



# THAMES VALLEY POLICE SCHOOLS OFFICER NEWSLETTER

BUCKS LCU Aylesbury Vale April 2024

## TVP SCHOOLS OFFICERS

As Schools Officers we aim to proactively work with children, young people and their educational establishments to maximise early intervention, prevention and safeguarding opportunities. We aim to enforce the law in a positive way and to act with professional discretion to avoid young people entering the criminal justice system unnecessarily.

Police working with schools undertake a diverse range of roles and activities along a wide spectrum of work. This includes enforcement and safety of students (e.g. tackling crime and behaviours in school), contributing to young people's knowledge, and multi-agency preventative work.

## SAFER SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP (SSP)

Thames Valley Police embraces the Safer Schools Partnership (SSP) approach to engaging with schools, so it is worth a reminder of what this is.

Incidents that occur on school premise or spill out of school, involves students from the school, and fits the required classification category can be dealt with restoratively under SSP. This also includes online harassment happening between students as a result of them attending the same school. This is not an optional process, it is a Home Office requirement, so parents should report incidents to the school if the school are not already aware.

The school takes primacy in investigating by taking school statements from those involved and witnesses, collecting evidence like CCTV, and obtaining an overview of the incident. If an incident is reported to the police we will notify the school, liaise with the relevant investigating teacher, and if appropriate, deal with the incident under SSP guidance. Police cannot provide additional punishment if parents are dissatisfied the school procedure and outcome.

SSP lets us support schools and take a simpler, more common sense path in dealing with young people for most low-level school based incidents.

This newsletter highlights some of the common themes we are seeing.

We are the Schools Officers for Buckinghamshire and cover the Aylesbury Vale Schools within the Buckinghamshire area. Our role is to engage with and work closely with schools to support them in making their school a safe environment. PC 3594 Lucy Hobley and PC 5664 Janine Daniel.

## INDECENT IMAGES (NUDES) – KNOW THE RISKS

We have seen a rise in the reporting of a variety of sexual image related incidents among students.

These include pressure for photos, taking sexual pictures of themselves, and sharing images. The NSPCC reported that nearly every male child by the end of year 8 (age 13) has accessed unprecedented levels of porn online; they believe this has driven an unrealistic expectation of sexual conduct. The report indicated girls, in turn, feel pressured to participate due to a variety of reasons, from social pressure and insecurity.

**It is a criminal offence** to make / take / possess / distribute / publish / show indecent images of a person under 18 or incite someone else to do so, even if the people doing any of these things are under 18 themselves.

When image offences are reported Police are required to record a crime. However under College of Policing guidance, where applicable, the resolution will be restorative with safeguarding not criminalising in mind (unless there is reason to follow the criminal path).

Sending a nude image of themselves can leave a child open to grooming and/or blackmail. The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) have seen an increase in child sexual extortion reports. Sexually coerced extortion or child 'sextortion' is a type of blackmail usually involving a threat to share intimate or naked photos or videos to coerce a young person to pay money, share further images or do something else against their will. New IWF data on child sexual extortion reports, the majority of which come via the **Report Remove** service run jointly by the IWF and **Childline**, showed that boys were targeted most often in the reports; and three in five reports involved 16 and 17-year-olds.

## USEFUL LINKS

[Rise in child sexual abuse image offences | NSPCC](#)  
[Preventing online harm and abuse | NSPCC Learning](#)

[www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) for reporting

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) for information

[www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org)

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**REPORT  
REMOVE**

## COUNTY LINE EXPLOITATION

**Unseen UK** expressed deep concern about the rise in child criminal exploitation, including county lines. County lines is a growing threat, with gangs using social media to target, groom and exploit children across the UK. Social media is used to target children and force them into drug trafficking. Between 2017 and 2022, online grooming crimes surged by 82%, with 73% involving platforms like Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Between 2021 and 2022, the Unseen UK helpline saw a just over 16% rise in criminal exploitation cases, impacting both boys and girls.

Unseen UK has launched the [#LikesToLines](#) campaign. The campaign provides parents and professionals tools to identify and protect children from county lines exploitation. I encourage you to look at the [#LikesToLines](#) campaign page which is packed with resources and knowledge to understand the tactics of exploitation, with actionable steps to keep safe and fight back.

### USEFUL LINKS

[Keeping children safe online | NSPCC](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND FRIENDSHIPS

Young people have a lot to negotiate in today's world of friendships, much of which is conducted using social media. We see the risks and the fallout of behaviours relating to social media use.

How we communicate with each other online can have an huge effect. The words we use and the comments we make affects people physically and emotionally. If it is persistent and ongoing it is called cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is any form of bullying which takes place online. It can be done over smartphones, tablets, online gaming, chat forums, social and other media.

There is no legal definition of bullying or cyberbullying but if it is reported to the Police it can be dealt with under legislation such as the Protection from Harassment Act, the Malicious Communications Act, Computer Misuse Act, Telecommunications Act, or the Public Order Act.

Bullying at school is normally best dealt with by the school. By law all state schools must have a behavior policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy is decided by the school. All teachers, pupils and parents should be made aware of what it is, and is normally found on the school website. TVP Schools Officers aim to work with schools to support any bullying policies they have in place.

*"it's a joke and we are just having fun."*

said to a 15 year old girl

## MONEY MULES - DON'T BE FOOLED

Parents and guardians are being urged to warn their children about the dangers of becoming a money mule, as figures reveal the number of 14-18 year olds misusing their bank accounts has risen (see [Newsroom | Updates on our Insights, Trends and Fraud Solutions | Cifas](#)).

The [Don't Be Fooled](#) awareness campaign warns parents and guardians of the risks of their children becoming a money mule.

### WHAT IS A MONEY MULE?

A money mule is someone who transfers stolen money through their own bank account on behalf of someone else and is paid for doing so. Criminals need money mules to launder the profits of their crimes and young people are increasingly being targeted to become money mules.

Young people are often unaware that acting as a money mule is illegal. They are approached online or in person, including through social media, at school, college or sports clubs. Sometimes people they know persuade them to take part, often because they are also acting as money mules. Mules will usually be unaware of where the money comes from – commonly fraud and scams – and that it can go on to fund crimes such as drug dealing and people trafficking.

### BEING A MONEY MULE IS ILLEGAL

When someone is caught, their bank account will be closed, and they will have problems getting student loans, mobile phone contracts and credit in the future. They could even face arrest for money laundering which could result in prison sentence.

### WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Tell-tale signs that someone might be involved could be them suddenly having extra cash, buying expensive new clothes or top-of-the-range mobile phones and gadgets with very little explanation as to how they got the money. They may also become more secretive, withdrawn or appear stressed.

If you are worried about anyone who might be caught up in money muling, you can contact **Crimestoppers** anonymously on 0800 555 111. Please **do not** attempt to contact any individual you suspect of organising money muling. If you think you may have been a victim of fraud contact your bank or card issuer as soon as possible using the number advertised on their website and report the incident to **Action Fraud**.

Have a look/listen to this recently produced music video that highlights the methods of the loanshark: <https://youtu.be/Wxwjfm1VpkQ>.

### USEFUL LINKS

[www.stoploansharks.co.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.co.uk)