

YOUNG PEOPLE AND GANGS

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information for parents and carers



Young people may consider joining a gang for various reasons such as a need to belong to a group, perceived safety / protection or perceived improved status. Although the chances are relatively low it is important to be aware of possible warning signs.

Behaviour may change for many reasons as part of 'growing up' and these changes do not necessarily mean that a young person is involved in a gang, however below are some indicators that your child may be becoming involved in a gang culture:

- Joining groups linked to a gang on social networking sites (Facebook, Myspace, YouTube etc)
- Interest in gang-influenced music, films and games
- New interest in one or two specific colours or clothing types / brands / logos (bandanas, beads, belts, hats, shoes, shoelaces, jewellery)
- Unexplained money or belongings such as clothing or jewellery
- Carrying / using weapons
- Suspected drug or alcohol misuse
- Withdrawing from family or usual friends
- Keeping secrets / wanting more privacy
- Staying out late with no explanation
- Missing or showing a change in attitude to school
- Sudden negative opinions about 'authority' or change in language when referring to 'authority'
- Increase in confrontational behaviour
- New use of hand signals to communicate with friends
- Unusual drawings or symbols on schoolbooks, clothing, notebooks, or even walls
- Changes in hair or dress style and/or having a group of friends who have the same hair or dress style/colours
- Injuries that could have been gained through fighting

Advice from young people is that if you are worried about your child, do not push them away, speak to them about any concerns face to face.

THINK FIRST *before you do what you do.*

For more information or advice, visit:

- www.fearless.org
- www.dudleysafeandsound.org
- Family lives parent line 0808 800 2222

If you have any concerns please contact:

- West Midlands Police on their non emergency number 101
- Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111