

South Yorkshire Police
60 Attercliffe Common
Attercliffe
Sheffield
S9 2AD

19 March 2026

Dear parent/carers

I am writing to you following the shocking stabbing of a 14-year-old boy in Sheffield on Wednesday (18 March). You and your families may have seen this in the news and it may well have prompted some tough, and possibly scary, conversations at home about knife crime.

Wednesday's incident occurred on Market Square in the Woodhouse area of the city, but I've no doubt that whatever area of the city you call home, it will have sent ripples through your community.

The victim in this particular incident was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries, but thankfully he is now stable. His family was put through every parent's worst nightmare as they did not know if their son would come home.

That is the brutal reality of knife crime in South Yorkshire, and the reason why I have asked your child's school to pass on this letter to you today.

Let me say this as plainly as I can: this is senseless, it is devastating, and it is utterly unacceptable. A child's life was brought to the brink over a moment of violence that should never have happened.

Behind every incident like this is a trail of trauma with families shattered, communities shaken and futures potentially destroyed.

I am deeply concerned by what feels like a growing disregard for human life. Carrying a knife is not normal. It is not inevitable. And we must not allow it to become something we simply accept.

To you, I am making a personal plea to ask you to please lean in. Ask the difficult questions. Have the challenging conversations. Know where your children are, who they are with, and what is happening in their lives. I understand how hard that can be, but silence and distance create space for risk. Your involvement could genuinely be the difference between safety and tragedy.

Ensure that children know carrying a knife will not keep them safe. It puts them in more danger, not less. In seconds, a situation can spiral, and they could take a life, or lose their own. No argument, no moment of fear or anger, is worth that.

We will do everything in our power to find those responsible for Wednesday's attack and bring them to justice. You will see more officers on the streets in local areas, and we will act decisively.

But policing alone cannot undo this. This is about values; about the kind of society we want to be. We cannot accept South Yorkshire being a place where young people feel they need weapons, or where violence like this becomes routine.

It is just over a year since we tragically lost 15-year-old Harvey Willgoose in a knife attack. Another boy remains in hospital today and his family is in pieces. We cannot let this happen again.

If you or your child has information about someone suspected to be carrying a knife, please tell your school, or report it to us either online (www.southyorkshire.police.uk) or by calling 101. Always dial 999 in an emergency.

If you don't feel comfortable speaking to us directly, you can pass on what you know via the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or by visiting www.crimestoppers-uk.org. The Crimestoppers youth service, which enables young people to pass on information about crime 100% anonymously, is available at www.crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless

For advice about how to approach a conversation about knife crime with a young person, an animation aimed at children in their early years of secondary school, and other useful resources, please visit the Knives Take Lives website – www.knifestakelives.co.uk

Yours faithfully

Chief Superintendent Jamie Henderson