

Featherstone Primary School

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy



Governing Board approval date: 16.01.25

Monitoring, evaluation and review: Every two years

Rationale:

Featherstone Primary has robust and rigorous safeguarding procedures and takes its responsibilities of child protection seriously.

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse, and as such, is dealt with under the schools Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy. At Featherstone Primary, the Head Teacher and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expect all staff to adhere to and follow these policies.

The school uses the World Health Organisation definition of FGM as written below.

"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" and (World Health Organisation-1997).

Government Documents:

The school has taken information from several documents to write this appendix. These include, Government Home Office Guidelines, the *Ofsted* Guidelines for "Inspecting Safeguarding", NSPCC Guidance.

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 who 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 excerpts from this document:

ANNEX 4. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

“...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 also be 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?”

Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

With effect from October 2015, all schools are subject to a mandatory reporting requirement in respect of female genital mutilation. When a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl aged under 18, that teacher has a statutory duty to report it to the Police.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

In light of this information Featherstone Primary School has decided to implement these policies and procedures:

Procedures School has in place:

Featherstone Primary School has decided to take proactive action to protect and prevent our girls being forced to undertake FGM. The Head Teacher 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 DSLs and disseminated training for all staff at the front line dealing with the children (all our staff are Safeguard Trained)
3. FGM discussions by Child Protection DSLs with parents of children from practising communities who are at risk
4. Relationship and Sex Education delivered to KS2 children with a discussion about FGM with Year 6 girls (from female teachers)

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 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

Record

All interventions should be accurately recorded.

Refer

The Head Teacher needs to seek advice about making referrals to Social Care and to follow Birmingham Safeguarding Boards on Child Protection Procedure Guidelines on FGM and CP referrals.

EMERGENCY

Call police on **101** if you have information about FGM, believe a child may be at risk or feel your child being cut and out of control. In an emergency, dial **999**.

Alternatively contact Crimestoppers anonymously on **0800 555 111** or the NSPCC's FGM Helpline on **0800 028 3550**