

31st January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you regarding the threat of knives in the local community. Since the murder of Oly Stephens in 2021 the threat of knife crime has been even more sharply in local headteacher's foci. Oly was very young when he was murdered and with the murder of 12 year old Leo Ross in Birmingham recently it has brought my own focus on this matter more sharply into view. Sadly, despite the fact that we only have Year 7 students at River Academy, one must never be complacent and from the students' point of view, them being aware of the issues is incredibly important.

Therefore, with this in mind I have been liaising with the local schools' police liaison officer, PC Carly Baldwin, and we have arranged three events to support the children in becoming more aware of the dangers surrounding this matter. The first is on February 25th and will be a presentation in knife crime and its consequences by a local charity, n3wangle, who are endorsed and supported by Thames Valley Police for their outreach work. There will then be a follow up by the police themselves shortly afterwards and, in line with the other local secondaries, we will have the knife arch erected for the students to walk through as they arrive to school. This event will be organised by the Thames Valley Police Force, and we will work closely with them to ensure it is delivered sensitively.

We do not want to alarm the students, but it is my duty to ensure that the students understand the implications of carrying a knife, both on themselves, their friends and their communities, so that we can prevent another Oly Stephens like tragedy from occurring.

Thank for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Andy Hartley
Headteacher

