



EMal/DE  
9 February 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

As I am sure you are aware, County Lines is a very serious issue where criminal gangs set up a drug dealing operation in a place outside their usual operating area. Gangs will move their drug dealing from big cities (e.g. London, Manchester, Liverpool etc.) to smaller towns in order to make more money. This can have a really big effect on the community who live there and bring with it serious criminal behaviour. No one really knows how many young people across the country are being forced to take part, however The Children's Commissioner estimates there are at least 46,000 children in England who are involved in gang activity and are being exploited through child criminal exploitation, or 'county lines'.

Gangs are deliberately targeting vulnerable children – those who are homeless, living in care homes or trapped in poverty. These children are unsafe, unloved, or unable to cope, and the gangs take advantage of this. These gangs groom, threaten or trick children into trafficking their drugs for them. They might threaten a young person physically, or they might threaten the young person's family members. The gangs might also offer something in return for the young person's cooperation – it could be money, food, alcohol, clothes and jewelry, or improved status – but the giving of these gifts will usually be manipulated so that the child feels they are in debt to their exploiter. However they become trapped in county lines, the young people involved feel as if they have no choice but to continue doing what the gangs want.

We know that the best protection we can give to young people is knowledge of the dangers so that they are aware and can protect themselves, as well as letting them know where they can go for help and support if they are worried. In order to do this, we are presenting an interactive play to all of our Year 9 pupils which will tackle the difficult issue of Criminal Exploitation on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**. The play is called County Lines and raises awareness of the coercive process that young people may have been through that has resulted in them being criminally exploited – a process that can all too easily make it seem as though they have 'made their own choices'.

We will provide an information sheet which has been designed with input from young people to all pupils on where to go if they are worried about exploitation, feel forced into doing something they don't want to, or if they feel they are at risk. School staff will also be on hand to help with questions.

This activity in secondary schools is part of a proactive programme of work around raising and tackling the complex nature of Child Criminal Exploitation and is being supported by Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership and all Partner Agencies in the county.

We hope that this will be a powerful and memorable way to enhance the PSHE curriculum and help our young people to stay safe.

If you have any concerns around your son/daughter watching this presentation please contact their Head of House

Yours sincerely

E Malsom  
PSHE Co-ordinator

Mitcheldean, Gloucestershire, GL17 0DU Tel: 01594 542370 Sixth Form: 01594 838549  
website: [www.denemagna.gloucs.sch.uk](http://www.denemagna.gloucs.sch.uk) email: [reception@denemagna.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:reception@denemagna.gloucs.sch.uk)

**Deputy Headteacher: Fred Mitchell**

Company registered in England at Abenhall Road, Mitcheldean, Glos. GL17 0DU. Company number 7695544