



Aston Manor Academy

All different • All equal • All achieving

PHILLIPS STREET, ASTON, BIRMINGHAM B6 4PZ TEL: 0121 359 8108 FAX: 0121 359 2426

EMAIL: enquiry@astonmanoracademy.com

WEBSITE: www.astonmanoracademy.com

HEADTEACHER: JILL SWEENEY



28th January 2021

Dear parents/carers,

The murder that took place last Thursday in Handsworth whereby a young man of 15 years of age was senselessly shot and stabbed has left us all in shock. A young life tragically taken by needless violence. These incidents force us to reflect on our own lives and be grateful for our loved ones, they also bring out our instincts to protect our children as much as we can. They can bring out feelings of fear and sadness in our young people, all at a time when our children are already having to overcome great challenges in their lives.

I would like all students to be aware that although they are not in the school building their teachers are thinking of them and are aware of the difficulties they may be facing. We can offer support for students who feel that they need to talk to someone if they are feeling as though they need emotional support. Please contact Ms Coleman if you would like access to further support at scolem@astonmanoracademy.com

As a parent, brother, sister, cousin, friend please spare a thought for the family that have lost a loved one. For any of us to lose someone so tragically is truly devastating. Youth violence does not only impact on those directly involved, but on the whole wider community in which we all belong.

Aston Manor Academy is not only a place to educate our young people but our role first and foremost is to keep everyone safe and provide an environment in which students can feel safe and thrive. Please can you ensure that whilst we are in lockdown students are in the house; that if they are out you know where they are going; that you know who their friends are, and that you are aware of what they are doing online. Please try and keep the lines of communication open with your child and talk to them about how they are feeling and any fears they may have.

I would appeal to you to contact the police if you have any information about this crime using the anonymous link below. This is a direct portal to the investigation team and any information could help the investigation and lead to justice.

<https://mipp.police.uk/operation/20HQ20H42-PO1>

As a community we can work together to ensure that our young people can grow up in safety and thrive. I would ask that if you know anything please help the police in any way you can.

Please be safe,

Yours Sincerely

J Sweeney
Headteacher





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Dear Parents/Carers and Students,

COUNTY LINES / EXPLOITATION INTENSIFICATION PERIOD 1ST – 14TH FEBRUARY 2021



It is likely you have heard the term 'County Lines'. This is a growing form of criminal activity that exists nationally, regionally across the West Midlands and here in Birmingham. County Lines is a term used to describe how gangs and organised criminal networks export illegal drugs into other (mainly rural) areas by exploiting children and vulnerable adults, often without them realising it. Gang members may use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to do this. We are clear that this is child exploitation.

WARNING SIGNS

We want to support parents and carers to keep children safe; listed below are some warning signs of 'County Lines' exploitation for you to look out for. Often, these are behavioural changes such as:

- Returning home late, staying out all night or going missing
- Being found in areas away from home
- Increasing drug use, or being found to have large amounts of drugs on them
- Being secretive about who they are talking to and where they are going
- Unexplained absences from school, college, training or work
- Unexplained money, phone(s), clothes or jewellery
- Increasingly disruptive or aggressive behaviour
- Using sexual, drug-related or violent language you wouldn't expect them to know
- Coming home with injuries or looking particularly dishevelled
- Having hotel cards or keys to unknown places.

Birmingham schools are working together with West Midlands Police and partners, including The Children's Society, to prevent and spot signs of exploitation at the earliest opportunity. We're keen that parents are also aware of 'County Lines', know where to ask for more support if they are worried and know that you will be listened to and supported.

If you have any concerns about your child, speak to them calmly and explain the risks and consequences. You may wish to contact a member of the Pastoral Team at school if you feel you need support or believe your child is at risk. We can talk through your concerns and plan a way forward together. Please take a look at the below link, here you will find useful guidance on the referrals to make if you have concerns.

<http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/child-exploitation#:~:text=The%20Birmingham%20Safeguarding%20Children%20Partnership,with%20children%20and%20young%20people.>

If you or your child are aware that other young people in school or the community are at risk of 'County Lines' or any criminal exploitation, you should contact the police directly via 101. Alternatively, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or via www.crimestoppers-uk.org. If a crime is taking place or a life is in danger, call 999 immediately.





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There are some links overleaf that you may find useful for more information

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-is-county-lines> (on The Children's Society's website there are also guides for parents available in 14 different languages).

<https://www.fearless.org/professionals/resources/gangs>

<https://www.youandco.org.uk/crime-info/violent-crime-facts/gangs-and-street-violence>

[https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/help-with-county-lines-gangs-and-similar-issues?gclid=EAlaIQobChMInvuOiPKT7glViBkGAB2qkQ9GEAAYyAAEgIBFfD_BwEhttps://west-](https://www.stgilestrust.org.uk/help-with-county-lines-gangs-and-similar-issues?gclid=EAlaIQobChMInvuOiPKT7glViBkGAB2qkQ9GEAAYyAAEgIBFfD_BwEhttps://west-midlands.police.uk/your-options/county-lines)

[midlands.police.uk/your-options/county-lines](https://west-midlands.police.uk/your-options/county-lines)

Yours faithfully,

Head/Principal Name
Headteacher
Aston Manor Academy

Mat Shaer
Chief Superintendent - East NPU
West Midlands Police

Steve Graham
Chief Superintendent - West NPU
West Midlands Police

