

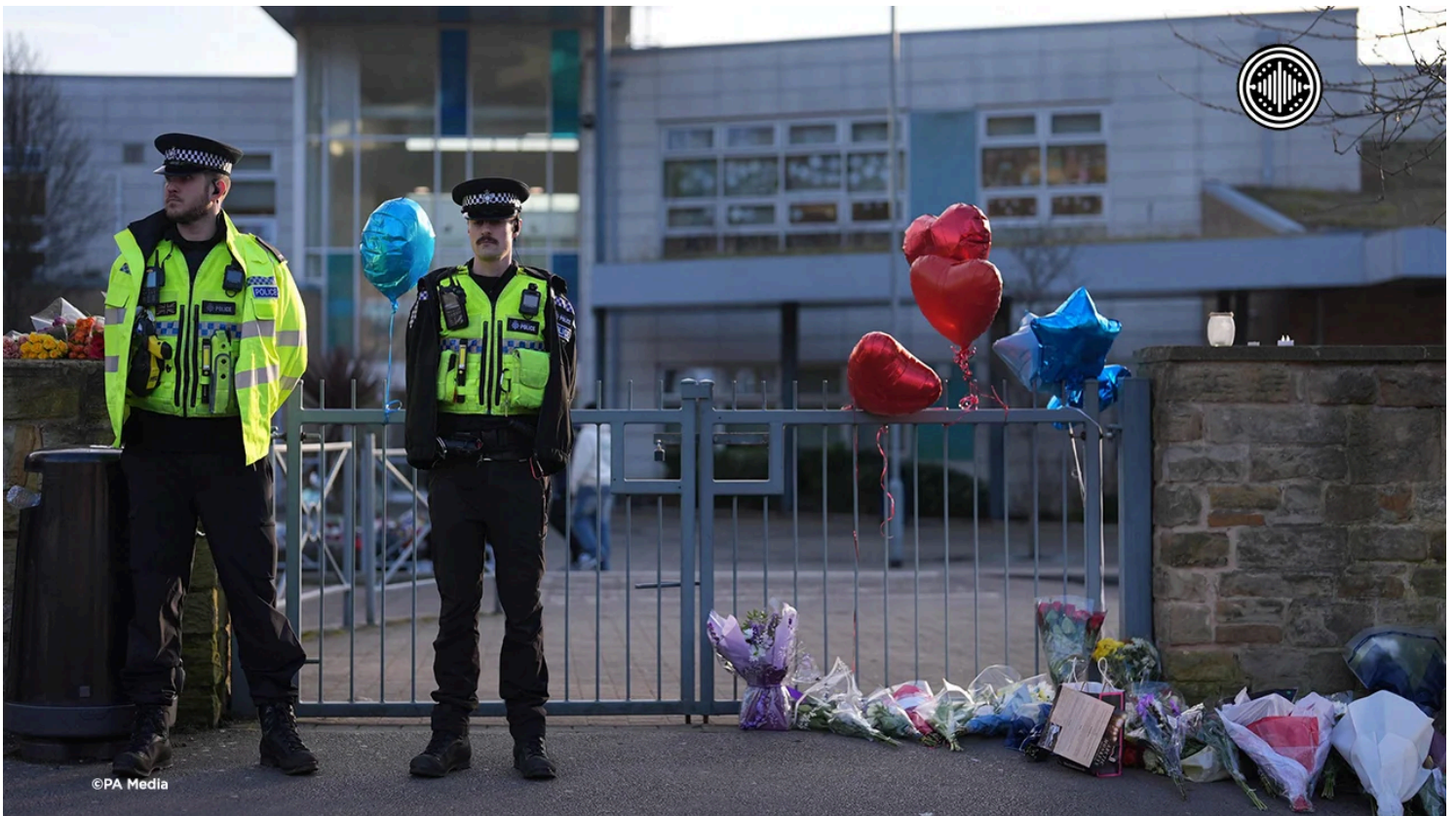
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Teenage Defendant 'Obsessed with Knives' Before Fatal School Stabbing, Court Told

July 31, 2025

— Categories: Breaking News



A 15-year-old boy who fatally stabbed fellow pupil Harvey Willgoose at a Sheffield school was “obsessed” with weapons and sought to portray himself as intimidating, prosecutors told a jury on Thursday. The defendant, who cannot be named for legal reasons, admits manslaughter but denies murder, claiming he lost control during the incident on 3 February at All Saints Catholic High School.

Prosecutor Richard Thyne KC argued that the stabbing was not a momentary lapse but a calculated act, describing it as “purposeful aggression” likely motivated by a desire for

retribution. Jurors were told the defendant had previously fallen out with Harvey during a dispute involving other pupils and had already acquired the hunting knife used in the attack before this disagreement.

The prosecution presented evidence that the accused had a longstanding fascination with weapons, including internet searches and social media activity promoting knife-carrying behaviour. Mr Thyne said the teenager had posted videos online showing knives and admitted doing so “to let people know he wasn’t someone to be messed with.”

According to the court, the defendant had also searched terms online relating to anger and violence, including “waiting for someone to swing so I can let out my anger.” Mr Thyne argued this suggested a deliberate mindset, not one of fear or panic. CCTV footage from the school was shown to the jury, allegedly depicting the defendant attempting to provoke Harvey, who appeared to remain calm.

The trial also heard from another pupil who said Harvey mentioned the defendant had been behaving as if he had a knife under his jumper earlier that day, though Harvey reportedly dismissed it as a bluff. Mr Thyne said that during the fatal encounter, the defendant could be seen unzipping his coat, reaching into his pocket and drawing the knife, actions he claimed were “deliberate and purposeful.”

The headteacher of the school reportedly told police the defendant admitted after the incident that he stabbed Harvey “once, maybe twice.” Mr Thyne argued this contradicted the defendant’s claim of having no memory of the attack and showed he was aware of his actions.

In defence, Gul Nawaz Hussain KC said the teenager had “snapped” after enduring prolonged bullying and lived in fear at school. He characterised Harvey as “the final straw” in what he described as an accumulation of threats and intimidation. Mr Hussain told the jury the defendant’s actions were the result of a loss of control rather than premeditation.

He also highlighted a broader issue of teenage boys feeling the need to carry knives to protect themselves, likening the situation to a “nuclear arms race” where fear escalates the risk of violence. “The sad truth is boys involved in this case were keen to make people think they did carry knives,” he said, noting a wider cultural problem.

The trial continues at Sheffield Crown Court.