



Dear Parent or Carer,

As Halloween and Bonfire Night approach, we are asking for your support in helping young people across Merseyside stay safe and make informed choices during the celebrations.

For many families, this is an exciting time of year. While the vast majority of young people celebrate responsibly, we typically see an increase in incidents involving fireworks, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage. Such incidents can affect local communities and place additional demand on police, fire and ambulance services.

As part of our seasonal safety campaign, this information is currently being shared with secondary school pupils across Merseyside. Your child may therefore already be familiar with some of these messages. However, we wanted to share the information with parents and carers too, as conversations at home can play an important role in helping young people make positive choices and stay safe.

### **How you can help**

There are a number of simple ways parents and carers can help young people enjoy Halloween and Bonfire Night safely while reducing the risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

- Know where your child plans to be, who they will be with and when they are expected home.
- Encourage them to attend organised events where possible and to avoid situations that could place them or others at risk.
- Remind them of the importance of respecting local communities, emergency workers and public spaces.
- Take time to talk about the information below and the potential consequences of unsafe or anti-social behaviour.
- Encourage them to stay with friends they trust, keep their phone charged and contact you if their plans change.
- Avoid buying fireworks, eggs, flour, paint or similar items that could be used irresponsibly.

### **Understanding the risks**

- Throwing eggs, flour, fireworks or other items at vehicles, homes, shops or public transport can cause injury, distress and damage. Even a momentary distraction to a driver could lead to a serious collision.
- Anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on local communities, causing fear, upset and inconvenience to residents, particularly older or vulnerable people.



- Fireworks can cause serious burns and life-changing injuries if used irresponsibly. They can also cause distress to pets, livestock and wildlife.
- Trespassing, criminal damage, fire-setting or misuse of fireworks may result in police action and could affect future education, employment and travel opportunities.
- Being part of a group involved in anti-social or dangerous behaviour can have serious consequences, even if they did not personally carry out the act.
- Deliberately targeting police officers, firefighters, ambulance crews or other emergency workers is a criminal offence and can prevent those services from helping people in genuine need.

### **Legal information**

To help avoid unnecessary involvement with the police, it is important that parents and carers are aware of the laws relating to fireworks and anti-social behaviour.

- It is illegal for anyone under the age of 18 to possess an adult firework in a public place.
- It is against the law to set off or throw fireworks in the street or other public places.
- Throwing eggs, flour, paint or other objects at people, vehicles or property can cause injury, distress and damage, and may result in offences such as criminal damage, assault or anti-social behaviour being investigated by the police.
- Where offences are committed, young people may be dealt with through the youth justice system and, in some circumstances, parents or carers may also be required to take responsibility for penalties imposed by the courts.

Thank you for taking the time to discuss these issues with your child and for your continued support in helping to keep our communities safe. By working together, we can help ensure Halloween and Bonfire Night are enjoyable experiences for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Merseyside Police