

Link between exclusions and knife-crime?

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Recent press coverage of an increase in knife attacks has raised concerns over what can be done to tackle what is fast becoming a national crisis. One area of focus is the role of schools, given the apparent link between pupil exclusions and violence.

Bringing a knife into school is a serious breach of a school's behaviour policy. Allowing that pupil to remain at the school is likely to seriously harm the welfare of others at the school as it not only puts that pupil and others at risk of harm, but can also lead to an inference that carrying a knife is not overly serious. This is why schools often impose the last-resort sanction of permanent exclusion in order to convey to all pupils the seriousness of carrying knives and to deter others from doing the same.

Exclusions appeals/reviews following knife incidents should review what schools do to prevent knife-crime in the first place. Regularly communicating and enforcing clear behaviour policies, tackling gang culture and bullying through active policies, workshops, PHSE lessons and getting various agencies such as the police and charities to hold talks about knife-crime are all steps that schools can take to help combat this complex issue.

Contact



Hayley O'Sullivan

Senior Associate

hayley.o'sullivan@brownejacobson.com

+44 (0)121 237 3994

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