

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM) POLICY

*Last reviewed: March 2016
Date for next review: March 2019*



Ashton Hayes Primary School
Church Road, Ashton Hayes, Chester, Cheshire CH3 8AB



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Policy

Rationale:

Ashton Hayes Primary School 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 safeguarding children policy. The school uses the World Health Organisation definition 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.” (World Health Organisation-1997)

The school has taken information from several documents to write this policy. These include, the Government Home Office guidelines and the *Ofsted* guidelines for “Inspecting Safeguarding”. The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states;

“FGM is considered as 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.”

Designated senior staff for child protection are aware of the guidance that is available in respect of FGM, and should be vigilant to the risk of it being practised. Key questions which this appendix addresses are:

- Are designated senior staff for child protection aware of the issue and have they 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 Ashton Hayes Primary School implements these procedures.

1. A robust attendance policy.
2. FGM training for Child Protection leads and disseminated training for all staff at the front line dealing with the children.
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 students.

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.

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 will sensitively and informally ask the family about their planned extended holiday ask questions like;

- Who is going on the holiday with the child?
- How long they plan to go for and is there a special celebration planned?
- Where are they going?
- Are they aware that the school cannot keep their child on roll if they are away for a long period?
- Are they aware that FGM including Sunna is illegal in the U.K even if performed abroad?

If we suspect that a child is a victim of FGM you may ask the child;

- Your family is originally from a country where girls or women are circumcised – Do you think you have gone through this?
- Has anything been done to you that you are not happy about?
- Do you want to talk to someone who will understand you better?
- Would you like support in contacting other agencies for support, help or advice?

These questions and advice are guidance and each case should be dealt with sensitively and considered individually and independently.

Policy Adopted September 2015

Signed Headteacher:  **Date:** March 2016

Signed Chair of Governors: *Margaret Ripworth* **Date:** March 2019