

Working with Educational Institutions

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Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) are committed to Safer School Partnerships (SSP) and to the engagement of the Force with all educational institutions. Protocols and other processes have been developed to assist with the day-to-day role of police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) within schools, colleges and higher education institutions.

The guidance applies whether this is enveloped within a formal Safer Schools Partnership agreement (or Safer Student Partnership where these exist) or through neighbourhood policing.

This policy covers the strategic and operational arrangements, and key responsibilities in relation to all officers, PCSOs and staff that work with schools, colleges and higher education establishments. It also covers how working with educational establishments can form part of wider strategic engagement work with children and young people.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers, police staff and police community support officers (PCSOs).

Principles

General

- Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) must be aligned with both school and police priorities, with the day-to-day work of Safer Schools Officers (SSOs) embedded into these priorities, which must focus on the threat, harm and risk attached to young people.
- In the majority of cases, Safer Schools Officers will be police constables.
- Officers and staff who engage with educational establishments must, in the first instance, understand the demographic make-up of the children and young people. This includes ethnicity, gender, disability and religion and belief. It is important to understand this information to effectively capture actions to forcewide strategic plans, including Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), the Police Race Action Plan – Improving Policing for Black People, Working with Young People to Prevent Involvement in Serious and Organised Crime and the NPCC Child Centred Policing Strategy.
- All schools without a SSO must have a PCSO aligned to them for reference and a base line level of engagement in place.
- SSOs and PCSOs must share best practice of education work with colleagues and be members of either the Force SSO Secondary Schools Engagement or PCSO Primary Schools Engagement Microsoft Teams group, where relevant training, information and advice will be disseminated.

- SSOs, as members of WYP, must remain under the direct control of designated police officer line management, but must also report to the head teacher, principal or appointed school or college liaison person.
- All officers attending at schools or colleges must wear full uniform and carry and use a Force-issued mobile device.
- Where a complaint is made about the conduct of an officer, the officer and police line manager must be informed and any further informal or formal action undertaken as deemed appropriate. Any official complaints about an officer must be submitted through official West Yorkshire Police channels for lodging complaints to be dealt with according to local People Directorate and Professional Standards policies.
- Where a complaint is made about police staff within a school, the police line manager, head teacher/principal must be informed and any further action negotiated according to local policies and procedures.

Funding and Facilities

- Safer Schools Officers will be part funded, with the school paying either 50% or 75% per annum (pro rata for part time).
- Safer Schools Officers, and where appropriate PCSOs, may be funded or part funded posts, either full or part time.
- The school must make available the facilities that are necessary in order for officers to effectively perform their duties. Contract managers must be part of negotiations where issues arise regarding liability for expenditure.
- The use of Force computer terminals at schools is a matter for local discussion.

Information Sharing

- The exchange of information between WYP and educational institutions is covered by the Force Inter-agency Information Sharing Protocol. Operation Encompass is covered in this Protocol. In addition there may be local Information Sharing Protocols by district partners.
- In the course of engagement with the school, and its surrounding community, any disclosures must be fed back through the appropriate channels within school. Children must be made aware that any disclosure made, where appropriate, will be passed on in the interests of their safety. Any information received or names given will be passed on and, where necessary, acted on.

Working Hours

- The hours worked must be negotiated to meet the needs of the school. Although this will largely encompass the school day, it will also accommodate working on safe routes to and from schools, and pupil-based events during the holidays.
- Participation in any school trips must be discussed with district supervision, outlining clear rationale for attendance.
- SSOs attached to a particular school, or schools, will spend the majority of the working day with the schools and immediate beat area but must inform the school of their (the officer's) absence as soon as possible in

relation to circumstances such as dealing with arrests, attending briefings, training or other school related issues.

- Local policies and procedures on working hours and annual leave developed at district level must be referred to.

Vehicle Use

- As the role profile for Safer Schools Officers states, it is desirable to use one's own vehicle, and personal vehicle use must be negotiated with, and approved by, line managers based on circumstances and in accordance with force policy.
 - Use for business purposes must be covered in an individual's insurance policy when using personal vehicles for this role. This will allow for the carrying of passengers such as school staff.
 - Where possible, West Yorkshire Police vehicle fleet should be used.
 - Transport of pupils must only take place in exceptional circumstances. When practicable, an additional adult must be present. Failing this, body worn cameras must be switched on and recording.
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Abstraction and Redeployment

- Safer Schools Officers must not, routinely, be removed from their dedicated partnership role other than in exceptional circumstances. Any such abstraction will be agreed between the police and school management in advance unless impractical to do so.
 - Abstraction in the case of this policy refers to:
 - The removal of a school's officer from their primary role of working in a school, or cluster of schools, to undertake other duties;
 - Short term abstractions for periods of up to seven days (other than periods of annual leave);
 - Long term abstractions for periods of seven days and over; or
 - Planned operations arranged in advance of a tour of duty and/or requiring an operational order.
 - Districts must ensure that plans are made to cover existing commitments, and for monitoring the amount of time spent by officers on abstractions.
 - Long term abstractions must only be considered as a final option when all other staffing options have been exhausted.
 - When abstracted from normal duties, the new duty allocated must maintain the geographical responsibility, relevant duties to the primary role of the officer, where possible.
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Responsibilities

Force

WYP is responsible for:

- Providing dedicated Safer Schools Officers based on expressions of interest from schools and WYP priority mapping; and

- Aligning a PCSO to all educational establishments, through NPTs, to carry out community engagement as described in the PCSO Manual of Guidance (page 3).

Safer Schools Officer

Safer Schools Officers are responsible for:

- Working in partnership with teachers, other education services and related agencies in identifying, supporting and working with children and young people, particularly those at risk of becoming a victim, being exploited, radicalised, offending behaviour or social exclusion;
 - Being mindful of the Force's statutory general duties in relation to the nine protected characteristics, and promoting the equality of opportunity and good relations between children and young people from diverse backgrounds;
 - Adhering to the Equality Act 2010. This legally protects people from discrimination both in the workplace and in wider society;
 - Building good relations between children and young people from diverse backgrounds to fully understand identity, vulnerability and inequality;
 - Focussing on the prevention and reduction of crime, anti-social behaviour and harm and risk, ensuring the physical security and personal safety of the school community, and dealing with incidents on the school site when required;
 - Sharing information to identify those young people at risk of becoming victims or offenders, those who already are, and identifying working opportunities with other colleagues or agencies;
 - Ensuring the Home Office Counting Rules are adhered to, particularly the Schools Protocol contained within General Rules Annex B. Further elaboration around crime recording obligations is contained within National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) and Schools;
 - Ensuring all Hate incidents and Hate crimes coming to the attention of police, regardless of location, must be the subject of a recorded crime or incident on Niche as appropriate;
 - Acting in accordance with and supporting the progression towards a Trauma Informed and Responsive Education System by 2030; and
 - Familiarising themselves with the Force Schools Directories to understand the Ofsted rating, number of children in receipt of free school meals (as this reflects economic hardship), persistent absenteeism, SEN children and pupils whose first language is not English.
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School and Colleges

Schools, colleges and universities are responsible for:

- Sharing relevant information on pupils at risk of harm, exclusion or offending with Safer Schools Officers and PCSOs in line with information sharing protocols;
- Informing Safer Schools Officers and PCSOs of all crime related incidents and matters warranting police attention when they arise; and
- Preserving evidence (within the guidance of the law) and with advice sought from the Safer Schools Officer or PCSO.

**PCSOs
(External to
Safer Schools
Officers)**

PCSOs are responsible for:

- Meeting at regular intervals with school staff to gather intelligence on issues arising in the community and, where appropriate, making proactive interventions;
- Engaging with pupils, staff and the school community in general to provide safety advice and deliver inputs from the Schools Toolkit to promote awareness and safeguarding;
- Disseminating information to the wider police network and other appropriate agencies, providing a link between all external parties;
- Assisting the school in providing mentoring services for any students at risk of being drawn into anti-social behaviour, CCE and or any form of criminality; and
- Familiarising themselves with the Force Schools Directories to understand the Ofsted rating, number of children in receipt of free school meals (as this reflects economic hardship), persistent absenteeism, SEN children and pupils whose first language is not English.

Prevention and Diversion

Responsibilities

In the area of preventative work, Safer Schools Officers and other external PCs and PCSOs are responsible for:

- Sharing information with identified school staff to assist in safeguarding and preventing offending by young people;
- Working with the youth offending team in which the school is located in identifying and addressing the needs of young people in relation to offending;
- Actively working in partnership towards the encouragement of reporting incidents, reduction of victimisation of pupils and staff through restorative justice, mediation schemes and where necessary the criminal justice processes; and
- Maintaining a visible and accessible presence within the school environment and surrounding community to foster good relationships and build confidence in policing.

Education Awareness

Principles

- All police inputs must be integrated into the school's wider curriculum and ethos, except when delivered in response to a specific incident or unplanned event.
- Inputs must be taken from the Force Schools Toolkit or discussed first with the Education Liaison Officer where one does not exist in the Toolkit.

Safer Schools Officers/PCSOs responsibilities

In the area of educational work, Safer Schools Officers or other officers/PCSOs are responsible for:

- Disseminating education and awareness inputs on issues to prevent engagement in criminal or risky activity;
 - Disseminating education and awareness inputs on issues to prevent any vulnerability to exploitation;
 - Providing Crime Prevention education; and
 - Identifying opportunities for inter-agency working and partnership building in educating children, young people and the wider school community.
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Educational talks by WYP

- When delivering educational inputs, members of WYP are 'school visitors' and as such:
 - Responsibility for managing behaviour in the classroom lies with the class teacher.
 - The teacher must be present in the classroom for the duration of the input.
 - The input must be discussed with the class teacher prior to delivery to check relevance to the particular cohort and to be mindful of any potentially vulnerable children.
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Dealing with Incidents in Schools

Principles

- Officers must recognise and understand the emotional and behavioural difficulties faced by many young people to ensure the correct support and interventions are put in place in agreement with the school and family.
 - The main aim of an officer when dealing with an incident in school is to work in partnership with the school, to ensure the safety of all young people and to support the school when dealing with the incidents on school premises.
 - It is the responsibility of school staff to lead on, deal with and record behavioural incidents as per the school's behaviour policy.
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Use of discretion

- Officers must adopt a consultative approach and use their discretion with schools in determining how incidents must be dealt with, focussing on consistency, proportionality, the wishes of the victim and an awareness of the seriousness of the incident.
 - Officers must be reminded that if they are experiencing difficulty in reaching a decision of how an incident should be progressed, they must contact a supervisory officer at their district.
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Searching pupils

- Individuals must always refer to the Department for Education Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

- Without consent, only authorised school staff can carry out personal searches of pupils, their clothing or their personal property in relation to searching for items which compromise the safety of staff, students and personnel within the school, if there is reasonable suspicion.
 - The schools may need the police to assist with searches if the pupil refuses to hand over any illegal substance/weapon etc. Officers have the powers of search and are able to assist.
 - Schools may not detain a person without their consent for the purpose of a search, however police officers may undertake limited personal searches on school premises or detain for the purposes of doing so.
 - Wherever possible, illegal drugs must be disposed of by the police.
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National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) and Schools

Principles

- Officers must follow the stipulations contained in the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) (particularly, the School's Protocol contained with Annex B, General Rules), Department for Education and the Home Office documentations.
 - Officers must consider the nature, exploitative element, and seriousness of an incident prior to deciding whether to officially record as a crime. All offences appearing on the Serious Offence List contained within Annex B must be recorded as a crime.
 - When being informed of an incident on the school premises, during normal school hours, the head teacher/principal must be informed to initially follow school discipline procedure, where officers must perform duties lawfully in relation to these procedures and the NCRS.
 - Offences involving anyone other than school aged children, on school premises, during normal operating times cannot be dealt with under the School's Protocol.
 - If the victim/parent/guardian/school are not happy for the matter to be dealt with through normal school disciplinary measures, formal police involvement will be required. The incident must be recorded as a crime. If otherwise, a crime related incident.
 - Action must also be determined whether the offence is a serious 'indictable' offence, which has led to, or could lead to, serious harm or loss to any young person. In a case of a serious offence, the officer must remove/arrest the offender from the school premises.
 - Where a formal arrest or interview is necessary (S24 PACE codes G&C), if possible this must be dealt with outside normal school hours.
 - Normal processes for interviewing children and young people in the presence of a parent/carers or other appropriate adult must still be adhered to.
 - For further information see the Crime Recording and Finalisation policy.
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Missing from Education

Introduction

- The procedure for dealing with children and young people who go missing from educational establishments must reflect the nature of the absence, the type of educational establishment and the threat, harm or risk surrounding the individual who is absent. Any school or multi-agency protocols must also be incorporated into proceedings.
 - The procedure takes into account the three key strategic objectives outlined in the Home Office Missing Children and Adult Strategy 2011 – Prevention, Protection and Provision.
 - Absences from school may be managed through multi-agency and multi-systemic work with establishments and relevant partners to identify ways to minimise the number of missing from education incidents, where the Force may be required to be a part of joint patrols and providing inputs to pupils, staff and parents.
 - Safer Schools Officers and PCSOs must work closely with the school to identify children who, for a variety of reasons and vulnerabilities, may have patterns of persistent absenteeism work in partnership with the school and local safeguarding hub to identify potential threat, harm and risk.
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Absent or missing

- Schools will initially ascertain the nature of the absence, but police involvement will only be necessary if the schools are being obstructed from speaking to or visiting the young person, or if there is evidence the young person is at immediate risk, harm or exploitation.
 - Officers must ensure the schools have undertaken appropriate enquiries themselves for the safety of the individual, the school itself and local education authorities that are involved.
 - Unauthorised absence, retrospectively, does not require police intervention (absent from school without parental consent), however, the SSO/PCSO may be part of the multiagency support system to minimise instances.
 - If a young person fails to arrive at school, their whereabouts are unknown and they potentially could be at risk of harm, this young person would be defined as missing.
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Responsibilities

Safer Schools Officers and PCSOs are responsible for:

- Assisting officers assigned to locate missing persons with any school or college-based enquiries, recording information on Niche Occurrence and Misper 7 form;
- Ensuring an efficient information exchange between schools and the police in the case of young people who go missing from education, particularly in respect of those who may be high-risk owing to safeguarding concerns; and

- Assisting with the collaborative aftercare when a 'missing person is located'.
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Legal powers

- Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 allows an officer of superintendent rank or above to issue a Truancy Order.
 - Schedule 4 of the Police Reform Act 2002 extended provisions to grant PCSOs the same power as a constable to remove truants and return them to school or a designated premises, without a formal Truancy Order.
 - A Truancy Order must be authorised by a District Commander, and only made in response to an evidenced and specific problem of persistent absence agreed with the Local Education Authority. (Consideration must be made as to whether the resources involved in devising and monitoring an order would be more efficiently invested in diversionary or educational initiatives.)
 - Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 gives a power to a constable to issue a penalty notice in respect of failure to secure regular attendance at school. The Police Reform Act 2002 allows for officers and PCSOs to issue fixed penalty notices to the parents of truants.
 - Truancy is not a criminal offence and a pupil must not be returned to school or designated premises through force. Unless the pupil has committed, or is likely to commit, an offence there are no powers of arrest.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation policy and guidance:

- APP Engagement and communication
 - Police and Crime Plan
 - NPCC National Strategy for the Policing of Children & Young People 2015
 - Child Centred Policing Best Practice Framework 2022
 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
 - Police Reform Act 2002
 - Education Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Data Protection Act 2018
 - Anti-Social Behaviour policy
 - Community Engagement policy
 - Missing Persons policy
 - Crime Recording and Finalisation policy
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Further Information

Further guidance in relation to this policy can be sought from:

- Home Office Counting Rules
 - Department for Education statutory guidance – Keeping children safe in education
 - Department for Education and ACPO Drug Advice for Schools (DfE, 2012)
 - Force Inter-Agency Information Sharing Protocol (2015)
 - Home Office Missing Children and Adult Strategy (2011)
 - Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
 - Information and Data Management policy; Information Sharing under the GDPR; Ad Hoc – Information Sharing under the GDPR Guidance and NDM
 - All schools have their own policies on a wide range of topic areas including bullying, behaviour, visitors in school etc. They will be located in the school office and are freely accessible to anyone who wishes to read them. Individuals should familiarise themselves with the school's policies in order to uphold and comply with their way of working.
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