Evidence to Decision Framework: Education practice guidance

This Evidence to Decision framework explains the decisions that underpin the recommendations in the Youth Endowment Fund's (YEF's) *Education, Children and Violence: Guidance for School, College and Alternative Provision Leaders to Help Prevent Children's Involvement in Violence.* For each recommendation, we answer the following questions:

1. **What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?**
2. **Is this a priority for education leaders?**
3. **Is this feasible?**
4. **Does this recommendation further equity?**

As this framework explains, this guidance report draws upon the best available global evidence, including the YEF Toolkit, on how to prevent children's involvement in violence. The YEF Toolkit uses rigorous, independent and systematic methods, drawing from over 2,000 studies to summarise the evidence associated with 30 approaches for preventing children's involvement in violence. Several of these approaches are school, college or alternative provision (AP)-based strategies. The guidance also uses the primary research the YEF has conducted, including research evaluating violence prevention programmes and large-scale surveys of 7,500 teenage children and 9,500 teachers.

A consultative group of school, college and AP leaders, academics and policy experts also steered the guidance, using their knowledge of practice to ensure our recommendations are feasible. Academic experts suggested additional rigorous and relevant studies to inform the guidance.

The recommendations provide guidance on the 'best bets' from the underpinning evidence. School, college and AP leaders' professional judgement on how to use these recommendations and knowledge of their local context remain critically important.

If you have any questions about this document and the evidence underpinning the guidance, please contact Joe Collin (joe.collin@youthendowmentfund.org.uk).

Please note, this document is not the guidance report; the guidance report can be found here:
https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/education-guidance/

Recommendation	**1. Keep children in education.**
	Why?
	Being in education can protect children from violence.
	Recommended actions
	a. Deliver evidence-informed and targeted attendance-improvement strategies (such as meetings with parents/carers and breakfast clubs).
	b. Implement whole-school and targeted support to reduce the need for exclusion.
	c. Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children.
What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?	**Being in education can reduce the risk that a child will be involved in serious violence.**
	This claim is based on three sources of evidence:
	• Department for Education (DfE), E*ducation, Children's Social Care and Offending: Multi-level Modelling,* 2023
	There are seven regression models in the analysis of the relationship between persistent absence for unauthorised other (PAUO) reasons and serious violence. Six out of these seven models show a significant positive relationship between PAUO and violence. After accounting for a range of factors, this analysis shows that children who are PAUO are between 1.2 and 2 times more likely to commit a serious violence offence. The magnitude of the effect increases when considering a shorter time frame (1.5-2 times as likely within two years). This evidence suggests that not being in school increases the risk of involvement with violence.[1]
	• Ullman et al., *Constructs Associated with Youth Crime and Violence Amongst 6-18-Year-Olds: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews,* 2024
	The authors identified three constructs as having evidence of a protective (negative) association with recidivism: rejection or the absence of drug or alcohol use, good family relationships and support, and education and employment opportunities. Once again, involvement in school and education appears to protect children. In addition**,** academic achievement was also noted as having a possible protective association with non-violent offending and violence.[2]
	• We also know that a number of school-based interventions can reduce children's involvement in crime and/or violence (including mentoring, sports, social skills training and relationship violence reduction).[3] Children can only benefit from these school-based interventions if they're in school, college or AP. The same is true of schools' role in safeguarding; schools will find it much easier to notice and respond to safeguarding concerns if a child is in school.

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[1] Department for Education, E*ducation, Children's Social Care and Offending: Multi-level Modelling,* 2023
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_childrens_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)
[2] Ullman et al., *Constructs Associated with Youth Crime and Violence Amongst 6-18 Year Olds: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews,* 2024 (https://research.edgehill.ac.uk/en/publications/constructs-associated-with-youth-crime-and-violence-amongst-6-18y)
[3] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/

Deliver evidence-informed and targeted attendance-improvement strategies

We recognise that the evidence on how to improve attendance is severely limited (as detailed in the Education Endowment Foundation's *Rapid Evidence Assessment*). However, there is some limited evidence of promise for several strategies, including meeting with the parents/carers of absent children to discuss the reasons for low attendance and to develop strategies to improve it, communicating with parents and holding breakfast clubs.[4]

We recommend ensuring that particularly vulnerable children can benefit from these strategies because other risk factors (aside from absence) are more strongly associated with involvement with violence. According to the DfE and Ministry of Justice (MOJ) (*Education, Children's Social Care and Offending Data Multi-level Modelling Analysis*), children who received a suspension in years 7-10 were between four and five times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence, Children in Need were approximately twice as likely, children cautioned or sentenced for a separate non-serious violence offence were three to four times more likely and children attending AP were two to four times more likely.[5] We also know that the vast majority of children (98%) who are persistently absent do not go on to commit a serious violence offence.[6] Therefore, we want to ensure that the most vulnerable children receive support to get them back into school (as they are most at risk of involvement in violence).

Implement whole-school and targeted support to reduce the need for exclusion and provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children

The discourse surrounding whether to ban exclusions and the association between exclusion and suspension and crime and violence is heated and often unproductive. In this context, YEF notes the following:

- There is an association between suspension and exclusion and children's involvement in violence.[7] For instance, after controlling for a range of other factors, children who receive a suspension in years 7-10 are between four and five times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence. Those permanently excluded during those years are between one and two times as likely, with the risk being highest for those excluded in year 7. This risk declines with age, with those excluded in year 11 having a lower chance of later involvement in violence than children not excluded.
- Recent studies point towards a potentially causal link between exclusion and offending. Specifically, the Behavioural Insights Team analysed the link between exclusion and suspension in year 10 and the probability of experiencing custody at ages 15-17.

[4] Education Endowment Fund, *Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment,* 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Attendance-REA-report.pdf?v=1705993938)

[5] Department for Education, *Education, Children's Social Care and Offending: Multi-level Modelling,* 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_childrens_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)

[6] DfE & MOJ, *Education, Children's Social Care and Offending Descriptive Statistics,* 2022 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6227a9b58fa8f526dcf89e17/Education_children_s_social_care_and_offending_descriptive_stats_FINAL.pdf)

[7] Department for Education, E*ducation, Children's Social Care and Offending: Multi-level Modelling,* 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1171532/Education_childrens_social_care_and_offending_multi-level_modelling.pdf)

They found that 'exclusion presents a small but non-ignorable risk of increases in custody.'[8] They used a particularly novel method in this study, and future evaluation is required to build confidence in this causal link.

- Reviews of school-based interventions that attempt to reduce school exclusion show that these interventions have had, on average, a low impact on violence.[9]
- There are racial disparities in school exclusions: Gypsy and Roma Traveller children, children of Irish traveller heritage, White and Black Caribbean children, and Black Caribbean children are most likely to be excluded or suspended in England; Black children have the highest rate of permanent exclusions in Wales.[10]
- We also note the prevalence of unexplained pupil exits that may make it challenging to ascertain the true scale of exclusion.[11]
- Reviews of serious case reviews suggest that exclusion contributes to children's involvement in crime and violence. As explained in the national review into adolescent deaths or serious harm, where criminal exploitation was a factor, 'Exclusion from mainstream school is seen as a trigger point for risk of serious harm. Seventeen [of the 21 cases of] children [we reviewed] who died or experienced serious harm had been permanently excluded from mainstream education'. While this alone does not evidence causation, the qualitative reflections in the review make clear that exclusion may be a 'trigger' for escalating risk: 'Permanent exclusion was identified by practitioners and family members as a trigger for a significant escalation of risk. Exclusion has a major impact on children's lives, and if it is unavoidable, then there needs to be immediate wrap-around support to compensate for the lack of structure, sense of belonging and rejection that exclusion from mainstream school can cause.'[12]
- Parents of excluded children often argue that the mainstream school did not do enough to keep them in school.[13]
- Teachers do not think the exclusion rate is too high. Only 1% of the 9,602 teachers in England who Teacher Tapp surveyed in October 2023 believed the exclusion rate in their school was too high.[14]
- It is not easy to exclude children; a considerable process is involved, and it is a very difficult decision for headteachers to make.

Given this complexity, YEF proposes reducing our focus on the decision point (i.e. whether schools should exclude). Instead, we need a greater focus on the following:

[8] Cathro et al., *School Exclusions and Youth Custody*, 2023 (https://www.bi.team/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Nuffield-Foundation-Exclusions-and-Youth-Custody-Report-vFinal-2023-01-17.pdf)
[9] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/interventions-to-prevent-school-exclusion/
[10] Department for Education, *Spring Term 2022/23: Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions in England,* 2024 (https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england); Welsh Government, *Permanent and Fixed-term Exclusions from Schools: September 2021 to August 2022*, 2023 (https://www.gov.wales/permanent-and-fixed-term-exclusions-schools-september-2021-august-2022)
[11] Hutchinson et al., *Unexplained Pupil Exits From Schools: Further Analysis and Data by Multi-academy Trust and Local Authority,* 2019 (https://epi.org.uk/publications-and-research/unexplained-pupil-exits-data-multi-academy-trust-local-authority/)
[12] The Safeguarding Review Panel, *It was Hard to Escape,* 2020 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e5e7f47e90e077e3385cb44/Safeguarding_children_at_risk_from_criminal_exploitation_review.pdf)
[13] Ofsted and the CQC, *Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England: A Thematic Review*, February 2024: 'Only 19% of parents and carers who responded to the national survey felt that children in their area are supported to stay in mainstream schools, rather than go into AP. They told us that mainstream schools "seem to want to support children that thrive in their environment". (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review)
[14] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,602 teachers on 30/10/2023.

	a. **Reducing the need for school exclusion using universal and targeted behaviour strategies:** Here, we draw from the evidence review underpinning the EEF's behaviour guidance[15] and the recent Campbell review (in press) on school-based interventions to prevent school exclusions.[16] b. **Providing appropriate support to children who are temporarily suspended or permanently excluded:** Ofsted and the CQC's recent thematic review of *Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England* includes a survey of 700 parents, children and professionals. The researchers found that only 50% of those surveyed agree that 'Children in AP and their families get the right support when moving between services or providers in their local area'.[17] This situation needs to improve. We draw on the statutory guidance on exclusions for England and Wales to reaffirm the support that schools, colleges and AP settings should and could already be providing to children. We also include the recommendation to provide suspended children with a mentor (drawing on the evidence warrant for Recommendation 2).
Is this a priority for education leaders?	Ensuring presence in school is a key priority for schools, colleges and AP settings (particularly since COVID). In England, in autumn 2018/19, the persistent absence rate (not being in school more than 10% of the time) was 11%. This rate rose to 24% in autumn 2022/3, falling slightly to 19% in autumn 2023/4.[18] Meanwhile, severe absence (not being in school more than 50% of the time) has risen from 0.7% in autumn 2018/2019 to 2% in autumn 2023/4. Attendance in AP is especially concerning, with a 40% absence rate in autumn 2023/4.[19] This issue has shot up the political agenda, with the DfE publishing new guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance,* establishing the Attendance Action Alliance, upping efforts to monitor attendance data and piloting an attendance mentors team. In Wales, the rise is similarly concerning. The percentage of Welsh secondary-school-aged pupils who were persistently absent tripled to 16.3% between 2018/19 and 2022/23.[20] This increase is even more concerning, as persistent absence was defined in Wales as not being in school for more than 20% of the time (rather than 10% in England). The Welsh Government has also published engagement and attendance guidance (*Belonging, Engaging and Participating)* and established a National Attendance Taskforce. The government will also change their definition of persistent absence to match England's 10% threshold.
Is this feasible?	Many teachers report that their school already delivers some of our recommended evidence-informed attendance strategies. In autumn 2023, 73% of teachers across English primary and secondary schools reported that their schools were delivering meetings with the parents/carers of absent children, 70% were sending text messages to parents and 39% were offering breakfast clubs.[21] These responses imply that these recommendations are feasible.

[15] Moore et al., *Improving Behaviour in Schools: Evidence Review,* 2019. (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/behaviour)

[16] Valdebenitio et al., *School-based interventions for reducing disciplinary school exclusion: An updated systematic review* (2024; in press).

[17] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review

[18] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england

[19] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england

[20] https://www.gov.wales/absenteeism-secondary-schools-september-2022-august-2023-revised-html#:~:text=Following%20the%20coronavirus%20pandemic%2C%20persistent,the%20percentage%20is%20now%2016.3%25.&text=Secondary%202022%2F23-,%5BNote%201%5D%20There%20is%20no%20data%20in%20this%20collection%20for,circular%20markers%20on%20the%20lines.

[21] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,625 teachers on 30/10/2023.

	Our guidance on reducing the need for exclusions with targeted and universal behaviour strategies is in line with current school practice. All schools, colleges and AP settings have behaviour policies and deliver similar universal and targeted strategies. Our recommendations on providing appropriate support to temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children also largely align with statutory guidance on exclusion in England and Wales. We have commissioned RAND to further evaluate the feasibility of these recommendations in England and Wales. This will report in Early 2025, and our systems-focused guidance (publishing in spring 2025) will make recommendations to system leaders on how to support schools, colleges and AP settings to follow the guidance.
Does this recommendation further equity?	Exclusion and absence are not evenly distributed among pupils, and we note the racial inequities in exclusion and absence data. For instance, in England, Gypsy and Roma Traveller children, children of Irish traveller heritage, White and Black Caribbean children, and Black Caribbean children are most likely to be excluded or suspended. Black children also have the highest rate of permanent exclusions in Wales.[22] A greater proportion of Gypsy and Roma Traveller children, children of Irish traveller heritage, White and Black Caribbean children, Black Caribbean children, Pakistani children, Bangladeshi children and Irish children are also persistently absent when compared with the average in England.[23] We are unaware of programmes or interventions that have evidenced an impact on reducing racial inequity in these rates. However, we include a case study from the Co-Op Academy Leeds and Oasis Community Learning Trust (supported by Oasis Community Partnerships). They recently designed and began to implement specific strategies to reduce exclusion and absence among Black Caribbean and Gypsy and Roma Traveller children. These strategies (parental engagement and trusted adults) align with the evidence-based practice discussed in this guidance. In addition, given the higher rates of exclusion and suspension among children from particular racially minoritised communities, our recommendation to provide appropriate support to children who have been excluded or suspended should support a higher proportion of children from these communities. Children are also more likely to be excluded, suspended or absent if they are eligible for FSM or have SEND.[24] The support suggested above should also better help these children, while the recommendation also advises that schools, colleges and AP settings provide SEND support where required.

[22] Department for Education, *Spring Term 2022/23*: *Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions in England,* 2024 (https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england); Welsh Government, *Permanent and Fixed-term Exclusions from Schools*: *September 2021 to August 2022*, 2023 (https://www.gov.wales/permanent-and-fixed-term-exclusions-schools-september-2021-august-2022)

[23] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-absence-in-schools-in-england

[24] https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england

Recommendation	**2. Provide children with trusted adults**
	Why?
	Meaningful relationships with trusted adults can protect children from violence.
	Recommended actions
	    a. Provide one-to-one mentoring from trained adults to support vulnerable children.
	    b. Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them.

What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?	**Meaningful relationships with trusted adults can protect children from violence.** We know that mentoring programmes are likely to have a moderate impact on reducing children's involvement in violent crime. Mentoring is also likely to have a desirable impact on reoffending, substance misuse, behavioural difficulties, educational outcomes and self-esteem.[25] We have moderate confidence in our estimate of the average impact on violent crime because our estimate is based on eight studies, and there was some variation in the results, with some studies suggesting that the impact was higher than others. We have high confidence in our estimate of the average impact on reoffending because our estimate is based on 23 studies.[26] We note that there is no evidence of impact on violence and offending in the UK context. We're aware of two published impact studies in the UK and Ireland; one study was a randomised controlled trial of the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programme with children aged 10-14 in Ireland. The study suggested that the programme failed to impact behaviour or substance use. The other study was an evaluation of Mentoring Plus, a programme for young people at risk of social exclusion. The evaluation found desirable effects on educational attainment and employability skills but no effect on offending.[27] Given this gap in the evidence base, YEF is funding the evaluation of several mentoring programmes designed to reduce children's involvement in violence across England and Wales. However, given the international evidence underpinning our Toolkit strand, mentoring still represents a 'best bet' for keeping children safe from violence. **One-to-one mentoring from trained adults can support vulnerable children.** With regards to the format of mentoring, we recommend one-to-one because the majority of studies that underpin the effect in Lakshminarayanan et al. (2022) provided one-to-one mentoring (66% were one-to-one, only 10% group and 24% both).[28] We recommend that mentoring lasts for two full terms, which is supported by the findings of Lakshminarayanan et al. (2022). They explained that shorter-duration interventions were significantly more effective in improving externalising behaviours. However, two full terms

[25] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/

[26] Lakshminarayanan et al. *Systematic Review: The Effects of Adult Mentoring Interventions for At-risk and Offending Children and Young People on Behavioural, Psychosocial, and Offending Outcomes: A Mixed-methods Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, 2022 (in press) report a 14.2% reduction in youth offending based on 37 evaluations of mentoring programmes, and a 21.1% reduction in violent behaviour based on eight evaluations, with evidence ratings of 4 and 3 respectively (on a scale of 1–5). There is also a large effect on reoffending – a 20% decrease, based on findings from 23 studies, with an evidence rating of 4. Raposa et al. (2019) report a 19% reduction in externalising behaviours based on 38 evaluations of mentoring programmes, with an evidence rating of 2. See Gaffney et al., *Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022* (*https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf*)

[27] See Gaffney et al., *Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022* (*https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf*)

[28] Lakshminarayanan et al., *Systematic Review: The Effects of Adult Mentoring Interventions for At-risk and Offending Children and Young People on Behavioural, Psychosocial, and Offending Outcomes: A Mixed-methods Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, 2022 (in press).

(approximately six to eight months) is at the shorter end of the range of interventions included in their study.[29] The majority of the studies see mentoring delivered weekly, and the vast majority did not report on the length of the mentor–mentee meetings. While a considerable number of the studies (26) reported that the meetings were more than two hours weekly, we anticipate that more than two hours weekly may not be feasible for schools, so an hour is advised here. Raposa's (2019) moderator analysis also found that shorter mentoring sessions were associated with larger effects.[30]

We advise that sessions are delivered after school, as this is when children are most at risk of involvement in violence.[31] Further implementation considerations draw from the implementation analysis detailed in our Toolkit strand technical report[32] and the EIF's commissioning guidance for mentoring, a practical implementation resource designed with the Home Office.[33]

Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them.
As our Toolkit strand details, sports programmes could have a high impact on offending. This conclusion is based on 10 effect estimates from six studies. However, there is substantial heterogeneity, and we have low or moderate confidence in the findings of the studies included in the review. Consequently, the overall evidence strength is only rated two out of five. There also appear to be large effects on externalising behaviour and aggression, although again with a weak evidence base. The studies also showed reductions in internalising behaviour and increases in self-esteem and academic performance. There were weak or no effects on social skills and prosocial behaviour. Only one study reported on violent crime, finding a significant reduction.[34]

While we recognise the limitations in this evidence, we note that sports interventions may provide a useful additional route to give children trusted adults. Once again, we suggest doing this after school (as this is when children are most at risk). We also suggest that other activities, such as wilderness, adventure and arts activities, may be used; however, the evidence for these is even more limited, particularly arts (where there is no evidence of impact), and so we only recommend these positive activities as another route to providing trusted adults.[35]

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[29] In the majority of the studies (30), mentoring relationships lasted for 12-24 months — 6 to 12 months in 24 studies. Sixteen and 10 studies were included with mentoring relationships of less than six months and two to three years, respectively. In eight studies, the mentoring relationship was longer than three years. In 24 studies, the duration was either unclear or not reported.

[30] Raposa et al., *The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies,* 2019.

[31] Vulliamy et al., *Temporal and Geographic Patterns of Stab Injuries in Young People: A Retrospective Cohort Study From a UK Major Trauma Centre,* 2018 (https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/8/10/e023114.full.pdf): we know that children are most at risk of involvement in violence between 4 pm and 6 pm.

[32] Gaffney et al., *Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf)*

[33] O'Connor and Waddell, *Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence: Advice for Those Commissioning Mentoring Programmes,* 2015 (https://www.eif.org.uk/resource/preventing-gang-involvement-and-youth-violence-advice-for-commissioning-mentoring-programmes)

[34] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/

[35] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/adventure-and-wilderness-therapy/; https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/arts-programmes/

Is this a priority for education leaders?	This may not currently be a central priority for school, college and AP leaders (especially when compared with attendance, attainment and social skills development). However, given the potential evidence of impact on violence and offending, it is an important recommendation for this guidance.
Is this feasible?	We recognise that there are barriers to delivering mentoring, notably the cost and availability of mentors. However, we are also heartened by the findings of our recently commissioned Teacher Tapp survey. Out of 9,302 teachers in England who were surveyed on 31 October 2023, 42% said that their school is currently delivering mentoring to children with behavioural difficulties.[36] There are challenges in delivering sports sessions to children. Cost and time can be prohibitive. Consequently, we suggest delivering universal sports sessions (to improve cost-effectiveness for schools, colleges and AP settings) and advise that they contact local sports clubs (as in the Rugby Football League case study) to see what they may have available. We have commissioned RAND to further evaluate the feasibility of these recommendations for school, college and AP settings in England and Wales. This report will be released in early 2025, and our systems-focused guidance (publishing spring 2025) will make recommendations to system leaders on how to support schools, colleges and AP settings to follow the guidance.
Does this recommendation further equity?	Where moderator analysis was conducted on the impact of mentoring programmes by demographics such as age and race, no difference in impact has been identified.[37] The moderator analysis conducted by Raposa et al. 2019 suggested that programmes with a greater proportion of male mentees and mentors were more effective; however, we would still expect the intervention to benefit all children. Some qualitative evidence suggests that matching mentors and mentees who have shared interests and may be from the same communities could be more impactful;[38] we suggest that school, college and AP leaders consider this. Very weak evidence based on a small number of studies suggests that sports programmes have had larger impacts when attended by children from ethnic minority backgrounds.[39] We hope that sports interventions, therefore, would support the outcomes of children from racially minoritised communities. However, given the limitations in evidence, we have not explicitly asked school, college and AP leaders to target children from any particular background or protected characteristic, and we are keen to avoid any unnecessary profiling of children.

[36] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,302 teachers on 31/10/2023.

[37] There were no significant differences in the effectiveness of programmes in relation to mentee age, ethnicity, or risk at baseline as indicated by single-parent households, eligibility for free school meals, poor academic achievement and reports of problem behaviours (Raposa et al., 2019); Burton (2020) found no differences in programme effectiveness based on mentee or mentor demographics, such as age, sex or race; see Gaffney et al., *Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report,* 2022 (*https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf*)

[38] Gaffney et al., *Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report,* 2022 (*https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf*)

[39] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/

Recommendation	**3. Develop children's social and emotional skills**
	
	Why?
	Effective social and emotional skills can protect children from violence.
	
	Recommended actions
	    a. Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.
	    b. Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-age children.
	    c. Implement an anti-bullying strategy.
	    d. Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support.

What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?	**Effective social and emotional skills can protect children from violence.** Seven out of ten children who admit to perpetrating violence say that they did so because they were provoked, as reported by our 2023 CVV survey of 7,500 13-17-year-olds.[40] We know that supporting children to develop their social skills, think before they act, understand others' perspectives and manage aggression can reduce their risk of being involved in violence. This is evidenced by our social skills training Toolkit strand, which notes that child social skills training and self-control programmes are effective in reducing delinquency. The observed effect size of 0.27 corresponds to a decrease in delinquency of approximately 32%. Beelman and Lösel (2020) conducted the review that underpins the strand and also found that social skills training programmes can reduce aggression by 28%, oppositional/disruptive behaviours by 32% and general antisocial behaviour by 26%.[41] Ullman et al. (2024) also found that prosocial attitudes and values, conflict resolution skills, moral reasoning, emotional intelligence and prosocial positive peer relationships offer a protective association from violence.[42] **Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.** Here, we define five key social and emotional skills drawn from the EEF's primary guidance on social and emotional skills development and the influential CASEL model.[43] We acknowledge that we are broadening the scope of these skills beyond the 'social skills training' definition in our original Toolkit strand. Social skills training is a set of interventions that might be seen as a subset of the broader umbrella term 'social and emotional learning'. However, as the technical report for the Toolkit strand acknowledges, in practice, it is often very difficult to

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[40] Youth Endowment Fund, *Children, Violence and Vulnerability,* 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/reports/children-violence-and-vulnerability-2023/)

[41] Beelman and Lösel, 2020: see discussion in H. Gaffney et al., *Social Skills Training: Toolkit Technical Report,* 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-Skills-technical-report.pdf)

[42] R. Ullman et al., *Constructs Associated With Youth Crime and Violence Amongst 6-18-Year-Olds: A Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews,* 2024 (https://research.edgehill.ac.uk/en/publications/constructs-associated-with-youth-crime-and-violence-amongst-6-18y): prosocial attitudes and values, conflict resolution skills, moral reasoning, emotional intelligence and prosocial positive peer relationships were shown to offer a protective association from violence.

[43] Education Endowment Foundation, *Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools,* 2021 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/primary-sel/EEF_Social_and_Emotional_Learning.pdf?v=1710846786)

differentiate between social and emotional skills: indeed 'emotional skills can also be an important component of social skills training programmes, as some interventions will focus on the behaviour, cognitions or emotions that are fundamental in the development of social skills'. School, college and AP leaders are also very unlikely to make this distinction when using the recommendations.

We advise that schools, colleges and AP settings deliver a universal and SAFE social and emotional skills curriculum. Reviews have shown that universal curricula can improve SEL skills (for the primary level, see the review of reviews by Wigelsworth et al. [2020]; for the secondary level, see Van de Sande et al. [2019]; Van de Sande et al. [2019] also shows an impact on reducing aggression).[44] The review that underpins YEF's social skills training strand also shows that while targeted interventions have larger effects, universal programmes are still associated with a desirable impact on delinquency (0.11).[45] The guidance also features two examples of randomised controlled trials in England that have evidenced the impact of universal SEL provision:

- **DARE:** DARE25 is a 10-session universal curriculum delivered by a trained DARE officer (from Life Skills Education) to Year 6 children. Lessons involve role play, discussion groups, and reading and writing exercises and cover a range of skills, including dealing with stressful situations and peer pressure and balancing risks and consequences. From 2020 to 2022, YEF funded a randomised controlled trial of DARE25 in 121 schools in England. After the programme, children who had received DARE25 reported slightly lower levels of behavioural or emotional difficulty than their counterparts who had not.[46]
- **Healthy Minds:** Healthy Minds is a 14-module PSHE curriculum for Year 7-10 children. It covers topics such as mindfulness, resilience, substance misuse and healthy relationships. School teachers are trained to deliver the programme by Bounce Forward and are provided with lesson plans and accompanying resources. The programme can be delivered during PSHE lessons or built into the school week at other times. A randomised controlled trial of Healthy Minds was conducted in 34 schools in England from 2013 to 2018. Children who received the programme had better behaviour, lower levels of absence and fewer exclusions among children eligible for free school meals than children who did not receive it. Teachers also viewed the programme positively, finding it well-structured with relevant and useful content.[47]

[44] Wigelsworth et al., *Programmes to Practices Identifying Effective, Evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Teachers and Schools: Evidence Review,* 2020 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/guidance/Social_and_Emotional_Learning_Evidence_Review.pdf?v=1714048132); Van de Sande et al., *Do Universal Social and Emotional Learning Programs for Secondary School Students Enhance the Competencies They Address? A Systematic Review,* 2019 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/pits.22307)

[45] Beelmann and Lösel, 2020: see discussion in Gaffney et al., *Social Skills Training: Toolkit Technical Report,* 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-Skills-technical-report.pdf)

[46] Culliney et al., DARE 25, *Efficacy Randomised Controlled Trial,* 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DARE25- YEF-Efficacy-RCT-Sep-22-1.pdf)

[47] Lordan and McGuire, *Healthy Minds: Health Outcomes,* 2019 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/ Healthy_Minds.pdf?v=1710847314): the Healthy Minds course shows a positive and significant effect on externalising behaviour after four years. See also Stokes et al., *Healthy Minds Evaluation Report,* 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/Healthy-MindsReport-Final-Version.pdf?v=1710847314): there was some evidence of lower levels of absence, especially in Year 7 pupils, and some indications of fewer exclusions among pupils eligible for free school meals in schools that received the Healthy Minds programme compared to similar pupils in schools that did not.

The recommendation also encourages education leaders to deliver targeted support when children need it. Beelman and Lösel (2020) found that targeted programmes have a larger impact (0.49) on delinquency than universal interventions.[48] In addition, school-wide positive behavioural interventions and support (PBIS) is a specific, international example of a multi-tiered approach (including targeted support) to improving behaviour and social and emotional skills. Schools implementing PBIS organise behaviour support across multiple tiers: universal and small-group targeted support together with intensive individualised support for the students who have the highest support needs in the school. Results from several evaluations of PBIS have identified improvements in behaviour, bullying socioemotional skills, discipline referrals and suspensions (Waasdorp et al., 2012; Bradshaw et al., 2012).[49]

We recommend delivering targeted interventions once a week for a minimum of one term. This draws on Beelman and Lösel (2020); their review included interventions of varying intensity; those of lower intensity (up to eight hours or 10 sessions over a two-month period) were less effective than those of moderate intensity (9-15 hours, with 11-20 sessions over two to four months). We also advise that sessions can be delivered either as one-to-one sessions or in small groups: a large proportion of programmes included in Beelman and Lösel (2020) used the group format; individual training seemed slightly more effective, but the difference was not significant.[50]

The guidance to deliver whole-school strategies that embed social and emotional skills learning is drawn from the EEF's primary guidance for SEL development. This is underpinned by Jones and Bouffard (2012) and Goldberg et al. (2019).[51]

Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-school-aged children.
This advice draws from the YEF toolkit strand, which is underpinned by Farmer et al. 2023. On average, relationship violence prevention activities are likely to have a moderate impact on keeping children safe from involvement in violence. The research suggests that these activities can reduce all types of dating and relationship violence, including emotional, physical and sexual violence, and violence that takes place online. We have high confidence in our estimate of the average impact on violent crime, as it is based on a high-quality review of 16 studies.[52]

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[48] Beelmann and Lösel, A Comprehensive Meta-analysis of Randomized Evaluations of the Effect of Child Social Skills Training on Antisocial Development. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology, 7*(1), 41-65, 2020 (https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-020-00142-8)

[49] Waasdorp et al., *The Impact of Schoolwide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Bullying and Peer Rejection: a Randomized Controlled Effectiveness Trial*, 2012 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22312173/); Bradshaw et al., *Effects of School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports on Child Behavior Problems*, 2012 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3483890/)

[50] Beelmann and Lösel, A Comprehensive Meta-analysis of Randomized Evaluations of the Effect of Child Social Skills Training on Antisocial Development. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology, 7*(1), 41-65, 2020 (https://doi.org/10.1007/s40865-020-00142-8)

[51] Education Endowment Foundation, *Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools,* 2021 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/primary-sel/EEF_Social_and_Emotional_Learning.pdf?v=1710846786); Jones and Bouffard, S*ocial and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies*, 2012 (https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2012.tb00073.x); Goldberg et al., *Effectiveness of Interventions Adopting a Whole School Approach to Enhancing Social and Emotional Development: A Meta-analysis*, 2019 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10212-018-0406-9)

[52] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/dating-and-relationship-violence-prevention/

We also draw here from our Toolkit strand on bystander interventions to prevent sexual assault.[53] The research on the impact of these programmes is complex. These programmes aim to support people in safely intervening to prevent potential incidents of sexual assault they might encounter in public or in their peer groups. Research suggests that programmes can be effective in supporting people in making this kind of intervention. However, research has not been able to measure the impact of this on instances of sexual assault by the wider public. It seems that this training can support children and young people to act, but we don't know whether these actions lead to fewer instances of sexual violence by other people. The research is stronger on the impact of this training on participants' own likelihood of perpetrating sexual assault. It suggests that bystander interventions are likely to have a moderate impact on reducing intervention participants' involvement in sexual assault. Our confidence in this estimate is low because there are only four studies that look at the impact of these interventions on sexual violence. All four studies were undertaken with boys and young men. None of these studies were from the UK. Three were from the US and one from India. There are three relevant studies from the UK, but they did not measure the impact on sexual violence or offending. The studies found positive impacts on participants' knowledge and awareness of sexual violence and confidence to intervene in potential incidents. We advise that these interventions are only delivered to children 14 years and older, as this is the age at which these sessions are typically provided.

We also advise that more than one session is delivered, with a break in between to allow time for children to reflect on the content. Kettrey et al. (2019), which is the review that underpins the Toolkit, found that behaviours like taking responsibility to intervene, knowing strategies for intervening and having the intention to intervene were more likely to be impacted one to four months after the intervention (rather than straight away), implying that some reflection and rumination occurs before impact.[54]

Implement an anti-bullying strategy.

Preventing bullying is an important goal for all schools. We acknowledge in the guidance that the evidence is limited but stress that preventing bullying could also keep children safe from involvement in more serious violence. In their review of constructs associated with violence among 6-18-year-olds, Ullman et al. (2024) found that bullying perpetration had a significant moderate-to-strong positive association with violence- and crime-related outcomes.[55] There is also strong evidence that anti-bullying programmes can reduce bullying.[56]

A specific example that we draw on in the guidance from an English context is the Learning Together programme. This is a whole-school anti-bullying programme for secondary schools. It includes anti-bullying training for staff paired with a social and emotional skills

[53] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/bystander-interventions-to-prevent-sexual-assault/

[54] Kettrey et al., *Effects of Bystander Programs on the Prevention of Sexual Assault Among Adolescents and College Students: a Systematic Review,* 2019 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.4073/csr.2019.1)

[55] Ullman et al., *Constructs Associated With Youth Crime and Violence Amongst 6-18-Year-Olds: a Systematic Review of Systematic Reviews,* 2024 (https://research.edgehill.ac.uk/en/publications/constructs-associated-with-youth-crime-and-violence-amongst-6-18y)

[56] Gaffney et al., *Anti-Bullying Programmes Toolkit Technical Report,* 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Anti-bullying-programmes-Technical-Report.pdf)

| | curriculum. Schools also coordinate action group meetings, in which a small group of staff and pupils meet to discuss action plans that aim to make the school safer and more inclusive. Schools are encouraged to select a diverse range of students for these groups, including children who require support with their behaviour. In 2018, a randomised controlled trial was published in England that established the impact of the programme on a range of outcomes. Results showed that schools that delivered Learning Together exhibited lower levels of bullying after three years compared to schools that did not deliver the programme.[57]

Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support.
This recommendation is underpinned by the evidence we have for the impact of therapies on reducing children's involvement in violence. For instance, the review underpinning the Toolkit strand on CBT (Koehler et al., 2013) found that CBT, on average, reduced reoffending by 27%. We have moderate confidence in this estimate, as it comes from 11 evaluations.[58] Riise et al. (2021) also found large impacts of CBT on behavioural difficulties.[59] Our Toolkit strands on trauma-specific therapies also explain that this intervention is associated with a high impact on reducing crime and violence.[60] However, we only have very low confidence in this estimate (based on four studies of limited quality). Therapists may also opt to use family-focused therapeutic models, such as multi-systemic therapy (MST). On average, based on a review including eight studies from the US, international research suggests that MST is likely to have a moderate impact on violent crime. Four non-US studies included in the review, three from the UK and one from Canada, suggest that MST is likely to have a low impact on violent crime. We have moderate confidence in our estimate of the impact of MST.[61] Evidently, therapy represents a 'good bet' for keeping children safe from violence. |
|---|---|
| Is this a priority for education leaders? | All schools, colleges and alternative provision settings across England and Wales will already aim to improve the social and emotional skills of children and young people, in addition to teaching them how to recognise and prevent relationship violence. In England, relationship education is compulsory for all pupils, while all settings must provide for the moral and mental development of children. All settings must also have an anti-bullying policy in place.

In Wales, the new curriculum explicitly aims to support students to help them 'form positive relationships', take 'measured decisions' and 'develop emotional intelligence and awareness'. The *Welsh Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being* and the Welsh relationship and sexuality education code also mandate that education settings focus on social and emotional skills and relationship violence. The Welsh government also expects school leaders to follow their statutory guidance for tackling bullying. |

[57] Bonell et al., *Effects of the Learning Together Intervention on Bullying and Aggression in English Secondary Schools (INCLUSIVE): A Cluster Randomised Controlled Trial*, 2018 (https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)31782-3/fulltext)
[58] Gaffney et al., *CBT Toolkit Technical Report,* 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CBT-Technical-Report-.pdf)
[59] Riise et al., *Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Externalizing Disorders in Children and Adolescents in Routine Clinical Care: a Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, 2021 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33418192/)
[60] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/trauma-specific-therapies/
[61] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/multi-systemic-therapy-2/

	One in six secondary school teachers in England surveyed by the YEF revealed that a sexual assault had occurred between children in their school in the preceding term,[62] while inspectorates across England and Wales emphasised the need to address sexual assault and harassment.[63]
Is this feasible?	We know from our Teacher Tapp surveys of teachers in England that a large number of schools are already delivering the strategies detailed in this recommendation: • Forty-nine per cent reported that their school is delivering social skills training lessons to support children in managing emotions. • Fifty-seven per cent reported that their school delivers an anti-bullying programme. • Forty per cent of secondary school teachers reported that their school is delivering Relationship Violence Reduction sessions.[64] Only 10% of teachers in the same survey reported that their school was delivering CBT. In this recommendation, we acknowledge the constraints on delivering therapy and the often-stretched nature of local services. We suggest measures that may make the provision of therapies more feasible (such as pooling money and resources across settings to recruit a specialist, working with local third-sector organisations and making use of Mental Health Support Teams in schools (CAMHS in-reach in Wales) where they are present. We have commissioned RAND to further evaluate the feasibility of these recommendations for school, college and AP settings in England and Wales. This report will be released in early 2025, and our systems-focused guidance (publishing spring 2025) will make recommendations to system leaders on how to support schools, colleges and AP settings to follow the guidance.
Does this recommendation further equity?	Several strands in this recommendation aim to further equity. Relationship violence reduction sessions most often focus on reducing gender-based violence and harassment, and we know that girls, in particular, face high levels of sexual harassment; in a survey of 800 children, Ofsted (2021) found that 90% of girls and nearly 50% of boys said that being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers. In addition, 92% of girls and 74% of boys said that sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers.[65] We also expect anti-bulling programmes and school anti-bullying policies and procedures to explicitly aim to protect all children from bullying, including sexist, racist, homophobic and ablest bullying.

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[62] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 4,953 teachers on 30/10/2023.

[63] In 2021, Ofsted published a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in England. Ofsted found that sexual harassment occurred so frequently that it had become 'commonplace'. See Ofsted, *Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges,* 2021 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges); in 2021, Estyn also published a report showing similar findings in Wales. See *'We Don't Tell Our Teachers' Experiences of Peer-on-peer Sexual Harassment Among Secondary School Pupils in Wales*, 2021 (https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-12/Experiences%20of%20peer-on-peer%20sexual%20harassment%20among%20secondary%20school%20pupils%20in%20Wales_0.pdf)

[64] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,302 teachers on 30/10/2023.

[65] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges

We hope that encouraging schools to provide access to psychological therapies where required will challenge some of the racial inequity currently present in mental health services. Access to psychological therapies is not currently racially equitable. Specifically:

- **Referral pathways:** Young people from racially minoritised communities are less likely to access support and psychological therapies through primary care and are, instead, more likely to access them via social care or the justice system.[66]
- **Access to services:** Black young people are more likely to attend mental health services for only one session after having been reffered;[67] there is also an overrepresentation of white or white British children and young people receiving input from Forensic CAMHS (the most specialist CAMHS service established in 2019 to support those most at risk of serious violence and offending).[68]

A range of qualitative literature in England and Wales has also explored some of the barriers that young people from racially minoritised communities face in accessing therapies. These barriers may include a lack of trust in the mental health system, discriminatory racist treatment from services affecting (and delaying) decisions to seek help for mental health problems and language barriers.[69]

With regard to social and emotional skills development, reviews have shown that intervention studies that had a majority male sample were more impactful than those with a majority female sample.[70] However, both still had a positive average impact on all pupils, so we would not recommend excluding children from interventions or targeting them simply on the basis of gender.

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[66] An analysis by Edbrooke-Childs et al. (2019) on national routinely collected data from 14,588 young people (under 25, with a mean age of 12) showed that compared to white British young people, Black young people and mixed-race young people were more than twice as likely to be referred through social care/youth justice than voluntarily through primary care. Compared to white British young people, Asian young people were also almost twice as likely to be referred through social care/youth justice than voluntarily through primary care. See Edbrooke-Childs et al., 2019 (https://www.jaacap.org/article/S0890-8567(19)30001-2/fulltext)

[67] Edbrooke-Childs et al., Association Between Single Session Service Attendance and Clinical Characteristics in Administrative Data, *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 2021 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/13591045211002609)

[68] Lane et al., *Characteristics of Young People Accessing Recently Implemented Community Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (F: CAMHS) in England: Insights From National Service Activity Data,* 2023 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00787-021-01870-y)

[69] Kapadia et al., *Ethnic Inequalities in Healthcare: a Rapid Evidence Review* (https://www.nhsrho.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/RHO-Rapid-Review-Final-Report_.pdf)

[70] Gaffney et al., *Social Skills Training: Toolkit Technical Report,* 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Social-Skills-technical-report.pdf)

Recommendation	**4. Target efforts at the places and times where violence occurs**
	Why?
	Violence happens more often in certain places and at certain times.
	Recommended actions
	a. Survey children and talk to staff to determine where to focus your efforts.
	b. Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response.
What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?	We know that violence is concentrated in certain places and times. Vulliamy et al. (2018) conducted an 11-year retrospective cohort study examining the hospital admission data of 1,824 patients at a UK-based trauma centre. They found that among children (<16), a significant peak in injuries occurred between 16:00 and 18:00, accounting for 22% (38/172) of injuries in this group.[71] Studies of crime concentration also show offending tends to be concentrated in particular geographic locations (Weisburd, 2015),[72] and this has led to approaches like 'hot spots' policing, which have demonstrated a moderate positive impact on reducing violent crime and offending.[73]
	We also know that there are interventions that have proven an impact on reducing violence among children by targeting particular travel routes to and from school. The Chicago Safe Passage programme hires and trains neighbourhood residents and places them along specified routes to and from schools at the beginning and end of the school day. The aim is to decrease crime by means of deterrence and reporting by community monitors. Several studies have examined the impact of Safe Passage in Chicago since it launched. How the programme was rolled out made it infeasible to conduct randomised controlled trials, so most of the studies have employed quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) using retrospective, longitudinal data. Sanfelice (2018) examined the first 35 schools in the programme, and Curran (2018) analysed the 2013/14 expansion of the programme. Both found that the programme was associated with crime reduction along the travel routes. By analysing data from 2009-2016, McMillen et al. (2019) found that Safe Passage was associated with lower crime levels, with violent crime declining by 14% on average compared to neighbouring areas. In a longitudinal study, Gonzalez and Komisarow (2020) also found that total crime decreased by 17% relative to comparison areas.[74]
	YEF is conducting an evaluation of Step Together (a UK version of Safe Passage). The implementation and process evaluation yielded positive qualitative findings.[75] In the summer of 2024, we will publish an impact analysis.

[71] Vulliamy et al., *Temporal and Geographic Patterns of Stab Injuries in Young People: A Retrospective Cohort Study from a UK Major Trauma Centre,* 2018 (https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/8/10/e023114.full.pdf)

[72] Weisburd, *The Law of Crime Concentration and the Criminology of Place,* 2015 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1745-9125.12070)

[73] Approaches where police presence is increased in particular 'hot spot' areas have been shown to reduce crime: Youth Endowment Fund, *Hot Spots Policing* (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/hot-spots-policing/); Braga et al., *Hot Spots Policing and Crime Reduction: an Update of an Ongoing Systematic Review and Meta-analysis*, 2019 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11292-019-09372-3); referenced in Gaffney et al., *Hot Spot Policing Toolkit Technical Report*, 2019 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/YEF-Hot-Spots-Policing-Technical-Report_Final_July-2022.pdf)

[74] Taken from Bierman et al., *Step Together Pilot,* 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Step-Together.-YEF-IPE.-March-2023v2.pdf); Sanfelice, *Are Safe Routes Effective? Assessing the Effects of Chicago's Safe Passage Program on Local Crimes*, 2019 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167268119302033); Curran, *Does the Chicago Safe Passage Program Reduce Reported Crime Around Elementary Schools? Evidence from Longitudinal, Geocoded Crime Data*, 2019 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0887403418812125); McMillen et al., *Do More Eyes on the Street Reduce Crime? Evidence from Chicago's Safe Passage Program*, 2019 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0094119019300014); Gonzalez and Komisarow, *Community Monitoring and Crime: Evidence from Chicago's Safe Passage Program*, 2020 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272720301146)

[75] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Step-Together.-YEF-IPE.-March-2023v2.pdf

Is this a priority for education leaders?	Yes, as this will support leaders in better prioritising their efforts and making the best use of resources.
Is this feasible?	We expect that this is feasible and we provide case study examples of schools that have surveyed children and partnered with local partners. Local liaison and partnership are also expected as part of current safeguarding statutory guidance and the serious violence duty. We have commissioned RAND to further evaluate the feasibility of these recommendations for school, college and AP settings in England and Wales. This report will be released in early 2025, and our systems-focused guidance (publishing spring 2025) will make recommendations to system leaders on how to support schools, colleges and AP settings to follow the guidance.
Does this recommendation further equity?	In their analysis, Vulliamy et al. (2018) demonstrated that children in the most deprived communities are most at risk of involvement in violence. A substantial majority of patients (1127/1594, 71%) were from the most deprived quintile, while only 1% (15/1594) were from the least deprived quintile.[76] This recommendation should support settings to target their efforts at deprived areas and at children who are most in need by fully understanding their local context and focusing interventions and support.

[76] Vulliamy et al., *Temporal and Geographic Patterns of Stab Injuries in Young People: a Retrospective Cohort Study from a UK Major Trauma Centre,* 2018 (https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/8/10/e023114.full.pdf)

Recommendation	**5. Cautiously consider unproven strategies and avoid harmful approaches**
	Why?
	Resources are best spent on evidence-based strategies.
	Recommended actions
	    a. Cautiously consider unproven strategies (such as knife education programmes, trauma-informed practice training and police in corridors and classrooms).
	    b. Avoid approaches that have been proven to cause harm (such as prison awareness programmes).

What is the evidence warrant for this recommendation?	The aim of this recommendation is to highlight interventions that do not have an evidence warrant and implore school, college and AP leaders to carefully consider whether they deliver these. These include: • **Knife education programmes:** Our Toolkit strand explains that we've identified six evaluations of knife crime education interventions. Four of these studies were undertaken in the UK and two in the US. However, none of these studies measured the impact of knife crime education on reducing violence.[77] We advise that given the lack of research, education leaders could instead spend their limited resources on strategies with a stronger evidence base, such as providing trusted adults and developing children's social and emotional skills. If they are going to deliver these programmes, we suggest some implementation considerations (drawn from the four UK studies).[78] • **Trauma-informed practice training:** There is very little research on the impact of training teaching staff to recognise and respond to trauma on violence.[79] We still acknowledge the importance of trauma, as we know that adverse childhood experiences have a long-term impact on children's development, including their involvement in crime and violence.[80] Therefore, we still advise that *'acknowledging the impact that trauma can have and continuing to be curious about the causes of children's behaviour is sensible'.*[81] However, when it comes to trauma-informed practice training in particular, we do not yet know whether it protects children from involvement in violence. YEF is funding research to fill this gap; in the meantime, we advise leaders to carefully consider whether it is a priority while continuing to be curious about the causes of behaviour and providing targeted support to the children who need it. • **Police in corridors and classrooms:** As detailed in the YEF Toolkit, there is very little research on the impact of police in corridors and classrooms on violence, and the evidence we have is mixed.[82] There are two particularly relevant studies from England and Wales. The first study, published in 2005, reported the findings from a national evaluation of the Safer Schools Partnership programme. It compared 15 schools that worked with a police officer through the programme with schools that did not take part in the programme. The study suggested that the programme reduced absences but found no evidence to suggest reductions in exclusions or offending. A more recent study used a rigorous randomised controlled trial design to estimate the impact of the Police in Classrooms programme in 81 schools across England and Wales. The programme aimed to improve perceptions of and

trust in the police and involved police officers in conducting lessons on drugs and the law. The trial found a positive impact on children's perceptions of the police but did not measure the impact on crime or violence.[83]

Beyond the YEF Toolkit, a recent systematic review on school-based law enforcement strategies to reduce crime in primary and secondary schools (Fisher et al., 2023) identified 32 studies. These studies were QEDs (of varying quality), and all but three were conducted in the US. Fisher et al. (2023) found that having law enforcement in schools was, in fact, associated with greater crime and more behavioural problems. However, there are significant questions regarding how generalisable these findings are and how applicable they are to a UK context, given that 94% of school-based law enforcement officers in the US carry firearms.[84]

Given the limitations in the evidence on police in corridors and classrooms, we advise that school, college and AP leaders set clear aims for the police presence and clear boundaries and that they communicate with children, parents and carers about why the police are present and the safeguards they have in place.

We were careful to include the following in the police in corridors and classroom section: 'Collaboration between education settings and the police is vital to safeguarding children and is mandated as part of statutory safeguarding guidance. Alongside local authorities, health services, youth justice services and other agencies, education settings and the police must work together to promote the welfare of children. Just one example of this collaboration is Operation Encompass, which is in place in all police forces in England and Wales. This initiative requires that when the police attend incidents of domestic violence or abuse where children are directly or indirectly involved, they notify the designated safeguarding lead at the child's school before the start of the next school day. This ensures that the school can support the child.' This is to emphasise that schools, colleges and AP settings must still closely liaise with the police to effectively fulfil their safeguarding duty; we do not want them to interpret our recommendation as a suggestion to stop working with the police.

We are more confident in the evidence on prison awareness programmes, and we advise that school, college and AP leaders avoid these interventions. Prison awareness programmes do not seem to have a desirable impact on children's involvement in crime and violence. In fact, the research suggests these interventions could increase the likelihood that children become involved in crime. It is

[77] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/knife-crime-education-programmes
[78] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/knife-crime-education-programmes
[79] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/trauma-informed-training-and-service-redesign/
[80] Asmussen et al., Adverse Childhood Experiences: What We Know, What We Don't Know, and What Should Happen Next, 2020 (https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adverse-childhood-experiences-what-we-know-what-we-dont-know-and-what-should-happen-next)
[81] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/trauma-specific-therapies/.
[82] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/police-in-schools/
[83] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/police-in-schools/
[84] Fisher et al, School-based Law Enforcement Strategies to Reduce Crime, Increase Perceptions of Safety and Improve Learning Outcomes in Primary and Secondary Schools: A Systematic Review, 2023 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cl2.1360)

	important to note that the research is dominated by evaluations of programmes in which children visit prisons. The best available systematic review did not find any evaluations of programmes in which prisoners visited schools. Our estimate of the impact of prison awareness programmes is based on a high-quality recent analysis of 12 studies, which directly measured the impact on offending. There is evidence that the approach can have a positive effect on children's attitudes towards offending and punishment. But this did not seem to translate into actual reductions in offending. There is some very weak evidence to suggest that evaluations that measured outcomes more than six months after the end of the programme found more positive effects. However, we would need to see stronger evidence of a long-term impact before it affected our overall judgement of the impact of these programmes.[85]
Is this a priority for education leaders?	Resources are tight for school, college and AP leaders across the country. We are, therefore, keen to ensure that resources are not wasted and that leaders can focus their efforts on the most impactful interventions. In this context, this recommendation is worthwhile, as we know that some schools are delivering strategies that have a limited evidence warrant: • Forty-seven per cent of 6,244 secondary school teachers surveyed by Teacher Tapp in autumn 2023 reported that their school was delivering knife crime awareness programmes (13% in primary). • Thirty-four per cent of 9,302 primary and secondary teachers surveyed by Teacher Tapp in autumn 2023 reported that their school was delivering trauma-informed practice training for teachers (38% in primary and 34% in secondary). In the same survey, 2% of secondary school teachers reported that their school was delivering trips to prisons.[86]
Is this feasible?	We hope that this recommendation provides the opportunity for schools, colleges and AP settings to stop certain interventions. We acknowledge, however, that some leaders will be particularly attached to certain interventions and may be using them for reasons other than violence prevention. For instance, they may want police in corridors and classrooms to support the police in building community trust. Therefore, we only ask leaders to cautiously consider these unproven strategies, carefully considering the aims of interventions like police in classrooms and corridors. We are more strident, however, in our suggestion to stop prison awareness programmes.
Does this recommendation further equity?	We know that particular concerns have been raised with regard to race equity and the presence of police officers in schools and, particularly, the use of strip searches (following the case of Child Q in Hackney).[87] Our guidance encourages schools, colleges and AP settings to set clear boundaries with the police officers in the school. For instance, you may not want them stopping children in the corridors or intervening in behavioural incidents. In addition, any searches of children or their belongings should follow statutory guidance.

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[85] https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/prison-awareness-programmes/

[86] Teacher Tapp survey commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,302 teachers on 30/10/2023.

[87] https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2023/03/cc-strip-search-of-children-in-england-and-wales.pdf