



Alfred Street Junior School

Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 9YS
Web site: www.alfredstreetjunior.org
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Telephone: 01933 353762
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Headteacher: Mrs K O'Connor
School Business Manager: Mrs Debbie Heffernan

17.7.19

Dear Parents/Carers

As we are nearing the Summer holidays, where the children may potentially be spending more time out in the local community, I feel I have a duty to increase your awareness of some local safeguarding issues that we have been made aware of by the police, social care and other outside agencies, so that you can put necessary measures in place to protect your children.

It has come to our attention that there is an increased risk in the local area of children becoming involved in gangs and exploitation. Children as young as 9 years old (boys and girls), are being targeted and befriended by older children or teenagers and then being lured into gangs and groups involved in drugs, knife crime and sexual exploitation. Once in these gangs, children are being asked to carry/deliver items.

We have talked to the children about the dangers of talking to and hanging around with older children and young people. The topics of drug taking, carrying weapons, relationships and keeping safe, are also part of our PSHE curriculum and Protective Behaviours work, so the children get constant reminders from a school perspective. However, we know that when the children are not in our care, they are associating with known offenders and gang members without their parent's knowledge. Children do not always realise that they are being enticed into a gang or dangerous situation until they find themselves unable to get out of it.

I would urge all parents/carers to be vigilant about who their children are associating with and where they are going. Look out for any changes in behaviour, any new names that they mention, new possessions that they might acquire without your knowledge. The following websites give information about the above issues.

- https://www.northamptonshireneighbourhoodalert.co.uk/da/268171/Advice_for_parents_and_those_who_work_with_young_people_about_County_Lines_gangs.html
- www.aimone.org.uk

As a school, we have put additional preventative measures in place to try and safeguard our children when out in the local community. Our PSCO has delivered workshops to all classes on the theme of knives and gangs, at a level appropriate to their age groups. This week in assembly, an ex-gang member who now works as a mentor for the charity Guiding Young Minds, spoke to the children about the importance of speaking out if they are afraid or if they know of anybody involved in gang related crime and all children were given a wrist band with the charity details on. This week the PSCO is also working with the children on the Blue Butterfly project which will be

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focusing upon issues around bullying, physical and verbal aggression and e-safety. The Blue Butterfly project explore ways of handling bullying, violence and anything that causes upset and how we can find solutions to release that feeling and move on with our lives. 'Bertie' the Blue Butterfly, the mascot for the scheme, is becoming recognised by those that have already received a presentation and so far has provided children with confidence to speak to a trusted adult or appointed person that is wearing the recognisable friendly butterfly badge. The Policing team have also produced leaflets for parents on the theme of bullying, ways to protect your children and online bullying. All of these can be found on our website in the Useful Documents section, within the Parent folder <https://www.alfredstreetjunior.org/index.php/parents/useful-forms> and will be emailed out to you with this letter.

We have also been working with local agencies who specialise in the areas of crime that are affecting the local area. We are delighted to announce that in September, our school will be piloting a programme run by a specialist team called Fearless and CIRV, who will be educating children on the effects of knife crime and gangs, as a way of deterring them from becoming involved in the future. This work will be pitched at Primary School level in the hope that it will then be rolled out across other schools in the local area. Information about this programme will be sent to you in September.



It doesn't have to end up this way.

Are you in a gang, in too deep, or worried about someone who is?

Call us any time of day or night
07539 183975

We can help
We're not here to judge

CIRV Community Initiative to Reduce Violence

www.aimonline.org.uk

The Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV) is a multi-agency gang intervention programme designed to reduce gang violence and help those involved in gangs to live a life free of crime.

If you do have any concerns, I would urge you to please report these to the police on 101 or contact our local PCSO Katie Stringer, who will be able to advise you. It would also be helpful if

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you could share the information with us at school, either with myself or Mrs Watts our Family Support Worker, so that we can work collaboratively.

Kind regards

Mrs Kelly O'Connor
Headteacher



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