

# **St Matthew's Church of England Primary School**



## **Female Genital Mutilation Policy and Guidelines**

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### **Female Genital Mutilation Policy**

#### **Rationale**

In April 2014 every school in England received new safeguarding guidelines and detailed information on identifying and responding to Female Genital Mutilation. FGM is a procedure carried out on young girls between the ages of infancy and 15 years of age. Female Genital Mutilation is classified as a form of Child Abuse in the UK. It therefore makes the procedure of it a serious Child Protection issue. It is illegal for anyone to perform FGM in the UK or to arrange for a child to be transported to another country for the procedure. The maximum sentence for carrying out FGM or helping it to take place is 14 years in prison.

At St Matthew's Church of England Primary School we have robust and rigorous safeguarding procedures and we take our responsibility of child protection seriously. The Headteacher and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expect all staff to adhere to and follow this policy.

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, Sandwell Safeguarding Board Guidelines for FGM ([www.sandwellscb.org.uk](http://www.sandwellscb.org.uk)) and the Government Home Office guidelines

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."

### **Signs that a girl is at risk of FGM.**

Staff have been trained to recognise whether a girl may be at risk of FGM.

Some of the signs include:

- The position of the family, and their level of integration into UK society.
- Any girl with a mother or sister who has been subjected to FGM.
- Any girl withdrawn from Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).
- A female family elder visiting from a country of origin, as the risk of FGM may increase.
- A girl confiding that she is to have a 'special procedure' or a ceremony to 'become a woman'.
- A girl requesting help from a teacher if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk.
- A girl, or her family member, talking about a long holiday to her country of origin, or another country where the practice is prevalent.

### **Signs that FGM may have already taken place.**

Staff have been trained to recognise signs that FGM may have already taken place.

Some of the signs include:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet.
- Spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day, with bladder or menstrual problems.
- Prolonged or repeated absences from school followed by withdrawal or depression.
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Asking for help, but not being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

If a girl 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.

### **Procedures that we have in place to prevent FGM.**

At St Matthew's Church of England Primary School we are proactive in our approach and take action to protect and prevent our girls being forced to undertake FGM. The Headteacher, Fiona Deakin, and Governors do this in four ways:

1. We have a robust attendance policy and we do not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise.
2. All teaching staff (including support staff) have completed online FGM training

3. Open and frank discussions around FGM are held by the by either the DSP or the Deputy DSP with parents of children from practising communities who are at risk.
4. A comprehensive PSHE and Sex and Relationships Education is delivered to KS2 children

### **Traditional and Local terms used for FGM**

Country	Term used for FGM	Language	Meaning
<b>Egypt</b>	Thara	Arabic	Deriving from the Arabic word 'tahar' meaning to clean / purify
	Khitan	Arabic	Circumcision - used for both FGM and male circumcision
	Khifad	Arabic	Deriving from the Arabic word 'khafad' meaning to lower (rarely used in everyday language)
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Megrez	Amharic	Circumcision / cutting
	Absum	Harrari	Name giving ritual
<b>Eritrea</b>	Mekhnishab	Tigreigna	Circumcision / cutting
<b>Kenya</b>	Kutairi	Swahili	Circumcision - used for both FGM and male circumcision
	Kutairi was ichana	Swahili	Circumcision of girls
<b>Nigeria</b>	Ibi / Ugwu	Igbo	The act of cutting - used for both FGM and male circumcision
	Sunna	Mandingo	Religious tradition / obligation - for Muslims
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Sunna	Soussou	Religious tradition/ obligation - for Muslims
	Bondo	Temene	Integral part of an initiation rite into adulthood - for non Muslims
	Bondo / Sonde	Mendee	Integral part of an initiation rite into adulthood - for non Muslims
	Bondo	Mandingo	Integral part of an initiation rite into adulthood - for non Muslims
	Bondo	Limba	Integral part of an initiation rite into adulthood - for non Muslims
<b>Somalia</b>	Gudiniin	Somali	Circumcision used for both FGM and male circumcision
	Halalays	Somali	Deriving from the Arabic word 'halal' ie. 'Sanctioned' - implies purity. Used by Northern & Arabic speaking Somalis.
	Qodiin	Somali	Stitching / tightening / sewing refers to infibulation

<b>Sudan</b>	Khifad	Arabic	Deriving from the Arabic word 'khafad' meaning to lower (rarely used in everyday language)
	Tahoor	Arabic	Deriving from the Arabic word 'tahar' meaning to purify
<b>Chad - the Ngama Sara subgroup</b>	Bagne		Used by the Sara Madjingaye
	Gadja		Adapted from 'ganza' used in the Central African Republic
<b>Guinea-Bissau</b>	Fanadu di Mindjer	Kriolu	'Circumcision of girls'
	Fanadu di Omi	Kriolu	'Circumcision of boys'
<b>Gambia</b>	Niaka	Mandinka	Literally to 'cut /weed clean'
	Kuyango	Mandinka	Meaning 'the affair' but also the name for the shed built for initiates
	Musolula Karoola	Mandinka	Meaning 'the women's side' / 'that which concerns women'

#### **Useful documents and contacts include:**

- Daughters of Eve. A non-profit organisation that works to protect girls and young women who are at risk from female genital mutilation website: [www.dofeve.org](http://www.dofeve.org)
- NSPCC website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/signs-symptoms-and-effects/>
- FGM online training: <https://www.fgmelearning.co.uk/>
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office 020 7008 1500