

Policy document for: **Serious violence**

Updated: Autumn 2025

This policy forms part of the Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and gives specific school actions in relation to their context.

Linked guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Staff must remember contextual safeguarding. When considering safeguarding incident or behaviour concerns, all assessments must consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. This is an approach to understanding and responding to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. This includes online abuse.

Children and young people's involvement in serious violence, particularly knife crime, is a growing safeguarding issue. All staff are aware of the indicators which may signal children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- unexplained gifts or new possessions
- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of CCE.

Other possible indicators and vulnerability factors include:

- having been frequently absent, or permanently excluded, from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery
- Troublesome / high daring behaviour;
- A change in friendships / relationships with older individuals or groups;
- A significant decline in performance;
- Signs of self harm;
- Significant changes in wellbeing;
- Unexplained injuries / non plausible explanations of injuries;
- Unexplained gifts / new possessions;
- Gang involvement;
- Involvement in anti-social behaviour;
- A disrupted / dysfunctional family;
- Being male;
- Poor family supervision;
- Children with learning disabilities;

- Peer involvement in anti-social behaviour / crime

Violence can peak in the hours just before or just after school/college, when pupils are travelling to and from school/college and these may be particularly risky times for children involved in serious violence.

Any concerns regarding serious violence will be reported and responded to in line with other child protection concerns by speaking with a DSL or deputy. The initial response to child victims is important and staff will take any allegations seriously and work in ways that support children and keep them safe.

How we teach children to have healthy relationships

The curriculum at our mainstream schools includes Relationships and PSHE teaching to focus on developing skills and knowledge on how to resolve conflict. This is delivered in an appropriate way to children at Aspire school with regard to their stage of development and cognition.

Home Office guidance recommends developing competencies for staff:

- Developing skills and knowledge to resolve conflict as part of the curriculum;
- Confidence to challenge aggressive behaviour in ways that prevent the recurrence of such behaviour;
- Understanding the risks for specific groups, including those that are gender-based, and targeting appropriate interventions;
- Safeguarding and organising child protection measures when needed in a timely way;
- Carefully managing individual transitions between educational establishments, especially into Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) or alternative provision;
- Working with local partners to prevent anti-social behaviour or crime.

Legal powers

Teachers have a number of legal powers to manage pupil behaviour and impose discipline. These include:

- Statutory power to discipline pupils including giving sanctions
- A statutory power to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils
- A power to search pupils without consent for a number of 'prohibited items'. These include:
 - 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;
 - Any item banned by the school rules that has been identified in these rules as an item that may be searched for.

See the **screening, searching & confiscation** policy.

Additional guidance

- [Home Office – Serious Violence Strategy, April 2018 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- <https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/>