Dear Parents/Guardians,

Working together with West Midlands Police – Smith’s Wood and Castle Bromwich Neighborhood Team, the Academy will be utilising a range of approaches to educate young people on the dangers of getting drawn into knife and weapons crime.

Supt Ian Parnell, West Midlands Police’s lead on knife crime, said: “One knife-related crime is one too many”.

“The consequences of carrying knives can be catastrophic. We’ve seen people suffer very serious injuries, while offenders can expect to spend many years behind bars.

“If we look at the level of knife crime across the area we can see that although the statistics have increased recently - mirroring the national picture - it comes following a considerable decline leading up to the last few years. Nevertheless, there is still much work to do.

“If you carry or use a knife you are likely to be arrested and prosecuted and, if found guilty, likely to face a substantial prison sentence.”

Figures from September 2016 to date, which categorised the figures into areas of the West Midlands, revealed the largest chunk of knife crimes took place at Birmingham schools. Police recorded 69 reports of children carrying knives at Birmingham schools, whereas other areas had a significantly smaller number of knife-related crimes.

As part of a proactive approach to address this worrying issue the Academy will be using a range of measures and interventions. This will include the use of informative assemblies, group workshops, parents/guardians and community member’s presentation, direct one to one work with students who may be at risk and random knife and weapon searches.

These interventions will assist in the following ways:

* Confront young people with the consequences of offending
* Help young people to develop a sense of personal responsibility
* Manage risk to young people within the community
* Reinforce the serious nature of weapon-related crime
* Encourage reparation
* Define, agree and reinforce the responsibilities of parents

Key points – Confiscation and Screening

Academy staff can seize any prohibited item found as a result of a search. They can also seize any item, however found, which they consider harmful or detrimental to Academy values and policies.

The law allows schools to require students to undergo screening by a walk-through or hand-held metal detector (arch or wand) even if they do not suspect them of having a weapon, and without pupil consent.

\*More information for Smith’s Wood Academy search and confiscate protocol can be shared by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead – Mrs Phillipa Brookes