

Policy for Forced Marriage and FGM

Cultural Issues

As a school we are aware of the cultural diversity of the wider community and seek to work sensitively to address this in relation to safeguarding. School guidance on key issues such as female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and the Prevent Strategy are set out below.

The 'One Chance' rule

With Forced Marriage and FGM there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that school takes action without delay.

FGM

It is illegal in the United Kingdom to allow girls to undergo female genital mutilation either in this country or abroad. FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls. At QEGS we recognise our **statutory** duty (Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 –as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015), to report to the police where we discover either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18; failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead (Jay Harding) and involve children's social care as appropriate. It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

'At risk' communities for FGM are Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemen, Afghanistan, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan.

Key Points:

- Not a religious practice
- Occurs mostly to girls aged from 5 – 8 years old; but up to around 15
- Criminal offence in UK since 1985
- Offence since 2003 to take girls abroad
- Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison

Reasons for this cultural practice include:

- Cultural identity – An initiation into womanhood
- Gender Identity – Moving from girl to woman – enhancing femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman's desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – un mutilated women are regarded as unclean

Risk Factors include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- a visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin
- talk about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman'

High Risk Time:

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools should be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high risk group is absent from school or where the family request an 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

Although, it is difficult to identify girls before FGM takes place, where girls from these high risk groups return from a long period of absence with symptoms of FGM, advice should be sought from the police or social services.

Post-FGM Symptoms include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- spend longer than normal in the toilet
- unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- difficulties urinating or incontinence
- frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- menstrual problems
- kidney damage and possible failure
- cysts and abscesses
- pain when having sex
- infertility
- complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- emotional and mental health problems

Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and a crime which 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 or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistleblowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party; **if needed the school will seek advice and information from the Forced Marriage Unit – 020 7008 0151 or fmu@fco.gov.uk.**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

This is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops.

Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss school or education or don't take part in education

Prevent Strategy

In line with the Statutory Guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015), we at QEGS recognise our duty to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The following is based on recent Home Office guidance and is to help raise awareness of the Prevent strategy among parents, carers, staff and any other adults involved with young people.

Prevent is 1 of the 4 elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy:

- responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views
- provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with

The strategy covers all forms of terrorism, including far right extremism and some aspects of non-violent extremism. The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Factors that could make someone susceptible or vulnerable to carrying out or supporting violent, criminal or terrorist acts:

- Family change
- Physical changes
- A grievance/ sense of injustice
- Wanting respect
- Issues in school
- Wanting to belong
- Searching for sense of identity/ self-worth/ purpose

It is important to consider both emotional (for example, anger or disappointment) and external factors (for example, foreign conflicts, extremist material online).

Behaviours that may indicate a cause for concern:

CHANGE – emotional, verbal or physical; these changes could include:

<i>EMOTIONAL</i>	<i>VERBAL</i>	<i>PHYSICAL/ CIRCUMSTANTIAL</i>
Short tempered Angry New-found arrogance Withdrawn Depressed Crying	Fixated on a subject Closed to new ideas/ conversations Change in language/ use of words Asking inappropriate questions “Scripted” speech Saying inappropriate things – a call to violent action	Clothing/ appearance New circle of friends Changing relationships with family/ friends/ staff New family members attending school events Change of routine Use of internet Absence