

Parents deserve more information on knife crime in school

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Councils should improve the way they collect data on the number of children caught carrying weapons in schools, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Around five instances a week are reported to the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration where under 16s are found to be in possession of items such as knives.

However, nearly half of Scottish councils are unable to produce relevant statistics, meaning no clear picture of the extent of the issue is available.

The matter was raised today at First Minister's Questions by Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson as the second anniversary approaches of the death of Aberdeen schoolboy Bailey Gwynne.

He was stabbed by a fellow pupil, with his death prompting a review of security in schools across the country.

In response, Nicola Sturgeon agreed to look at ways of ensuring all local authorities gathered data in the same way, to provide a clearer picture of the extent of knife crime in schools.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

"We know the problem of knives in schools is an increasing one, with an 11 per cent increase in incidents referred last year alone.

"In the aftermath of the tragic death of Aberdeen pupil Bailey Gwynne, the Scottish Government rightly issued new guidance on weapons found in school.

"But nearly two years on, around half of Scottish councils are unable to confirm the number of weapons confiscated from pupils in their area.

"That's the kind of information parents and the wider public have a right to know.

"We think all local authorities should meet the same standards on this, and look forward to working with the Scottish Government to see how this could improve."