



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE KNIVES & WEAPONS GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS

(Reviewed and updated September 2022. V3)

Introduction

Violent crime using weapons and possessions of a knife/bladed article is increasing nationally, and Nottinghamshire is not immune to this trend. Unfortunately, many of the reported knife crime offences in Nottinghamshire have involved children and young people.

Nottinghamshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, working with partner agencies, has published the [Nottinghamshire Knife Crime Strategy](#) to tackle this issue. An important element of this relates to educating children and young people on the dangers and consequences of carrying a knife or bladed article, and schools in Nottinghamshire are in a prime position to be part of this. The strategy and 'best practice' add strength to the notion of working in partnership to support this. Schools can also use their curriculum resources around PSHE and RSHE/RHE to further support education on violent offences. School's Early Intervention Police Officers (SEIO's) can support with this education in secondary schools, and local PCSO's can assist in Primary schools.

Whilst Schools generally remain safe places and only a small minority of pupils carry knives or other weapons in school, the potential - consequences are serious. Schools have a responsibility to keep all students and staff safe, including the child who may be in possession of a knife, as research indicates that often they can also become a victim.

This guidance produced in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Police aims to provide clarity to aid schools, and other education providers, to make the best decisions possible, balancing safety and risk against a need for a proportionate response, where children or young people come to school with a knife, bladed article, or weapon. This document is to be used in conjunction with existing guidance e.g. *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and, local policy documents, and should complement your existing approach to safeguarding including acting as a guide, should you choose to have a school weapons/knives policy.

Legislation and Procedures

An offensive weapon is defined as any article made or adapted for causing injury or intended by the person having it with them for such use. As a school this would include items such as knives, including pocketknives, sling shots, bb guns, imitation firearm, and any other bladed instrument. It should be recognised that when children bring an offensive weapon onto a school site this can often be in response to a situation where they feel unsafe, and your resulting response needs to promote a feeling of safety for the child. It is strongly recommended

that a [Contextual Safeguarding](#) approach and accompanying resources should be used in understanding the drivers/motivations for the child in question including any elements of child exploitation (including CCE and CSE), when this does arise in schools in the first instance.

Nottinghamshire's Chief Constable has issued guidance to the Police force on how to deal with individuals who commit knife crime. Whilst Officers will still retain some discretion, the focus of the guidance is to ensure a consistent and robust approach to knife crime and in particular possession offences, sending a clear message to those who carry knives that this is unacceptable.

The guidance is clear that for 16- and 17-year-olds caught in possession of a knife or weapon, they will be charged to Court, unless there are exceptional circumstances. For those aged 10 (criminal age of responsibility) to 15 years old, the likely outcome of a first knife/weapon possession will be a Youth Conditional Caution, in which the child will be required to work with the Youth Justice Service (YJS). However, partners are keen that children are dealt with at the lowest level so, where there are exceptional circumstances, following a fuller assessment, they could receive a lesser outcome (Community Resolution/Youth Caution) but still receive support and intervention according to their individual need. In more serious circumstances, a charge to Court is also an option which may have to be considered. To enable swift action to be taken, children in possession may be arrested and taken to the Police station.

The **Early Police Alert to Schools (EPAS)** process occurs following a child being connected to a knife related or serious violent incident which has been reported to the Police. The key point to consider as a school or education setting is to remember the child has been through something difficult and may not be at their best, they may be the alleged perpetrator, victim or witness to a serious incident and are likely to need some support. The details of the alleged offence should not be discussed with the child or their parent(s)/carer(s). An example of the EPAS form and a Step-by-Step Guide to the EPAS process is attached at the end of this guidance.

Safeguarding issues for children are still paramount, and contextual safeguarding issues will be considered, with a safeguarding referral being made to the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) for knife enabled offences.

Responding to incidents and intelligence

Response to an incident of possession or use of a knife/weapon in school/education provision occurs in many different contexts. This can range from a teacher confiscating a knife found in a child's bag, to encountering a student threatening another student or member of staff and may involve a weapon already available on education premises. It could be an unintentional case of a child dropping a butter knife into their bag by accident, or a child intentionally bringing a knife to school under the misconstrued guise of self-protection or to attack someone.

Schools are advised to report all known knife/weapons crime/possession cases, and where there is intelligence to suggest a child may be carrying a knife/weapon, whether in school or the community, this information should be passed on to the Police as below:

Emergency

In cases where there is an immediate risk that the knife/weapon may be used, and the school/education provider is not confident of managing the incident safely, then the police should be **contacted immediately on 999**. This can include a situation where the student has fled the school/site or where the student has been contained but is still presenting a risk of harm to themselves, staff, or other students.

Non-emergency and intelligence

For example, a student has been searched and found to be in possession of a knife which has been handed over, and at that time the student is not assessed as posing any immediate or ongoing risk to themselves or others.

Due to the serious nature of weapons possession and potential consequences, contact should be prompt in order that future potential risk is managed, and behaviour confronted. **Call 101 to report to Police Control room.**

When reporting incidents of weapons possession to 101, schools should always request and record the incident log reference number. This will facilitate further contact in relation to the incident.

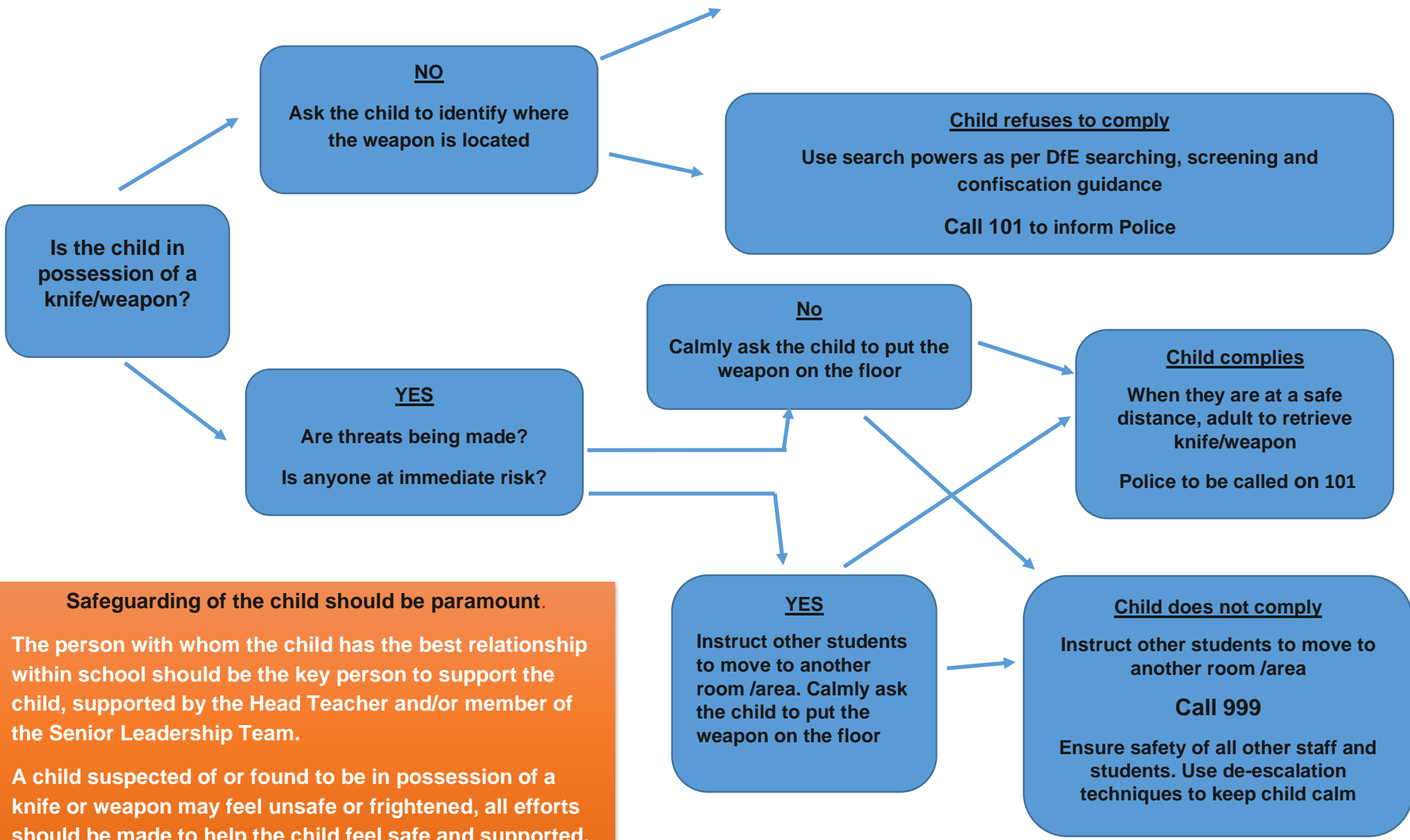
Response to reports of a knife/weapon in school:

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Child complies

Retrieve knife/weapon, store in safe place

call 101 to inform the police



Safeguarding of the child should be paramount.

The person with whom the child has the best relationship within school should be the key person to support the child, supported by the Head Teacher and/or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

A child suspected of or found to be in possession of a knife or weapon may feel unsafe or frightened, all efforts should be made to help the child feel safe and supported.

- Following any incident and initial notification to the police, schools/education providers should take action to ensure that children are appropriately safeguarded and potential risks are sufficiently managed . The priority for schools is to safeguard the child(ren) within their setting. Additional support and guidance can be sought from the Education Access & Partnership Services Team.
- Convene a meeting with parents, key person, and Head Teacher to discuss the incident, explore any risks/support needs and agree future actions. The child should be included in discussions and development of any support plans and future actions.
- Where additional support is required consider an Early Help referral or a referral to the MASH depending on the level of urgency. (Refer to the Pathway to Provision Vol.9) [pathwaytoprovisionhandbook.pdf \(nottinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- Speak to the SEIO to explore if they can offer any support/guidance or are aware of any other information/intelligence which needs to be taken into consideration. seios@notts.police.uk
- Where there are ongoing concerns regarding the child being at risk of repeating such behaviour consider making a referral to the Youth Justice Service for preventative intervention.
- Consider if a referral to Victim Care is required to provide support for perpetrator, victims or wider groups in school who may have witnessed the incident; admin.nottsvictimcare@catch22.cjism.net
- Where there are ongoing concerns for a young persons' emotional health and well-being consider referrals to CAMHS

Support for Schools/Education providers to deliver Knife and Weapon Crime Education and Interventions

Prevention is always preferable to dealing with an incident, and the Nottinghamshire Knife Crime Strategy focuses on prevention and early intervention. Educating children and young people about the consequences of carrying or using a knife or weapon, as well addressing the reasons why they carry knives and weapons is paramount. Schools and Education Providers are reminded to consider issues such as being Trauma Aware and Informed, Contextual Safeguarding, CCE, CSE, and County Lines among other issues. The diagram on the next page identifies approaches taken for universal, targeted, and statutory education and interventions.

UNIVERSAL / WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

All children and young people in school / education provision

This could take the form of assemblies, RSHE/PSHE lessons, themed days etc. facilitated by Teachers, SEIO's, TETC Team, and Youth workers. Staff briefings and staff training is also available. A whole school approach is recommended and utilising your curriculum to address this should be considered as well.

TARGETED

young people identified as being at risk of committing offences e.g. police intelligence, siblings of young people who have offended, associating with yp who have offended.

Targeted preventative intervention could take the form of smaller group sessions by Schools Early Intervention Officers, referral to YJS for diversionary intervention 'My Futures', Youth Service or other providers

STATUTORY

young people who have been charged with an offence

Police and involvement from YJS (Out of Court Disposal or Statutory Court Order).

REAL LIFE STORIES

| Resource | Recommended use | Details | Where you can access the resource | Author organisation |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Video</p> <p>Character(s): victims and their parents and EastEnders characters (not related, two different stories)</p> | <p>Real life story interwoven with fictional scene to be used in both an assembly and classroom setting. Suitable for all ages</p> | <p>Developed by EastEnders this video including interviews with real family members of knife crime victims. Features real-life testimonies about the effects of knife crime.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: https://youtu.be/OfYZhWAwGgc</p> | <p>BBC EastEnders</p> |
| <p>Video: vox pops</p> <p>Character(s): three young people both victims and perpetrators</p> | <p>Real life story to be used in both an assembly or classroom setting suitable for all ages</p> | <p>Drop the Weapons is a vox pop including contributions from the perpetrators and victims of knife crime. The site also includes links to anti-knife crime television adverts and 'choose a different ending' YouTube videos.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: www.droptheweapons.org/droptheknife.html</p> | <p>Metropolitan Police Service Drop the Weapons</p> |
| <p>Video: documentary, case studies and posters</p> <p>Character(s): policeman, young people, doctor</p> | <p>Real life stories to be used in both an assembly or classroom setting</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds</p> <p>(warning, graphic images)</p> | <p>No More Knives is a short documentary that goes beyond the headlines to see first-hand the impact knife crime has on its victims, their families, the offender and their families, and on the professionals on the front line on the war against knives.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: https://www.merseyside.police.uk/police-forces/merseyside-police/areas/campaigns/campaigns/2018/no-more-knives/</p> | <p>Merseyside Police No More Knives</p> |

| Resource | Recommended use | Details | Where you can access the resource | Author organisation |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Video</p> <p>Character(s): Mother of a victim who died as a result of knife crime in Nottinghamshire.</p> | <p>Real life story to be used in a classroom setting</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds (warning, deeply moving and emotive)</p> | <p>Case studies of real-life experiences of knife crime. Jane Taylor from Clifton talks about losing her son Luke in 2011 to knife crime.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: https://youtu.be/GicU2ALMZe8</p> | <p>Nottinghamshire Police</p> <p>Lives Not Knives Campaign</p> |
| <p>Video</p> <p>Character(s): young people planning and effecting knife crime</p> | <p>To be used in both an assembly and classroom setting dealing with Peer Pressure and Joint Enterprise.</p> <p>Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds</p> | <p>Developed by Nottingham Youth Offending Service. Intended for peer-to-peer education to teach young people about the dangers of peer pressure.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: https://youtu.be/RVGx4qsVx6c</p> | <p>Nottingham Youth Offending Service</p> |
| <p>Video</p> <p>Knife Angel by Alfie Bradley-One Show</p> | <p>To be used in both an assembly and classroom setting dealing with violence and knives</p> | <p>Created with over 100,000 knives 'Knife Angel' sculpture made of confiscated weapons, The Knife Angel is a national monument against violence and aggression and aims to show the impact knife crime has on people's lives.</p> | <p>Available as streaming on this site: https://youtu.be/XiGYEjuFMR8</p> | <p>BBC One Show</p> |

LESSON PLANS

| Resource | Recommended use | Details | Where you can access the resource | Author organisation |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| Home Office Guidance | KS 3 and 4 | Free Lesson Plans and teacher guidance | https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/home-office-knifefree-lesson-plans-ks34 | PSHE Association |
| Video Amani – Short Film | Short film to be used in both an assembly or classroom setting Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds (warning, graphic images) | Based on a true story from Amani Simpson, 'AMANI' is a short from Joivan Wade. The film depicts the inner reflections of a young man battling with his faith after being stabbed seven times. The vision is that this will be much more than a film, but rather a movement to strengthen the discussion and debate towards the end of the knife crime epidemic plaguing the lives of our young people and adults across the country | Video available via this site: https://youtu.be/Jm6PwChWiJ8 | MYM : Million Youth Media |

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|-----------------|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| | | | | The Children's Society |
| GAMES | | | | |
| Resource | Recommended use | Details | Where you can access the resource | Author organisation |
| Interactive | Can be used in a classroom setting Suitable for 14 to 16 year olds | Designed and researched by the sentencing council and the CPS, this interactive website allows young people understand the workings of the crown court and sentencing guidelines for a raft of offences | Available as streaming on this site: https://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk/about-sentencing/you-be-the-judge/ http://ybtj.justice.gov.uk/ | Sentencing Council |

Fearless Website <https://www.fearless.org/en> which is aimed at children and young people.

Some Support Agencies

Support

| Organisation | Contact | Details | Where you can access the resource |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>TETC Team, Meadow House, Littleworth, NG18 2TB</p> | <p>Kirstin Lamb - Kirstin.lamb@nottsc.gov.uk</p> <p>Penny Bent – Penny.bent@nottsc.gov.uk Tackling Emerging Threats to Children</p> | <p>Early intervention including -Group work, support to schools, training, quality assurance, co-production of resources</p> | <p>Available upon request and on Notts Schools Portal - http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal</p> |
| <p>Schools Early Intervention Officers</p> | <p>Nottinghamshire Police seios@nottinghamshire.police.uk</p> | <p>Assembly / Lesson delivery (generic violence & specific knife crime). Problem Solving in school (tackling immediate or emerging themes 1-2-1's with vulnerable young people.</p> | <p>See contact</p> |
| <p>Lifeskills Education</p> | <p>Angie Sheard Learning and Development Manager Lifeskills Education Charity (Registered Charity Number 1772680) NBV Enterprise Centre 6 David Lane Nottingham NG6 0JU angie@lifeskills-education.co.uk</p> | <p>Pilot project to current DARE customers, one session on knife crime added to programme</p> | |

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|--------------------------|---|--|---|
| Lotus Development | <p>Rachel Pink</p> <p>https://www.lotusdevelopment.co.uk/</p> <p>hello@lotusdevelopment.co.uk</p> | <p>Life coaching sessions, resilience and decision making</p> | <p>See contact</p> |
| Pythian Club | <p>Ben Rosser</p> <p>NBV Enterprise Centre, 6 David Ln, Nottingham NG6 0JU</p> <p>07718649771</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxing, football and music programmes which are delivered within schools, communities and sports settings. • nKife awareness drama performance called Double Edge. The performance focuses on creating awareness, education and early intervention/prevention when it comes to knife crime awareness • Referral based early/targeted intervention projects/workshops – Including gang and knife crime, county lines/drugs, alcohol and ASB. • Senior coaches actively promote positive lifestyle choices and decision making. Mentoring of young people towards resilience and constructive pathways towards learning and employment. | <p>See Contact</p> <p>https://www.thepythianclub.co.uk/home</p> |

Referral Criteria & Referral Form:

- **My Future: Youth Intervention Programme**
- **My Future: Mentoring and Support**

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) work with young people on a voluntary basis, offering preventative interventions to address individual needs, with the aim of preventing them from entering the Criminal Justice System (CJS).

The service can also provide support to young people in a mentoring capacity; encouraging positive lifestyle choices, by challenging and changing attitudes and values that contribute to serious youth violence.

The service offers support and intervention to children and young people that is tailored to their individual needs. Intervention could be on a one to one or group work basis, delivered by YJ workers or specialist workers based within the Youth Service. The referrer should consider what services are already being provided to address the areas of concern and what additional support is required.

Referrals will be considered for young people aged 10 – 17 (up to their 18th birthday). Referrals are welcomed from across all partner agencies and should be made at the earliest opportunity. It needs to be clear that a discussion has been had with the young person and parent / carer (where appropriate) to advise them that a referral will be made, and that engagement is voluntary.

The referrer should consider the young person's behaviour in the context of their *individual circumstances and needs*.

Referral indicators:

- The young person is engaging in, or at risk of engaging in, anti-social behaviour or behaviour which could lead to Police involvement.
- There are concerns relating to the young person being involved in, or at risk of being involved in, acts of aggression/violent behaviour and/or using knives/weapons.
- There are concerns' regarding their use of social media which places either themselves or others at a risk of harm.
- There are concerns regarding the young person's thinking and behaviour which harmfully impact on their relationships (e.g. discriminatory attitudes and beliefs).
- Concerns are being raised in relation to the young person's risk of being or becoming involved in Serious Youth Violence (SYV) or / and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- There exists other concerning or worrying behaviour, which unaddressed, may lead to criminalisation.

If there are concerns that are not referenced above, please contact the Early Help Unit 0115 8041248 for advice and guidance. If a young person is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a safeguarding referral should be made to MASH 0300 500 80 90 email: mash.safeguarding@nottsc.gov.uk (or contact the Emergency Duty Team if out of hours on 0300 456 4546).

If you are unsure as to whether a referral is appropriate, please call the YJS Duty Officer 0115 8042888 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm).

Referral Details

Name of Young Person:

Date of Birth:

Age:

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|----------------------|----------------------|

Parent/ Carer name(s):

Address and contact telephone number(s):

Name and contact details of referrer (including organisation):

| | |
|--|----------|
| Has the young person and parent / carer been advised that a referral is being made for intervention and support? | Yes / No |
| What are the views of the young person and family regarding this referral? | |

Reason for referral (present situation and concerns):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Has the young person been discussed at the Serious Youth Violence Child Criminal Exploitation Panel? Yes / No | | |
| Are any of the following risk factors applicable for this young person? | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knife Use | <input type="checkbox"/> Serious Youth Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CCE/CSE | <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Misuse | |

Please specify how you want the young person to benefit from this referral and the desired outcome:
(Are there any resources (e.g. family, friends, community) or services already being provided to address the concern?)

Date of Referral: _____

Contact Details and Referral Submission

Referrals should be sent password protected – please do not include personal details in the email subject line.

NottsYJS@nottscc.gov.uk

Once a referral has been received, you will be updated regarding the referral decision within five working days.

Should you need to discuss a referral please phone YJS Duty Officer 0115 8042888 (Mon – Thurs 8:30am – 5:00pm, Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm).

For Office Use Only: Information Relevant to Allocation of Referral

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Early Police Alert to Schools

This notification is an early alert that a young person has been identified, via Capita, as being a pupil at your school who has been connected to a knife related or serious violence incident which has been reported to the Police. This personal data is being shared in line with DPA 2018: Section 35(2)(b)

Name:

Involvement: Suspect

DOB:

School:

Offence:

Occurrence Number:

Offence date: [Click here to enter a date.](#) **Time:**

The minimum data provided above is proportionate as an early alert of an incident. If you require any further information, you must contact the Investigating Officer directly and not the sender of this email. Your Schools and Early Intervention Officer- SEIO will also be able to offer support and guidance:

Investigating Officer:

Contact number:

Email: @notts.police.co.uk

Currently open to Youth Justice Service: No

YJS worker: **Contact number:**

The purpose of this early alert is for you to monitor the safeguarding and welfare of the young person, offer support, understand the context around any repercussions and to share information back with the police.

This information must not be further disseminated without the consent of the Investigating Officer and must be securely disposed of in line with your Data Protection requirements.

If the DSL speaks to the young person involved, subject to the alert, they MUST record what was said as it may need to be disclosed as third-party material.

[Early Police Alert to Schools \(EPAS\)](#)
following weapon possession or violent incident

Step 1 - DON'T PANIC! The EPAS notification lets you know the child has been through something difficult and may not be at their best at school today - someone who the child has a good relationship with might be best placed to have a chat to them to see if they are okay and if there are any immediate concerns that need addressing

Step 2 - Establish the Details Contact the Officer In Charge (OIC) or your allocated SEIO for further details, to verify action taken to date and whether they have any recommendations on interventions required for the school to manage risk. Advice should be sought as to whether it is appropriate to contact parents/carers. Information may be limited if it is part of an ongoing investigation.

Step 3 – Manage any Known Risks - If the alleged suspect, victim and/ or the witness attend the same school you may wish to consider with police how will this be managed to reduce the impact of heightened tensions? Is there a plan to manage unstructured times and travelling to and from school? Is there an appropriate risk assessment in place? **Refer to your schools own policies on Safeguarding, Behaviour Policies and Child Protection.**

**DO NOT DISCUSS ANY DETAILS OF THE ALLEGED OFFENCE
WITH THE CHILD / PARENT IF THIS IS STILL A PENDING INVESTIGATION**

Step 4 – Check on the Welfare of the Young Person Are they in school and if not have you heard from parent/carers? Would they benefit from some additional support from a member of staff? Do they need any adjustments today to help them access their education? Do they feel safe in school and travelling home today?

Step 5 – Contact Parents if agreed with OIC/ SEIO (they will guide you about what can be shared at this stage). Are there any additional safeguarding concerns raised by the parents/ carers, do they need additional advice on next steps and who is best to provide these (police, SEIO, YJS)?

Step 6 – consider what else is going on for this young person - How is their behaviour in school? How is their attendance? Have parents reported any concerns? When these are considered in the context of the EPAS, does there need to be an onward referral to the Early Help Unit, MASH or Youth Justice Service?

Key Contacts for further advice:

On how to support and make referrals for specific young people – contact your local YJS team [Youth justice | Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

On the EPAS process, whole school approaches and knife crime policies - Contact the TETC team tetc@nottscc.gov.uk

On the role of the SEIOs or if you do not know who your SEIO is contact Kerry.Hall@Notts.Police.uk