

Enfield Safer School Partnership Offensive Weapons Protocol

Context

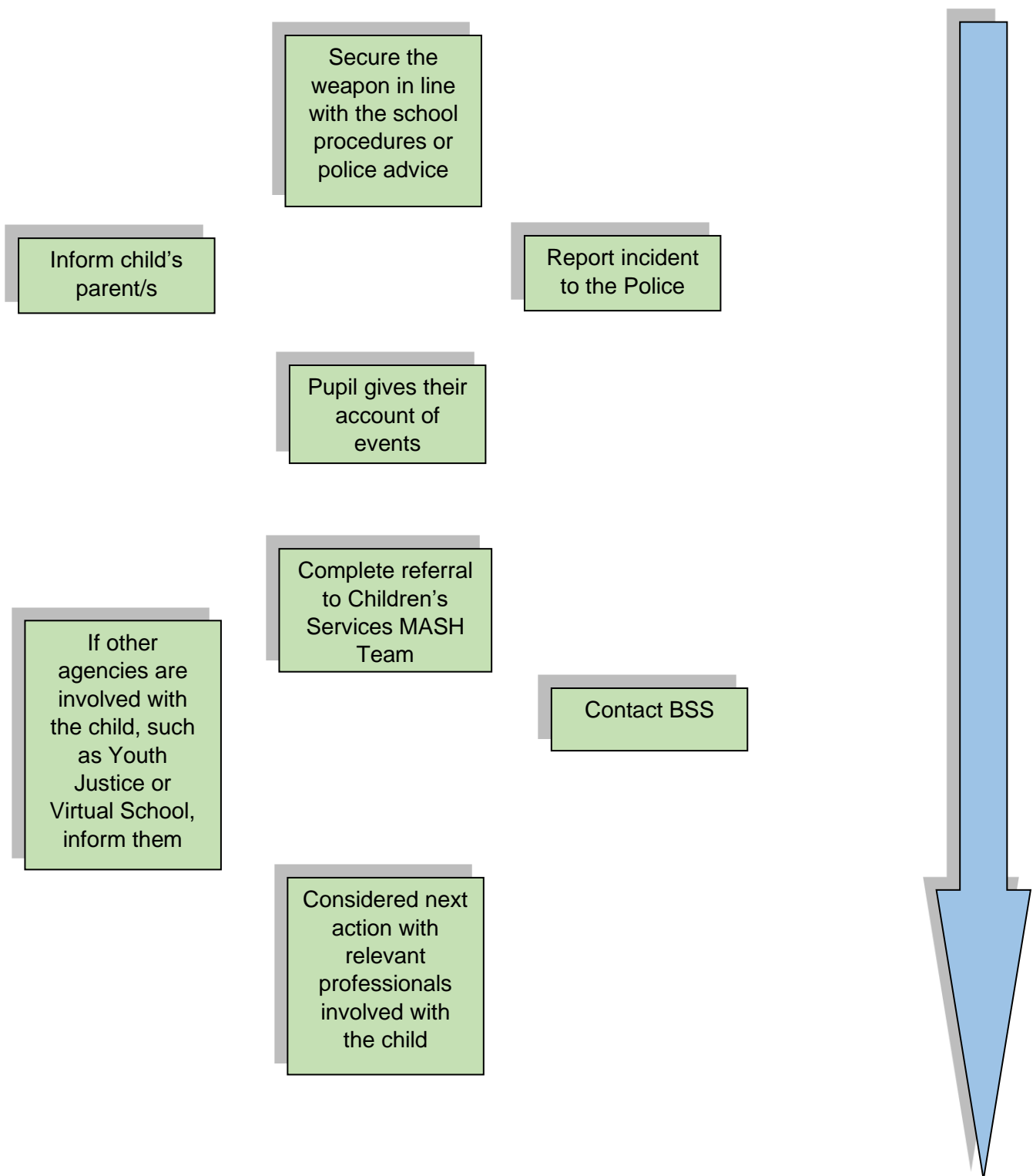
1. Knife crime offences for March 2022-February 2023 for Enfield was 585, down from 601 the previous year. Knife crime with injury offences for March 2022-February 2023 for Enfield was 141 and knife crime with injury non DA victims under 24 for March 2022-February 2023 in Enfield was 48.
2. The increase in knife crime witnessed in London has occurred alongside a general increase in overall knife crime throughout England and Wales.
3. The use of weapons by young people, and in particular, knives is a growing concern. Offences involving possession of a weapon are within the top five most common offence for first time entrants into the criminal justice system.
4. In its recent report 'Safeguarding children and young people in education from knife crime, Lessons from London', 2019 Ofsted conclude that no single agency can solve knife crime in isolation. The report makes a number of recommendations for strengthening existing practices in order to afford children and young people greater protection. For example:
 - a. Improving partnership working and strategic planning in London;
 - b. Sharing and promoting good practice in relation to exclusions and managed moves;
 - c. Coordinating early help and prevention;
 - d. Improving information-sharing;
 - e. Teaching the curriculum and supporting children to achieve.
5. School leaders involved in the Ofsted research identified 'vulnerability' as a common denominator among pupils found to be carrying bladed objects into school. These pupils are often seen as at high risk of being groomed into gangs for the purposes of criminal exploitation.
6. A report from the Ministry of Justice in 2018, 'Examining the Educational Background of Young Knife Possession Offenders', includes the finding that only a very small proportion of young offenders with knife possession offences committed the offence shortly after being excluded from school. The report therefore concludes that this removed any possible association of exclusion from school as a significant driver of youth knife possession offending overall.
7. Enfield recognises that knife-crime does not exist in a vacuum; children and young people who are both the victims and perpetrators of knife-crime are likely to experience multiple layers of vulnerability. For example, they may have witnessed other children carrying knives, or have suffered trauma which has had an impact on their ability to make safe choices and self-regulate.
8. Nonetheless, it is clear that children and young people need help and support to prevent them from becoming either victims or perpetrators of knife-crime. As such, our local responses to knife-crime are being framed within the context of the government's Serious Violence Strategy, and The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC) Knife Crime Strategy. These strategies identify that, in addition to law enforcement, multi-agency and partnership work with children and young people is crucial. Partners are working together to reduce the number of young people exposed to knife-crime and other weapon-related incidents. This protocol supports that approach.

Definition of Offensive Weapon

Section 1 of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 provides that an offensive weapon is “any article made or adapted for use for causing injury to the person or intended by the person having it with him for such use by him or by some other person.”

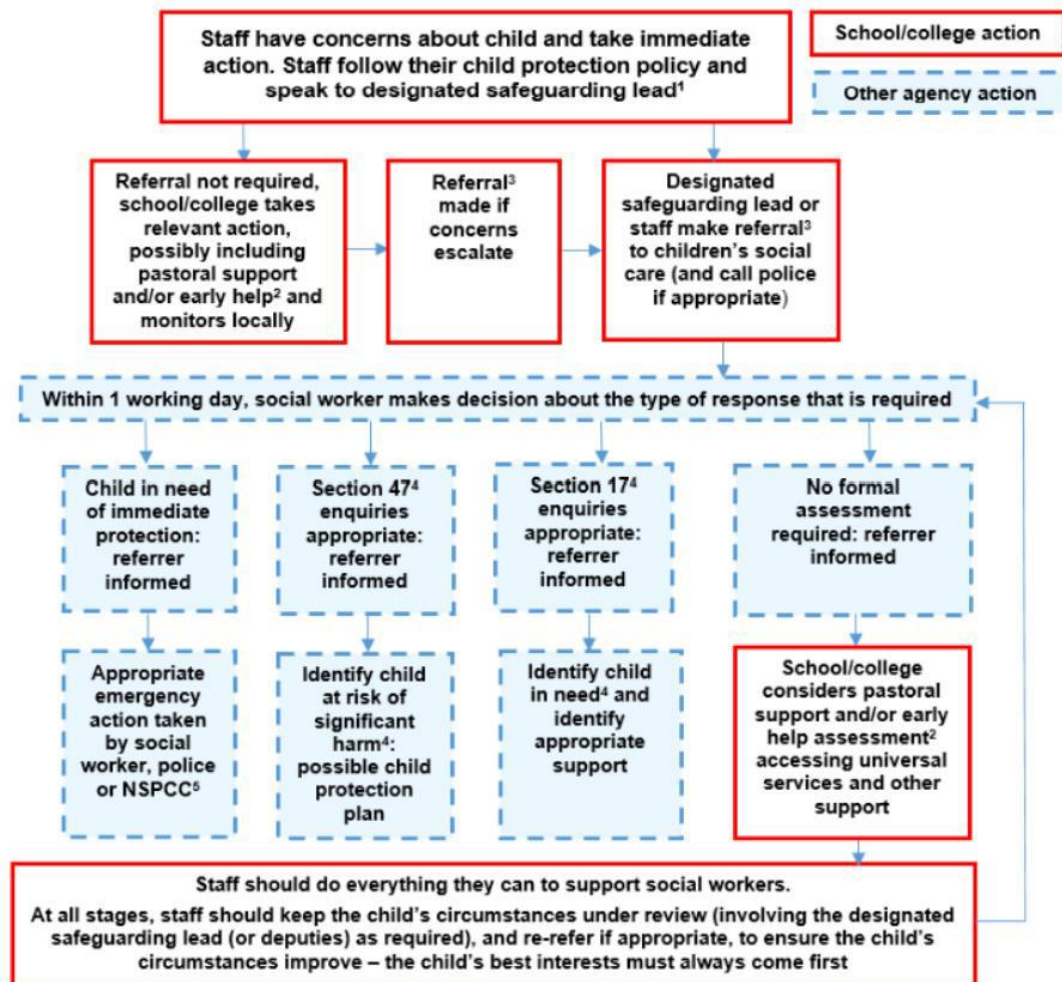
The vast majority of young people attending Enfield schools will not be affected by serious violence or carry weapons. However, where these problems do occur there will almost certainly be a significant impact. Schools, both primary and secondary, have a duty and a responsibility to protect and safeguard their learners and staff. Enfield schools are safe places where learners are offered high quality teaching and learning opportunities enabling them to leave school with qualifications and access to greater employment opportunities.

Procedures Flowchart



Safeguarding Procedures Flowchart

Actions where there are concerns about a child



Principles

As young people develop maturity they naturally experiment with their behaviour and test boundaries. The younger they are the less capacity they will have for restraining themselves, resisting temptation or resisting peer pressure. They will mature at different rates and will have less life experience than adults. We would also expect them to benefit from a greater opportunity to learn from their mistakes, being more able to change their behaviour and attitudes than adults. Young people will also suffer a greater impact from social stigma or a criminal record, affecting their future opportunities and prospects. Effective integration back into their communities is a key consideration. None of this excuses poor or criminal behaviour. It actually increases the need to intervene at a low level, to show that actions have consequences, and that harm is being caused. But we must also be careful, in acting positively, to take into account immaturity and ensure we don't inadvertently damage a young person's future

Enfield is committed to:

- A focused deterrence approach which ensures swift action by all in respect of child-on-child abuse;

- Safeguarding children in education settings from knife crime and violence;
- Supporting children and young people who are the victims of knife-crime;
- An early intervention approach that does not stigmatise education settings seeking to be open and proactive in preventing knife-crime;
- Preventing children and young people from entering the criminal justice system;
- Ensuring appropriate interventions are put in place to divert children and young people from reoffending;
- Implementation of a trauma informed model across services recognising the strong associations between victims, perpetrators, trauma, childhood conduct disorders, and violent behaviour;
- Working with families to raise awareness of internet safety and risks posed by social media;
- Working together to reduce exclusion rates for pupils.

Protocols

Risk assessment and weapon handling

If a child or adult is at immediate risk, phone 999.¹

1. Schools will contact the Police to inform them of all incidents involving any child or adult carrying an offensive weapon onto or within the school premises.²
2. Schools will inform their Safer Schools Officer of all incidents involving any child or adult carrying an offensive weapon onto or within the school premises after they have contacted the Police so that they are aware.
3. In the case of a serious incident the Local Authority should be informed in line with the Council's Critical Incident Reporting Procedure³. Support for the staff and pupils involved should be arranged by the school and Local Authority.
4. The Police will always seek to engage and collaborate with partners throughout any incident involving an offensive weapon in an Enfield school and will only make an arrest on school premises if absolutely necessary.
5. The Police will ensure that information will be provided to the Headteacher and/or DSL as soon as possible following an arrest. The final decision on the case disposal/outcome will be made on a case-by-case basis and remain with the Police.
6. For pupils who are Enfield residents, a referral must also be made to Enfield's Children's Services, MASH, using the appropriate form. Parents must be informed that a referral is being made due to safeguarding concerns and that consideration will be made as to what services could be offered to the young person and other family members. For non-Enfield resident pupils, a referral should be made to the child's Home LA.
7. The weapon must be safely retrieved and handled in line with police advice. Where there is an immediate risk to the school community, the school should call 999. The member of staff taking possession of the weapon, from a pupil, will document the incident and provide police statement regarding the seizure if requested.
8. Headteachers must ensure that the parent of a pupil involved in any incident involving possession, threat or use of a weapon is informed at the earliest opportunity. As part of

¹ [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf \(npscc.police.uk\)](https://www.npscc.police.uk/when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf)

² [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/searching-screening-and-confiscation-at-school)

³ The definition of what constitutes a tragic event or trauma depends on the particular needs, experiences and perceptions of staff, pupils and parents at the time. This may include such events as the sudden death of a child or member of staff, a local disaster or a violent crime. It may involve a single event or a series of incidents which are sudden and unexpected, contain real or imagined threats to a person, overwhelm usual coping mechanisms, cause severe disruption, are traumatic to anyone.

the Headteacher's investigation, the pupil should be given the opportunity to give their version of events.

9. Contributing factors that may have led to the incident should be explored and a robust risk assessment carried out, with a management plan that minimises the likelihood of a future incident.
10. On receipt of the referral, Children's Services will consider what services could be offered to the young person and other family members, including assessing risks for siblings.
11. The Safer Schools Officer can be asked to provide information on an individual. This information will be shared with the requestor, on a case-by-case basis, in line with the Information Sharing Agreement in place with the school. The passing of information is not by absolute right and there may be occasions where it will not be deemed appropriate. An officer may also share information without an official request if deemed appropriate.⁴
12. In cases where there is an identified victim (e.g. threats made against an individual on social media), the needs and safety of the victim will be considered, including any additional support or safety planning as required.
13. Appendix 1, Protocol Checklist will be used by schools as a guide.
14. Where a member of the public is suspected of having a weapon on site, the Police must be called. The school can make the call to the Police on 101 or 999, where it is felt an urgent response is needed.
15. Where offensive weapons are found or abandoned outside the school grounds but in the vicinity, staff should also follow school procedures and inform their Safer Schools Officer after they have dealt with this so that they are aware.

Deciding on the school sanction

1. It is essential that the individual circumstances of each case are considered to ensure the Headteacher's discretion is not fettered through the application of a blanket policy. This will include due consideration of whether it is possible for the pupil to remain in school without compromising the integrity of the school's behaviour policy or putting at risk the safety of others in the school. For example, is it possible for the pupil to remain in school without compromising the safety of others? Is it possible to arrange a Managed Move? Is it necessary to permanently exclude the pupil? Have alternatives been considered? (e.g. multi-agency intervention/wraparound/SBSS/Nexus support).
2. Headteachers should refer to page 10 of the Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement September 2022, that states that Headteachers should take in account extenuating circumstances, advocating of social workers and the students level of understanding and also the context in which the knife was carried/shown etc.
3. Appendix 2, Managing Suspensions and Exclusions Checklist, will be used by the school as a guide.
4. For children looked after (LAC), the Headteacher will discuss the incident with the Headteacher of the relevant local authority's virtual school before coming to a final decision on the school sanction to see whether any additional support or alternative course of action is available.
5. For children with a social worker, the Headteacher will discuss the incident with the Headteacher of the relevant local authority's virtual school or LA CiN Lead and the social

⁴ DPA 2018 Act <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents/enacted>

worker, before coming to a final decision on the school sanction to see whether any additional support or alternative course of action is available.

6. For children with Youth Justice involvement, the Headteacher will discuss the incident with the YJS, before coming to a final decision on the school sanction to see whether any additional support or alternative course of action is available.
7. For children with an EHCP, the Headteacher will discuss the incident with SEN before coming to a final decision on the school sanction to see whether any additional support or alternative course of action is available. Enfield will always do their utmost to prevent unnecessary criminalisation of children with SEND who may carry a bladed article where appropriate.
8. The decision to impose a school-based consequences remain with the Headteacher and governing body. It is important to indicate if the decision is made at the time of the incident or at a later date, and how that is communicated to the learner and family.
9. Each incident will be considered, and a measured response provided according to the individual circumstances and severity of the incident. School based consequences could include:
 - Restorative justice;
 - Internal suspension;
 - Fixed term suspension;
 - Emergency EHCP review meeting with LA SEN Officer present;
 - Managed move to Alternative Provision, another Enfield school or a school outside the borough;
 - Permanent exclusion.
10. Where a permanent exclusion is issued, the school must ensure that all relevant information provided by Children's Social Care and the Police are passed to the LA's exclusion Officer, together with all other relevant school paperwork. This information is used by Enfield Local Authority to meet its statutory duty to provide suitable education provision by Day 6 of the permanent exclusion.
11. The clerk to the school's governing body must also convene a panel of three governors to review the Headteacher's decision and invite the pupil and family to attend. The Headteacher's report must be circulated to all parties at least 5 days prior to the hearing. The family group are also able to make written and/or oral representations to the governors.
12. Schools should record weapon-related exclusions using the DfE exclusion code 'OW' (Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item).

Police Action

Once informed of the incident, Police will make the decision on the appropriate action to be taken, this will depend on the gravity of the offence and specific factors concerning the young person. These may include:

- The immediate or ongoing risk, threat of harm or harm caused;
- Previous incidents that have come to notice at the school or through police contact such as arrest or previous prosecution;
- Prevalence of offence in local area;
- Attitude of offender;
- Age of offender.

Where a decision is made to question under caution or arrest the offender, they will be usually required to attend a police station. Once all the evidence has been gathered the police (maybe in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service) will make a decision on

the appropriate disposal of the matter. Such disposal can run in parallel with any action the school may have taken or is considering. The disposal will consider the following options:

- Take no further action;
- SSOs and YEDOs continue work with the individual to refer them into diversionary activities, away from the criminal justice system;
- Warn the offending child in accordance with the Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and make a referral to Youth Justice Service for an Out of Court Disposal consideration (such as triage/youth caution/youth conditional caution);
- Charge to Court - This will be a CPS decision. The final decision will be based upon the learner's previous offending history, details of the specific incident and any other mitigating circumstances.

Prevention

The safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and people who visit our schools is of paramount importance.

Within the curriculum, we will continue to adopt a clear preventative strategy across all schools to raise awareness of and educate all pupils on the risks of the carrying a weapon, of knife crime and the life changing consequences this could have for them and others. In addition, all schools will keep under review the communication channels that young people use in their schools to express their views and concerns about their school and personal life.

DSL Networks and other relevant borough meetings will share information and support school leaders around safeguarding pupils in relation to knife crime.

Further proactive measures schools can take are getting your Safer Schools Officer and Site Team to do regular weapons sweeps in the local area and ensuring that you keep cutting back long grassed areas etc to help with reducing areas where things might become hidden, the DSL linking up with other agencies/support such as NAVRAG, Community Safety Partnership and Vulnerable Young People's Group on a regular basis to further identify proactive ways as a partnership to prevent youth crime in schools, including knife crime prevention.

Appendix 1

Protocol Checklist

1. Has the weapon been secured in line with the school procedures or police advice?	
2. Has/Have the child's parent/s been informed?	
3. Has the pupil been given the opportunity to give their account of events?	
4. Has the incident been reported to the Police?	
5. Has the incident been reported to the Safer Schools Police Officer?	
6. If Youth Justice are involved with the child, have they been informed?	
7. Has a referral been made to Children's Services MASH Team?	
8. Has a response been received from MASH?	
9. Has a response been received from the Safer Schools Police Officer?	
10. Has a response been received from the Safer Schools Police Officer?	
11. Has the pupil received an offer of additional support?	
12. Is it possible for the pupil to remain in school without compromising the safety of others?	
13. If there is an identified victim, have their needs been assessed and any additional support or safety planning been put in place as appropriate? (e.g. referral to CAMHS, EP made aware, victim support offered, etc)	
14. Have all alternatives been considered linked to suspensions or exclusions? (e.g. multi-agency intervention, managed move, etc)	
15. Have the school involve BSS?	
16. Can a suspension or permanent exclusion be avoided?	
17. If a decision has been made to permanently exclude the pupil, has all the relevant paperwork linked to this been shared with the LA Exclusions Officer Day 1 of the permanent exclusion?	

Appendix 2

Managing Suspensions and Exclusions Checklist

Key consideration questions	Comments
1. Has the child or young person been excluded before? What was the impact of this?	
2. Have the following been engaged to help prevent exclusion? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child or young person• Parent/s• Key education staff• Other professionals, e.g. Social Work, Educational Psychologist, SSO, Youth Justice	
3. Has there been clear assessment of the young person and their needs?	
4. Has additional support/intervention been provided for the child or young person?	
5. Have alternative arrangements been made for the child or young person prior to the exclusion, e.g. curriculum alternatives, temporary placement in base, use of visual learning?	
6. How can the staged intervention process and school partnership be utilised to further support the child or young person?	
7. Has the incident that precipitated the consideration of exclusion been reviewed with all staff who were present to explore fully what happened?	
8. Has another professional from within the school, who is not directly involved, been consulted on the situation in order to provide a different perspective?	

9. Has the child or young person been consulted on their views of the situation?	
10. Have relevant professionals been consulted on how to move forward? E.g. BSS, EP, Virtual School, etc.	
11. Has the possible impact of exclusion on the child or young person been considered in light of individual circumstances?	
12. Does the child or young person's recent presentation constitute a wellbeing concern?	
13. What might the impact of an exclusion be on a child or young person's wider circumstances?	
14. What impact might an exclusion have on the planning processes?	
15. Has a risk assessment been completed for the child or young person where appropriate?	
16. What are the desired outcomes of an exclusion? Are there alternatives that might achieve this?	
17. Has there been consideration given to length of exclusion to ensure it is proportionate and in best interests of child/young person?	
18. Have the rights of the child or young person been considered?	
19. Have all other options been considered before deciding on exclusion as a necessary step?	

[Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Appendix 3

Example Risk Assessment Proforma (e.g. to use if a child has previously carried a knife)

Pupil Risk Assessment and BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Assessing and managing foreseeable risks for children who present challenging or adverse behaviours also to include students who are vulnerable for in relation to social and emotional aspects.

Name:

Year Group:

Date:

Review date:

Identification of Risk	
Describe the foreseeable risk.	
Is the risk potential or actual? (See guide below)	
List who is affected by the risk.	

Assessment of Risk	
In which situation does the risk usually occur?	
How likely it is that the risk will arise? (Scale 1-6)	
If the risk arises, who is likely to be injured or hurt?	
What kinds of injuries or harm are likely to occur?	
How serious are the adverse outcomes?	

Agreed Behaviour Management Plan & School Risk Management Strategy		
Focus of measures	Measures to be employed	Level of Risk
Proactive interventions put in place to prevent risk		
Early interventions to manage risks		

Reactive interventions to respond to adverse outcomes		
Agreed Consistent Responses to Specific Situations		
Behaviour/Situation	Agreed Response	Next Steps
Any physical altercations		
Any verbal threats that are unprovoked		
Exclusion / Internal exclusion issued where necessary		

Signed by:

Date

Assessor's Guide: Some working definitions -

Risk:

Risk is a combination of the severity of harm and the likelihood of it happening.

Actual or Potential?

This depends on whether the conflicting factors/parties are likely to be together or come together. If the pupil is known to be in contact with protagonists (or other threats) this poses actual risk.

Likelihood:

Rate the chance of the problem occurring using the following scale –
 1= Highly Unlikely, 2= Unlikely, 3= Possible, 4= Likely, 5= Highly Likely, 6= Certain

NB:

1. Risk will vary depending on the interaction of a particular set of variables

2. At any given time, it is expected that this form will be completed by a senior member of staff, assisted by a support agency.
3. This proforma is **not** intended to replace the *Health and Safety Pupil Risk Assessment* form but may be used in conjunction.
4. The format is adapted from DfES document – “*Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties*” Pupil Support: Health & SEN 2003)

Appendix 4

Key Contacts and Useful Links

Safer Schools Officers	PC Lauren Banks – Primary PS Velda Ewen – Secondary & Colleges PS Mehmet Ganidagli – Secondary & Colleges	Primary - NAmailbox- .NorthPrimarySchools@met.police.uk Secondary & Colleges - NAmailbox- .SaferSchoolsNorth@met.police.uk	0208 345 1155
MASH		https://cp.childrensportal.enfield.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/home	Office hours -0208 379 5555 Outside office hours - 0208 379 1000
Youth Justice Service	Linda Crawford Gavin White – YOT education Co Ordinator	Linda.crawford@enfield.gov.uk gavin.white@enfield.gov.uk	020 8379 5800
Head of Virtual School	Suzanne Rowson	Suzanne.rowson@enfield.gov.uk	020 81320336
Head of Admissions	Jo Fear	Jo.fear@enfield.gov.uk	020 81321807

and Attendance			
Pupil Exclusions Officer	Vonda Taylor Broughton	Vonda.taylorbroughton@enfield.gov.uk	02081322846
Senior School Improvement Advisor Safeguarding and Inclusion	Dani Lang	Daniella.lang@enfield.gov.uk	07980 945731
Head of Secondary Behaviour Support Service	Mervin Cato	Mervin.cato@enfield.gov.uk	07855 004711
Head of Enfield Primary Behaviour Support Service	Nigel Ellerby-Jones	Nigel.ellerby-jones@enfield.gov.uk	020 3855 5879

Information for parents and carers

[Parents' guide to knife harm A5 16pp final.pdf \(govdelivery.com\)](#)

[I'm worried about my child and knife crime - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)

Information and resources for schools and colleges

[Ofsted research on knife crime: safeguarding children and young people in education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Searching Screening and Confiscation guidance July 2022.pdf](#)

[Knife crime advice & support | LiveSafe](#)

[Resources - NKBL \(noknivesbetterlives.com\)](#)

www.knifecrimes.org/Children-Young-People.html

[British Red Cross teaching resources: Increase in knife crime](#)

[Resources | The Ben Kinsella Trust](#)

[Knife crime support – Strive For Life](#)