



Gangs and Youth Violence

*Advice for schools: DfE / **Home Office***

- ✓ Identification
- ✓ Intervention (Referral)
- ✓ Action
- ✓ Prevention



'Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. '

(Department for Education, 2015)

- Shared responsibility
- Adopting a 'could happen here' vigilant approach

Introduction

- Majority of educational establishments are safe
- Key factor with Ofsted – Behaviour & Safety / Achievement
- Even low levels can have a disproportionate impact
- Increase in research and initiatives

Targeted Programmes

Multi agency involvement with a range of responses incorporating numerous strategies:

- Identifying specific issues;
- Targeting the right ages/stage of development;
- Understanding the causes of the problem – scale and nature;
- Safety partnerships – give advice, share information, provision.

The Law

*Teachers have a range of powers in relation to discipline. These are there to protect teachers as they tackle problems, including violence, in the school environment. Such powers cover disciplinary actions, the power to **restrain violent pupils**, and the power to **search pupils for prohibited items**. There are also some legal issues that teachers should be aware of that relate to gang membership, in particular concerning the potential criminal liability of young people whose presence or actions lead to a crime, even if they did not commit the crime themselves (**'joint enterprise'**). This highlights the risks for young people of gang involvement, even if they think that they have not directly committed any crimes.*

Examples of prohibited items:

- knives and weapons; alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items; tobacco and cigarette papers; fireworks; pornographic images; any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property; and any item banned by the school rules that has been identified in these rules as an item that may be searched for.

Signs and Symptoms

Vigilance - 'it could happen here..'

Physical

- Changes in appearance – weight, appetite, fatigue, facial changes (teeth, gaunt)

Mental

- Changes in behaviour – Out of character changes in behaviour, aggression, confrontation, 'rash', intimidation

Social

- 'Tagging', symbolism / Graffiti
- Over hearing discussions of drug use / gang behaviour
- Engagement in anti-social behaviour
- Periods of absence
- Communication / Discussions - Strong views and attitudes
- Glorifying violence / making controversial remarks, especially in relation to Anti-social behavior / drugs
- Advocating messages similar to illegal organisations
- Secretive behaviour
- Online searches or sharing illicit messages on social profiles, encouraging perceptions/ comments regarding gang behaviour
- Advocating violence towards others

Risk Factors

Factor	Strong risk factors for youth violence (age group)	Strong risk factors for gang involvement (age group)
Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troublesome (7-9; 10-12) • High daring (10-12) • Positive attitude towards delinquency (10-12) • Previously committed offences (7-9) • Involved in anti-social behaviour (10-12) • Substance use (7-9) • Aggression (7-9) • Running away and truancy (7-9; 10-12) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marijuana use (10-12)
Child's Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrupted family (7-9; 10-12) • Poor supervision (10-12) 	

Factor	Strong risk factors for youth violence (age group)	Strong risk factors for gang involvement (age group)
School		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low academic achievement in primary school (10-12) • Learning disability (10-12)
Child's peer Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (7-9; 10-12) 	
Community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marijuana availability (10-12) • Children and young people in the neighbourhood involved in crime and/or anti-social behaviour (10-12)

Prevention of violence and aggressive behaviour

- Mentoring
- Bullying prevention – proactive peer support / reactive anti-bullying
- Developing social skills / anti-social behaviour awareness e.g. managing anger, modifying behaviour, conflict resolution training, SEAL, PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking), Participate and Learn.
- Home school partnerships – involving parents
- Cognitive behavioural therapy - external
- Knife wand
- Educational attitude change programmes – Realising ambition
- Extra-curricular activities – self-esteem, building character projects
- Conflict resolutions
- Talks / media programmes – ex-criminals, drama groups

Disclosure - Intervention / Action

- Record – OSA – CPOMS immediately
- Restraint / searching – where we stand?? Ask for support, liaise with DSL LADO
- Call 101 – Police and Youth Offending Teams
- NSPCC
- www.fearless.org