

Involving Parents



Because the issue of gangs and weapons, as well as associated worries such as drug use or dealing and alcohol misuse is something that is in the news or in other cities or countries it is not necessarily the case that young people are automatically at risk of these issues. Many children and young people may encounter these things but never become involved, some may be more vulnerable.

These issues affect families and communities in many ways, levels of fear may vary, as will levels of involvement. It is desirable to involve families when you are teaching these lessons so we suggest that you add these lessons to your regular curriculum planning for safety or PSHE and make this planning available to parents.

You may be using these lessons in a more general sense, as a preventative measure or in response to real worries in the community. It may be useful to keep parents informed as to what you are planning and to reassure them that it is devised to be appropriate to the age of the pupil and will not use inappropriate teaching techniques such as showing shocking pictures or increasing their fears. It may be useful to include a session to meet parents after school so that questions or concerns can be answered before the lessons are delivered. It will be useful to have local data available relating to issues to reassure parents about the scale of the issue in their community. Data about drug exposure and fears of the issue are captured by the D-Vibe survey and this data is available from the DrugAware Programme.

There is a letter template for parents that can be used to introduce the issue and the intention to deliver lesson on the issue.

As with all sensitive issues it is useful to consider a few points before deciding whether to inform parents:

- Is it an issue in the area?
- Could it lead to stereotyping?
- Is this a regular aspect of PSHE, therefore not a special case?
- Could parents be involved in gang or drug related behaviours?
- Is it normalised in the area?
- Do parents need some education too?
- Are any of the children potentially at risk or likely to be withdrawn as a result of knowing about the lessons?
- Are the staff confident and knowledgeable about the issues?
- Do they need briefing?
- Is the school linked to the relevant referral agencies covering the issues?
(Compass, Vanguard Plus Support, Regents House, WAM)