

Mini Police: five things you need to know

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Learn about the Mini Police initiative aimed at primary school children

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1. What is the Mini Police?

The Mini Police is a volunteer engagement scheme for primary school children aged 8 to 11 years old. Originally conceived in Durham Constabulary, the scheme provides an educational and fun way for children to associate positively with policing from an early age. It also encourages them to get involved in their local community.

2. Mini Police models

As of 2024, approximately 28 English forces run a Mini Police programme. The delivery model can vary. Northumbria Police currently have 37 Mini Police schools across the force area, aimed at children in year five. 10 children from each school are selected to take part in the programme, which runs annually from September to July. Some forces run condensed schemes throughout the academic year to widen the offer to a larger number of children. Other forces partner with local charities and agencies to enhance the volunteer offering.

3. Activities and learning

Officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) visit schools, delivering lessons to the Mini Police throughout the year. These cover a range of topics depending on the forces' initiatives and strategies, such as online safety and healthy relationships. The Mini Police also visit police horses, dogs, marine units and other 'behind the scenes' locations. These interactive visits help to break down barriers and any negative associations children may have with policing due to their surroundings or social influences.

4. Mini Police community impact

As well as supporting at local events such as fairs and parades, the Mini Police take part in visits and activities which focus on building positive community relationships between the public and the police. The Mini Police visit community homes at Christmas to sing carols to the elderly. They litter pick and help officers issue surveys to residents about problems in the local area. Their presence helps to build community spirit, improve the public perception of policing and encourage good citizenship.

5. Benefits of the Mini Police

Participation in the Mini Police has helped to foster trust between children and the police. In Northumbria, a recent survey found that 90% of the Mini Police who responded felt they had learned and understood more about what the police do. 93% felt proud to be a Mini Police volunteer and 61% of teachers surveyed agreed that Mini Police participation had positively influenced the children's behaviour.

To get involved or find out more, please contact the Citizens in Policing lead in your force.

- Peer reviewed by Alecko Shyne, Neighbourhoods Inspector, Avon and Somerset Police

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