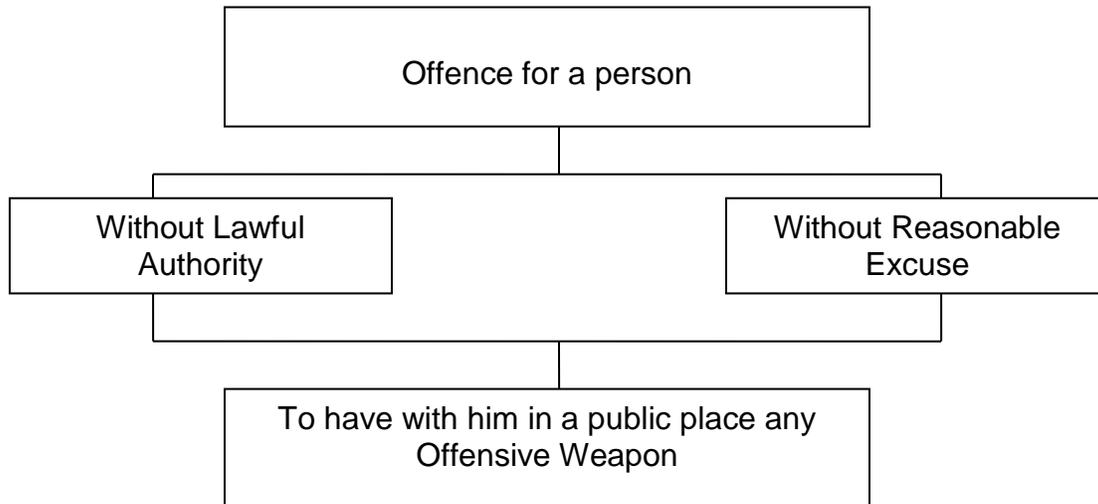


A Parent's Guide

Knife Crime

This document was written and prepared by PC Ian Scanlon of Harrow Metropolitan Police.
It is NOT a legal document and is NOT legal advice. The points raised are for information and crime prevention purposes ONLY.
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Offensive Weapons



Sec1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953

Lawful Authority:

Police and Military will have lawful authority when **on duty** and carrying out that duty.

Reasonable Excuse:

Tool for your trade, sporting event etc

Note: Forgetfulness, Ignorance to law or General Self Defence are NOT Reasonable Excuses'

Has with him:

Knowingly has

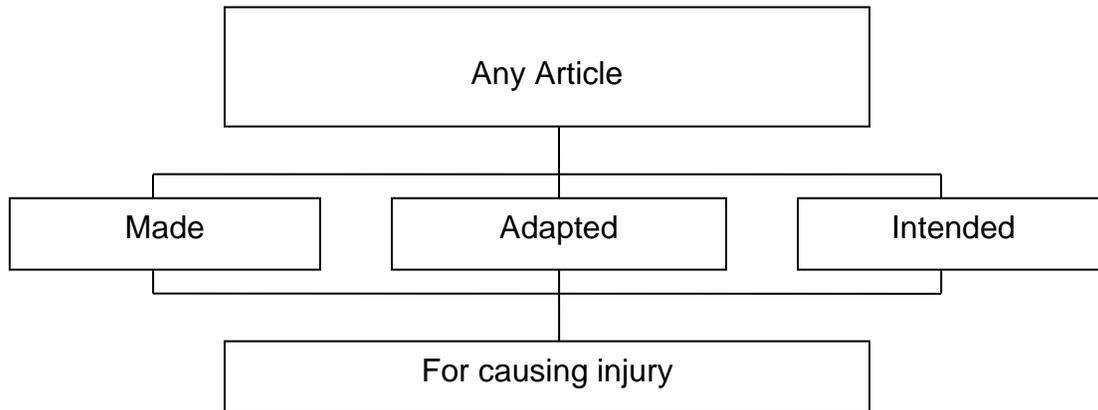
Physical Possession: In his hand or pocket or stuffed down a sock.

Constructive Possession: In the boot of his car or someone else is carrying it for them

Public Place:

Any Highway and any Other Premises or Place to which at the material time the Public have or are permitted to have access, whether on payment or otherwise.

What is an Offensive Weapon?



Sec1(4) Prevention of Crime Act 1953

Made

Made to cause injury - Knuckle Duster, Police Baton, Bayonets
(No need for further proof)

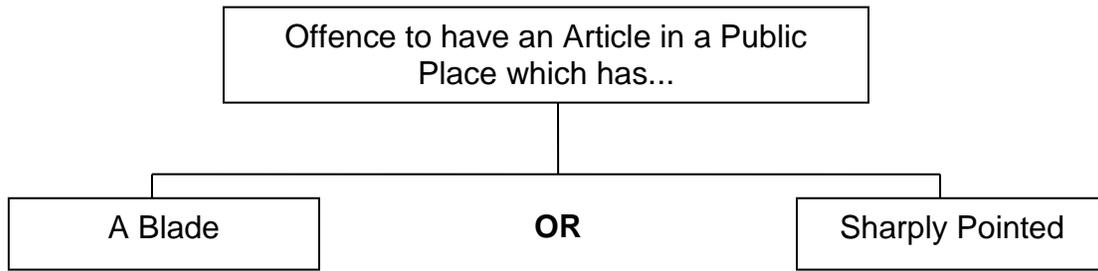
Adapted

Something innocent that has been Adapted to cause injury. Broken Bottle, Chair leg with nails etc
(Proof that Injury was Intended)

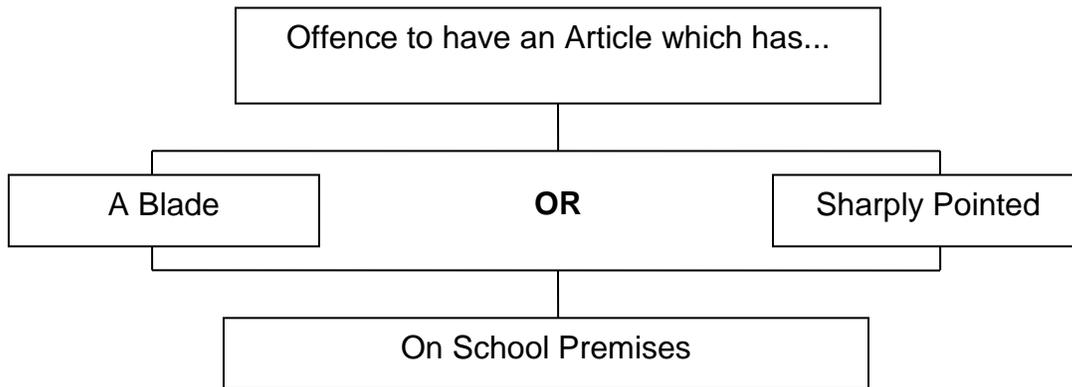
Intended

Anything else - Umbrella, Pen etc - Intended by the person in possession to be used as an Offensive Weapon

Points & Blades



Sec139 Criminal Justice Act 1988



Sec 139(A) Criminal Justice Act 1988

Blades

Any Bladed Article - Kitchen Knife, Scissors, Craft Knife or any other article with a cutting edge or blade.

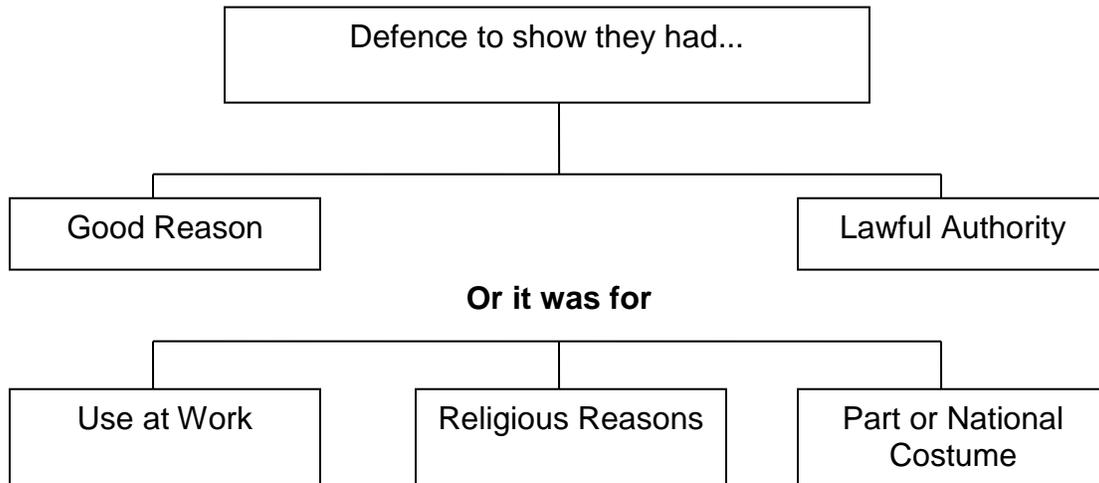
Sharply Pointed

Needles etc

Exceptions

Folding pocket knives with a blade not in excess of 3 inches are exempt

Defences



Use at Work

Legitimate use at work. E.g. Tradesman at work.

Religious Reasons

E.g. a member of the Sikh faith may carry a Kirpan.

Part of National Costume

E.g. someone in Highland dress with a Skean Dhu

Parent's Guide

The Facts

Here are some facts to help you feel more confident when talking to your child:



Getting caught with a knife

If you get caught with a knife, even if it was for your own protection or you were carrying it for someone else, you will be arrested and prosecuted.

STOP

Stopped and Searched

Police can and will search anyone they believe is carrying a knife.



Prison

Getting caught with a knife can mean a prison sentence - even if it's not used.



Keeping Safe

Some young people carry knives to protect themselves and 'keep safe'. But if you carry a knife you are much more likely to use it and to get stabbed yourself.



Joint Enterprise

If someone is injured or killed by a knife in your presence you could be prosecuted even if it's not you who uses it. You could be sent to prison for murder in what is referred to as 'joint enterprise'.



Alcohol

Alcohol lowers inhibitions and increases the chances of taking a risk. Alcohol is a factor in 80% of weapons related injuries.



There's No Place Like Home

There is no 'safe place' to stab someone. A wound in the arm or the leg can still be life threatening. Young people have died from wounds to the leg because an artery was severed.



Stabbing an Artery

If a knife punctures an artery you can bleed to death within a minute.



Criminal Record

If you have a criminal record you might not be accepted into a college or university, get a job, or travel to some countries, like the USA, Canada or Australia.

The Conversation

This is not the only way to have the conversation about weapons, but hopefully you can find some guidance below.

Getting started

Find the right time for your child. The conversation needs to take place wherever they feel safest. Be available and ready to listen.

Reassure them that they can be honest with you and let them know you are not there to judge them.

Listen

Don't expect or demand them to talk. If they do, be patient and try not to react straight away to what they tell you. Give them the voice in this conversation.

Encourage them to share their fears.

Don't make it all about you as the parent, but where appropriate, share your own fears - tell them how much you worry about their safety and their future.

Be positive

Show them that they are being listened too. Reassure them that vast majority of young people don't carry a knife.

If they are fearful of someone or something specific, tell them that it can be dealt with without the need for them to carry a knife.

Stick to the facts

They might not think you know what you're talking about so a little preparation can really help here.

Use what you have learnt at the Knife Crime Presentation to deliver the facts.

Be clear about false 'bravery'

Walking away from confrontation or a fight is the braver thing to do.

If someone pulls a knife on them, the safest, wisest thing to do is to walk away.

Children fear backlash from their peers, and fear being targeted by a wider group for not stepping up to a situation or individual. Remind them that this moment will pass and attention will move away from them in time.

Standing their ground can have lasting consequences.

The Impact

Help them reflect on how their actions could affect the people that care for them the most.

Using a knife is only the beginning. It could place others at risk of being brought into the situation against their will.

If they were injured, who will be affected?

Be realistic

Your child may feel you have no experience of knife crime or the challenges they face. Your 'old and out of touch' after all.

Are there any examples from your own childhood that you can draw upon?

Has there been anything in the news recently or something that's happened locally that you can refer to?

Suggest alternatives

Find out about safe, fun activities for children and young people in your local area. Volunteer Police Cadets etc.

Try something different

It doesn't have to just be a conversation; you know your children and what they respond to best. Try thinking beyond a 'chat' and try helping them understand the risks with knives.

Get help and support for yourself

It may be that you learn some worrying things about your child and the things they're involved in.

Try not to overreact but don't feel you have to deal with this on your own - help is available.

Why would they carry a Knife/Weapon

There are many reasons for children to decide to carry a knife or weapon.

This list is NOT exhaustive but gives you some reasons.

- Fear of being a victim of knife crime - It could have been a specific threat, or a perceived fear.
- General self defence - The 'Just in case' reason.
- They don't know it's wrong/illegal.
- To intimidate others (by way of protection).
- Peer pressure.
- To earn respect.
- Street cred.
- They may feel disenfranchised.
- Involvement in criminal activities.

Practical Tips

- Know what you have in the Kitchen and in Tool kits.
- Keep an eye out for any online purchases
- Keep tabs on what is delivered to your home
- Keep engaged with your kids lives and social media
- Think about searching their bag and room*
- Think of 'other' hiding spaces
- Remember it might not be a 'knife' but some other weapon
- Know **where** they are and **who** they are with**
- Encourage them to 'hang out' in safe areas wherever possible

*Is there evidence of drugs, extra money and new clothes?

**Do they have a new circle of friends? Are they becoming less engaged with you?

I need help - Advice to Young People

If you find yourself involved in a gang or carrying a weapon, you probably feel your life is spiraling out of control, and you are constantly looking over your shoulder. But you're here looking for help and that's a good start.

You might think you'll be respected or even feared for carrying a weapon. But all it really does is put you, your friends and family in danger.

- Carrying a knife or gun is illegal.
- Carrying a knife or gun increases your risk of being injured.
- It also increases the risk of the people around you being injured, and can cause great distress and upset to your family.
- Police are allowed to stop and search someone if they believe a weapon is being carried.
- Having a criminal record could stop you gaining entry into your chosen college or university, getting a job and could place restrictions on you travelling to some countries like the United States of America.

What can you do?

Maybe you're under pressure to carry a knife or gun - you might think it'll be worse trying to get out of a gang or have it with you for protection. The truth is, it is more dangerous to keep going as you are:

- If you don't take it with you, it won't be used.
- Whilst walking away is often the hardest thing to do, it is the safest and won't get you into trouble with the police.
- There is help out there. If you don't feel as though you can talk to your parents, a teacher or the police, then talk to a professional in confidence. ChildLine could be your first call on 0800 1111.

What should you do if you've already injured someone?

If you've used a weapon to injure someone you're probably feeling a mixture of different emotions: fear, guilt, anger, worry.

- You must own up. The trouble you'll be in if you're found out later could be much worse than if you do the right thing now.
- If you want to speak to the police, contact your Safer Schools Officer, your local Safer Neighborhoods Team or go to your nearest police station. If it's an emergency call 999.

- You can also call Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You do not need to give your name and your call will not be traced).

Are you getting pressure from your friends to carry a knife?

Your friends might tell you that you'll be respected or even feared for carrying a weapon. Maybe they say you'll need it for protection. But all it really does is put you and your friends in greater danger.

Perhaps there's more to it than that - maybe you feel threatened by your friends and feel you need to carry a weapon for your own protection. What could be happening is that you're being bullied into doing something you don't want to do. If this is the case, try reading our section on bullying on our Safe website.

https://safe.met.police.uk/bullying/get_the_facts.html

What can you do?

The advice is clear - don't give in to them - don't carry a weapon:

- If you don't take it with you, it won't be used.
- Whilst walking away is often the hardest thing to do, it is the safest and won't get you into trouble with the police.

There is lots of help and support out there. If you don't feel as though you can talk to your parents, a teacher or the police, then talk to a professional in confidence. ChildLine could be your first call on 0800 1111.

If things are getting bad and people are getting hurt you should report it, even if you know your friends might get into trouble. It is better that they get into trouble now than for you or them to get more involved and end up seriously injured or even killed.

- You could speak to your Safer Schools Officer or Safer Neighborhood Team. If it's an emergency call 999.
- If you feel unable to talk to the police, you could contact Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You don't have to give your name and your call will not be traced.)

Have you been the victim of knife crime?

If you've been a victim of knife or gun crime, you're probably going through a whole mixture of emotions - fear, anger, pain. Perhaps it was a random attack, or maybe you're in a gang and this was always going to happen sooner or later. Maybe you get bullied and the bullying has got a whole lot worse.

If the police haven't already been notified, then you or someone close to you should contact them straight away by speaking to your Safer Schools Officer, your local Safer Neighbourhoods Team, or by going to your nearest police station.

If it's an emergency, and you still feel like you're in danger you need to call 999.

Report it

If you don't want to make the call to the police or report it online, perhaps speak to someone like a parent or teacher - they can make the call for you.

- You also don't have to talk to the police if you don't want to. You could call Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. Your call will be treated in the strictest of confidence - you do not need to give your name, and your call will not be traced.
- If you've been threatened but not injured it is still a matter for the police and must be reported for your own safety.

What to do next - get more help

Being injured by a knife or gun is no doubt one of the worst things that has happened to you. Even being threatened with a weapon can be incredibly frightening. Don't be embarrassed to seek out expert help - you need support and there are lots of ways for you to speak to someone anonymously.

Choose a different ending

Choose a Different Ending is an interactive film that allows you to decide what happens next. You can interact with it, choose what to do and decide how it ends. In Choose a Different Ending you decide whether to live or die.

Search 'Choose a different ending' on YouTube

Someone I know needs help

Has your friend been a victim of knife crime?

If a friend of yours has been a victim of knife crime, you're probably going through a whole mixture of emotions - fear, anger, pain.

You, or someone close to your friend, should contact the police if they've not already been notified by speaking to your Safer Schools Officer, your local Safer Neighborhoods Team or, if it's an emergency, call 999.

If they've been threatened but not injured it is still a matter for the police and must be reported.

If you feel unable to talk to the police, you could contact the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You don't have to give your name and your call will not be traced).

How can you help?

Depending on what type of incident they've been involved in, your friend may be experiencing many types of emotion:

- fear
- anger
- denial (pretending it didn't happen)
- pain
- loneliness
- depression

Even if they're getting help from their family and other friends, your friend probably needs you more than ever. You need to be there for them. You might be one of the only people they feel they can be honest with.

Encourage your friend to speak to the police if they haven't already. If you don't think they're going to make the call, perhaps speak to someone like a parent or teacher, or call the police yourself.

What if it they've been seriously injured or worse?

Knife crime injuries can be severe. If your friend has been seriously injured or died as a result of their injuries, the police will be doing all they can to investigate the incident and find the person responsible. Perhaps you also need help getting

over such a terrible experience or are worried that it might happen to you. Maybe you've even been threatened to stay quiet.

Do you think a friend is involved in knife crime?

Carrying a weapon is a crime, so if you think a friend is involved you should do something about it.

To them it might seem that it makes them look good or they might be doing it because it makes them feel safer, but the truth is that someone could end up getting seriously hurt or killed. If they are found with a knife in their possession, they will be prosecuted.

Why are they doing it?

If you ask your friend why they're getting involved in knives or guns they are likely to give a few different reasons:

- fear
- to gain respect
- protection
- to steal
- to intimidate or harass
- peer pressure or being pressured into carrying it for someone else
- defence

Whatever the real reason, it is always likely to have something to do with fear. Even if they don't admit it, a friend getting involved in weapons will be frightened and continuously looking over their shoulder. They'll be waiting for the police to stop and search them, or to be confronted by others, and in the end will be grateful for a 'way out'.

What can you do?

- You might think talking to your friend will make them angry or put you in a difficult position, but you should try.
- If you don't think you can talk to your friend, you should talk to an adult you know you can trust about it.
- If not your parents or another member of your family, then a teacher or your Safer Schools Officer. They will know what to do.
- You can also speak to a professional in confidence. Get in touch with ChildLine for example on 0800 1111.
- The most important thing is that you don't just let it go - the longer your friend is involved with dangerous weapons the more likely it is that someone is going to get seriously hurt.

If you think the situation is getting really bad, perhaps you feel you need to report it, even if you know your friend will get into trouble. It's better they get into trouble than get seriously injured or even killed:

- You should speak to your Safer Schools Officer or Safer Neighbourhoods Team. If it's an emergency call 999..
- If you feel unable to talk to the police, you can contact the CrimeStoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You don't have to give your name and your call will not be traced).

Has your child been a victim of knife crime?

If your child has been the victim of this type of crime, and has been seriously injured or worse, you are now probably going through grief that most people will never experience.

If you have not already been contacted by victim support, you may wish to go to www.victimsupport.org or call 0845 30 30 900.

How can you help?

You should report it to the police if they've not already been notified. Visit your local police station or speak to your local Safer Neighbourhoods Team. If it's an emergency and you feel your child is still under threat, you should call 999.

Report it

If you feel unable to talk to the police or report it online, you could contact the CrimeStoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You don't have to give your name and your call will not be traced).

Helping your child

Depending on what type of incident they've been involved in, your child - and the rest of your family - may be experiencing many types of emotion:

- fear
- anger
- denial (pretending it didn't happen)
- pain
- loneliness
- depression

They probably need you more than ever. It's important to be there for them.

Is it part of a something bigger?

If you think there might be more to it than a one-off incident and that maybe them being threatened or injured by a weapon has something to do with them being bullied, take a look at our bullying pages. Either get the facts about bullying, or for more detailed info on how you can actually help them read 'Are you worried your child is being bullied?'

There are trained professionals who can offer confidential help, advice and counselling support for you and your child. Encourage your child to speak to ChildLine on 0800 1111 if you feel you are unable to give them the help they might need.

What if it they've been seriously injured or worse?

Knife or gun crime injuries can be severe. If they've been seriously injured or died as a result of their injuries the police will be doing all they can to investigate the incident and find the person responsible. Perhaps you also need help getting over such a terrible experience or you're worried it might happen to you. You need help and support.

Think they might be getting into something they shouldn't?

Are you worried your child is involved in knife crime?

It can be extremely worrying to think that your child is involved in something as dangerous as knife or gun crime. Maybe they're not carrying a weapon themselves but are associated with people who are. The natural reaction is to panic - but this won't resolve the situation and could push your child away.

The consequences of taking no action, though, could be extremely serious for your child or someone else. You must do something about it.

If you discover they've been carrying a weapon, you'll almost certainly question why. If they're willing to talk about it, they might give you a number of reasons:

- fear
- to gain respect
- protection
- to steal
- to intimidate or harass
- peer pressure or being pressured into carrying it for someone else
- defence

Whatever the reason, it is likely to have something to do with fear. Even if they don't admit it, a young person getting involved in weapons will be frightened and

continuously looking over their shoulder. They'll be waiting for the police to stop and search them, or to be confronted by others, and in the end will be grateful for a 'way out' of that lifestyle.

What can you do?

Learn about the law:

- Carrying a knife or a gun is illegal.
- Police are allowed to use their powers to stop and search someone if they believe a weapon is being carried.
- Having a criminal record could stop your child gaining entry into a university, getting a job and could place restrictions on them travelling to some countries.

Make them aware of the consequences:

- Carrying a weapon increases the risk of them being injured themselves.
- It is illegal - they could ruin their life if they're caught, even if they never use the weapon.
- They could go to jail for up to 4 years if they're found in possession of a knife or 5 years for a gun, even if they're carrying it for someone else.
- In the worst case scenario, they could get life imprisonment for murder.
- Whilst walking away is often the hardest thing to do, it is the safest and won't get them into trouble with the police.

Talk to the parents of your child's friends. If you're worried, they probably are as well.

- They may see your child in different places, hanging out with different friends and could help you get a better understanding of the situation.
- By working together you could raise awareness.

Is it part of something bigger?

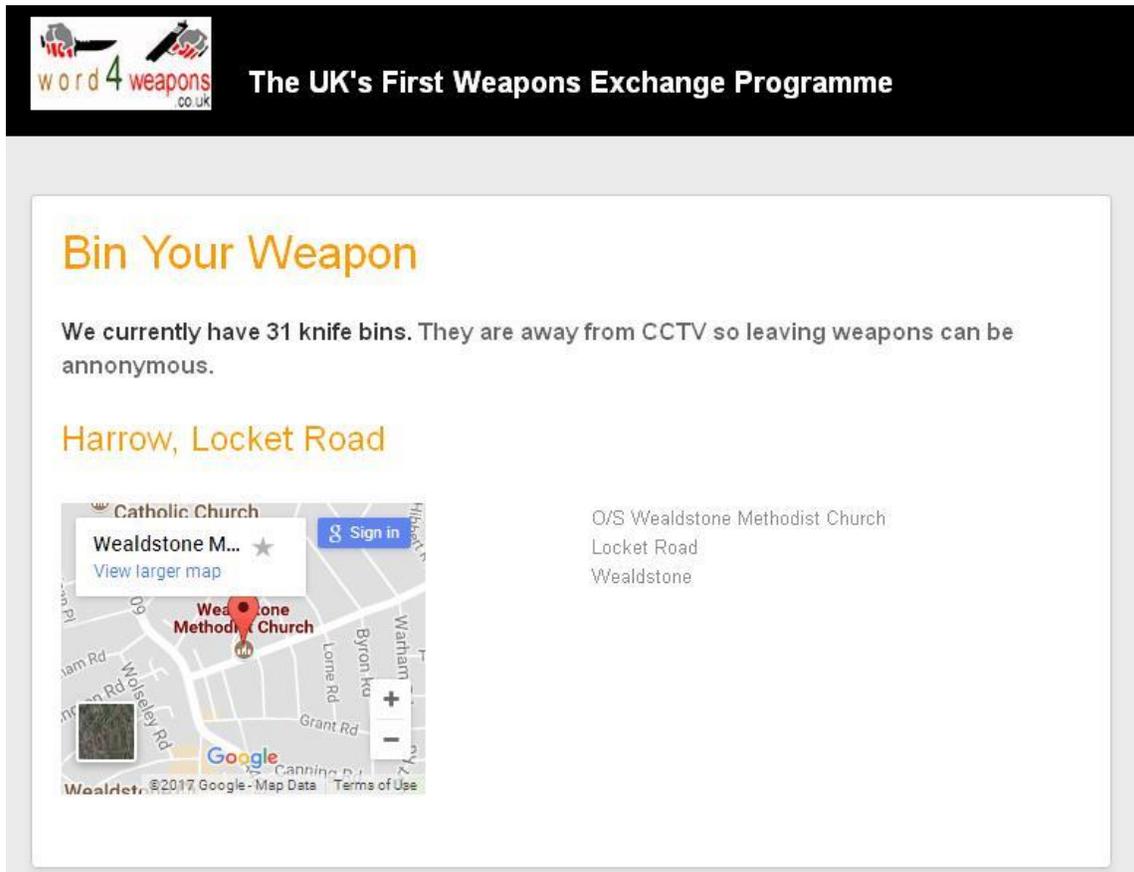
If you think it's getting really bad and think your child has used the weapon against someone, you should report it, even if you know they will get into trouble. It's better they get into trouble now than get seriously injured or even killed.

- Your child doesn't need to know it was you who reported it.
- You could speak to your local Safer Neighborhoods Team. If it's an emergency call 999.
- If you feel unable to talk to the police, you could contact the Crimestoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111. (You don't have to give your name and your call will not be traced).

Local to Harrow

You can dispose of any knife or pointed and bladed article by using the knife bin in Wealdstone.

Please refer to the Word 4 Weapons website on how to wrap up a knife that you intend on taking to the bin.



The screenshot shows the 'word4weapons.co.uk' logo and the text 'The UK's First Weapons Exchange Programme'. Below this is a section titled 'Bin Your Weapon' with the text: 'We currently have 31 knife bins. They are away from CCTV so leaving weapons can be anonymous.' The specific location is identified as 'Harrow, Locket Road'. A Google Map shows the location of 'Wealdstone Methodist Church' with a red pin. To the right of the map, the address is listed as 'O/S Wealdstone Methodist Church, Locket Road, Wealdstone'.