

17 January 2022

Dear Parent / Guardian

Anti-social Behaviour

We are writing to you in our capacity as the lead responsible officers for community safety in Warrington on behalf of Cheshire Police and Warrington Borough Council and our aim in doing so is both to alert you and to seek your assistance to stem what is increasingly becoming an unacceptable level of anti-social behaviour (ASB) developing within pockets of our communities and particularly within our Town Centre.

We appreciate that this behaviour is carried out by a minority of young people and we want to assure you that we are in no way intending to stereotype young people across our community. However, we do feel that as responsible parents, who continually have to balance providing sufficient freedoms to allow children to grow and mature into responsible citizens whilst also maintaining an appropriate level of parental control and guardianship, you would want to be informed of the real issues that are now prevalent within our Town Centre.

ASB is always an ongoing issue at a typically lower level, it is generally cyclical and can be linked to school holidays, also influenced by the weather. It would be unrealistic to suggest that we can completely eradicate ASB, and at the same time, we fully acknowledge and support that youths congregating together to have fun, hang out and share mutual interests is not ASB and they are fully entitled to do so.

However, over the past few months, there have been various incidents arising, particularly in the vicinity of the Bus Interchange and the new Time Square development and the list below are just examples of the behaviours emerging;

- Youths being disruptive, threatening behaviour to security personnel, allegations of racial abuse in the bus interchange and at Cineworld.
- An allegation of a physical assault.
- Vulnerable adults and their carers have received abuse and threats of violence.
- Bike riding and e-scooters being used in and around the Bus Interchange, including the "live" lanes, where the buses reverse; there is a great risk that this could result in a serious accident.
- Young Persons indicating they are vulnerable with no money to cover the fare home to outlying areas.
- Allegations of underage vape products being sold from a premise in the area which is attracting young people, this matter has been reported to Trading Standards.
- Allegations of drugs and drug taking.

There are large groups of young people congregating in the Town from all areas of the Borough. In addition to this there are now groups of youths visiting from out of Town which has led to some local youths reporting feelings of intimidation when in the Town Centre.

Whenever large groups of youths congregate from different areas of the Borough and especially from out of Town there is a heightened risk of tension, there is also a real risk of exploitation. There have been anecdotal reports related to some young people thought to be carrying knives; however, we must stress this has not been substantiated but is still being actively investigated.

We appreciate that some of the information within this letter may be alarming, and we want to assure you that as a partnership we are doing everything we can to identify and deter this minority cohort from continuing this behaviour. We have increased CCTV and security guards have been asked to wear body cameras so that we can access the footage and positively identify anyone causing ASB.

We will also be working in partnership with school leaders to deliver key messages through school assemblies. We will also be commissioning and continuing the workshop style productions that have successfully been delivered over the past two years during 2022/2023 in school, aimed at raising awareness and educating young people around the signs and dangers of becoming involved in gangs, knife crime, county lines and exploitation.

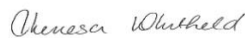
If you have any queries or concerns you can contact us on;

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