



# **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

## **Policy 2022-2023**

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### **Introduction:**

'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-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. It involves removing and damaging healthy and normal female tissue, and hence interferes with the natural function of girls' and women's bodies. The practice causes severe pain and has several immediate and long-term consequences, including difficulties in childbirth also causing dangers to the child.' (Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines)

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt in accordance to our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures at Read Academy.

### **Government guidance on FGM**

'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.

It is acknowledged that some FGM practising families do not see it as an act of abuse. However, FGM is child abuse and has severe significant physical and mental health consequences both in the long and short term.

Girls are at particular risk of FGM during the summer holidays. This is a 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.'

### **Indications that FGM may have taken place:**

- a prolonged absence from school with a noticeable behaviour change (depression or withdrawal)
- a disclosure that FGM has taken place
- an extended holiday to a country where the practice is prevalent
- a girl having difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may look uncomfortable
- a girl spending more time in the toilet due to difficulties urinating or with menstrual problems

### **Indications that FGM may be about to take place:**

- a disclosure that FGM is about to take place
- a parental request for authorised overseas travel during term time to a country where the practice is prevalent
- a girl expressing concern about forthcoming overseas travel
- a girl being withdrawn from PSHE
- a girl confiding that she is to have a 'special procedure' or is to attend a special occasion to 'become a woman'
- parents seeking to withdraw their child from learning about FGM

## **Procedures at Read Academy**

At Read Academy, we take a proactive approach to protecting our female students from FGM through:

- raising awareness of FGM through staff training.
- a comprehensive programme of RSE, including discussion by a female teacher about FGM with students during Key Stage 3 and 4.
- a robust attendance policy and interventions including first day calling and calling each day of every absence.
- reporting to the designated safeguarding leaders when a parent fails to notify the school of an absence or when the reason given for an absence appears suspect.

Any disclosure or suspicion that FGM is about to take place or may have taken place should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately. All interventions should be accurately recorded on the safeguarding report form and safeguarding procedures followed.

The Head Teacher must report FGM to the **police** immediately.