Education, Children and Violence

Guidance for school, college and alternative provision leaders to help prevent children's involvement in violence

About the YEF

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) is a charity with a mission that matters. We exist to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in violence. We do this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice.

The charity was established in 2019 with a 10-year, £200 million endowment from the Home Office.

Acknowledgements

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Content warning: this report features discussion of physical assault, sexual assault, harassment and relationship violence.

Foreword

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Schools and colleges are safe spaces for the vast majority. They are places where our children make lifelong friends, learn about the world and grow into adults. Yet, as teachers know, schools and colleges are also places where violence can intrude. Two-thirds of teachers in England report that a physical assault occurred between children in the last term.[1]

It is not the job of schools, colleges and alternative provision (AP) to single-handedly reduce violence, but the fear of violence disrupts education. One in five teenage children skipped school last year because of the fear of violence in their neighbourhoods.[2] Making sure children are in school prevents violence and also helps with attainment.

Headteachers and teachers deserve access to the best available evidence on what works and what doesn't when it comes to preventing violence because there are some things that can be done and some things that shouldn't be done.

The Youth Endowment Fund exists to provide evidence on what works and what doesn't. We believe teachers, youth workers, police officers, social workers and policymakers should all have the best available information on what works.

Over the last year, we have worked with schools, colleges, AP settings, education leaders, children and teachers to provide this guidance report.

This first-of-its-kind resource provides school, college and AP leaders with five actionable recommendations on how they can reduce children's involvement in violence.

We've created this guidance to help you get the most out of your finite resources when commissioning or designing plans to keep children safe. It draws on the best available global evidence about what works to prevent violence and identifies the approaches that have the greatest chance of making a difference.

This guidance is focused on what you can do. We will also be producing guidance on how the wider system needs to change.

Thank you for all you do for our children across the country.

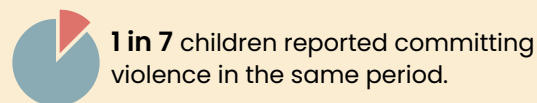Together, we can help all children live a life free from violence.

Introduction

This guidance provides school, college and alternative provision (AP) leaders across England and Wales with five evidence-based recommendations on how to help prevent children's involvement in violence.

Defining violence and its prevalence

Violence is the use or threat of intentional physical force.[3] It can include murder, physical assault, sexual assault, harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon, and robbery.[4]

Violence is, unfortunately, common. In 2023:

1 in 6 children reported being victims of violence in the preceding 12 months.

1 in 7 children reported committing violence in the same period.
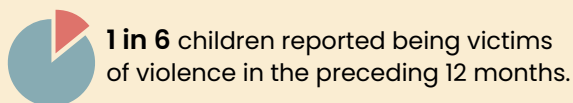
Violence has wider impacts on children's education. Last year, **20%** of children said they had missed school due to feeling unsafe, while **18%** said they found it harder to concentrate at school due to violence or the fear of violence.[5] We also know that violence happens in schools, colleges and AP.

In Autumn 2023, **67%** of teachers across English primary and secondary schools reported that a physical assault had occurred between children in the previous term. Forty-three per cent reported physical assaults against teachers and staff, **15%** reported that a child had brought a weapon into school and **12%** reported that a sexual assault had occurred against a child.[6]

In the past term, has a child committed any of these incidents in your school?
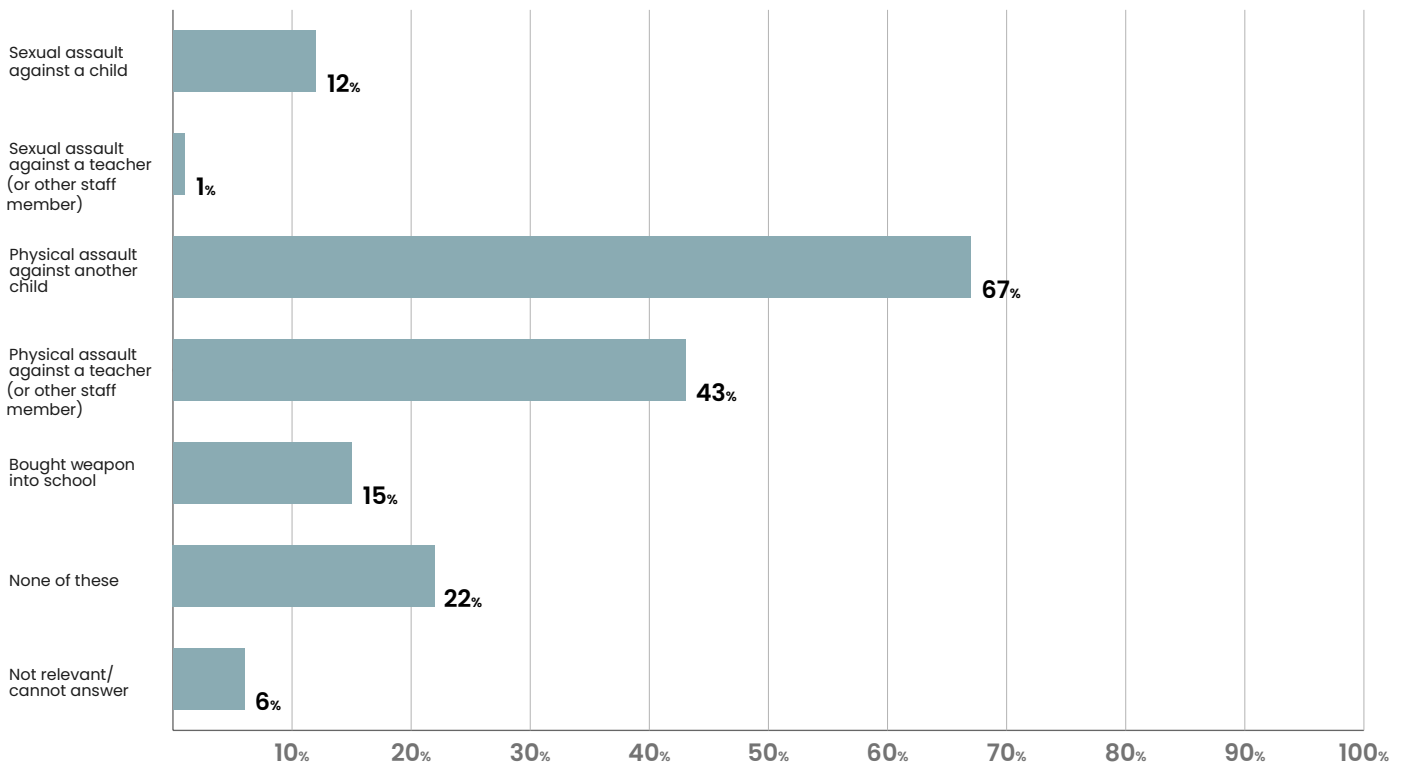
Category	Percentage
Sexual assault against a child	12%
Sexual assault against a teacher (or other staff member)	1%
Physical assault against another child	67%
Physical assault against a teacher (or other staff member)	43%
Bought weapon into school	15%
None of these	22%
Not relevant/cannot answer	6%

Question answered by 7,520 teachers on the 31/10/2023 (Results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Education settings are uniquely positioned to help keep children safe from violence

Of course, many other agencies are involved. These include local authorities, children's social care, youth justice services, youth custody, the police, violence reduction units (VRUs), community and youth organisations, health services and more. Children's families and communities are crucially important, too.

However, schools, colleges and AP settings also have the power to play a central role. This is because:

- **Education settings can provide safe, trusted spaces for children.** Last year, 85% of children said they felt safe at school. This is compared to 71% who felt safe in shopping centres, 59% on public transport, 57% on the street and 54% in youth clubs. Sixty-one per cent also said they believed their teachers kept them safe (compared to 50% who thought the police did).[7]

- **Education settings can offer evidence-based support that reduces children's involvement in violence.** Schools, colleges and AP can offer mentoring, sports, social and emotional skills development, relationship violence reduction sessions and more. These activities can keep children safe from violence.[8]

- **Education settings safeguard children, spotting problems and signposting to specialist help.** They are the one service all children should be in contact with; they are well-placed to notice when issues arise.[9]

What is included in this guidance?

This guidance report focuses on everyday practice in schools, colleges and AP. However, we recognise that effective practice relies on a broader system that dictates the resources available to teachers and the availability of other services.

In 2025, we will publish recommendations for improving this broader system to make it easier for schools, colleges and AP to deliver 'what works'. We have invested in new research to inform this work, including research on the role of SEND support and on education's role in the safeguarding system.

What evidence underpins this guidance?

This guidance report draws upon the best available global evidence on how to prevent children's involvement in violence. This includes the YEF Toolkit. The YEF Toolkit uses rigorous, independent and systematic methods and draws from over 2,000 studies to summarise the evidence associated with 30 different approaches to preventing children's involvement in violence. Several of these approaches are school, college or AP-based strategies.[10]

This guidance also uses the primary research the YEF has conducted, including our evaluation of violence-prevention programmes and largescale surveys with 7,500 teenage children and 9,500 teachers.

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

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

Recommendations

1

Keep children in education

Why? Being in education can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Deliver evidence-informed attendance-improvement strategies (such as meetings with parents/carers and breakfast clubs).
- Implement whole-school and targeted behaviour support to reduce the need for exclusion.
- Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children.

2

Provide children with trusted adults

Why? Meaningful relationships with trusted adults can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Provide one-to-one mentoring by trained adults to support vulnerable children.
- Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them.

3

Develop children's social and emotional skills

Why? Effective social and emotional skills can protect children from violence.

Recommended actions

- Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.
- Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-age children.
- Implement an anti-bullying strategy.
- Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support.

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

- Survey children and talk to staff to determine where to focus your efforts.
- Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response.

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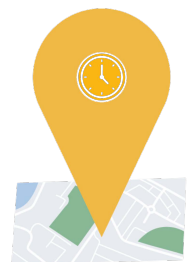
Cautiously consider unproven strategies and avoid harmful approaches

Why? Resources are best spent on evidence-based strategies.

Recommended actions

- Cautiously consider unproven strategies (such as knife education programmes, trauma-informed practice training, and police in corridors and classrooms).
- Avoid approaches that have been proven to cause harm (such as prison awareness programmes).
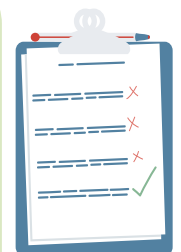
Many school, college and AP leaders are already implementing several of these recommendations. We encourage leaders to continue to focus on these priorities and hone their implementation in line with this guidance.

The critical importance of effective safeguarding

Children's involvement in violence is a safeguarding issue. Before considering any of our recommendations, school, college and AP leaders must ensure they are fulfilling their safeguarding roles effectively. Education settings play a critical role in safeguarding children. They can identify concerns early, provide help for children and families, promote children's welfare and prevent concerns from escalating.[11]

School, college and AP leaders must familiarise themselves and their staff with the statutory guidance in their countries.[12] This is imperative. Statutory guidance covers a range of issues, including child-on-child abuse (such as violence, bullying, relationship violence, sexual violence and sexual harassment), child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation (CCE). It also provides guidance on searching, screening and confiscating items.[13]

Safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and, in most cases, will overlap.[14] Involvement in CCE, for instance, can also force children into committing serious violence.

All staff in education settings must always recognise that children are, first and foremost, children. Whatever the circumstances, the primary duty of all professionals who work with children is to safeguard them from harm. Safeguarding should be conducted in a child-centred way, recognising the needs and voice of the child.

'Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child, listen to what they say, observe their behaviour, take their views seriously and work with them and their families and the people who know them well when deciding how to support their needs.'

Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department for Education (2023)

Child criminal exploitation[15]

CCE refers to the coercion and exploitation of children into committing crimes. It can take many forms. Some examples include children being forced or manipulated into transporting or selling drugs, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. Children can also be forced or manipulated into threatening or committing serious violence.

Children can become trapped by criminal exploitation. They might find themselves in debt, or if they try to resist exploitation, the perpetrators might threaten them and their families. When children are criminally exploited, they can face extremely difficult and dangerous situations and decisions. They might be coerced into carrying weapons or begin to carry a knife because they think it will protect them from harm.

The role of CCE in explaining why some children commit crimes is not always recognised by adults. But we mustn't overlook the fact that a child committing a crime can also be a victim of exploitation and serious harm, even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

Key messages from statutory safeguarding guidance include, but are not limited to:

It is important to ensure appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and actively used.

These include an effective child protection policy, a behaviour policy, a staff behaviour policy and appropriate safeguarding arrangements to respond to children who are absent.[16]

Multi-agency work plays a central role.

Schools, colleges and AP must all play their roles in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, working alongside safeguarding partners such as the local authorities, health services and the police. Senior school leaders, designated safeguarding leads and governing bodies should make themselves aware of and follow local safeguarding arrangements.[17]

Practitioners and agencies should proactively share information.

Given the nature of violence, schools, colleges and AP should also collect and share information related to safeguarding concerns that occur outside of the home (such as in neighbourhoods or schools, online or among peer groups) rather than about only those concerns that occur inside the home.[18]

All staff should undergo safeguarding and child protection training.[20]
All staff should:
- Be prepared to identify children who may benefit from an early help referral.
- Be aware of systems within the setting that support safeguarding.
- Be aware of the process for making referrals where they have concerns.
- Know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited or neglected.
- Be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and will be kept safe.
- Have professional curiosity and raise any concerns they have about a child with their designated safeguarding lead.
- Be aware of the indicators that may signal that children are at risk from or are involved in serious violent crime. These may include an increased number of absences from school or college, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.[21]

In October 2022, only 15% of primary and 20% of secondary teachers in England reported feeling confident in dealing with safeguarding incidents related to antisocial/criminal behaviour including gang and knife crime.[19]

Recommendation 1

Keep children in education

Keep children in education

Why? Being in education can reduce the risk that a child will be involved in serious violence.[22] Schools, colleges and AP can play a protective role by providing children with trusted adults, offering a safe place to be, safeguarding children from harm and delivering a variety of approaches that make violence less likely.

Recommended actions:
- Deliver evidence-informed attendance improvement strategies.
- Implement whole-school and targeted behaviour support to reduce the need for exclusion.
- Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children.

Deliver evidence-informed attendance improvement strategies
Reducing absence is a key priority for education leaders. Although the evidence base on how to improve attendance is limited, there are some evidence-informed strategies that leaders can use.[23] Schools, colleges and AP should:

1. Meet with absent children and their parents/carers:
In these meetings, school staff should establish the reasons for low attendance and discuss support and strategies for solving this. Leaders should be curious about what may be causing a child's absence and take care to listen to the child.[24]

2. Inform parents and carers about low attendance:
Ask parents and carers what their preferred method of communication is (email, phone calls, text messages or letters) and use this to encourage better attendance.[25]

3. Provide breakfast clubs:
Offer a free (or reduced price) breakfast club to get children into school, college or AP.[26]

'Too many are struggling to attend regularly, absences remain at crisis levels, and if we don't act now, we risk failing a generation.'

Dame Rachel De Souza, Children's Commissioner for England, October 2023

Supporting vulnerable children:
Ensure that children with the highest levels of absence, looked-after children, those who have previously been suspended, those in AP and those who have had previous contact with the police can benefit from these attendance strategies.[27]
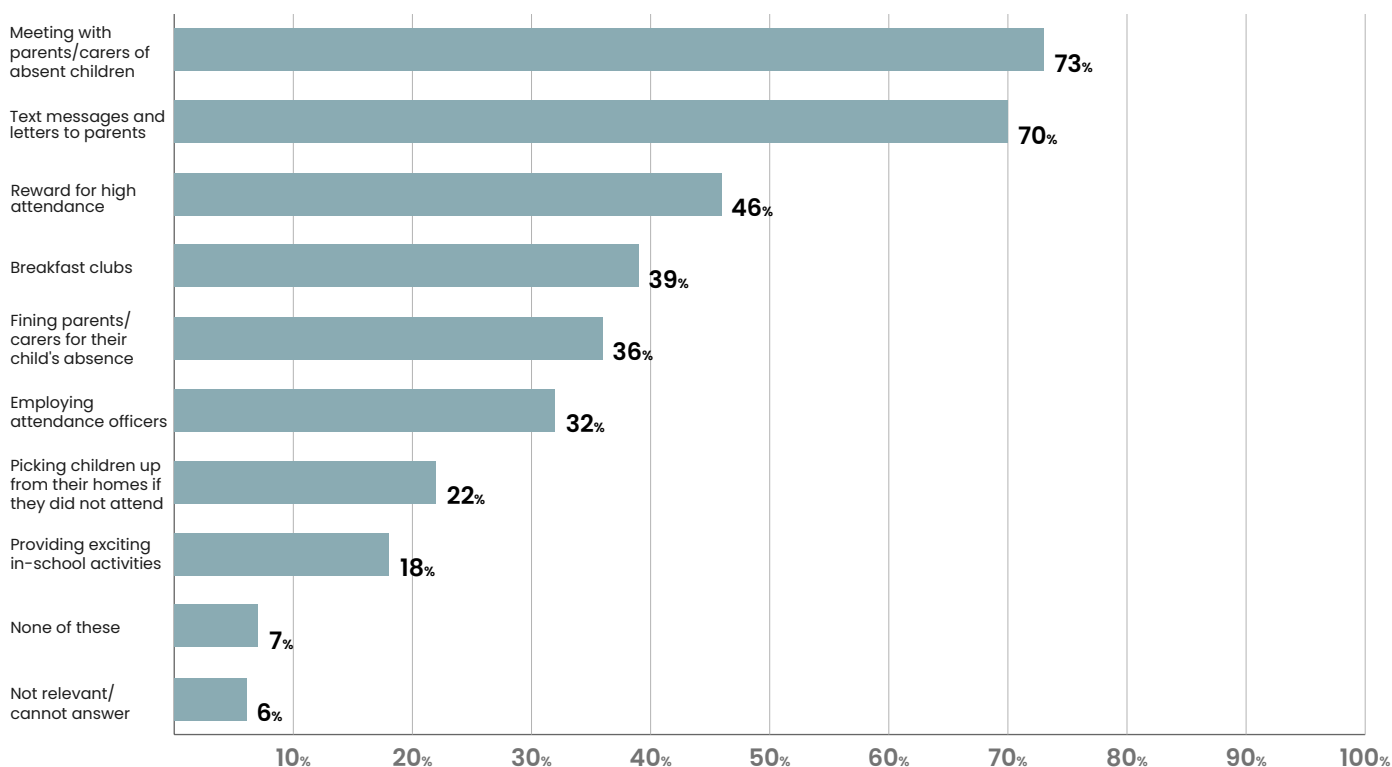
'Since the pandemic, too many young people are missing out on invaluable school time. This can impact on their well-being, their social skills and their education.'

Jeremy Miles, Welsh Education Minister, October 2023

Many teachers report that their schools are already delivering these recommended, evidence-informed strategies. In Autumn 2023, 73% of teachers across English primary and secondary schools reported that their schools were having meetings with the parents/carers of absent children, 70% reported that their school were sending text messages to parents and 39% reported that their school were offering breakfast clubs.[28]

What is your school currently doing to improve attendance?

Category	%
Meeting with parents/carers of absent children	73%
Text messages and letters to parents	70%
Reward for high attendance	46%
Breakfast clubs	39%
Fining parents/carers for their child's absence	36%
Employing attendance officers	32%
Picking children up from their homes if they did not attend	22%
Providing exciting in-school activities	18%
None of these	7%
Not relevant/cannot answer	6%

Question answered by 7,520 teachers on the 31/10/2023 (Results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Implement whole-school and targeted behaviour support to reduce the need for exclusion

Temporary suspension and permanent exclusion from school are associated with involvement in crime and violence.[29] We also know that children from certain ethnic-minority communities (such as children from Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller heritage communities and children from Black Caribbean backgrounds) are more likely to be suspended or excluded.[30]

Deciding whether to suspend or exclude a child is a challenging decision that requires Headteachers to carefully balance the needs of the child and the wider school community. In some cases where a child has been suspended or excluded, parents and carers may feel like the school has not done enough to support the child to stay in mainstream school.[31] However, only 1% of 9,600 teachers in England surveyed by Teacher Tapp in October 2023 believed the exclusion rate in their school was too high.[32]

Everyone can agree on the need for schools to support positive behaviour so that fewer exclusions are necessary. Improved behaviour is what all school and college leaders aim for, and evidence-based universal and targeted support can help.

Universal support

Universal behaviour strategies can improve in-school behaviours.[33]

Schools, colleges and AP should:

- **Use classroom management strategies to support good classroom behaviour:** For instance, reward systems can be effective when part of a broader classroom management strategy.[34]

- **Implement a clear and consistent behaviour policy:** Use a well-defined policy to promote positive conduct, learning and safety.[35]

Targeted support

Sometimes, children will need targeted support.[36] Schools, colleges and AP should:

- **Deliver strategies to know and understand children's behaviour:** Education professionals should be curious about the causes of difficult behaviour, which may include the influence of peers or family, the child's mental health or special educational needs and disabilities and/or adverse childhood experiences (ACES). It is crucial that these influences are understood so that appropriate support can be provided if required. To do this, build trusted relationships with children and consider specific strategies such as functional behaviour assessments (where several professionals assess a child's in-school behaviour, establish the causes and propose strategies to improve it).[37]

- **Use daily report cards:** Primary school teachers could complete these once or twice a day, while secondary teachers could do so after each class. The teacher can report against key behaviour targets set in relation to the individual child's improvement needs.[38]

- **Provide SEND support where required:** Provide children who have identified special educational needs with the additional support they require.[39]

- **Consider additional assessments:** Where there are serious concerns about a child's behaviour, leaders should consider whether a multi-agency assessment that goes beyond the pupil's educational needs, such as an early help assessment, is required.[40]

Box 1. Case study from practice:
The Co-op Academy Leeds and Oasis Community Learning

The Co-op Academy Leeds and Oasis Community Learning Trust (supported by Oasis Community Partnerships) recently designed and began to implement specific strategies to reduce exclusion and absence amongst Black Caribbean and Gypsy and Roma Traveller children. Recognising the disproportionate levels of absence and exclusion among these children, these schools are delivering:

- A parental engagement campaign, employing and training community liaison officers to conduct a listening campaign and understand any barriers faced by these children that may be preventing their presence in school.

- A social and emotional learning programme designed to reduce the need for exclusions; this includes designing and delivering a new volunteer mentoring programme to create long-lasting and trusted relationships.

These schools are also training their staff to be aware of the racial disproportionalities seen in exclusion and attendance rates.

Provide appropriate support for temporarily suspended and permanently excluded children

Only half of children, parents/carers and AP professionals believe that children are provided with the right support when moving between schools and AP.[41]

When a decision has been made to temporarily suspend a child (or, in Wales, to give a fixed-term exclusion), school, college and AP leaders should:

- **Follow the statutory guidance in their country.**[42]
- **Immediately inform the child's parents, the local authority, the child's social worker (if the child has one) and the virtual school head (if the child has one) of the suspension and meet with local safeguarding partners to consider what additional support the child may need.**
- **Assign a designated pastoral professional** in school who will have daily contact with the child while they are out of the school setting.[43] Where there are capacity challenges, consider innovative ways to achieve this (such as using online calls).
- **Set work for the suspended child while they are out of the school setting.**[44] Ensure that this is marked. Online pathways such as Google Classroom or Oak National Academy can be used.
- **If in England, ensure the child is in an appropriate AP from the sixth day (or earlier) of the suspension.** Leaders must ensure that the child can easily get to the new setting, that the curriculum is appropriate (and follows on from what they were learning in school) and that the temporary setting can meet the child's needs. Leaders should also meet with the temporary setting's staff to discuss the child's history, risk management and any strategies used to support strong attendance.[45] This effective liaison between schools and AP settings is often lacking.[46]
- **Arrange regular review meetings** with the school's governing body, with any agencies working with the child (such as early help professionals and/or children's social care), and with the child and their family to determine how appropriate the provision is and when a return will occur.[47]
- **Implement a process to monitor how many days the child is out of the school setting due to suspension (or fixed term exclusion in Wales).** In both England and Wales, it cannot be over 45 days in an academic year.[48]
- **Hold a reintegration meeting** when the child returns to school. Parents and carers should be invited to the meeting, and leaders who know the child should explain to the child that they are valued and that their past behaviour will not impact their future success. Leaders can also explain any new strategies they will be using (such as daily report cards) and any additional support that will be provided to the child.[49]
- **Provide a mentor to the returning child.** Recruit an adult mentor who can deliver at least two terms of weekly one-to-one mentoring.[50] Several children who had previously been excluded from school explained to the YEF last year that trusted adults would be valuable. As one excluded young person explained, they needed 'more one-to-one help: people understanding who I am'.[51]

When a decision has been made to permanently exclude a child:

- **Follow the statutory guidance in your country.**
- **Immediately inform the child's parents, the local authority, the child's social worker (if the child has one) and the virtual school head (if the child has one) of the exclusion and meet with local safeguarding partners to consider what additional support the child may need.** For instance, an exclusion could be followed by a referral to early help, a SEND assessment or a referral to local mental health services for therapeutic support.[52]

Recommendation 2
Provide children with trusted adults

Provide children with trusted adults

Why? Having a meaningful relationship with a trusted adult who understands the child and wants the best for them can protect against involvement in violence.[53]

Recommended actions:

Teachers and other members of staff play an essential role in developing positive and trusting relationships with all children via their daily interactions. Vulnerable children may require additional support; this could take many forms, depending on the child's interests and needs. Research has emphasised the impact of mentoring and sports.

School, college and AP leaders should:

- Provide one-to-one mentoring by trained adults to support vulnerable children.
- Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them.

Provide one-to-one mentoring by trained adults to support vulnerable children

In mentoring, a child is matched with a mentor and encouraged to meet them regularly. Mentoring aims to help the child form a good relationship with a positive role model, develop social skills and positive behaviours and form constructive relationships with others.[55] There is good evidence that mentoring can reduce the likelihood that children become involved in crime and violence.[56]

If you have concerns about a child, mentoring can be offered as part of an effective package of support. Concerns might be related to children who have been excluded or suspended,[57] are getting into conflicts with their peers,[58] have been in trouble with the police[59] or are experiencing other difficulties that a trusted adult could help with.

Mentors should be trained adults and should deliver one-to-one sessions.[60] Mentors can be provided by external organisations, or they may be internal school staff (depending on local availability, staff time and available funding). They can be volunteers or paid.

'Back then, I was a hard head; I used to get into fights and stuff ... [my mentor] basically talked to me about fighting and how, if I do fight, there will be consequences. After that, I felt like I was mature enough.'

Reflections from a child who received mentoring as part of YEF's multi-site mentoring trial pilot.[54]

Leaders should:

- **Provide vulnerable children with an hour-long mentoring session, each week, for at least two terms.**[61]
- **Ensure mentors receive appropriate training.**[62] This should cover safeguarding; rules, goals and expectations; relationship development and maintenance; listening and non-judgemental counselling skills; knowledge of local services for children; role-play for dealing with various issues; and advice on where mentors can go for support.[63] The level of training should match the experience and expertise of the mentor.
- **Provide supervision for mentors.** Give mentors the opportunity to meet, reflect on their sessions and receive support and guidance.[64]
- **Inform parents and carers about mentoring.** When parents and carers are aware of mentoring, mentees tend to commit to it for longer.[65]
- **Ensure clear communication with the child regarding the end of mentoring.** You want to avoid feelings of abandonment and loss from the child, so celebrate the final session and ensure they know who to reach out to if they require further support.[66]
- **Seek to minimise the impact of any missed learning from lessons.** After-school sessions (or sessions during free periods in post-16 settings) may work well.[67]
- **Ensure that staff are informed of mentoring and understand the aims of the programme.** This will allow staff to support the work between sessions and encourage the child's participation.

If you are recruiting mentors, clearly describe what the responsibilities are and ensure that the mentors are motivated and able to effectively work with children. Also ensure they have the time to commit.[68] Try to match children and mentors who have something in common (such as shared interests or being from the same community).[69] If working with an external provider, check that they have clear safeguarding policies and procedures.[70]

Engage vulnerable children in sports with coaches who can support them

Sports may help to reduce children's involvement in offending, improve behaviour and reduce aggression.[71] Sports can provide a useful context for developing trusted relationships with adults and help children to meet and bond with new peers. They can also be used as a 'hook' to engage children in additional impactful activities (such as mentoring or therapy). Sports can also use up the spare time that children have, preventing boredom and reducing the risk of involvement in negative activities.[72]

'Say something's happening in school, for example, you're getting bullied, you could come to these [RFL sessions] on a Thursday, and they'll tell you what you could do instead of going straight into a fight and maybe getting excluded or worse.'

Reflection by a child attending mentoring and sports activities run by the Rugby Football League (RFL).

School, college and AP leaders should:

- **Ensure that vulnerable children can participate in weekly coach-led sports sessions for at least two terms.**[73] This is in addition to PE. Sessions should be offered universally, to all the children in a setting, but additional effort should be made to promote the activities to vulnerable children.
- **Recruit coaches and activity leaders with the soft skills** required to develop meaningful relationships with the children. These could be internal school, college and AP staff, or you could partner with external organisations.[74]
- **Deliver sports sessions after school.** This is the time when children are most at risk of involvement in violence.[75]
- **Provide incentives to attend.** Incentives could include healthy meals or the opportunity to complete an accredited coaching course.[76]
- **Monitor attendance at sports sessions.** If the children most in need are not attending, meet with them and find out why, then take action to promote future attendance. This could involve providing transport support or a suitable sports kit.
- **Consider other types of positive activity to engage children and provide trusted adults.** Not all children are interested in sports. Wilderness and adventure activities can also be effective at reducing children's involvement in violence.[77] These activities usually take place in outdoor settings and can include a range of options such as walking, hiking, camping and orienteering. Leaders may also consider using art activities. Art activities have not evidenced an impact on reducing children's involvement in violence;[78] however, school, college and AP leaders may consider combining art activities with mentoring and access to trusted adults to engage and support children.
- **Reach out to local sports organisations to see what they could offer (see Box 2).**

Box 2. Example from the evidence: YEF's Rugby Football League Educate Mentoring Programme[79]

YEF funded the RFL's delivery of the Educate Mentoring Programme, a 12-week programme for 11–14 year olds. Weekly two-hour sessions delivered by RFL professional club coaches combine physical activity and mentoring. These sessions focus on building core personal skills and improving children's awareness of risky behaviours and positive choices. Pupils also complete an accredited SLQ Young Leaders award. Schools select children for the programme who require support with their behaviour and attendance and have an interest in sport.

YEF funded a feasibility and pilot evaluation of the programme. The pilot did not aim to ascertain the impact of the programme but showed that attendance at sessions was good; the children reported that the programme was engaging and addressed their expectations and needs. Pupils said that they were excited to participate due to the programme involving sports and having a link to the local RFL club.

Schools, colleges and AP may look to partner with local sports clubs in their areas to provide similar opportunities.

Recommendation 3
Develop children's social and emotional skills

Develop children's social and emotional skills

Why? **Seven out of 10 children who admit to perpetrating violence say that they did so because they were provoked.**[80] **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.**[81]

Recommended actions:

- Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies.
- Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-age children.
- Implement an anti-bullying strategy.
- Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support.

Develop children's social and emotional skills with a universal curriculum, targeted support and whole-school strategies

Social and emotional skills can be separated into five key skills.[82]

Social and emotional skill competency	Definition	Associated skills
Self-awareness	Accurately recognising one's own emotions, thoughts and values and how they influence behaviour. Accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.	• Identifying emotions • Accurate self-perception • Recognising strengths • Self-confidence • Self-efficacy
Self-management	Successfully regulating one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours in various situations – effectively managing stress, controlling impulses and motivating oneself. Setting and working towards personal and academic goals.	• Impulse control • Stress management • Self-discipline • Self-motivation • Goal-setting • Organisation
Social awareness	Taking the perspective of and empathising with others. Understanding social and ethical norms for behaviour and recognising family, school and community resources and support.	• Understanding emotions • Expressing empathy/sympathy • Appreciating diversity • Having respect for others
Relationship skills	Establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Communicating clearly, listening, cooperating with others, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively and seeking or offering help when needed.	• Communication • Social engagement • Relationship-building • Teamwork
Responsible decision-making	Making constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions. Realistically evaluating the consequences of various actions and considering the well-being of oneself and others.	• Identifying problems • Analysing solutions • Solving problems • Evaluating • Reflecting • Taking ethical responsibility

Developing these skills protects children from involvement in violence.[83]
School, college and AP leaders should, therefore:

- Deliver a universal and SAFE social and emotional skills curriculum.
- Provide targeted social and emotional learning (SEL) support when children need it.
- Deliver whole-school strategies to promote social and emotional skills.

Deliver a universal and SAFE social and emotional skills curriculum.[84]
Across all key stages, dedicate time to explicitly teaching the five social and emotional skills. PSHE is a good time to do this. In Wales, the Health and Wellbeing area of the new curriculum can include these skills. Teachers are well-placed to deliver these lessons, or leaders can commission external organisations to deliver them. The curriculum should be SAFE:

- **Sequenced** in a coordinated and connected way to support skill development, breaking down more complicated skills into smaller steps.
- **Active,** to enable children to practice and rehearse new skills.
- **Focused,** with specific sessions allocated to social and emotional learning (SEL).
- **Explicit,** clearly defining and targeting skills, and explicitly teaching the five social and emotional skills to children.

'I think it will help us either now or in the future because if we've got, like, problems at home or anything, we know what to do and what situations you could get in. And because we're going into secondary school soon, and in secondary [school], we'll come across also situations there, and I think it will help us by learning what to do and what not to do in certain stressful situations'.

Year 6 pupil reflecting on their universal DARE25 social skills curriculum. [85]

Box 3. Example from the evidence:

DARE25	Healthy Minds
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 received DARE25 reported slightly lower levels of behavioural or emotional difficulty than their counterparts who didn't.[86]	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. [87] Teachers also viewed the programme positively, finding it well-structured and with relevant and useful content.

Provide targeted social and emotional learning (SEL) support when children need it[88]

Sometimes children require additional support. Perhaps they haven't had the opportunity to learn and develop these important social and emotional skills. Schools can help by providing focused SEL support when children need it.

Identify an internal staff member or external organisation to deliver one-to-one or small-group sessions that teach social and emotional skills and give children the opportunity to practice them.[89] Deliver these sessions weekly, for a minimum of one full term.[90] Seek to minimise the impact of any missed learning from lessons. You could choose to combine these sessions with mentoring or sports programmes should the children already be receiving this provision.

Box 4. Example from the evidence: Becoming a Man (BAM)

BAM aims to support 12- to 16-year-old boys to develop their social and emotional skills. It has demonstrated a positive impact on reducing arrests and violence in robust, US-based evaluations and is currently being delivered in the UK by the Mental Health Foundation.

BAM delivers a weekly group session in school to 8–12 children. Fifty of these sessions are delivered over two years of BAM, and they are led by a BAM counsellor (who is recruited from the communities where the children live). Sessions include a range of activities, such as check-ins, role plays, group missions, videos, lectures and stories, and these activities promote BAM's core values, including integrity and positive anger expression.

The YEF funded a feasibility study of BAM in a UK context. The teachers and pupils involved had positive perceptions of the programme, and attendance was good.[91]

Deliver whole-school strategies to promote social and emotional skills

In addition to specific lessons and targeted support, social and emotional skills should be promoted across the whole setting. Embedding messages, routines and strategies into the wider school ethos and environment has been shown to improve children's social and emotional skills and their behaviour.[92] School, college and AP leaders should:

- Deliver whole-setting assemblies focused on certain skills, encouraging children to demonstrate them in the week ahead.
- Notice and praise children when they exhibit the skills across the setting.
- Train teachers in how to model and encourage the skills. For instance, if a primary teacher notices an argument in the playground, they could model how to calm down and listen to others' perspectives.
- Consider providing areas on site where children can go to calm down or spaces where they can use problem-solving skills to resolve conflict, providing support from an adult to do so.
- Inform parents/carers of the five skills you are aiming to develop and suggest activities they can use to practise the skills at home.[93]

Provide relationship violence reduction sessions to secondary-age children

As children develop their social and emotional skills, schools can help them to apply these skills to relationships, including to romantic relationships. Violence and abuse within romantic relationships is unacceptably common. It can happen anywhere and is often hidden.[94] Consequently, education settings are expected to tackle relationship violence head-on.[95]

Secondary schools, colleges and AP should make the best use of relationship and sex education and deliver relationship violence reduction sessions. These sessions should aim to challenge unhealthy attitudes, beliefs and opinions about appropriate behaviours in relationships, build interpersonal relationship skills and improve the children's ability to identify warning signs that a relationship might lead to violence.[96] Only 40% of secondary teachers in England report that teachers in their school are delivering these sessions.[97]

'For some children, [sexual harassment and abuse incidents] are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them … the issue is so widespread that it needs addressing for all children and young people … Schools, colleges and multi-agency partners [should] act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports.'

Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges, Ofsted (2021)

When delivering relationship violence reduction sessions sessions, school, college and AP leaders should:

- **Recruit session leaders who can confidently deliver the sessions.** It is imperative that those leading relationship violence reduction sessions are confident in and at ease with delivering the content. Do not expect all internal staff members to be able to deliver these sessions. Instead, seek out those staff members who may be enthusiastic or knowledgeable and then provide training to those who step forward. Alternatively, commission external organisations with the necessary expertise and positive references from other schools, colleges and AP.[98]

- **Use interactive, age-appropriate content.** Include stories about relationship problems and incidents of violence and use these to prompt discussion. Cover important and challenging topics, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'.[99] Make use of role-playing to explore problematic encounters,[100] and ensure that all content is appropriate to the age of the class.

- **Teach young people how to be active bystanders.** For children aged 14 and above, leaders should also arrange the delivery of sessions on how young people can identify warning signs and safely intervene should they see a sexual assault. For example, how to start a conversation with a potential victim or perpetrator or physically intervene to prevent a potential victim from being led away to an isolated place can be effective strategies.[101] These sessions should also be led by confident, expert facilitators, and ideally (to allow for reflection), young people should receive two or more sessions on how to be active bystanders, with each session held a few weeks apart.

Secondary schools, colleges and AP should also reinforce the messages from relationship violence reduction sessions across the whole setting. Leaders can use posters around the settings to promote the content and share it with parents, as well as reflecting it in their behaviour policies.[102]

Box 5. Example from the evidence: The Me & You programme[103]

The Me & You programme adopts a whole-school approach to promoting healthy relationships. Children aged 11-12 receive 12 lessons that each last 25 minutes and are provided by trained facilitators (including school teachers and external organisations).

Sessions are aimed at enhancing the children's relationship and responsible decision-making skills. Children are asked to design personal rules for healthy relationships and identify signs and situations that could challenge these rules. Additional topics might include managing emotions and improving communication skills, dating violence and consequences, consent, gender role stereotypes, online safety and resources that can help people leave unhealthy relationships. Sessions use a variety of activities, such as role plays and group discussions. Me & You also uses a newsletter to share their key strategies for supporting children with the attendees' parents and carers.

A randomised controlled trial evaluation of Me & You in the US showed that the programme reduced relationship violence perpetration.

Implement an anti-bullying strategy

Preventing bullying is an important goal for all schools. Although the evidence is limited, preventing bullying could also keep children safe from involvement in more serious violence.[104] There are several evidence-based strategies that schools can use to prevent and address bullying.[105]

School, college and AP leaders should:

- **Consult children,** using school councils and surveys to understand the causes of bullying in their settings. Leaders can then design and embed effective responses.[106]
- **Include an anti-bullying strategy in the whole-setting behaviour policy** and implement it consistently. Leaders should ensure there is buy-in across their settings.[107]
- **Train staff on how to identify and respond appropriately to bullying.** This could involve asking staff to identify and focus on bullying hot spots – areas in the school where bullying is more likely to occur.
- **Communicate the anti-bullying policy and approach to parents and carers.**[108]

Box 6. Example from the evidence: Learning Together – the INCLUSIVE trial

INCLUSIVE, also known as Learning Together, is a whole-school anti-bullying programme for secondary schools. It includes anti-bullying training for staff paired with a social and emotional skills 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.[109] 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. Attainment was also improved in those schools that delivered Learning Together.[110]

Support access to therapy for those children who require additional support

We recognise that the capacity of children and young people's mental health services across England and Wales is stretched. Education leaders may, therefore, have very limited access to therapy provision locally. However, some children do require additional specialist support in the form of psychological therapy, particularly children who are experiencing serious emotional distress or exhibiting the most challenging behaviours.[111]

There is relatively strong evidence that psychological therapy can provide some protection against involvement in violence. Therapies, including individually focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and trauma-specific therapies or family-based therapies, have been shown to reduce children's involvement in violence.[112]

These therapies aim to explore children's thinking patterns and help them to better manage and regulate their emotions or address family dynamics. They may also support children's recovery from trauma.

School, college and AP leaders should consider whether to refer those children with the most serious and complex emotional needs or behavioural difficulties to CAMHS. We acknowledge, however, that local mental health services are often stretched, and waiting times may be excessive.

Where timely therapy is not available from local services, leaders could consider:

- **Partnering with local charitable or third-sector organisations** that can provide evidence based therapeutic support to children.
- **Employing their own mental health specialists and therapists.** Where funding is tight, schools, colleges and AP could consider pooling together to fund such a role. Leaders should carefully consider the supervision and support provided to the specialist to ensure they can effectively identify need and offer appropriate support. Local CAMHS services, and Mental Health Support teams in schools may be able to advise.
- **Making use of Mental Health Support Teams in schools.** These teams are available to an increasing proportion of schools in England. In Wales, CAMHS in-reach may be available.

## Box 7. A case study from practice: St Wilfrid's Academy Alternative Provision Free School, Delta Academies Trust

As part of the Department for Education's AP Specialist Taskforce programme, St Wilfrid's Alternative Provision Free School in Doncaster employs its own fully trained therapist for four days a week. This therapist provides a range of therapies, including CBT, to children with identified needs.

Students are identified and referred to therapy through weekly 'spotlight' sessions after school, during which staff meet to discuss the children they teach and any potential barriers to their learning. St Wilfrid's also uses a questionnaire that measures behavioural and emotional difficulties to determine the children's needs.

The therapist attends regular supervisory meetings with an external expert and has a weekly meeting with St Wilfrid's SENCO (who is also their line manager).

Recommendation 4
Target efforts at the places and times where violence occurs
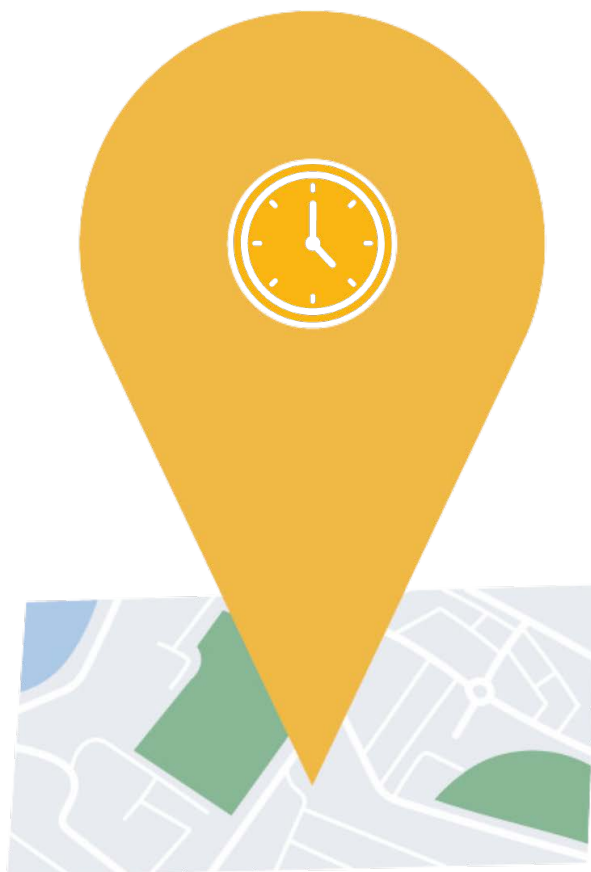
Target efforts at the places and times where violence occurs

Why? **Violence is concentrated. It is more likely to occur in certain places[113] and at certain times of the day.[114]**

Recommended actions:

- Survey children and talk to staff to determine where to focus your efforts.
- Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response.

Survey children and talk to staff to determine where to focus your efforts

School, college and AP leaders should ask children 'How safe do you feel...

- In lessons?
- In the playground/at break times?
- In the corridors?
- At lunch?

- After the school/college day?
- During the school holidays?
- When travelling to and from school/college?'

You could ask this question using an online survey tool (such as SurveyMonkey), paper-based questionnaires, focus groups, interviews with pupils or feedback cards that children fill in and post into a 'feedback box'.[115] You could consult a school council or a similar structure used to collect children's voices. Take care to ensure that you capture the voices of all the children in the setting, including those who may need support with their behaviour.

Leaders should also consult their staff. Have they heard about particular incidents or specific areas where violence is occurring? Are there specific year groups or classes of concern? Are there specific times in the day or term when violence is a particular issue?

Once you know where and when children feel less safe, target your efforts in these areas. For instance, if there are violent incidents at lunchtime, you could set up a sports programme at that time. If problems occur immediately after school, establish a mentoring initiative that occupies vulnerable children between 4pm and 6pm. If there have been incidents of bullying in break times, target your anti-bullying activity at this problem and ask teachers to position themselves in hot spot areas where it is occurring.
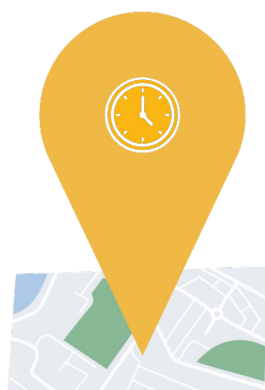
'Young people have a right to have a say in the matters that affect them and to have their voices heard. It is essential that we embed mechanisms into our practices to hear their voice and to gain insights into their lives and experiences. We must all follow the principle of "Nothing for us without us".'

Anna Wallace, school Senior Leader and Bradford SAFE Taskforce Commissioning Lead

Box 8. Case study from practice: Surveying children to understand their perspectives on violence before designing a response – the Bradford SAFE Taskforce

In 2022, the Department for Education in England funded 10 SAFE Taskforces in areas where children are more likely to become involved in violence. The YEF is funding an evaluation. These taskforces were established to identify specific challenges in local areas before commissioning evidence-based support to meet these needs.

Led by Exceed Academies Trust, Bradford's SAFE Taskforce began its work by consulting children on a range of questions, including:

• How safe do you feel in school?
• How safe do you feel when you are out in the community?
• What do you think young people in Bradford need to make it a better place to live?

Consultation responses provided a better understanding of children's needs and the nature of the violence in the local area. Consequently, the Bradford SAFE team commissioned a range of support to meet these needs, including:

• The St Giles Trust mentoring project, which provides mentoring for vulnerable children.
• School-Home Support, which works with families with persistently absent children to encourage them back into education.
• An after-school activities programme (including sports activities) that provides activities and supervision between 3 and 5 pm.

Box 9. Example from the evidence: Step Together

Step Together recognises that children are at greater risk of violence when travelling to and from school. The programme, delivered by the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership, places trained adult chaperones on the school travel routes used by children in areas that have been identified as having a heightened risk of violence or of antisocial behaviour. A similar US-based programme (the Safe Passage Initiative in Chicago) has had a demonstrated impact on reducing crime[116] and pupil absence.[117]

The YEF funded an evaluation of Step Together in England. A pilot evaluation of the programme in the West Midlands found that the chaperones intervened in a variety of incidents, including physical violence, antisocial behaviour, bullying and knife crime incidents.[118] The YEF will publish additional findings about the impact of Step Together in Summer 2024.

Meet with partners to understand the local context and coordinate your safeguarding response

Leaders should meet with local agencies to better understand the violence in their areas and effectively coordinate their safeguarding efforts. The local authority, children's social care, police forces, violence reduction units, health services (and integrated care boards) and youth justice services will have a wealth of knowledge about the nature of the violence in their areas and how best to keep children safe.

The government recently introduced a Serious Violence Duty,[119] which requires local authorities, police, fire and rescue services, health services, youth justice services and probation services to collaborate with education settings to devise violence reduction strategies. Schools, colleges and AP should meet with these agencies to share their knowledge and better understand how they can support local strategies.

Schools, colleges, AP leaders, designated safeguarding leads and governing bodies should also make themselves aware of and follow their local safeguarding arrangements. Most local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements include systems to ensure engagement with education settings. Education partners have a key role to play in sharing vital information.

This could include information about attendance, suspension and exclusion; concerns about abuse, neglect and exploitation; and any wider social or environmental factors that could pose a risk to children. Leaders should ensure they have robust systems and procedures to collect and hold this information and then share it with local, multi-agency safeguarding partners so that agencies can collectively build a better picture and safeguard vulnerable children.[120]

Box 10: Case study from practice: Liaising with local partners to understand violence and take action – Oldham Sixth Form College

Oldham Sixth Form College participates in a thriving multi-agency collaboration that was established following instances of violence at a tram stop in the town centre. The tram stop is a public area where large groups of children and adults gather.

Oldham College regularly meets with colleagues from Oldham Council, Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Police and Oldham Youth Justice Service to share information and discuss the issue.

This group has developed a range of strategies for preventing violence at the tram stop, including:

- Increasing police presence and visibility.[121]
- Providing support from youth workers in the college to provide trusted adults for children at the tram stop.

Recommendation 5
Cautiously consider unproven strategies and avoid harmful approaches

Cautiously consider unproven strategies and avoid harmful approaches

Why? It's important to prioritise evidence-based violence reduction approaches. Where resources are tight, school, college and AP leaders are better placed to use their resources on approaches that are more likely to reduce children's involvement in violence. Where unproven strategies are delivered, this should be with great caution. There are also approaches that have been shown to cause harm; these should always be avoided.

Recommended actions:

- Cautiously consider unproven strategies.
- Avoid approaches that have been proven to cause harm.

Cautiously consider unproven strategies

Knife crime education programmes

Thirty per cent of teachers in England (and 47% in secondary schools) report that their school is delivering knife crime education assemblies or lessons,[122] despite the lack of evidence to support their use.

Knife crime education sessions are typically delivered in schools and tend to be one-off, short sessions of one or two hours. They may include an exploration of children's attitudes towards carrying knives and a discussion of the potential consequences, including stories, photos or videos that depict the impacts of violence.

Advocates of these programmes argue that teaching children about the consequences of knife carrying will deter them from carrying knives.

However, critics say that raising awareness of knife violence could make children feel less safe and lead to more knife carrying for self-protection. Graphic imagery of knife injuries may also be upsetting for some children.[123]

Unfortunately, there is no robust evidence regarding the impact of these programmes. 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 a school, college or AP leader still decides to deliver a knife crime education programme, they should:[124]

- **Use real stories about knife crime:** Children and young people may find the sessions more engaging and impactful when they hear stories about how knife crime has affected people, particularly when they hear directly from the victims or their families.
- **Engage skilled facilitators:** Sessions receive better feedback from participants when facilitators are confident in their knowledge of knife crime and can engage in lively discussions with participants.
- **Closely manage group discussions:** Group discussions can help reinforce messages about the consequences of knife crime. These sessions need to be managed closely to identify any situations where children may demonstrate support for knife carrying or may threaten others in the session.
- **Adapt to local context:** The content and examples shared in sessions need to feel relevant to the children in relation to their geography, the situation and the type of crime.
- **Provide follow-up materials and support:** Some children and young people may be upset by discussions about the impact of knife crime or the sight of images showing knife-related injuries. Provide opportunities for children and young people to debrief with trusted adults in the days or weeks following a session.

Trauma-informed practice training for teachers

Trauma occurs when an event or set of circumstances causes physical or emotional harm that leads to lasting adverse effects on well-being. Research on trauma has often focused on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). ACEs are negative childhood experiences that can include experiences of abuse or neglect, having a close family member in prison or witnessing violence in the home. We know that ACEs have a long-term relationship with children's development, including their involvement in crime and violence.[125]

Acknowledging the impact that trauma can have and continuing to be curious about the causes of children's behaviour is sensible. Many school, college and AP leaders have sensibly aimed to embed trauma-informed principles into their settings and have reflected these principles in their behaviour policies. These policies and principles may aim to shift a teacher's perspective of a child's behaviour from 'What is wrong with you?' to 'What has happened to you?'.[126]

Trauma-informed principles can also lead to the targeted support that some children may need. For instance, there is some evidence that trauma-specific therapies, which aim to support children's recovery from trauma, can reduce children's involvement in crime and violence.[127]

Unfortunately, we know very little about how to effectively train teachers to recognise trauma and amend their practice in response to it. Thirty per cent of primary and 38% of secondary teachers in England who responded to our Teacher Tapp survey in October 2023 reported that their school delivers trauma-informed practice training for teachers.[128] We do not yet know if this training is effective at preventing children's involvement in violence.

The YEF is currently funding research that aims to better understand the impact of trauma-informed practice training. While we await further evidence, leaders should:

- **Carefully consider whether trauma-informed practice training is a priority in your setting.** Where resources are tight, and where preventing children's involvement in violence is the aim, resources may be better spent on other strategies for which there is stronger evidence of impact.
- **Continue to be curious about the causes of behaviour** and provide targeted support to those children who need it.

If a school, college or AP leader decides to deliver trauma-informed practice training, they should ensure that the training specifically defines trauma and provides clear and actionable recommendations for practice that can be used in their specific settings.

Police in corridors and classrooms

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.[129] 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.

In many schools, police officers can also have a more active, physical presence. These officers may deliver a variety of activities, including:

- **Police patrols:** Officers might patrol in and around the school or conduct initial investigations into potential offences.
- **Police in classrooms:** Officers might provide lessons or assemblies on topics such as what to do in an emergency, drugs or personal safety.

In England and Wales, police presence in schools is often organised through the Safer Schools Partnership model. A police officer can work with several schools concurrently or with one school at a time. They might also work with schools on an ad hoc basis to address specific needs. Officers can be based on school premises or in their usual stations.

There is very little research on the impact of having a police officer in school. While we await further evidence, schools, colleges and AP leaders should continue to liaise with local police forces to effectively safeguard children in line with statutory guidance.

If you also choose to have a police officer regularly on site:

- **Set a specific aim for the police presence.** This aim might be to build trust between the police, the children and the community or to use the police officer as an additional trusted adult for the children. Ensure you have a clear aim and monitor whether it is being achieved.
- **Set clear boundaries with the police officer in school.** For instance, you may not want them stopping children in the corridors or intervening in behavioural incidents. Any searches of children or their belongings should follow statutory guidance.[130]
- **Communicate with children, parents and carers** about why the police are present and the safeguards you have in place.

Avoid approaches that have been proven to cause harm

Prison awareness programmes

Education leaders should also be aware of approaches that can have a harmful impact. Prison awareness programmes are a prime example of these.

Prison awareness programmes aim to deter children and young people from crime by demonstrating the difficulties of life in prison. Current or former prisoners will meet with the children and show them what prison is like. Programmes can involve children visiting a prison or prisoners visiting the children in a school or community setting.

On average, prison awareness programmes do not seem to have a desirable impact on children's involvement in crime and violence. In fact, research suggests they could increase the likelihood that children become involved in crime.[131]

Currently, 1% of teachers in England report that their school is delivering visits to prisons, while 5% report that their school hosts assemblies during which former prisoners explain what prison is like.[132]

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18. Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf); Welsh Government, Keeping Learners Safe, 2022 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf).
    See also: Department for Education, Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners Providing Safeguarding Services for Children, Young People, Parents and Carers, 2024 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/623c57d28fa8f540eea34c27/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf).
19. Teacher Tapp Survey, answered by 6,761 teachers on 12/10/2022.
20. Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf); Welsh Government, Keeping Learners Safe, 2022 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf).
21. Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf); Welsh Government, Keeping Learners Safe, 2022 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-04/220401-keeping-learners-safe.pdf).
22. Department for Education and Ministry of Justice, Education, Children's Social Care and Offending: Multi-level Modelling, 2023 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-childrens-social-care-and-offending). There are seven different regression models used in the analysis of the relationship between persistent absence for unauthorised other (PAUO) reasons and serious youth violence. Six out of these seven models show a significant positive relationship between PAUO and violence. After accounting for a range of factors, studies show that children who have PAUO are between 1.2 and two times more likely to commit a serious youth violence offence. The magnitude of the effect increases when considering a shorter time frame (1.5 to two times as likely within two years). See also 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). We know that a number of school-based interventions (mentoring, sports, social skills training and relationship violence reduction) can reduce violence; see Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/).
23. Education Endowment Foundation, Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment, 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Attendance-REA-report.pdf?v=1705993938).

24. *Ibid*

25. N. Axford et al., How Can Schools Support Parents' Engagement in their Children's Learning? Evidence from Research and Practice, 2019 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Parental_Engagement_-_Evidence_from_Research_and_Practice.pdf?v=1710848171); Education Endowment Foundation, Working with Parents to Support Children's Learning: Guidance Report, 2021 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/supporting-parents/EEF_Parental_Engagement_Guidance_Report.pdf?v=1710848399); Education Endowment Foundation, Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment, 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Attendance-REA-report.pdf?v=1705993938).

26. Education Endowment Foundation, Attendance Interventions: Rapid Evidence Assessment, 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/pages/Attendance-REA-report.pdf?v=1705993938); Education Endowment Foundation, Magic Breakfast, 2019 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/Magic_Breakfast_report.pdf?v=1710846533).

27. 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). This is because there are other risk factors that are more likely to be associated with involvement in violence. 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 youth violence (SYV) offence; children in need were approximately twice as likely to be cautioned or sentenced for an SYV offence; children cautioned or sentenced for a separate non-SYV offence were three to four times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for an SYV offence; children attending an AP setting were two to four times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for an SYV offence. We also know that the vast majority of children (98%) who are persistently absent do not go on to commit an SYV offence (Department of Education and Ministry of Justice, 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).

28. Teacher Tapp Survey, commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,625 teachers on 30/10/2023.

29. 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). 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 youth violence (SYV) offence; children who were excluded in Years 7–10 were 1.1 to 1.9 times more likely to be cautioned or sentenced for an SYV offence (those excluded in Year 11 were less likely at 0.7). See also C. 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) for an exploration of the link between school exclusion and youth custody.

30. 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).

31. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England: A Thematic Review, 2024 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review): '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"'.

32. Teacher Tapp Survey, commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,602 teachers on 30/10/2023.

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

34. D. Moore et al., Improving Behaviour in Schools: Evidence Review, 2019, (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/behaviour). The EEF summarised the evidence, saying 'A review of the literature found 31 studies of classroom-based strategies to manage behaviour aimed at the whole class. Studies came from a range of countries including the UK though most were from the USA. The vast majority of studies took place in primary schools, with only three studies including secondary-age pupils. Overall, consistently positive (small to medium) effects are seen for approaches that train teachers in classroom management approaches. Of programmes available in the UK, the Incredible Years® Teacher Classroom Management programme is the "off-the-shelf" programme with the largest evidence base, accounting for seven studies in our literature review. Evidence for "bought-in" reinforcement programmes is mixed; however, most programmes that focus on teacher training in classroom management also involve reinforcement systems. This combination of training teachers alongside delivering a rewards-focused reinforcement programme holds most promise'.

35. S. Valdebenito et al. 2024 (in press): This review of interventions designed to reduce school exclusion found that interventions targeted at the whole school or at teachers had larger effects on reducing exclusion than those focused on individual students. School-wide interventions 'strive to establish a positive atmosphere through well-defined regulations that encourage positive learning, conduct and safety' and were found to reduce school exclusion in a systematic review (where six studies of school-wide approaches were included).

36. D. Moore et al., Improving Behaviour in Schools: Evidence Review, 2019, (https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/evidence-reviews/behaviour). Targeted behaviour interventions have been shown to have more of an impact on behaviour than whole-school initiatives.

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

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

39. 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). Children cautioned or sentenced for a serious violence offence are more likely to be first issued with an EHC plan when they are much older (compared to nonoffending children with an EHC plan). This might imply that children who go on to offend do not receive the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support they require early enough. There is also a high level of SEND needs in children at risk of involvement or already involved with the youth justice system; 71% of those sentenced for a crime between April 2019 and March 2020 had speech, language and communication needs. See Youth Justice Board and Ministry of Justice, Assessing the Needs of Sentenced Children in the Youth Justice System 2019/20, 2021 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/604a3ee28fa8f540179c6ab7/experimental-statistics-assessing-needs-sentenced-children-youth-justice-system-2019-20.pdf).

40. Department for Education, Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff, 2024 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ce3721e1bdec001a3221fe/Behaviour_in_schools_-_advice_for_headteachers_and_school_staff_Feb_2024.pdf)

41. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England: A Thematic Review, 2024 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review). This review includes a survey of 700 parents, children and professionals. The survey showed that 50% agree that 'children in AP and their families get the right support when moving between services or providers in their local area'.

42. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, and Pupil Referral Units in England, 2023 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion); (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-04/240410-exclusion-from-schools-and-pupil-referral-units.pdf).

43. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf).

44. Welsh Government, Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, 2024 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-04/240410-exclusion-from-schools-and-pupil-referral-units.pdf); Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf).

45. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England: A Thematic Review, 2024 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review).

46. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, Alternative Provision in Local Areas in England: A Thematic Review, 2024 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-in-local-areas-in-england-a-thematic-review).

47. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf).

48. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf); Welsh Government, Exclusion From Schools and Pupil Referral Units, 2024 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-04/240410-exclusion-from-schools-and-pupil-referral-units.pdf).

49. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf).; Welsh Government, Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, 2024 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-04/240410-exclusion-from-schools-and-pupil-referral-units.pdf).

50. See Recommendation 2 in this report.

51. Youth Endowment Fund, Peer Action Collective, 2023 (Unpublished data).

52. Department for Education, Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from Maintained Schools, Academies and Pupil Referral Units in England, Including Pupil Movement, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf); Welsh Government, Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units, 2024 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-04/240410-exclusion-from-schools-and-pupil-referral-units.pdf).

53. 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). According to this review, having strong family relationships and support is a protective factor from violence; Youth Endowment Fund, Outcomes Framework, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/YEF-Outcomes-Framework-August-2022.pdf); M. 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); E. Raposa et al., The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies, 2019 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30661211/).

54. A. Hall et al., Multi-Site Trial: Mentoring. Feasibility Study Report, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/YEF.-Mentoring-MST.-October-2023.pdf).

55. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

56. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/).

57. 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).

58. 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). Externalised behaviours, conduct problems and the perpetration of bullying showed evidence of being associated with violence.

59. 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).

60. M. 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 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cl2.1286). In this article, 66% of studies were conducted one-to-one, 10% in groups and 24% both.

61. M. 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 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/cl2.1286). 'Shorter duration interventions were significantly more effective in improving externalising behaviours'. However, two to three terms (six to ten months) was at the 'shorter' end of the range of interventions included in this study by Lakshminarayanan et al. In the majority of the studies (30), mentoring relationships lasted for 12–24 months (six to 12 months in 24 of the studies). There were 16 and 10 studies with mentoring relationships of less than six months and two to three years, respectively. There were only eight studies in which the mentoring relationship was longer than three years. There were 24 studies in which the duration was either unclear or not reported. The majority of the studies (30 studies) saw mentoring delivered weekly. Many studies (60) failed to capture the length of the mentor–mentee meetings. However, a considerable number of studies (26) reported that the length of meetings was more than two hours. In 10 studies, the meetings lasted for approximately an hour. In 11 studies, it was anywhere between one and two hours. There were also eight studies in which the meetings lasted less than an hour. More than two hours may be unfeasible for schools. We also know from the YEF Mentoring MST Pilot that 45 mins weekly is feasible; see Youth Endowment Fund, Multi-site Trial: Mentoring, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/funding/evaluations/multi-site-trial-mentoring/). As such, an hour is advised here. Moderator analysis also found that shorter mentoring sessions were associated with larger effects; see E. Raposa et al., The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies, 2019 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30661211/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

62. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

63. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf); R. O'Connor and S. 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).

64. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

65. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/).

66. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

67. P. 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 and 6 pm.

68. R. O'Connor and S. 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).

69. R. O'Connor and S. 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); Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Mentoring Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/mentoring-2/); H. Gaffney et al., Mentoring: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Mentoring-Technical-Report_Final.pdf).

70. R. O'Connor and S. 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). Youth

71. Endowment Fund, YEF Sports Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/); H. Gaffney et al., Sports Programmes: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Sports-Programmes-Technical-Report.pdf).

72. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Sports Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/); H. Gaffney et al., Sports Programmes: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Sports-Programmes-Technical-Report.pdf).

73. S. Malhotra et al., 2021 (in press). This article explains that the longer the delivery the larger the impact on aggression and externalising behaviour; the researchers explored this using a continuous variable and a meta-regression. There was no set number given for the length of intervention. Given that we recommend two terms for mentoring (and that coaches/role models seem likely to be a key mechanism in sports), it's sensible to be consistent. Malhotra et al. (2021) only included targeted interventions (directed at those at risk of violence and those who have already offended). However, we suggest the delivery of a universal provision here; this is because it is much easier and significantly more cost effective for schools to deliver interventions universally, while ensuring that the children most in need are included. We also do not want children to be unnecessarily profiled and recognise the difficulty in sensitively targeting sports provision without giving other children the impression that you are rewarding children who are at risk of suspension or exclusion.

74. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Sports Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/); H. Gaffney et al., Sports Programmes: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Sports-Programmes-Technical-Report.pdf).

75. P. 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 and 6 pm.

76. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Sports Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/sports-programmes/); H. Gaffney et al., Sports Programmes: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2021 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Sports-Programmes-Technical-Report.pdf).

77. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Adventure and Wilderness Therapy Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/adventure-and-wilderness-therapy/); A. Mohan and H. White, Wilderness and Adventure Therapy: YEF Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Adventure-and-Wilderness-Therapy-Technical-Report.pdf).

78. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Arts Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/arts-programmes/).

79. K. Wong et al., Rugby Football League: Inspiring Futures Educate Mentoring Programme Feasibility and Pilot Trial Report, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/RFL.-YEF-Feasibility-and-Pilot-Study-2023.pdf).

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

81. 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); 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. See also Youth Endowment Fund, Outcomes Framework, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/YEF-Outcomes-Framework-August-2022.pdf).

82. 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).

83. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Social Skills Training Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/social-skills-training/); 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); 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. Youth Endowment Fund, Outcomes Framework, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/YEF-Outcomes-Framework-August-2022.pdf).

84. Reviews have shown that universal curricula can have an impact on improving SEL skills: at a primary level see the review of reviews, 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); at a secondary level, see 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). The review that underpins YEF's social skills training strand (A. Beelman and F. Lösel, 2020) also shows that while targeted interventions have larger effects, universal programmes are still associated with a desirable impact on delinquency (0.11).

85. M. 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).

86.   M. 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).

87.   G. Lordan and A. 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 L. Stokes et al., Healthy Minds Evaluation Report, 2022 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/Healthy-Minds-Report-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.

88.   Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Social Skills Training Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/social-skills-training/); 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); A. Beelman and F. Lösel, A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Randomized Evaluations of the Effect of Child Social Skills Training on Antisocial Development, 2020 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40865-020-00142-8). Beelman and Lösel found that targeted programmes have a larger impact than universal interventions. 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, social–emotional skills, discipline referrals and suspensions (Waasdorp et al., 2012, Bradshaw et al., 2012).

89.   A. Beelman and F. Lösel, A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Randomized Evaluations of the Effect of Child Social Skills Training on Antisocial Development, 2020 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40865-020-00142-8). A large proportion of programmes used the group format; individual training seemed to be slightly more effective, but the difference was not significant.

90.   A. Beelman and F. Lösel, A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis of Randomized Evaluations of the Effect of Child Social Skills Training on Antisocial Development, 2020 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40865-020-00142-8). The report 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 and 11–20 sessions over two to four months).

91.   F. Green et al., Becoming a Man (BAM) Feasibility Study Report, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/MHF-BAM.-YEF-Feasibility-study.-2023.pdf).

92.   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); S. Jones and S. Bouffard, Social and Emotional Learning in Schools: From Programs to Strategies, 2012 (https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/j.2379-3988.2012.tb00073.x); J. 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).

93.   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).

94.   In 2021, Ofsted published a review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges in England. It 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).

95.   Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf). This report calls on schools and colleges in England to ensure 'a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment'. Welsh statutory guidance is similarly clear and mandates that children should be taught to recognise harmful, abusive or coercive behaviour in personal relationships. See Welsh Government, The Curriculum for Wales: Relationships and Sexuality Education Code, 2021 (https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf).

96.   Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Dating and Relationship Violence Prevention Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/dating-and-relationship-violence-prevention/); H. Gaffney et al., Dating and Relationship Violence Prevention: Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Dating-and-Relationship-Violence-Prevention_Technical-Report.pdf).

97.   Teacher Tapp Survey, commissioned by YEF and answered by 9,382 teachers on 31/10/2023. Only 29% reported that external providers were delivering the sessions.

98.   Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Dating and Relationship Violence Prevention Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/dating-and-relationship-violence-prevention/); H. Gaffney et al., Dating and Relationship Violence Prevention: Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Dating-and-Relationship-Violence-Prevention_Technical-Report.pdf). H. Gaffney et al. cite C. Farmer et al., School-based Interventions to Prevent Dating and Relationship Violence and Gender-based Violence: Systematic Review to Understand Characteristics, Mechanisms, Implementation and Effectiveness, 2022 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36791352/).

99.   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). This report recommends: a carefully sequenced relationships, sex and health education curriculum, based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance, that specifically includes information about sexual harassment and sexual violence (including its prevalence online). The curriculum should include time for the open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent and the sending of 'nudes'.

100.   H. Gaffney et al., Dating and Relationship Violence Prevention: Toolkit Technical Report, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Dating-and-Relationship-Violence-Prevention_Technical-Report.pdf).

101.   Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Bystander Interventions to Prevent Sexual Assault Toolkit, ©2024 https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/bystander-interventions-to-prevent-sexual-assault/; H. Gaffney et al., Bystander Interventions to Prevent Sexual Assault: Toolkit Technical Report, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Bystander-Interventions-to-Prevent-Sexual-Assault_-Technical-Report_Apr-2023.pdf).

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103.   Taken from A. Clarke et al., Adolescent Mental Health: A Systematic Review on the Effectiveness of School-based Interventions, 2021 (https://www.eif.org.uk/report/adolescent-mental-health-a-systematic-review-on-the-effectiveness-of-school-based-interventions).

104.   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); YEF Outcomes Framework, 2022 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/YEF-Outcomes-Framework-August-2022.pdf)

105. Youth Endowment Fund, Anti Bullying Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/anti-bullying-programmes/).

106. M. Wigglesworth et al., INCLUSIVE (Learning Together), 2023 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/INCLUSIVE_EEF_Report-FINAL.pdf?v=1710935677). The programme includes a requirement for schools to 'coordinate two action group meetings per term, where a small group of staff and pupils meets to discuss action plans for improving the school climate and practices related to inclusivity informed by the results of needs assessment surveys completed by pupils'.

107.   H. 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).

108. H. 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).

109. C. 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).

110. M. Wigglesworth et al., INCLUSIVE (Learning Together), 2023 (https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/documents/projects/INCLUSIVE_EEF_Report-FINAL.pdf?v=1710935677).

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114. 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 and 6 pm.

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116. V. 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); F. 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); D. McMillen, I. Sarmiento-Barbieri and R. Singh, 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); R. Gonzalez and S. Komisarow, Community Monitoring and Crime: Evidence from Chicago's Safe Passage Program, 2020 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0047272720301146).

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119. Home Office, Serious Violence Duty, 2023 (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty).

120. HM Government, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023 (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf).

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123. Youth Endowment Fund, YEF Knife Crime Education Programmes Toolkit, ©2024 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/toolkit/knife-crime-education-programmes/); H. Gaffney et al., Knife Crime Education Programmes Toolkit Technical Report, 2023 (https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Knife-Crime-Education-programmes-Technical-Report_June-2023-1.pdf).

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