

Appendix to Safeguarding policy for FGM

Rationale:

Atwe have robust and rigorous safeguarding procedures in place and takes our responsibilities of child protection seriously, this guidance should be read in conjunction with this overarching Child Protection Policy

In line with Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) FGM policy we recognises that whilst there is not necessarily an intent to harm a girl / young woman through FGM, the practice has serious short and long term medical and psychological implications and as a school we need to work with partner agencies to promote understanding and safeguard students who may be at risk of this practice. We also recognise the practice of FGM in the UK is a criminal offence

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under the schools Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy. The aim of this appendix is to give depth to our understanding of the issues and our duty of care if we believe a child is at risk of or has had, any form of FGM performed on them.

We aim to work sensitively with community groups where this maybe a cultural belief and practice to educate and inform however we believe the welfare of the child is paramount and will act to safeguard and promote our students welfare, acting in the interest of the rights of the girl / young woman, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

Definition of FGM:

At.....we use the World Health Organisation definition as written below.

‘comprises all procedures (not operations) that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons’. (WHO – 2008)

Reference documents:

The school has taken information from a number of documents to write this appendix. These include, BSCB Guidance, the Government Home Office guidelines and the *Ofsted* guidelines for “Inspecting Safeguarding”.

The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states; “FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child’s right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.” UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-

African communities that are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women.”

Ofsted have included FGM in their “Inspecting Safeguarding” briefing for Inspectors. They will explore ;

How alert are staff to the possible signs that a child has been subject to female genital mutilation or is at risk of being abused through it; what sort of training have they had.

They will examine this through training records, talking to staff and examining any records school may have on file where FGM is a concern or advice, support or guidance has been sought in relation to a child at the school. There should be a culture of vigilance amongst staff rather than an assumption that the child is not at risk due to ethnicity or age.

Policy

At the Headteacher and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody’s responsibility and for all staff to adhere to and follow the policies in place to support children and their families to stay safe from harm. As a school we embrace the fact that we live in a multi-cultural society, we are however conscious there are some practices which are permitted in other parts of the world which are against the law in the United Kingdom, the practice of female genital mutilation is one of these.

1. Atwe have a robust attendance policy that does not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise
2. FGM training has been undertaken by the designated safeguarding lead and training disseminated to all staff at the front line dealing with the children.
3. There is a clear expectation for staff at to attend training to support them in their understanding of this issue and to be alert to the possible signs that a child may be vulnerable or has been subject to, female genital mutilation.
4. Staff are aware of their responsibility to escalate any concerns, where they believe a child may be at risk of FGM to the designated safeguarding lead, Staff are also aware they can refer the matter directly to the Police if they believe a criminal act has been committed and a child has been subject to FGM.
5. Staff are aware of the need to take timely and appropriate action in respect of concerns
6. Staff athave been made aware that female students are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Staff have also been made aware of other times of potential vulnerability; extensions to

school holiday times, children missing from education or where a child suddenly leaves the school with no follow on arrangements offered. We understand that many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM and that we need to be vigilante to indicators of risk.

7. Staff have been advised of the need to challenge requests from families for extensions to holiday times and to report;
 - talk of ceremonies to celebrate the young person becoming a woman
 - changes in patterns of behaviour if a child is taken out of the country or
 - undisclosed health issues where the child is experiencing discomfort in sitting, going to the toilet etc.
8. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will keep an open dialogue on the topic of FGM (ensuring this is done in an age appropriate way) with students and parents from practising communities who may be at risk.
9. We have a comprehensive PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education delivered to KS2 children with a discussion about FGM with Year 6 girls.
10. All staff at are aware FGM is a child protection issue. Concerns will be addressed under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 in common with any other safeguarding matter where it is believed a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm.
11. Staff are alert to possible indicators that a child is at risk of FGM:
 - The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM - especially if there are elderly women present.
 - In conversation a child may talk about FGM.
 - A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony.
 - The child may talk or have anxieties about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin.
 - Parent/Guardian requests permission for authorised absence for overseas travel or you are aware that absence is required for vaccinations.
 - If a woman has already undergone FGM – and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any Child Protection implications e.g. for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to Social Care or the Police if appropriate.
12. If we have concerns that children in our school community are at risk or victims of FGM then we refer to the BSCB Guidelines for FGM (www.Bucks-LSCB.org.uk).
13. Staff are aware of the need to have professional curiosity.

14. Staff are required to make an accurate record of concerns, observation or comment in line with schools record keeping policy
15. The DSL will refer all concerns re possible or actual FGM to social care via the First Response Team. In the event of information coming to the attention of the DSL that there is an immediate threat to the child or it is believe there is a flight risk or a criminal offence has taken place the DSL will refer immediately and directly to the Police
16. Referral to the First Response Team can be made verbally in the first instance but need to be followed up within 24 with a written account using the Multi Agency Referral Form following the usually CP procedures contained within the main body of our CP Policy
17. Practical tips

These questions and advice are guidance and each case should be dealt with sensitively and considered individually and independently. Using this guidance is at the discretion of the Headteacher

What can I ask?

- Talk to children about their holiday.
- Sensitively and informally ask the family about their planned extended holiday ask questions like; Who is going on the holiday with the child? How long they plan to go for and is there a special celebration planned?
- Where are they going?
- Are they aware that the school cannot keep their child on roll if they are away for a long period?
- If there is a concern that a child may be vulnerable to FGM this needs to be reported using the schools CP procedures and/ or the information passed to the Police. Are the family aware that FGM including Sunna is illegal in the U.K even if performed abroad?

The Department for Education website;
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/pastoralcare/childprotection/a0072224/safeguarding-children-from-female-genital-mutilation>.

This document updated the original of 19th January 2009 by Safeguarding FGM working party and was written on the 27th July 2013.