



# The Astley Cooper School

Aspiration, Determination, Integrity

Dear Parent/Carer,

You may be aware of the term 'County Lines' as it has been reported in the national press over recent years. It is used to describe the networks of gangs and organised criminals who export illegal drugs into other areas of the country, often smaller areas, using dedicated mobile phone lines known as 'deal lines.'

Dealers will take orders from drug users through mobile phones and exploit children and vulnerable people to move and store drugs and money. Often they do this using blackmail and intimidation and violence.

Children and vulnerable people can be groomed online or face-to-face by a strangers or someone they know. They can receive money, mobiles, credit, expensive clothing, jewellery, or other items/gifts in exchange for a specified task.

We want to reassure you that you are not receiving this letter because our schools have a problem with County Lines activity but it's important you know the risks and what you can do to help as this becomes more of an issue in the local area. This letter forms just a small part of the partnership work which is ongoing to combat this criminal activity. The activity also involves educating children and highlighting the dangers and consequences of being involved in gang culture, violence or drugs.

Students are going to receive talks in school over the coming term from those with experience in this area. Paul Hannaford is going to address the dangers of drugs, alcohol, knife crime and gangs with certain students with others listening to speakers from the charity 'Lives Not Knives'. You can find out more information about [Paul](#) and ['Lives Not Knives'](#) by clicking on their names.

There is a 'Lives Not Knives' event supported by Hertfordshire police on 19 April 2023 at the The Law Building, De Havilland Campus in Hatfield from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. If any parent wants to take their child along to listen to the important information available, please let us know by emailing [admin@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk) using the subject 'LNV event' so we can inform the organisers. A flyer for the event is attached below.

There are several signs to look out for that may indicate someone is involved in county lines:

- repeatedly going missing from school or home and being found in other areas
- having money, new clothes or electronic devices and they can't explain how they paid for them
- getting high numbers of texts or phone calls, being secretive about who they're speaking to
- decline in school or work performance
- significant changes in emotional or physical well-being



Headteacher: Sam Orsborne  
St Agnells Lane, Hemel Hempstead  
HP2 7HL 01442394141  
[admin@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk)  
Twitter@Astley\_Cooper



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No one school in Hemel Hempstead or East Dacorum is more or less affected by these problems. We know that the overwhelming majority of young people will never be affected by this issue but a conversation with your child will help us collectively make a difference. It is critical that young people know that there is help available if they are involved in County Lines activity and that they can get support from home, school and agencies who work with young people.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact a member of our safeguarding team - [safeguarding@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@astleycooper.herts.sch.uk) or [safeguarding@adeyfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto:safeguarding@adeyfield.herts.sch.uk)

Thank you for your support in this matter

Mr Orsborne  
Headteacher  
The Astley Cooper School

Ms D Mason  
Principal  
The Adeyfield Academy

You are personally invited to a  
**LIVES NOT KNIVES** event brought to you by  
Hertfordshire Constabulary CYP Gangs & Schools Team

An opportunity to come and listen first hand to a variety of inspirational speakers with real life experience of knife crime and gang affiliation.

**Wednesday 19th April 2023 | 5.30pm - 8.30pm**

**The Law Building, De Havilland Campus**

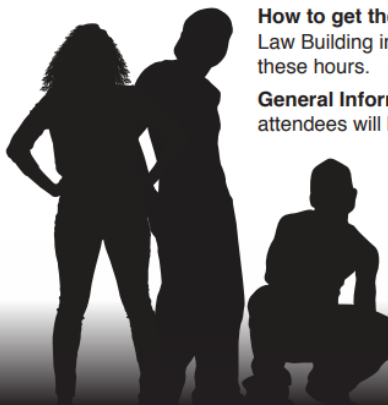
**Mosquito Way, Hatfield AL10 9UF**



**How to get there:** Postcode for Sat Nav AL10 9UF. **Parking:** There is parking directly outside the Law Building in the University Car Park. It is a pay and display but this is free of charge during these hours.

**General Information:** The event will start promptly at 5.30pm, please arrive in plenty of time. All attendees will be required to walk through a security arch.

- After the speakers there will be complimentary pizza and refreshments provided.
- Each young person will need to attend with one appropriate adult only (parent or professional).



Unfortunately the event is not suitable for younger siblings, also babies/toddlers cannot be accommodated.



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