

**Links to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education DFE Statutory Guidance**

Online and media: rights and responsibilities, online risks, what to do and where to get support to report material, the impact of viewing harmful content

The law: violence

Internet safety and harms: how to identify harmful behaviours online

**Links to PSHE Programme of Study:**

- **R42 (KS3)** to recognise peer influence and to develop strategies for managing it, including online
- **R44 (KS3)** that the need for peer approval can generate feelings of pressure and lead to increased risk-taking; strategies to manage this
- **H23 (KS4)** strategies for identifying risky and emergency situations, including online; ways to manage these and get appropriate help, including where there may be legal consequences (e.g. drugs and alcohol, violent crime and gangs)
- **R35 (KS4)** to evaluate ways in which their behaviours may influence their peers, positively and negatively, including online, and in situations involving weapons or gangs
- **R37 (KS4)** to recognise situations where they are being adversely influenced, or are at risk, due to being part of a particular group or gang; strategies to access appropriate help

**Objectives:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the risks and consequences of posting, sharing, liking and commenting on knife-related content on social media.
- Consider how social media can escalate violence.
- Explore ways to react to knife crime posts.

**Key Information:**

Starter activity: 10 minutes

Introduction/background/lesson objectives: 3 minutes

Ground rules: 2 minutes

Activity 1: 15 minutes

Activity 2: 3 minutes

Activity 3: 10 minutes

Activity 4: 10 minutes

Activity 5: 5 minutes

Signposting: 2 minutes

**Starter:**

Display slide 1 (image and independent task) as students are coming into the classroom, so they can complete the task as they sit down. Press the button to reveal the paired discussion activity, giving students a few minutes to discuss the picture of someone with a blade or something similar, and the associated bullet points. You can spend a bit of time exploring students' ideas. Show slide 2 which highlights the law regarding social media as well as a real-life consequence.

When discussing real-life consequences, students may also mention that the post:

- Could encourage violence, which carries legal penalties.
- If you post it, schools and colleges may expel you.

- A criminal record can affect university admissions and job opportunities.
- If you shared or liked it and something happens, you might be investigated as an accomplice.

If students do not know where to report material like this, you should share that:

- You can report it on the social media platform.
- Report to the police.
- Report to school, college or workplace.
- Report to an online safety or crime prevention organisation e.g. Fearless.

### **Introduction/background/lesson objectives:**

Explain to the class that there are many positives about social media, but one of the most concerning negative effects of social media is that it seems to contribute to knife crime. Even if you are not directly involved in knife crime, you can add to tensions by sharing, liking and commenting on knife crime posts. Some people mistakenly think that the police cannot track them down if they use social media to engage with crime posts, but this is not the case. The police have sophisticated tools to track social media users down and prosecute them if necessary.

### **Ground rules:**

Go through slide 6 with students so that they understand expectations. Emphasise the professionals within your school that a student can go to if they wish to speak someone confidentially after the session.

### **Activity 1:**

Display slide 5 and ask students to raise their hand as you go through the examples, indicating that they have seen something similar on social media. Give students a few minutes to discuss the risks and consequences of creating one of these posts.

Ask students what they have discussed.

Students may discuss the following:

- Young people showing off knives – arrest and criminal charges. If someone is harmed as a result of the post, the person who posted it could be charged under joint enterprise laws (being held partly responsible). School exclusion, becoming a target (e.g. attract attention of gangs or violent individuals), retaliation.
- Threats to harm with knives – Legal consequences and time in prison, becoming a target, encouraging others to carry a knife.
- Knife selling posts- If the seller does not check the buyer's age they can be prosecuted for selling a knife unlawfully, if a knife bought through social media is used in a crime the original seller could be held responsible.
- Posting violent acts – can result in police charges e.g. encouraging or glorifying violence (serious crime act 2007), becoming a target as they may attract retaliation from people involved. It can affect the mental health of the person watching the video.

Read through the law and social media on slide 6 and real-life examples on slide 7.

Encourage students to work with the person next to them to respond to the scenario on slide 8. Students may mention the following:

- Legal consequences (carrying or possessing a knife, inciting crime). If someone uses the knife in a crime later, you could be investigated under joint enterprise laws.
- Holding a knife increases the chances of an accident.
- Best course of action – avoid confrontation, change the subject, encourage them to put the knife away.

- Do not pose with the knife, do not try to impress your friend, do not post or send private photos with the knife.

### Activity 2:

Explain to the students that even if they do not post something on social media that relates to knife crime, if they share a knife crime post, it still has an effect. Ask students what the possible effects could be (slide 9). Press forward to the PowerPoint animation to see some ideas and you can compare your students' responses to this.

### Activity 3:

Show each of the statements on slide 10, asking the students to choose whether they agree with the post, disagree with the post, or are unsure.

Go through key takeaway points on slide 11.

Give students the time to discuss the scenario on slide 12. If students feed back to the class, they may mention:

- Legal consequences – could be seen as supporting, celebrating or encouraging the stabbing. UK law makes it illegal to incite or promote violence, even indirectly.
- If gangs or dangerous individuals see the comment, they might assume your friend is involved in crime and this could make them a target.
- You could: talk to your friend, encourage them to delete it.
- Report it if the video shows real violence and could cause distress or escalate tensions.
- If it's linked to a real crime, report it to the police.

### Activity 4:

Give students a couple of minutes to discuss the questions on slide 13.

Go through information on slide 14 and 15.

Discuss the Southport stabbings and the legal consequences that rose from comments on social media. Links are there that link to the prosecutions.

### Activity 5:

Show slide 17. Explain that although the lesson has been focusing on the ways in which increased social media use seems to be linked to a rise in knife crime, it is also a powerful tool for education and prevention. There are a range of social media campaigns, and some, like the 'Knives Impact Everyone' campaign, are used across platforms such as the backs of buses, billboards and kiosks.

This campaign features the words 'Knife crime cuts deep. Whether you're carrying or you're a victim, the consequences impact everyone: family, friends, emergency services and communities'.

Ask students to work in pairs to create the name of their own campaign and what message they would share.

### Signposting:

Spend time looking at where students can get help and support. Remind students of the professionals within your school they can go to if they have concerns or wish to talk to someone about the content of today's lesson. Explain that anyone can contact Fearless on 0800555111 to give information anonymously.

### Extension Activity

Conduct the discussion on slide 17. Suggested discourse markers are included.