

Thames Valley Police - Safer Schools Partnership

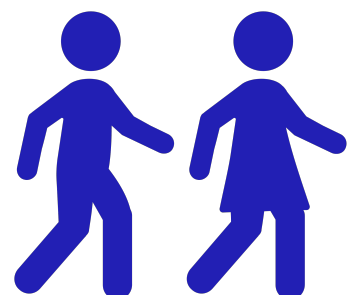
What is the Thames Valley Police Safer Schools Partnership (SSP)?

The SSP is a framework for Thames Valley Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for the Thames Valley and secondary schools in the Thames Valley area. In order to ensure equitable and consistent service provision, the SSP focuses on TVP's support specifically for secondary schools and schools and colleges educating students in Key Stage 3 and above.

Primary schools remain valued partners and can be supported under local policing arrangements through TVP Neighbourhood Policing colleagues as well as accessing support via the OPCC Crime Education Hub as detailed within the SSP.

What is our vision for the Partnership?

To ensure all children learning across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire have access to people and resources that enable them to make educated choices and reduce their risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime, thus impacting positively on their safety and the wider safety of our communities.



What are the aims of the Safer Schools Partnership?

The aims of our Safer Schools Partnership are to:

- Ensure that the whole school community including our children, school staff, parents, and the local community have a safe environment in which to study, work and visit.
- Ensure all Thames Valley Police activity in schools is conducted in line with TVP's Child Centred Policing Strategy, treating every child as a child, not a mini-adult, each with their own unique experiences and heritage.
- Help children deal with situations that may result in their becoming victims of crime and bullying.
- Take early action to ensure pupil safety and to prevent children from being drawn into crime or antisocial behaviour.
- Improve children's relations with the police and the local community.
- Provide access to resources to support schools with delivery of crime and community safety education through the Crime Education Hub.

The partnership provides a fantastic opportunity for the Police and the OPCC to engage with children, to support their education, work alongside schools to offer advice and a positive influence. This will aid in raising awareness around crime prevention, community responsibility and personal safety.

Every school educating students in Key Stage 3 and older will be supported by a named Schools Officer from Thames Valley Police and have access to the Crime Education Hub developed by the OPCC.

What is the role of the Thames Valley Police Schools Officer?

The Schools Officer (SO) is a police officer who works closely with a named contact at each school to support the safety of all students, staff and visitors to schools. They provide a regular uniform presence in schools and act as a conduit between schools and policing colleagues.



In partnership with teachers, education services and related agencies, the SO will:

- Have a geographical responsibility for local schools based upon their Local Command Unit (LCU).
- Develop trust and confidence within the school community to improve relations between police, school staff, pupils, parents and members of the community in which the school is located. Trust will be built through consistent, equitable and procedurally just responses to reported incidents and timely and proportionate support to all schools.
- Contribute to a partnership approach, advising schools of appropriate responses to incidents and liaising with police colleagues when dealing with reported crime.

Prevention

- Provide a visible, accessible policing presence within the school and the wider community in a consistent manner.
- Strive for continual improvement in our service provision, seeking and acting upon feedback.
- Work with the school to deliver crime education and improve community safety.
- Share information where appropriate with identified school staff to prevent offending and harm to children, staff, and the wider community (Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

Diversion

- Plan with school staff the most appropriate way of dealing with an incident. Where the police are the main investigators of an offence this will be dealt with as a formal police matter.
- Identify, support and work with children regarded as being at high risk of victimisation, offending and social exclusion.
- Establish and support both existing and new means of dealing with incidents including use of restorative justice approaches.

Education

- Attending and contributing to appropriate multi-agency meetings when agreed by the LCU, based upon local priority and capacity.
- Participate in initiatives to improve the school-learning environment and contribute towards community priorities.
- Engage with schools to promote crime education through inputs on key themes at appropriate age points as agreed through schools community surveys.

What is the role of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner?

The Police and Crime Commissioner's role is to hold the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police to account for the performance of the Force, effectively making the police answerable to the communities they serve. The Office of the PCC (the OPCC) also have a wider role in promoting community safety and working with partner agencies to improve support for victims of crime.

In July 2025 the PCC published an Education Strategy with the aim of promoting a consistent approach to crime education across the Thames Valley that focuses on prevention, improves trust in policing and reduces both the risk of children offending and becoming victims of crime.

The Strategy sets out a series of commitments from the OPCC to support the delivery of this aim, including:



Strengthened
engagement



Developing a Crime
Education Hub



Sharing an annual
online survey

1. Strengthened engagement with local authority Directors of Children's Services and Directors of Education with an annual meeting to discuss current areas of concern and priorities for crime education, opportunities for collaborative working and any support offer from the PCC over the coming year.



2. Developing a Crime Education Hub within the OPCC website to provide links to crime education resources developed by the OPCC and partner agencies for children, parents, teachers and wider professionals, links to local crime data, details for how to contact your School's Officer and an overview of projects being funded by the PCC.



3. Sharing an annual online survey for education settings to gather feedback on engagement with Thames Valley Police, identify opportunities for learning and improvement and seek insight into priorities for crime education to inform future delivery.



The role of the PCC is set to be abolished in May 2028. Governance arrangements in relation to policing in the Thames Valley are still to be determined. The PCC will continue to uphold the commitments made in his Education Strategy until May 2028.

What is the role of your school?

To provide a nominated Safer Schools liaison staff member who will be the first point of contact for the SO.



The nominated school staff member recognises the following:

- Responsibility for school discipline remains with the school and its staff.
- To communicate the aims of the Safer Schools Partnership to all members of the school community.
- To adhere to the National Crime Reporting Guidelines for schools/police.
- Contribute to a partnership approach when dealing with any issues of safety in or around the school and where appropriate agree an approach for involving Thames Valley Police to ensure most appropriate outcome for all parties.
- Ensure staff are aware of their own responsibilities and those of the police, clarifying which incidents can be dealt with by the school and those that should be reported to the police.
- Provide a forum for the SO to be identified to all school staff and pupils, including ancillary staff, governors, and parents.

Dealing with incidents within the school

In an emergency, always call 999. This should be used when:

- There is a danger to life or,
- Risk of serious injury or,
- A serious crime is in progress or about to happen.

All non-emergency incidents reported to Thames Valley Police should be via 101 or online at www.thamesvalley.police.uk/ro/report/.

Please note: Schools Officers should not be contacted personally to report a crime.

Many incidents can be dealt with and resolved internally without the need to contact the police. Schools should record all decisions and actions taken and ensure that parents and carers are informed throughout. Thames Valley Schools are encouraged in the first instance to refer to the [NPCC guidance](#)

In line with the [Home Office Crime Recording Schools Protocol](#), Thames Valley Police will not necessarily record all incidents as a crime. As long as the incident is recorded correctly according to the school behaviour policies, unless it is specifically requested by either the school, the student or their parents/carers, incidents that have been or could be dealt with by the school will be recorded as a Crime Related Incident (CRI). This avoids a child being unnecessarily recorded as a suspect on police systems, allowing for police knowledge of the incident without formal action being taken against the child.

Where a crime is recorded and the school is the appropriate agency to deal with the incident it is likely that the offence will be finalised as being dealt with by another agency ([Crime outcomes in England and Wales: Technical Annex - GOV.UK](#)). This is a formal action outcome which reflects the seriousness of the incident whilst allowing for the most appropriate agency to deal. It is essential that the victim (or the person acting on their behalf) is aware of this outcome before it is finalised. This outcome is commonly referred to as Outcome 20 or Code 20.

In line with the HOCR Schools Protocol, this SSP crime reporting advice relates only to incidents that happen on school premises whilst the school is open. Incidents or crimes outside of this criteria, for example in the community on the way to or from school, may still be dealt with under Outcome 20 if it is related to an ongoing issue that is based in school or if both the school and TVP agree that is in the best interest of all parties.

Any incidents that are investigated by Thames Valley Police and referred to Youth Justice Services will be managed in line with the Child First approach, seeing children as children, focusing on their rights, needs, and potential, and diverting them from the justice system where possible.

When available and appropriate, SOs may support the school by providing education following an incident to prevent recurrences but the management of, including any consequences for, the incident are the responsibility of the school.

Escalating concerns and sharing intelligence

Schools are encouraged to be professionally curious and to prioritise a safeguarding culture. This will involve sharing information with Thames Valley Police and other statutory agencies to reduce the risk of harm to children. This harm may come from exploitation, radicalisation, domestic abuse, child abuse, extra-familial harm or peer on peer abuse.

Thames Valley schools should adhere to the legislative responsibilities contained within statutory guidance such as Working together to safeguard children and Keeping children safe in education.

For guidance on reporting concerns about a student you think may be susceptible to radicalisation or terrorism please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-a-referral-to-prevent>. A referral to Prevent will be automatically shared to MASH.

Please note: Prevent referrals are for children vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism only. Any additional safeguarding concerns i.e. child criminal or sexual exploitation, abuse or neglect should be referred to local safeguarding services such as MASH directly.

Schools should contact their local authority via MASH to report concerns about non-criminal, familial or extra-familial harm or contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to report concerns about any other trusted adult. Further information on the support offer and front door services are available from each Thames Valley Local Authority.

Submitting intelligence to Thames Valley Police

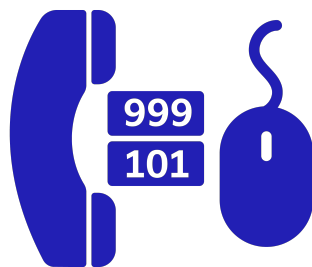
Thames Valley Police rely on information from the community to understand local and wider issues.

Crucial information may fill gaps and link other pieces of information together. Alongside reporting a crime and telling us about possible terrorist activity, schools can share non-urgent information. It is a safe and direct way to provide information which may help with investigations and inform actions.

To share community partnership intelligence (CPI) with TVP, go to <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/partners/partner-services>.

Please note:

- When you submit a CPI Thames Valley Police have not accepted responsibility. Schools still need to take appropriate steps to action information and safeguard the person affected.
- This is not a public link and shouldn't be used outside of a professional setting.



Crime Education

In partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner(OPCC) and following consultation with school leaders, SOs will routinely offer inputs on key harms to pre-agreed year groups. These may change each academic year in line with annual consultation commissioned by the OPCC.

Inputs outside of the annually published harm types may be considered on a case by case basis if a developing need is noted by the school or the SO.

All material presented and shared by SOs will be age appropriate and trauma-aware but to ensure that sessions are delivered in a safe, positive learning environment schools should adhere to the following:

- A teacher must always be present in the classroom. This enables teachers to be aware of the content that may lead to future discussions and questions from the pupils. This is also a necessary health and safety and safeguarding precaution.
- Classroom teachers need to be aware of the session topic and content, prior to the lesson and inform the officer of any pupil with specific additional learning needs or any who may be vulnerable to the topic being delivered.
- Teachers need to be aware that classroom management is the teacher's responsibility.

Missing

“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.” When a person is reported missing the police’s primary responsibility is to safeguard the missing person. Careful investigation is required to ensure that the risks of harm are fully explored and assessed, and that police resources are then appropriately assigned, if that is necessary.

With regards to children who are missing Education, schools should refer to statutory guidance, Children Missing Education.

When a child is expected to be at school and is not, in the first instance schools should follow their own attendance policies. If after contacting parents and carers, a student’s absence from school causes concern, schools should consult statutory Missing Children and Adults Strategy.

Schools are expected to be mindful of reasons for a child being missing or absent from school, including the risk of exploitation.

In cases where a child threatens to leave school having arrived, schools are reminded of their power to use appropriate force to keep a child safe (Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force). If they believe that the child leaving places them in immediate danger then it may be appropriate to prevent them leaving.

Guidance from the College of Policing confirms truanting is not normally something that should be dealt with as a missing person investigation. Reporting all such cases would place an impossible burden on the police service. Aggravating factors or information which suggest harm or risk of harm to the child should be reported to Thames Valley Police immediately.

Working with the Schools Officer

Thames Valley Police SOs are operationally active officers who wear uniform and carry their personal protective equipment. Specific requests to attend out of uniform may be considered on a case by case basis subject to approval from a supervisor.

For operational reasons it may necessary for Thames Valley Police to deploy SOs elsewhere to meet exceptional demand. In this instance as much notice as possible will be given and efforts will be made to rearrange any schools commitments as soon as possible.

SOs are unlikely to be the investigating officer in most cases linked to the school, but can act as a point of contact between the school and TVP colleagues. Please be aware that individual investigating officers may still contact school staff to request evidence or provide updates as necessary.



When sharing information with the police, schools can apply the Crime (& Taxation) exemption as this applies to organisations subject to the UK GDPR where personal data is shared for the purposes of the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders, without fear of breaching UK GDPR or The Data Protection Act 2018. Where safeguarding concerns involve crime, the crime exemption may also be used, however Schedule 8 of the Data Protection Act 2018 sets out conditions to share personal data for safeguarding purposes, where it is necessary and proportionate to do so.

SOs will not undertake any task asked of them by a school for which there is no police power, e.g. The SO cannot be authorised by a head teacher to conduct a search under s.550ZA of the Education Act 1996 where there is no corresponding police power to conduct such a search.

Whilst police officers have the power of lawful arrest, PACE 1984 Code C states that a [student] should not be arrested at a place of education unless unavoidable and that the head teacher should always be informed. Thames Valley Police will not arrest a student in school unless absolutely necessary.

Similarly, Thames Valley Police will only interview a student suspected of committing an offence at school in exceptional circumstances and with the prior agreement of the head teacher or their nominee.

The SO will be vetted to Recruitment Vetting (RV) and Management Vetting (MV) levels in accordance with section 5.10 of the College of Policing 'Vetting Authorised Professional Practice'.

"Where posts require DBS checks, the RV or MV is sufficient [as] it incorporates checks against the DBS barred list on the PND. Further DBS checks are not required".

This level of vetting means the SO is suitable to be unaccompanied within the school. SOs will however adhere to school policies regarding accompaniment if requested as a guest of the school.

Thames Valley Police SOs can be contacted via the following email addresses:

BerkshireEastSchools@thamesvalley.police.uk

BerkshireWestSchools@thamesvalley.police.uk

BuckinghamshireSchools@thamesvalley.police.uk

MiltonKeynesSchools@thamesvalley.police.uk

OxfordshireSchools@thamesvalley.police.uk

Please note, email addresses are for general contact only. **They are not monitored 24/7 and must not be used to report crimes or safeguarding concerns.**