

# SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

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## IN THIS ISSUE

- Knife crime
- Sexism and misogyny

Knife crime is a growing concern in many communities, affecting young people and their families. While most children will never become involved, it's important for parents to stay informed and engaged. Understanding the risks, recognising warning signs and having open conversations can help keep our children safe.

## THE REALITY OF KNIFE CRIME

Knife crime is not just a problem in major cities; it can happen anywhere. Although most young people do not carry knives, those who do – whether for self-defence or due to peer pressure – significantly increase their risk of harm.



Knife crime can impact any family, regardless of your identity or background.

Be vigilant for these warning signs:

- Unexplained cash or new possessions
- Secretive behaviour or sudden mood changes
- Avoiding school or staying out late
- Carrying a knife for 'protection' or because it was 'found.'



Early intervention can prevent a tragedy. Having regular, open conversations, and staying informed about the risks, can help keep your child safe.



## CONVERSATIONS ABOUT KNIFE CRIME

These can feel difficult but the way you approach it makes all the difference. Here's how to start the conversation:

### MAKE IT NATURAL, NOT A 'BIG TALK'



Chat while doing everyday things like driving, shopping or washing up. Use news stories as conversation starters.

### BE HONEST ABOUT YOUR FEARS

Carrying a knife doesn't keep them safe, it puts them in more danger. Walking away isn't cowardly, it's smart. The risks? Injury, arrest or even losing their life.



### HELP THEM MAKE SAFE CHOICES



Talk about signs that a friend might be getting involved and how to say 'No' if someone asks them to hold a weapon.

### STICK TO THE FACTS

The law is clear: carrying a knife without a valid reason is illegal. They can be searched, arrested and face up to four years in prison, even if they haven't used it.



# SAFEGUARDING AGAINST SEXISM AND MISOGYNY

Sexism and misogyny are increasingly present in online spaces, shaping how young people perceive gender roles and relationships. Social media, gaming and online influencers can promote harmful ideas that normalise disrespectful behaviour toward women and girls. These influences can impact how teens interact with peers, form relationships and view their own self-worth. As parents, understanding these issues is essential in helping young people develop respectful, healthy attitudes towards gender equality.



## SPOTTING THE SIGNS

Recognising early signs of exposure to sexist or misogynistic content can help parents intervene before these views take root. What to look out for:

Using derogatory terms for women or dismissing conversations about gender equality as 'overreacting' or 'woke.'



Changes in language

Strong allegiance to online personalities who promote anti-feminist or misogynistic views.



Defensiveness about online figures

Making negative generalisations about women or showing increased disrespect toward female teachers, friends or family members.



Hostility toward females

Dismissing conversations about sexism or brushing off concerns about online behaviour.



Reluctance to discuss gender issues

## HOW SOCIAL MEDIA AND GAMING CONTRIBUTE



Many online spaces subtly (or overtly) reinforce sexist views. Here's how:

- **social media algorithms:** platforms like TikTok, YouTube and Instagram use algorithms that push extreme or controversial content, sometimes leading young people down a path of increasingly sexist narratives.
- **gaming culture:** online multiplayer games often contain toxic environments where sexist language and behaviours are normalised. Female gamers frequently report harassment, reinforcing a culture of exclusion and hostility.
- **Influencer culture:** certain influencers cater to young male audiences by portraying women as inferior or by blaming feminism for societal problems, shaping how boys and young men perceive gender roles.
- **meme culture and dark humour:** sexist jokes and memes can desensitise young people, making them think these attitudes are harmless or just 'edgy humour.'

## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

Helping your child develop critical thinking skills and fostering open conversations can counteract harmful influences. Here's how:

- **Encourage open conversations**
  - Ask non-judgmental questions like: "What do you think about how women are portrayed in media?" or "Have you noticed any sexist comments in your online spaces?"
  - Share real-world examples and encourage discussion.
- **Challenge harmful views**
  - If your child repeats a sexist stereotype, ask them where they heard it and gently challenge it with facts and different perspectives.
  - Teach them to critically evaluate online content and question sources.
- **Be a role model**
  - Demonstrate respect and gender equality at home.
  - Avoid reinforcing traditional gender roles and challenge stereotypes in everyday conversations.
- **Set digital boundaries**
  - Encourage a balanced media diet, including positive representations of gender equality.
  - Use parental controls where necessary but prioritise open dialogue over strict monitoring.



By staying informed and engaged, parents can play a crucial role in shaping their children's perspectives on gender and respect. Open discussions and guidance help young people develop the tools they need to navigate online influences and build respectful relationships in the real world.