

What is a Criminal Street Gang?

"Criminal street gang" means any ongoing organization, association, or group of three or more persons, whether formal or informal,

- which has as one of its primary objectives or activities the commission of one or more criminal activities;
- which has an identifiable name or identifying sign or symbol; and
- whose members individually or collectively have engaged in the commission of, attempt to commit, conspiracy to commit, or solicitation of two or more predicate criminal acts, at least one of which is an act of violence, provided such acts were not part of a common act or transaction.

VA State Code 18.2-46.1

Criminal Street Gangs Explained

- *Three or more people*
- *Primary objective or activity is crime*
- *Identifiable name, sign, or symbol*
- *Whose members have committed, attempted to commit, conspired to commit, or solicited others to commit two or more predicate acts (one act of violence)*

VA State Code 18.2-46.1

Why Do Kids Join Gangs?

Safety
Stability
Belonging
Protection
Pride
Respect

Sex
Tradition
Peer Pressure
Curiosity
Excitement

Membership can create a sense of love, given and received, a sense of family. This sense of family can lead down a slippery slope... Popular culture and media influences portray the "gangsta life" in a positive light

How Do Kids Join Gangs?

Original Member: *A founding member of the gang*

Jump In/Beat In: *Inductee fights or is beaten by existing members. A symbolic ceremony used as a declaration of loyalty and commitment to the gang*

Crime In: *Inductees commit a crime to prove their loyalty*

Sex In: *Female inductees have sex with a certain number of gang members to earn membership.*

Born In/Blessed In: *Someone is allowed to join the gang because a family member is or was a member*

Warning Signs for Parents

- Admits to associating with gang members
- Unusual interest in one or two specific colors or logos
- Unusual interest in "gangsta" rap, movies, games, et cetera
- Use of hand signs
- Drawing gangs symbols
- Unexplained injuries
- Unexplained cash, jewelry, clothing

Negative Behavior in Your Child

- Withdrawing from family
- Declining school performance
- Unexplained absence from school
- Staying out late without reason/permission
- Unusual desire for privacy or secrecy
- Showing signs of drug use
- Breaking established rules
- Speaking in gang-like slang

Prevention Measures for Parents

- Spend quality time with your child
- Get involved in your child's school
- Encourage solid study habits
- Know your child's friends
- Teach your children responsible conflict resolution skills
- Encourage positive after school activities
- Mobilize your communities



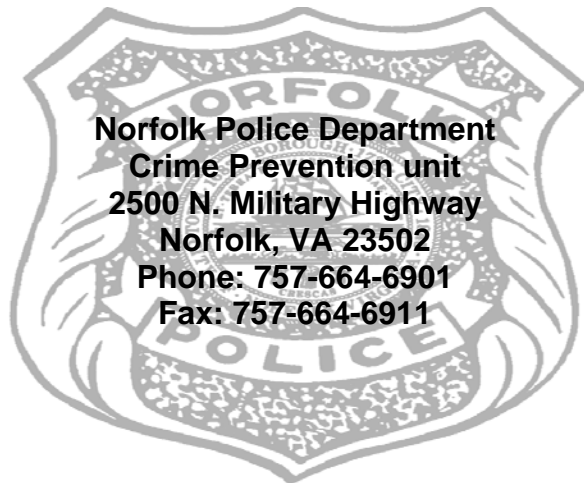
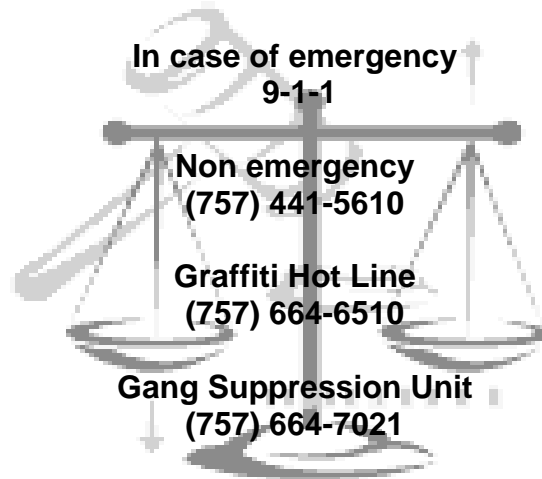
Warn Children Not To:

- Associate with known gang members
- Attend events sponsored by or frequented by gangs
- Use hand signs, wear clothing, or speak in slang that is meaningful to gangs
- Wear gang-specific clothing or accessories

NOT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE THAT WEAR THE "GANGSTER STYLE" ARE GANG RELATED.



There is NO absolute way to determine gang membership by sight. Membership must be determined by the individual's mindset and behavior



Parental Guide To Basic Gang Awareness

