

FGM

SAFEGUARDING GIRLS AGAINST FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

FGM is child abuse and against the law

Safeguarding girls at risk of harm of FGM poses specific challenges because the families involved may give no other cause for concern, for example with regard to their parenting responsibilities or relationships with their children. However, there still remains a **duty for all professionals to act to safeguard girls at risk** – with four key issues to consider:-

1. An illegal act being performed on a female regardless of age
2. A need to safeguard girls and young women at risk of FGM
3. The risk to girls and young women where a relative has undergone FGM
4. Situations where a girl may be removed from the country to undergo FGM

Professionals have a responsibility to ensure that families know that FGM is illegal, and should ensure that families are aware the authorities are actively tackling the issue. This knowledge alone may deter families from having FGM performed on their children and save girls and women from harm. Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care; anybody can make a referral. At Lindens School, initially, staff will refer the potential victim as a child in need and social care will assess the risk.

Staff should:-

- Talk about FGM in a professional and sensitive manner
- Explain that FGM is illegal in the UK and that the girl will be protected by the Law
- Recognise and respect the girl's wishes where possible but child welfare must be paramount.
- Activate local safeguarding procedures using existing and national protocols for multi-liaison with the police and children's social care
- Ensure that the girl is informed of the long term consequences of FGM
- Liaise with the designated teacher with the responsibility of safeguarding children
- Ensure that safeguarding and protection is considered for any other female members

Staff should not:

- Treat suggestions merely as a domestic issue
- Ignore what the student has told them or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection
- Decide that it is not their responsibility to follow up the allegation
- Approach the student's family or those with influence within the community

For more details use the link below

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-guidelines>

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/fgm-kcs/>