

Actively Reducing Gun and Knife Crime – NCCL’s work with schools

“The NCCL’s objective is simple: to prevent today’s child from becoming a teenager who one day will kill or maim.”

Sir Igor Judge, President of the NCCL.

The National Centre for Citizenship and Law (NCCL) will be launching a new programme to tackle violent crime with children and young people in schools from Autumn 2008.

ARC: Why Guns and Knives? is a programme aimed at both Primary and Secondary schools and will be delivered in the borough of Wandsworth in London.

ARC, which stands for Actively Reducing Crime, has been running for over 5 years across the East Midlands. NCCL has recently been asked to tailor the programme to tackle issues around gun and knife crime on a national scale.

ARC is an Early Intervention and Citizenship programme of resources designed for teachers to use in the classroom, supported by NCCL’s staff and expertise throughout the project.

At the heart of ARC is the empowerment of children and young people as active citizens in their communities; giving them ownership of their ARC project in school and providing them with a platform to explore issues of violent crime and communicate their fears, their concerns and their solutions. A group of pupils in each school leads the ARC project and works alongside teaching and support staff and the NCCL to ensure each project addresses the needs and interests of the children and young people and their local community.

ARC is designed to raise awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife or a gun, to reduce children and young people’s fear of violent crime and to give them the tools to avoid becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime in the future through building confidence, providing positive role models and signposting them to support services.

During the ARC programme, children and young people are linked with other agencies and organisations working in their area and schools are encouraged to work in partnership with the local police and others. ARC provides an umbrella framework for lots of different projects and activities to be brought together as part of a multi-agency approach. Bringing agencies into schools, providing additional teacher support through pro bono activities, and holding celebration and awareness raising events are all part of ARC: Why Guns and Knives?.

After completing the ARC programme, pupils are awarded a grant of a £1000 to put towards their own local crime prevention project or campaign and each school is established as a crime prevention centre in their community. ARC helps to create positive local stories for schools, communities, partners and stakeholders; giving a voice to children and young people around issues of guns and knives.

The schools participating in the launch of ARC: Why Guns and Knives? are Ronald Ross Primary School and John Paul II High School in Wandsworth. NCCL are currently planning to roll-out ARC in schools across the UK.

For more information about NCCL and ARC: Why Guns and Knives? please see our website www.nccl.org.uk or contact Katy Archer, Head of NCCL on katy.archer@nccl.org.uk, 0115 952 0555.

12 September 2008