



Female Genital Mutilation Policy

Document produced by: Matt Messias, The Principal

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Adopted by Governing Body:

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Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under the Schools Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. At Atrium School, the Principal and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expects all staff to adhere to and follow these policies. The school uses the World Health Organisation definition as written below.

Definition of FGM

"Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons."

(World Health Organisation-1997)

Government Documents

The school has taken information from several documents to write this policy. These include, The South West Child Protection Procedures Guidelines for FGM www.swcpp.org.uk, the Government Home Office guidelines, 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. "Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM.

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."

As from January 2013 *Ofsted* have included FGM in their "Inspecting Safeguarding" briefing for Inspectors. Annex 4 contains questions and information about FGM for inspectors.

Below are details from this document;"

Designated senior staff for child protection in schools should be aware of the guidance that is available in respect of FGM, and should be vigilant to the risk of it being practised. Inspectors should be also alert to this when considering a school's safeguarding arrangements, and where appropriate ask questions of designated staff. Key questions could include

- Are designated senior staff for child protection aware of the issue and have ensured that staff in the school are aware of the potential risks?
- 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?
- Has the school taken timely and appropriate action in respect of concerns about particular children?

"In light of this information South Dartmoor has decided to implement these policies and procedures.

Procedures the School has in place

Atrium Studio has decided to take proactive action to protect and prevent our girls being forced to undertake FGM. The Principal and Governors do this in 4 ways:

1. A robust attendance policy that does not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise.
2. FGM training for Child Protection leads and disseminated training for all staff at the front line dealing with the children.
Tracey West has completed the FGM training and will be the designated lead for the School.
3. FGM discussions by Child Protection lead with parents of children from practising communities who are at risk.
4. Comprehensive PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education delivered to KS3 & 4 children. *In order to protect our children it is important that key information is known by all of the school community.*

Indications that FGM has taken place

- Prolonged absence from school with noticeable behaviour change – especially after a return from holiday.
- Spend long periods of time away from the class during the day.
- A child who has undergone FGM should be seen as a child protection issue. Medical assessment and therapeutic services to be considered at the Strategy Meeting.

Indications 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.

If we have concerns that children in our school community are at risk or victims of Female Genital Mutilation then we refer to the South West Child Protection Procedures Guidelines for FGM (www.swcpp.org.uk). We may;

Recording

All interventions should be accurately recorded using the individual student event logs. Child protection leads Dan Vile and Chris Hodges need to seek advice about making referrals to Social Care and CAIT (Child Abuse Investigation Team) and to follow South West Child Protection Procedure Guidelines on FGM and CP referrals.

Documents to refer to;

Useful documents include:

- *Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation* (HM Government, 2011)
- *Briefings and Information for Use During Inspections of Maintained Schools and Academies* (Ofsted, updated December 2012).
- South West Child Protection Procedure Guidelines
- *Working together to safeguard children*, HM Government (2010), paragraphs 6.14 to 6.19.1
- *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*, DfE (2006), Annex A, paragraphs 39 to 42.2
- The Department for Education website;
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/pastoralcare/childprotection/a0072224/safeguarding-children-from-female-genital-mutilation>.