



The Forge Trust Female Genital Mutilation Statement

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's safeguarding statement and child protection policies.

Rationale

The Forge Trust has robust and rigorous safeguarding procedures and practices 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 The Forge Trust, the Senior Leadership Team and Trustees expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expect all staff to adhere to and follow these policies.

Definition of FGM

The school uses the World Health Organisation definition:

"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 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.

From 31 October 2015 onwards, regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales have a mandatory requirement to report visually confirmed or verbally disclosed cases of FGM in girls under 18 to the police.

In light of this information, The Forge Trust has decided to take proactive action to protect and prevent our girls being forced to undertake FGM. The Executive Senior Leadership Team and Trustees do this in the following 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 dealing with children.
3. FGM discussions by Child Protection DSLs with other agencies and parents of children from practising communities who are at risk.
4. Comprehensive PSHE, Relationship and Sex Education delivered to children with a discussion about FGM.

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:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing Prolonged absences from school/college
- Spending long periods away from the classroom/office with urinary or menstrual problems Reluctant to undergo medical examinations
- Noticeable changes in behaviour – FGM can result in post-traumatic stress Soreness, infection or unusual presentation when a nappy is changed
- Asking for help but not being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear

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.
- Parents seeking to withdraw their children from learning 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.

Record

All interventions should be accurately recorded on CPOMS.

Call police on 101 if you have information about FGM. In an emergency, dial 999.

Date: July 2025

Review Date: July 2027