



## Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) 2018

*This policy has been written with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2018*

York Steiner School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. As a school we recognise that safeguarding against Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

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## ***Aims and Principles***

The main aims of this policy statement are to ensure that staff are fully engaged in being vigilant about FM and FGM; that they overcome professional disbelief that “*such issues will not happen here*” and ensure that we work alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our pupils are safe from harm.

The objectives are that:

1. All trustees, teachers and non-teaching staff will have an understanding of what FM and FGM is and why we need to be vigilant in school.
2. All trustees, teachers and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on FM and FGM and will follow the policy when issues arise.

## ***Forced Marriage***

Forcing a person into marriage in England and Wales is a crime and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical, emotional or psychological. It is important to recognise that this is entirely separate from arranged marriage.

## ***What Is FGM?***

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long lasting harmful consequences.

## ***Procedures For Referrals***

Although serious incidents involving FM or FGM have not occurred at York Steiner School to date, it is important for us to be constantly vigilant and remain fully informed about the issues which affect the region in which we teach. Staff are reminded to suspend any professional disbelief that instances of FGM “*could not happen here*” and to refer any concerns through the appropriate channels (currently via the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Maurice Dobie).

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales to report to the police where they discover, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence, that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 yrs.

## ***The Role of the Curriculum***

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

Our PSHE provision is embedded across the curriculum, and underpins the ethos of the school. Children throughout the school learn about a wide variety of religions and beliefs in a respectful and balanced way. Active debate and questioning is promoted in the delivery of lessons.

## **STAFF GUIDANCE**

*Remember: you are under a legal obligation to report directly to the Police if you discover a child has been subject to FGM*

### **Why Is It Carried Out?**

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

### **Is FGM Legal?**

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK. Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

### ***The 'One Chance' Rule***

The One Chance Rule. The idea behind the One Chance Rule is that you might only have one chance to speak to a potential victim and, therefore, have one chance to save a life. If the situation seems urgent, the **One Chance rule should always be applied.**

### ***Action To Be Taken By Trustees And Staff***

If any trustee or member of staff has any concerns about a pupil they should refer their concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSO) in the same way that a child protection concern is referred.

If staff would like more information it can be obtained from here:

Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation,

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/380125/MultiAgencyPracticeGuidelinesNov14.pdf)

## ***Links to Other Policies***

***This policy should be read in conjunction with all other safeguarding policies as they all work together to safeguard the child, staff and school. These policies collectively support Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018***

## ***Approval & Review***

This policy has been approved by the Board of Trustees on October 2018

Policy review date: October 2019