

# Guidance for Schools and Colleges

Safeguarding children from

**Sexual Violence**

**Child Sexual Exploitation**

**Harmful Practices**



## Foreword from Commander Sue Williams

### Metropolitan Police Service, Head of Profession for Safeguarding

I am delighted to present the MPS Guidance for Schools and Colleges: Safeguarding Children from Sexual Violence, Child Sexual Exploitation and Harmful Practices. The aim of this guidance is to safeguard our most vulnerable people and empower professionals to make a difference in protecting London's younger communities by creating opportunities for professionals to achieve excellence in safeguarding those who need it most.

We recognise schools and colleges play a vital role in our communities. They are themselves a community, as teachers, pupils and those involved in their governance and administration share common goals that include helping to keep young people safe.

This comprehensive and easy to follow guide explores a number of threats and trends, including harmful practices, sexual violence, indecent images of children and child sexual exploitation. I know that the response to these issues is a challenge for all concerned and this guidance will assist colleagues working with young people.

The guidance explores these issues from a practical policing perspective. It highlights how the relevant legislation works and what the police response may look like, as well as identifying warning signs for schools to assist them to respond effectively within their existing referral pathways.

We accept that we do not have all the answers as the issues are complex and multifaceted. What we can do is generate an open discussion on the response to these sensitive issues and promote the sharing of information and best practice to encourage collaboration between all those working to safeguard young people.

I hope that you find the guidance to be a useful tool and that this will help us to work together more effectively to keep our young people in London safe.



**Commander Sue Williams**

## Foreword by Matt Miller MBE National Leader of Governance Advocate

Safeguarding is never far from our thoughts whether we are paid professionals working in schools and colleges, or serving there as volunteers, like governors. Yet, with each passing year and in spite of unprecedented attention, safeguarding presents even more challenges to those who seek to keep our children and young people safe from harm.

It is not simply enough to provide a safe learning environment; we must also consider the risks that extend beyond the school gate and after the school bell. We must keep pace with the growing threats posed by those who peddle their poison around the clock through the internet and social media sites. We must take action to prevent sexualised behaviour between peers in or out of school becoming the new norm. We must be vigilant to the signs and indicators which suggest a pupil might be at risk of radicalisation, or child sexual exploitation, or modern-day slavery, or female genital mutilation, or forced marriage or witchcraft. The list seems endless, but above all, we must never take our eye off the ball.

We live in an increasingly diverse world where tolerance and respect for our differing cultures and beliefs lie at the heart of our communities. This means that we need to listen, understand and educate what is right and what is wrong and stand by the values which enable our young people to flourish. We also need to have the confidence and courage to stand up against those who deal in harm, not just the ubiquitous predators who target the vulnerable, but the less obvious; those who hide behind the veil of so-called honour or faith to wreak misery.

This Guidance provides far more than a compendium of offences and unlawful practices, as helpful as that is. It also provides insight and practical guidance on how to deal with the type of concerns which are often problematical, but not necessarily criminal, in schools such as 'sexting', an unintended by-product of the digital age. It also helps us to see what may be happening in plain sight but is not immediately obvious, particularly in terms of harmful practices which may not be recognisable but are nevertheless equally devastating to victims. It makes us think and reflect on how we could improve further still, with the '*Schools Charter on Ending Harmful Practices*' providing a rigorous benchmark against which schools and colleges can review their safeguarding practices and protocols.

Above all, this Guidance demonstrates how law enforcement and education can lock arms in promoting the highest standards of safeguarding through the sharing of professional knowledge and practices. Having served as a school governor for 20 years in many different schools, I highly commend this Guidance to all those who uphold the words of William Wilberforce, "You may choose to look the other way but you can never say again that you did not know."

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## Scope of this guidance

The aim of this guidance is to assist governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, senior leadership teams, designated safeguarding leads and staff to understand the range of harms related to sexual violence, sexual abuse and harmful practices. It is designed to support front line professionals in situations or incidents that require a safeguarding response. Part of this response will on occasion include the reporting of criminal offences.

Police have written the guidance to support schools and colleges responding to complex issues that are both safeguarding concerns and criminal offences. It aims to improve the identification of vulnerability and enhance information sharing to enhance the safeguarding response children receive.

This guidance outlines what schools and colleges should consider and the action they should take when concerns are raised relating to sexual violence, sexting, child sexual exploitation and harmful practices.

Harmful practices cover a range of practices, not all of which are covered by current legislation. From a policing perspective, harmful practices include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Forced Marriage (FM), Honour Based Abuse (HBA), Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief (CALFB) and Breast Ironing (also known as Breast Flattening). They can be traditional, re-emerging or emerging practices. According to the United Nations<sup>1</sup> harmful practices are 'persistent practices and behaviours that are grounded on discrimination on the basis of sex, gender,

age and other grounds as well as multiple and/or intersecting forms of discrimination that often involve violence and cause physical and/or psychological harm or suffering'.

This document provides information on some of the more serious abusive behaviours police need to be made aware of and describe both the police and schools'/colleges' response to these safeguarding matters.

Although pursuing an alleged offender through a criminal justice route may not always be in a child's interests, recording the alleged or suspected crime is essential for the purposes of accountability and for planning appropriate responses. Pursuing evidence either to confirm or to discount an allegation is particularly important for identifying from whom, and in what way, a child might need to be protected in the future. Only the police can undertake this task<sup>2</sup>.

This guidance is **not** intended to replace existing policies or procedures, especially [Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges 2018](#) (updated 2019) which is the statutory safeguarding guidance to which all schools and colleges<sup>3</sup> in England must have regard. It has been written following consultation to address a gap that exists in relation to schools and colleges' awareness of police support available for specific safeguarding matters and how best to deal with them.

<sup>1</sup> Joint general recommendation No.31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No.18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on harmful practices

<sup>2</sup> In harm's way: The role of the police in keeping children safe – July 2015. HMIC

<sup>3</sup> College means further education colleges and sixth-form colleges as established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 and institutions designated as being within the further education sector.

This guidance complements the existing statutory guidance for professionals within 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' (HM Government, 2018). This guidance can be accessed [here](#).

The guidance is drafted to support the principles of Section 11 of the *Children Act 2004* and Section 175 of the *Education Act 2002*.

Whilst drafted with schools and colleges in mind this guide will be made available to head teachers and principals in educational establishments across England. We would encourage wider dissemination of this guidance to all staff, boards of governors and, where appropriate, it should be incorporated into schools' and colleges' safeguarding policies.

The advice provided is in addition to local safeguarding protocols and existing responsibilities to report incidents to children's social care. On occasions where local safeguarding thresholds have not been met, it should be recognised that police intervention and reporting of suspected offences might still be appropriate, as the information you hold might also be important intelligence for police in building a bigger picture of harm posed to children in the local area and community.



## Why this guidance is timely

From September 2020 Relationships Education for all primary pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all secondary pupils; and Health Education for all pupils will be compulsory. These subjects are designed to help children from all backgrounds build positive relationships and give them the knowledge they need to lead happy, safe and healthy lives.'

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education, (HM Government, February 2019) can be accessed [here](#).

From September 2020 statutory guidance for schools will require them to have teach children about good physical and mental health, how to stay safe on and offline, and the importance of healthy relationships.

Key principles are that compulsory subjects should help keep children safe; help prepare children for the world in which they are growing up, including its laws in relation to relationships, sex and health.

The focus on healthy relationships in both primary and secondary will help children who are experiencing, involved in or witnessing unhealthy relationships identify them as such, know where to seek help and report abuse as well as addressing inappropriate behaviour, harassment, abuse or exploitation.

HM Government has also been clear that, as part RSE for secondary pupils, children should know the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, and harassment at an age appropriate point. They have further strengthened the guidance on being safe to include content on female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage (FM), and rape, given the safeguarding case for doing so.

This guidance is useful information for schools to help clarify the police response to a number of sensitive topics. It is designed to support schools enhance their curriculum by providing specialist advice on handling sensitive issues, enhance responses to disclosures from pupils and help identify possible warning signs of abuse. The document will provide guidance to enable the safe sharing of information via existing referral pathways.

## Why this guidance is needed

Many serious offences affecting young people are underreported.

There are a number of reasons for this;

- Lack of confidence in the police or the criminal justice system;
- Abusive behaviours are increasingly 'normalised' by adults and young people, so much so that they don't realise that they are the victim of an offence;
- Lack of consistent understanding by professionals as whether and at what point Police should be informed of safeguarding matters.

Establishing an accurate picture of levels of victimisation allows police to signpost to appropriate victim care and support. It will also assist and help prevent the future victimisation of others.

### Initial action schools and colleges should take

When school and college staff have a concern about a child or are made aware of any suspected report of abuse or harm you must follow your locally agreed protocols as per Local Children Safeguarding Board / Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements and adhere to any statutory requirements.

The school's or college's role is to establish the basic facts and record in writing, all concerns and discussions about a child's welfare, the decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions. It is the role of the police and social workers to investigate cases and

make a judgement on whether there should be a statutory intervention and/or a criminal investigation. Consideration should be given to the extent of enquiries a school or college makes prior to involving police as asking too much could hinder a criminal investigation.

Questions should be limited to ascertaining:

- what happened
- where it happened
- when it happened and
- who committed the alleged offence

If in doubt, speak with the police or children's social care to advise.

Early disclosure maximises the evidence gathering opportunities that the police can employ. This could increase chances of progressing further along the criminal justice system and as a result may identify further risk management options for agencies to utilise.

If a disclosure is made to you, it is essential that exact words used be captured in the record made. You will discuss this with your designated safeguarding lead who will consider next steps. This will include consideration of making a report to the police at the earliest opportunity. The matter will then be subject of a sensitive and considered investigation.

It is vital that where appropriate a referral is made to local children's social care. If necessary, they will liaise with child protection police officers so that a full and sensitive investigation can commence. Consideration should be given to informing police at the same time as social care are informed, particularly if a young person is at immediate risk of harm or there is a risk of evidence being lost. If the allegation is about an adult working in the school, the Designated Safeguarding Lead / Head Teacher should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer in addition.

The child should be made aware that the disclosure will be shared with police and social services. The school should have a local guidance document or training programme that gives guidance on how to explore what happens next after a disclosure with the child.

Health professionals can support the victim and treat them medically and/or emotionally. Health can also contribute to building a case.

It is worth noting that the charity [Children and Families Across Borders](#) can assist with any overseas aspects, such as if the child has been taken abroad or is at risk of being taken abroad. They can also assess if family members overseas can offer the child with a safe placement if the child cannot be returned to their carers in the UK.

In cases where the child may be at risk due to the actions of a family member do **NOT** notify parents / carers. When dealing with

these incidents, it is vital to retain an open mind. HM Government advice is that you should not let other considerations, like the fear of damaging relationships with adults, get in the way of protecting children from abuse and neglect. Children's social care and/or the police will make decisions as to when to involve the family.

If you think that referral to children's social care is necessary, you should view it as the beginning of a process of inquiry, not an accusation<sup>4</sup>.

With regard to FGM, the National FGM Centre recommends that professionals treat all cases on a case-by-case basis and if in doubt, seek advice from social care regarding whether to speak to parents to clarify facts.

In cases where so-called 'honour' is a factor, family members and/or individuals from within the community concerned may support the primary offender(s), by seeking to mislead, obstruct or undermine any subsequent investigation.

This guidance highlights some of the more serious safeguarding matters and abuse that police need to be notified of. This list is not exhaustive and is designed to give assistance in spotting warning signs and raising awareness that these matters should be reported to police.

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<sup>4</sup> HM Government – What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners – March 2015 p4

## Rape

A person commits rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with their penis without consent. Whilst only a male can commit a rape (as by law you need a penis to rape someone), females can be convicted of rape if they aid and abet a male who rapes. Without true consent the sexual activity described above is rape.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 states that a person consents to sexual activity 'if he or she agrees by **choice** and has the **freedom** and **capacity** to make that choice'.

Section 75 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides for evidential presumptions about consent.

This means there is a presumption that the victim did not consent to sexual activity and the defendant did not reasonably believe that the victim consented, unless he can show otherwise. Circumstances include:

- A person is made to fear immediate violence will be used against them or another person.
- A person was asleep or unconscious.
- A person has a physical disability such that they would not be able to communicate their consent.
- A person has been given a substance, without their consent, which was capable of overpowering at the time of the act.
- A person was unlawfully detained at the time of the relevant act.

A consent defence cannot be used in cases where a child is under 13. If a penis is used to penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of a child aged 12 or under it is statutory rape. The age of consent to any form of sexual activity is 16 for both men and women.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a new series of laws to protect children under 16 from sexual abuse. Where a person is over 18 and is intentionally involved in sexual activity with a young person aged 13, 14 or 15 protection is provided to this age group, unless the defendant can show that they reasonably believed the young person to be aged 16 or over.

Consent as it applies to sexual activity is a complex issue. A good way of explaining it to both young people and professionals is shown [here](#).

The law is not intended to prosecute mutually agreed teenage sexual activity between two young people of a similar age, unless it involves abuse or exploitation.

A useful resource for schools when determining if sexual activities are harmful is Hackett's continuum of harmful sexual behaviour, which can be found [here](#).

Hackett (2010) has proposed a continuum model to demonstrate the range of sexual behaviours presented by children and young people, from those that are normal, to those that are highly deviant.

This integrated framework aims to support local work with children and young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours, and their families, by delivering and developing clear policies and procedures, and by refreshing local practice guidelines and assessment tools.

Children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours are a varied and complex group with diverse needs that cannot be addressed by a 'one size fits all' model of service provision.

**It is important to note that sexual violence occurs on a spectrum and can include activities of a sexual nature that someone does not consent to such as being forced to watch or engage in activities of a sexual nature or being assaulted with an object such as a bottle or a finger or tongue. Other forms of sexual assault can be very distressing to those affected by it and also need to be reported and investigated.**

## Actions police will take

If a rape or serious sexual assault is disclosed:

- Police should be informed as soon as possible so that time critical actions can be completed, such as gathering forensic evidence and CCTV
  - The victim may be taken to an NHS-run sexual assault referral centre. Here they will be offered the option to be examined by a doctor
  - The victim will be asked to provide evidence in the form of a written statement or a digitally recorded Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview dependent on the victims' wishes
  - The suspect will be interviewed and this may be whilst they are under arrest
  - Any witnesses, not just to the incident but those who can provide information in respect of the whole investigation, will be spoken to
- Police may wish to obtain evidence from phones, e-mail or social networking sites as police and prosecutors have a duty to pursue all reasonable lines of enquiry in every investigation, and to disclose any material that undermines the case for the prosecution or assists the case for the accused. With so much more of our lives being lived online, those reasonable lines of enquiry now frequently extend into the devices of complainants and witnesses, as well as suspects – particularly in cases where suspects and complainants know each other. Police want to do all they can to make sure that complainants feel confident to report crimes, and to support investigations and prosecutions
  - There may be a number of other investigative actions depending on the nature of the incident

Many people worry about going to the police because it is the start of a process they won't be able to control. Always remember that Police will support the victim every step of the way and keep them continuously informed. Police also will work with the multi-agency network, considering the advice of other professionals.

## Sexting

There is no clear definition of 'sexting' and it can mean different things to different people. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) refers to 'youth produced sexual imagery'

- 'Youth produced' includes young people (under 18) sharing images that they, or another young people, have created of themselves
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving video
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent'. A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context

Sexting can refer to sexually explicit content communicated via text messages, smart phones or social networking sites. It can include the exchange of sexual messages or images and the creating, sharing and forwarding of sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images through mobile phones and/or the internet.

Academic evidence suggests that girls are most adversely affected and that the main threat is from peers<sup>5</sup>. For a school or college, awareness strategies are challenging as a class may contain varieties of victim, abuser and bystander simultaneously.

Sexting occurs on a continuum from consensual sharing to abusive sharing and it will often not be coercive. When it is coercive it does not necessarily refer to a single activity but rather a range of activities, which may be motivated by sexual pleasure but are often coercive in nature, linked to harassment, bullying and even violence.

Non-statutory for advice on sexting for schools and colleges has been developed by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety and can be found [here](#). The National Education Union also provide comprehensive guidance for teachers that can be found [here](#).

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18, which is 'indecent', is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18. Following NPCC guidance on not criminalising young people, the focus of investigations will be on abusive and coercive incidents. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.csacentre.org.uk/research-publications/scale-and-nature-of-child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation/analysis-of-2017-18-official-and-agency-data/>

**Relevant legislation includes:**

**S160 (1) Criminal Justice Act 1998:**

Possession of an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child,

**S1(1), Protection of Children Act 1978:**

Taking, making, distributing and sharing an indecent photograph or pseudo photograph of a child

Where an image is of a child (under the age of 18) then it is an offence of possession of an indecent photograph or prohibited image. Further offences, are committed if a person creates or distributes an indecent image of a child.

'Indecent' is not defined in legislation. When cases are prosecuted, the question of whether any photograph of a child is indecent is for a jury, magistrate or District Judge to decide based on what is the recognised standard of propriety. For most purposes, if imagery contains a naked young person, a topless girl, and/ or displays genitals or sex acts, including masturbation, then it will be considered indecent. Indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear, dependant on the context of the situation it was shared within.

The law criminalising indecent images of children was created long before mass adoption of the internet, mobiles and digital photography. It was created to protect children and young people from adults seeking to sexually abuse them or gain pleasure from their sexual abuse. It was not intended to criminalise children. However, it is worthwhile to know that young people, who share sexual imagery of themselves, or peers, are breaking the law.

Whilst young people creating and sharing sexual imagery can be very risky, it is often the result of young people's natural curiosity about sex and their exploration of relationships. Often, young people need education, support or safeguarding, not criminalisation. The focus of education should be on the prevention of coercive and abusive sharing, including the non-consensual wider sharing of peers' images.



## Sexting and next steps for schools and colleges

Sexting is often referenced as incidents of youth produced sexual imagery and arising safeguarding concerns need to be addressed. The response to these incidents should be guided by the principle of proportionality and the primary concern at all times should be the welfare and protection of the young people involved.

Schools and colleges may respond to incidents without involving the police. The police may, however, need to be involved in cases to ensure thorough investigation including collection of all evidence (for example, through multi-agency checks). There are some incidents that should always be referred immediately to the police and/or social care; this will include when:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a pupil has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the pupil's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- You have reason to believe a pupil or other young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the pupil is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

Schools should make their policy about mobile phones known to all staff, pupils and parents, and they should outline any sanctions that will be imposed for breaking the rules.

Designated Safeguarding Leads when assessing risks in individual cases should consider:

- Why was the imagery shared?
- Was the young person coerced or put under pressure to produce the imagery?
- Who has shared the imagery?
- Where has the imagery been shared?
- Was it shared and received with the knowledge of the pupil in the imagery?
- Are there any adults involved in the sharing of imagery?
- What is the impact on the pupils involved?
- Do the pupils involved have additional vulnerabilities?
- Does the pupil understand consent?
- Has the pupil taken part in this kind of activity before?

Adults should **not** view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is good and clear reason to do so. Wherever possible responses to incidents should be based on what designated safeguarding leads have been told about the content of the imagery. Imagery should never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to the pupil. If a decision is made to view imagery the designated safeguarding lead would need to be satisfied that viewing:

- Is the only way to make a decision about whether to involve other agencies (i.e. it is not possible to establish the facts from the young people involved)
- Is necessary to report the image to a website, app or suitable reporting agency to have it taken down, or to support the young person or parent in making a report
- Is unavoidable because a pupil has presented an image directly to a staff member or the imagery has been found on a school or college device or network

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaviour and this includes the power to confiscate, retain or dispose of a pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, where reasonable to do so. The school's behaviour policy should set out their approach to confiscation, including the length of time a confiscated item may be retained and to whom it should be returned. The Government has produced advice for schools on searching, screening and confiscation, which is available [here](#) and applies to schools in England.

While the Government has set out the legal framework within which schools can confiscate and retain pupil's property as a disciplinary penalty, schools are free to develop specific policies according to their own particular circumstances. The law does not set out when to return the item, or who to return the item to as these are issues for the school to decide in the individual situation. Schools are, however, required to act reasonably.

Teachers can search pupils without their consent for a mobile phone if they reasonably suspect the phone has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or if mobile phones are banned by the school rules.

The Education Act 2011 provides that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized, a teacher can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so.

In determining a 'good reason' to examine or erase the data or files the staff member must reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, to disrupt teaching or break the school rules.

It is recommended that in most cases young people are asked to delete imagery and to confirm that they have deleted the imagery. Young people should be given a deadline for deletion across all devices, online storage or social media sites.

Young people should be reminded that possession of youth produced sexual imagery is illegal. They should be informed that if they refuse or it is later discovered they did not delete the image they are committing a criminal offence and the police may become involved. Whilst the image(s) may have been deleted from the device(s) in question, the image may be retained elsewhere on the wider World Wide Web and/or back-up systems.

All of these decisions need to be recorded; including times, dates and reasons for decisions made and logged in the safeguarding records. Parents and carers should also be informed unless this presents a further risk to the young person.

Pupils' rights to privacy in respect of the content of their mobile phones must be balanced against the harm caused by inappropriate images and mobile phone messages that are used to bully and harass both pupils and teachers.

Consideration must be taken to the impact on potential criminal investigations if a decision is made to delete data or files.

Where images have been shared online schools can contact the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) by clicking [here](#).

The IWF remit is to remove Child Sexual Abuse content hosted anywhere in the world. They do this by:

- Identifying, assessing, reporting and removing illegal child sexual abuse imagery
- Providing a world class Hotline for anyone to securely and anonymously report child sexual abuse imagery
- Actively search for child sexual abuse images and videos on the public internet
- Work with industry partners worldwide to remove images of child sexual abuse and stop them from being spread further
- Share their expertise and play an active role in the UK Safer Internet Centre

A sexting incident would be reported to a school or college, an initial safeguarding meeting would be held, and a risk assessment will then be conducted as part of the initial review of the facts. This will allow schools and colleges to assess within which of the following scenarios their particular case fits.

The below relates to common scenarios a school may be presented with. This is not an exhaustive list and is provided as a guide for those considering thresholds for referral to external agencies.

### Scenario 1

Peer to peer sharing with consent.  
No onward sharing from both parties and no additional safeguarding concerns

### Scenario 3

Image initially shared amongst peers with consent and then shared further.  
Receiver of image redistributed to other young people without consent but without malicious intent.

### Scenario 2

Peer to peer sharing with consent.  
Producer of the image shared it with multiple young people

### Scenario 4

Initial peer-to-peer sharing without consent and with malicious intent.  
e.g. coercion, blackmail, sexual bullying

**Scenario 1:** the school or college will ensure parents/guardians are informed of the nature of the incident and images are deleted (if that is possible as the image may be retained elsewhere on the wider World Wide Web and/or back-up systems). Parents will be informed if additional parties (e.g. social services or police) are going to be involved and parents have the option to involve the police, even if the school or college have decided not to.

**Scenario 2:** a referral/inquiry to a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is required to establish if there are further safeguarding concerns regarding the **producer** of the image. If there are further safeguarding concerns a referral to police and children's social care is required. If no further safeguarding concerns are present, parents will be informed and deletion of images considered. Referral to police **will** be via the Designated Safeguarding Lead to a Safer Schools Officer or via **101**.

If in both scenario 1 and 2 a decision is made NOT to inform the police you need to ensure that you have taken reasonable steps and have made an informed and robust decision as to the reasons not to. By NOT informing police, you need to record this decision and the rationale for it.

You are also accepting that:

- You are confident that the 'act' in the image is consensual.
- If there are current child abuse investigations involving any of the young people involved you will not know about them

**Scenario 3:** Police and parents need to be informed and invited to the school or college. Referral to police **will** be via the Designated Safeguarding Lead to a Safer Schools Officer or via **101**. A meeting with all parties is held to establish where the images have been shared. Students who have received the images are asked to delete them.

The image may need to be reported to the social media site and the Internet Watch Foundation. If all parties are content (children, parents, school/college and police) the devices should be returned to the students. Police will record this incident and an appropriate outcome determined. This could include Outcome 21, as it might not be in the public interest to pursue a criminal justice response for the receiver of the image, who has then distributed it onwards without malicious intent.

**Scenario 4:** An initial meeting will establish who the images have been shared with and where. It will also explore the experiences of young people and the motivation of the young person intending on using the image to coerce or bully. Devices should be secured as these are evidence that the police may need. The incident needs to be reported to police and parents are to be informed. Police will record and investigate, seize and examine the device(s) and in due course consider the appropriate outcome for those who have shared the image(s). A referral to children's social care will need to be made.

A school or college will assess this by considering whether:



The images were taken and shared consensually



Whether the images have been distributed further



If so, how far the images have spread, for example are they on social media?

**In all of these scenarios:**

- Schools and colleges should consider providing support/disciplining students/ imposing sanctions according to their behaviour/safeguarding policy.
- School and college staff should be offered support through their internal structures.
- Parents should be offered advice and support and helped to manage their child's future online interactions.
- Students should be offered direct support, this may involve counselling and/or education around sex and relationships.
- Each incident must be recorded using the schools safeguarding and recording templates.

## Actions police will take when investigating sexting

The National Police Chiefs Council produced updated guidance on the police response to sexting in November 2016. A briefing note by the College of Policing on the Police response to youth produced sexual imaging ('sexting') is available [here](#).

There is a particular emphasis on **NOT** criminalising young people who share an image of themselves. By virtue of their age they are committing an offence, however they are also victims and potentially vulnerable, as they can be exploited, cyberbullied and blamed for their own victimisation.

The outcome to a particular sexting incident will be determined by the nature and type of sexting incident. The interests of the children and young people involved will always be put first.

Home Office Counting Rules provide a number of outcome codes for case disposal of investigations.

Outcome Code 21 code states '*Further investigation, resulting from the crime report, which could provide evidence sufficient to support formal action being taken against the suspect is not in the public interest – police decision.*'

This outcome code allows police to record a crime as having happened but for no formal criminal justice action to be taken, as it is not considered to be in the public interest to do so.

Outcome 21 may be considered the most appropriate resolution in 'youth produced sexual imagery' cases where the making and distribution is considered non-abusive and there is no evidence of aggravating factors such as exploitation, grooming, a profit motive or malicious intent.

Where these and other high-risk aggravating factors are present, **Outcome 21 would not apply**. The wishes of the victim and appropriate adult will also be taken into consideration.

Once an appropriate outcome has been decided, it is vital that this is clearly communicated to the persons affected, their parents or carers and school where appropriate. This should also explain the immediate and longer-term implications, as this is a common concern cited by those being investigated as well as their parents or carers.

Should a person receive a caution (including a youth caution) or conviction, disclosure on a DBS certificate is mandatory.

Non-conviction information can only be included on an enhanced criminal record check and it is for a chief officer of police in the appropriate area to consider what information should be included based on relevance.

The discretion on whether to disclose non-conviction information rests with each chief officer managing the process. Therefore, no guarantee can (or should) be provided, that information regarding an outcome 21 disposal would not be released.

However, police retain the option to arrest/investigate those who share these images further, especially if aggravating factors are present. Offences such as the possession, or distribution of an indecent photograph of child (under 18) could then be considered.

Aggravating factors include:

- Adult(s) involved
- Bait sites (whereby young people use private social media groups to solicit sexual gossip and pictures from their peers)
- Blackmail
- Coercion
- Exploitative behaviour
- Extensive sharing
- Grooming conduct
- Inappropriate sharing
- Known CSE Perpetrator
- Malicious intent
- Persistent behaviour
- Profit motive
- Violence (within the imagery or threatened)

By way of example, the two scenarios below examine the investigative approach taken within London. These are from guidance developed by the Metropolitan Police Service and relate to common investigations/referrals involving indecent images of children.

**1. Possession of youth produced sexual imagery – a child in possession of an indecent image of themselves or a child in possession of an indecent image of another child (with no aggravating factors)**

The schools have the power to investigate and deal with youth produced sexual imagery in this case and should utilise their powers to seize, view and delete content (see [UKCISS guidance](#)).

If however the case is brought to police attention and police do **not** seize devices, a clear direction should be provided to the child and/or appropriate adult in possession of copies of any indecent images to delete them and prove they have done so.

Police should record the allegation on a crime report and investigate accordingly, with consideration given to the use of Outcome code 21 and serving the appropriate MPS 'information letter(s)'



## 2. Possession of youth produced sexual imagery where aggravating factors have been identified (as listed above).

In this situation, police will complete an investigation to include the seizure and digital forensic examination of the device (or devices) in question.

One of the biggest issues that schools seem to face is what to do regarding students who are subject to an on-going investigation. The removal of one party from the school is a multi-agency decision through a strategy meeting and subsequent reviews. The strategy meeting should agree lead professionals from all agencies who are able to make decisions on behalf of their agency and who are able to reconvene in a timely manner should the safeguarding situation change.

The strategy meeting could make recommendations such as the school manage any discipline issues and/or manage the pastoral care of all parties. Any bail conditions may also affect the situation and need to be taken into consideration.

### Deletion of images

Whilst deletion of images from devices is appropriate in many circumstances, it is important to recognise that this may subsequently present evidential difficulties for police if an investigation was then required.

As previously stated, whilst image(s) may have been deleted from the device(s) in question, the image may be retained elsewhere on the wider World Wide Web and/or back-up systems.

It is possible that imagery could put a child at future risk of potential harm from child sexual exploitation. This can occur with advanced technology and police **cannot** make assurances that the imagery could subsequently come to the attention of law enforcement agencies and others in the future.

One way of mitigating this is by surrendering the device(s) to police who will upload the imagery onto the Child Abuse Imagery Database. However, device(s) are likely to be in the possession of police for some time for this process to be undertaken, and the device may be damaged.

The Child Abuse Imagery Database is a Home Office developed secure database for illegal images of children to aid UK law enforcement and more information on CAID can be found [here](#).

## Child Sexual Exploitation

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology'<sup>6</sup>.

Child Sexual Exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability (Department for Education 2012)

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a complex area:

In law, there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation. Offenders are often convicted for associated offences such as sexual activity with a child or trafficking offences.

Child sexual exploitation is not a separate category of abuse in child protection procedures. This means data is often:

- missing or incomplete
- concealed in other categories of abuse or crime
- unreported

<sup>6</sup> Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation. Department of Education – February 2017

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.

- Those who exploit children sexually are often described as highly manipulative individuals and will often target the most vulnerable. As such it is important that we do not dismiss the warning signs and concerns based on a child's previous history or a perception that they have a chaotic lifestyle. Young people with learning disabilities share many of the same vulnerabilities to CSE that are faced by all young people, but the evidence indicates that they face additional barriers to their protection, and to receiving support to address CSE<sup>7</sup>. Other children and not just adults can instigate CSE.

### **Two films produced by the Metropolitan Police Service are useful resources**

'**Can you see it**', (2015): raises awareness amongst professionals working with children and young people of the warning signs for peer on peer child sexual exploitation with the aim of improving information sharing between partners.

[www.barnardos.org.uk/cse-can-you-see-it](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/cse-can-you-see-it)

'**Can you stop it**', (2015): seeks to identify the potential behaviours patterns by perpetrators who sexually exploit children and vulnerable young people.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=STJ163BK0xQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STJ163BK0xQ) or searchable by typing '*can you stop it CSE*' into the search engine.

<sup>7</sup> Unprotected, overprotected: meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience, or are at risk of sexual exploitation – Anita Franklin, Phil Raws and Emilie Smeaton

## Signs a child is being Sexually Exploited

There are a number of warning signs that can indicate a child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation. To assist you in remembering and assessing these signs and behaviours, you can utilise the mnemonic 'SAFEGUARD'.

Developed for use in London, this mnemonic is from the London Child Sexual Exploitation Protocols 2017, which can be accessed [here](#).

This document sets out the operating protocol for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children from Child Sexual Exploitation. This police-led, multiagency document is designed to complement and not replace statutory guidance. It outlines how, through our partnerships, we: assess, challenge and provide an enhanced, effective service to reduce the harm and threats posed to children and young people from CSE; and target offenders to prevent and disrupt criminal activity.

This protocol is non-statutory, London specific and has been produced to help practitioners, local leaders and decision makers who work with children and families to identify CSE and take appropriate action in response. This includes the management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.



## Sexual identity, wellbeing and choice

Sexually transmitted infections (particularly repeat infections); pregnancy; terminations; changing or out of character sexual behaviour; exploring sexual relationships in an unsafe context or environment; unable to disclose sexual orientation and fearful of societal responses.



## Absence, truancy and going missing

Truancy from school, including during the school day; missing from home or care, and repeat incidents; travelling outside borough/town when missing; unexplained absences.



## Family and home

Sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect; risks of forced marriage or so called honour based violence, female genital mutilation; domestic violence; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; bereavement; parental and sibling criminality; experiences of homelessness or sofa surfing; living in care or temporary accommodation; immigration status.



## Emotional and physical health

Suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts; self-harm; low self-esteem/confidence/worth; learning difficulties; changing emotional wellbeing and signs of poor mental health; unexplained injuries and changes in physical appearance.



## Gangs, Groups, Age Gaps and Crime

Involvement in gangs or gang affected family, peers or siblings; concerns of abusive peer groups; involvement with older individuals or groups, lacking friends in the same age group; older 'boyfriends'; sudden changes in peer groups; bullying, both on and off line; friends of young people experiencing CSE.



## Use of technology and sexual bullying

Sexting, both sending and receiving; being listed on social network pages in relation to sexual activity and, or names in videos; secretive use of the internet/phones/social networking sites; sudden behaviour changes when using the phone or internet; control via phone or internet; multiple or secretive social networking profiles.



## Alcohol and substances

Reliance on and changing use of substances, both legal and illegal.



## Receipt of unexplained gifts or money

Unexplained money, mobile phones; phone credit, items, clothes, money; new nails; travel in taxis; gifts where payment is required at a later date; worries about having debts.



## Distrust of authority figures

Resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social services, health, police and others.

## CSE and next steps for schools and colleges

Procedures for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children from Child Sexual Exploitation are set out within the Department of Education's 'Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation' document (2017). This document can be accessed [here](#).

This guidance aims to help practitioners, local leaders and decision makers who work with children and families to identify child sexual exploitation and take appropriate action in response. This includes the management, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.

It is important to identify children at risk of being sexually exploited and to work collaboratively to ensure, the children and young people at risk of being sexually exploited are safeguarded.

A key principle is that children identified as being 'at risk' of CSE should be reported. This requires making a referral for a vulnerable child or young person where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any of the CSE warning signs have been identified, even though there is no evidence of any offences at that stage.

This allows agencies to share information to safeguard those who may be at risk. It also helps agencies build a picture of the nature of CSE within the local area and assists with the disruption of perpetrators.

Schools and colleges also become aware of information that can be helpful in identifying and disrupting those who exploit children. For example, reports of people acting suspiciously, number plates of suspicious vehicles seen around school/college or information received from pupils themselves. This useful intelligence can help build up a pattern of behaviour and can be passed to police either through a schools officer or by calling '101', the police non-emergency number.

## CSE and actions for the police

Victim's needs are at the forefront of the police approach at all time and police work closely with partner agencies.

Police record all allegations of CSE irrespective of whether a crime has been committed or the child is at risk. This provides a record that is victim focused, not incident focused and allows for all enquiries and investigations specific to that child to be recorded. It also provides a record of multiagency / partnership working and outcomes.

Police tactics that can be deployed to safeguard children and target perpetrators include;



Services of an abduction notice on suspected offenders



Flagging victims and suspects on the Police National Computer



Providing specially trained officers to speak to the child



Targeting locations and perpetrators known for CSE



Obtaining 'Risk of Sexual Harm Orders' against suspects

Police can prosecute offenders even without a victim statement. This is possible if sufficient evidence can be obtained in other ways e.g. through forensics or social media.

## Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding has been developed by Dr Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Schools are an important context in which young people spend time, socialise and make friends. They are locations where young people feel safe, but also come across harm. When schools are identified as places young people encounter violence and abuse, practitioners need support to identify and intervene. To date, interventions into peer-on-peer abuse in schools has predominately targeted individual young people or relied on sanctions and exclusions that target problematic behaviours. When harm is located within schools, practitioners need advice and resources to disrupt harmful social and cultural practices.

A contextual approach to safeguarding in schools can consider how staff are supported with training and relevant policies and procedures, options for young people to identify and disclose harm and the relationship between schools and the local community.

The [Contextual Safeguarding Network](https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/en/) includes a range of tools, resources and videos for practitioners working in schools. These include a toolkit for assessing school responses to harmful sexual behaviour, videos on how contextual safeguarding applies to schools, resources for multi-agency partners to consider school exclusions and managed moves, and briefings for education providers. Access to these resources is via <https://www.contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/en/>



## Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

Abuse linked with belief is where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified and a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features, or when practice linked to faith or belief are harmful.

Globally, beliefs in the spiritual realm and of malevolent forces are common. There is nothing wrong with these beliefs. What is unacceptable is any abuse that takes place against those who are branded (or labelled) either as a witch or as having being possessed by an evil spirit.

Significant harm (including murder) can occur because of concerted efforts to 'excise' or 'deliver' evil from a child (or vulnerable adult). Spotting the signs that this abuse exists can prevent escalation from 'subtle' harms that may often go unnoticed by many, to 'extreme' situations where there is loss of life.

Witchcraft beliefs are used to blame a person (rather than circumstances) for misfortune that happens in life.

Children believed to be possessed and/or accused of witchcraft have been subjected to serious levels of abuse which can include:

- **Physical Abuse:** beating, shaking, burning, cutting, stabbing, semi-strangulation, tying up, rubbing chilli peppers or other substances into genitals, eyes or mouth.
- **Emotional/Psychological Abuse:** enforced isolation, threats of abandonment, convincing the child that they are evil or are possessed.
- **Neglect:** failure to provide appropriate medical care, hygiene, nourishment, clothing or warmth; or to ensure sufficient supervision or school attendance
- **Sexual Abuse:** children may be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may feel powerless or worthless and that they won't be believed.

Escalation of the cruelty and brutality the children endure is often rapid from the point they are accused.

It is important to recognise that even the response to a child being labelled is non-violent it could be an unpleasant and frightening experience for children.

Sometimes parents/carers may access websites that provide advice on how to deliver or protect children from evil spirits or witchcraft.

Children are also taken overseas to be 'cured', so there is also a flight risk to consider.

It is important to think about other children within the household who are not themselves accused. Case reviews have shown that they are also at risk of being (or have been) harmed, when another child has been accused.

## Children at risk

Those vulnerable to accusation of witchcraft or spirit possession can be of any age (including unborn children). Children born with physical disability, breech births, even twins may be at risk. Epilepsy, autism, learning difficulties, behavioural problems and bedwetting could indicate spirit possession or witchcraft in the mind of an abuser. Often a child will be used as a scapegoat and blamed for death, illness, separation, financial difficulty or any misfortune experienced within the household or community. Trafficked children or those in private fostering arrangements often can be more vulnerable to accusations. Both boys and girls are equally at risk of being accused.

Families and guardians sometimes make their own 'diagnosis' and devise their own methods of deliverance, but often suspicions of witchcraft or spirit possession are confirmed by a faith leader, usually for a substantial fee. Exorcism or deliverance can be an unpleasant process for a child. It could range of act that can be emotionally abusive and/or involve a violent process which can involve isolating, beating, burning and starving the 'accused'. An important factor to consider is the role of the internet as parents/carers may access advice on websites which provide advice on 'diagnosing' and 'treating' the matter. Some children are known to have been taken overseas to be 'cured', so it is important to consider if there is risk of the child being taken abroad. Case reviews have also highlighted that other children within the family who are not accused have also suffered significant harm when their sibling was accused.

## Identifying children at risk

It is important to remember every child is different. Some children will display a combination of indicators of abuse, whilst others will attempt to conceal them.

Indicators include:

- A child reporting that they are or have been accused of being 'evil', and/or that they are having the 'devil beaten out of them'
- The child or family may use words such as 'kindoki', 'djin', 'juju' or 'voodoo' – all of which refer to spiritual beliefs
- A child wearing items that may indicate protection from evil spirits
- A parent wanting to take the child out of school to be taken overseas for a deliverance/exorcism
- A child disclosing that they are made to be involved in 'rituals' to cleanse them
- A child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children
- A child's personal care deteriorating (e.g. rapid loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes)
- It may be evident that the child's parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child
- Physical injuries such as bruises or burns
- A child's attendance at school or college becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child's performance
- A child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged

## Things for professionals to consider

Abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession or witchcraft can be hard for professionals to accept, difficult to understand and it can take time to recognise.

Further information on this issue can be found [here](#) at the National FGM Centre's website.

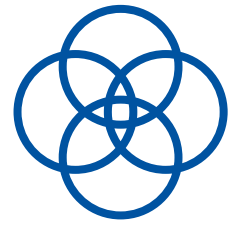
The NSPCC have a dedicated helpline for FGM and Child Abuse Linked to Faith of Belief. Professionals can contact the helpline if they are concerned a child is at risk of abuse linked to faith or belief. The helpline is free and anonymous. It is a 24/7 service: Phone: **0800 028 3550** or by email: [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

It is important to consider the following:

- Provide opportunities for children to discuss issues of faith and belief
- Provide opportunities for parents to discuss their faith or belief
- Ensure organisations renting your premises are fully vetted and they have safeguarding policies in place
- Safeguarding training for staff to include child abuse linked to faith or belief
- Build relationships with places of worship in your local area
- Children in these cases are at risk of being taken overseas, so respond quickly to concerns
- These cases require a multi-agency response, so work in partnership with others and follow safeguarding guidelines
- Access resources for schools on the National FGM Centre's website



Building a relationship of trust with the child to encourage disclosure.



The beliefs of the family and their understanding of them.



Seek advice if necessary, initially from the Child Protection lead, and refer if appropriate.



The family structure to include privately fostered children, biological relationships and extended family.



Reasons the child may be at risk that have not been identified above.



Professional Interpreters taking into consideration their standing in the community, own beliefs, gender, preconceptions, and allegiances.

## Honour Based Abuse

Honour based abuse' (HBA) is an incident or crime involving violence, threats of violence, intimidation, coercion or abuse (including psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse), which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of an individual, family and or community for alleged or perceived breaches of the family and / or community's code of behaviour.

National Police Chiefs Council definition

Honour based abuse is often a child protection issue. Perpetrators of HBA can murder or abuse their closest relatives and/or others for what might seem to those outside of their family or community a trivial transgression.

Evidence shows that these types of murders often involve considerable planning and are sometimes made to look like a suicide, or an accident. A decision to kill may be preceded by a family council. There tends to be a degree of premeditation, family conspiracy and a belief that the victim deserved to die. There is no honour in murder.

Males can also be victims of Honour Based Abuse<sup>8</sup>. This might be as a consequence of their involvement in relationships that are deemed as inappropriate, if they are Lesbian Gay Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT), or **if they are believed to be supporting the victim.**

Relatives (including females) may conspire, aid, abet or participate in the killing. Younger relatives may be selected to undertake the killing in order to avoid senior family members being arrested. Family members may go to extreme lengths to trace and seek the return of family members who have breached their honour code. Once returned they are then at risk of ongoing harm, abuse and possibly death.

<sup>8</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/783996/Male\\_Victims\\_Position\\_Paper\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783996/Male_Victims_Position_Paper_Web_Accessible.pdf)

## Children at risk

Just the perception or rumour of immoral behaviour may be sufficient to harm or kill. Such incidents may include:

- The existence of a boyfriend/girlfriend
- Unsanctioned use of social media
- A child with a learning disability
- Rejecting an arranged marriage
- Pregnancy outside of marriage
- Interfaith relationships
- Public displays of affection (e.g. kissing or intimacy in a public place)
- Coming out or risk of being 'outed' (LGBT matters)
- Making allegations to police, social care or school staff
- Schools informing of poor performance and/or truanting
- Perceived inappropriate make-up or dress

## Signs that a child is being subjected to HBA



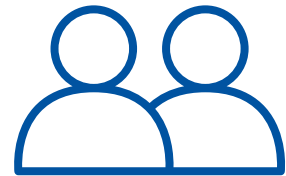
Sudden absence from school (children are withdrawn as punishment or in order that injuries are concealed)



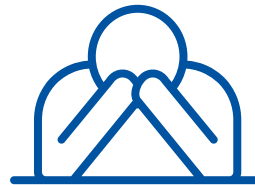
Plans to travel abroad for considerable lengths of time



Withdrawn of access to mobile phone/internet



Not being allowed out unchaperoned



Changes in behaviour/ child becoming withdrawn



Signs of physical abuse

## Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or any other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM has been categorised into four types, ranging from a symbolic prick to the clitoris to the fairly extensive removal and narrowing of the vaginal opening.

World Health Organisation

FGM is considered “significant harm” and child abuse in the UK. It is also a human rights violation.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it illegal to:

- Practice FGM in the UK
- To take girls who are British nationals or habitual residents of the UK abroad for FGM (irrespective of whether it is lawful in that country or not)
- To aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad

These offences can result in prison sentences of up to 14 years.

There is no religious basis for FGM. FGM is prevalent in over 28 African countries, as well as parts of the Middle East and Asia. Due to migration, it is now a global issue and is taking place in the UK, US, Australia and other countries.

You can find out more about the countries where FGM is taking place by utilising the National FGM Centre interactive FGM [map](#)<sup>9</sup>.

The NHS provide useful online resources that highlight the types of FGM, the effects of FGM and the help available to FGM survivors. This can be accessed [here](#).

According to the 28 Too Many<sup>10</sup> debates continue internationally about the most appropriate terminology to use to refer to procedures for altering the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

<sup>9</sup> <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk>

<sup>10</sup> [FGM and Social Norms: A Guide to Designing Culturally Sensitive Community Programmes – June 2019](#)

Essentially, FGM is known by different names in different communities. The terms used can also point towards the communicator's attitude towards the practice. Most practising communities do not see the practise as mutilation and therefore do not always use the term 'FGM'.

There are numerous other national and local terms (and associated definitions) for the practice across Africa and beyond, including the word sunna (referring to all types except infibulation) in countries such as Somalia and Sudan and local variations such as angurya (the scraping of tissue surrounding the opening of the vagina) and gishiri (cutting of the vagina) in Nigeria.

Sensitivity to language is an essential element of building trust with people in order to understand their perspectives and initiate change. When speaking to affected communities best practice in relation to terminology appears to be **the more neutral, the better**.

For locally specific terminology, please click [here](#).

Terminology for referring to FGM varies between communities, terms could include:

- Female circumcision
- Cutting
- Bondo
- Sunna
- Initiation

## Signs that a girl is at risk of FGM

- A female elder from a practising country is visiting the UK and is present in the family home
- A girl is going on an extended holiday to a practising country or will be continuing her education in a country of origin
- A girl may confide that she is going to have a 'special procedure' 'operation' or small injection
- A girl may confide that she is going to have a 'celebration' or attend a special occasion.
- A girl may confide that she is going to 'become a woman'
- Correcting perceived 'westernised' or 'bad behaviour'
- Parents seeking to withdraw a child from learning about FGM
- A girl comes from a community where FGM is practised. For country specific profiles the '28 Too Many' website<sup>11</sup> is particularly useful and can be viewed [here](#).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.28toomany.org>



## Indicators that a girl has undergone FGM

- A girl has difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may appear to be uncomfortable
- A girl spends longer than normal in the toilet due to difficulties menstruating/urinating
- A girl has frequent urinary, menstrual or abdominal problems
- There may be frequent absences from school or college
- Withdrawal or depression or significant behavioural change
- A reluctance to undergo medical examinations
- A girl may talk about pain or discomfort between her legs
- A girl may not partake in physical exercise
- The girl may be removed early, before the end of term, prior to a holiday or return late, after the start of a new term
- Unable to wear tights or trousers due to delayed healing
- Broken bones or bruises received from being held down and restrained during the procedure.

For further information on FGM professionals should complete an online FGM e-learning package that can be found on the Home Office website and is available [here](#).

If you're worried a child is at risk of or has already had FGM, you can call the NSPCC dedicated FGM helpline on **0800 028 3550** or email [fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk). This is a free and anonymous.

## FGM and Next Steps for Schools and Colleges

Identifying girls who have been subjected to FGM allows for medical interventions to be offered. There are numerous health risks associated with FGM including; blood loss, infection, urine retention, fistula, severe pain and infertility. Siblings of those subject to FGM will also be at risk and appropriate safeguarding action will need to be considered for them.

Discussing FGM can be challenging, as it is a hugely sensitive issue. However, it is vital that professionals are professionally curious and discuss it openly with both children and adults.

NHS Oxford Health Foundation Trust have produced a useful resource to enable conversations on FGM. This is available [here](#).

The National FGM Centre has designed a risk assessment tool for social workers dealing with FGM. This online tool is freely available and can help teachers identify vulnerability and frame their responses when discussing FGM.

The risk assessment tool can be found by clicking [here](#).

## Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting of FGM was introduced on 31st October 2015. All regulated professionals are now required to report either **known** cases of FGM or **disclosed** cases of FGM to girls **under 18**, direct to Police via the **101** telephone reporting system.

For schools and colleges in England, this **duty** applies to qualified teachers or persons who are employed or engaged to carry out teaching work in schools and other institutions.

Known cases of FGM are those that have been 'visibly identified' by a regulated professional and as such will almost exclusively relate to health care professionals.

Disclosed cases are far more likely to apply to education professionals.

If a girl under 18 discloses directly to a regulated professional that she has **had** FGM a report needs to be made to **101** (as soon as possible, within 48 hours) and you will need to include the following information:



Professionals

Name, Role & Contact Details



Girls

Name, Date of Birth, & Home Address



Organisations

Name, Address & Designated Safeguarding Lead

The duty to report is a **personal duty**; it cannot be transferred to anyone else.

Mandatory reporting does **not** apply if a child is 'at risk' of being subject to FGM, or the information relating to a child being subject to FGM has not come directly from her in the form of a direct disclosure. In these circumstances, normal safeguarding procedures and existing pathways would apply. If there is an immediate risk of FGM to a child, or other children within the home, then an urgent **999** response should be initiated.

For more information on the Mandatory Reporting Duty click [here](#).

The National Education Union provides advice to its members of Mandatory Reporting of FGM, which can be accessed [here](#).

## Female Genital Mutilation Protection Order's (FGMPO)

FGM Protection Orders protect girls under 18 years but also vulnerable female adults over 18 years.

Examples of the types of orders the court might make are:

- To protect a victim or potential victim from FGM from being taken abroad;
- To order the surrender of passports or any other travel documents, including the passport/travel documentation of the girl to be protected;
- To prohibit specified persons from entering into any arrangements in the UK or abroad for FGM to be performed on the person to be protected;
- To include terms in the order which relate to the conduct of the respondent(s) both inside and outside of England and Wales;

FGMPO's are issued by a small number of family courts due to the specialist nature of the cases. 296 FGMPO's have been obtained in England between October 2015 and September 2018.

Breach of an order is a criminal offence, and the respondent may be arrested if the police believe there is reasonable cause to suspect there is a breach of the order. The offence of breach of an FGM Protection Order is subject to a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment.

The following can apply for an order:

- the person who has had or is at risk of FGM;
- a local authority; or
- any other person with the permission of the court (for example, the police, a teacher, a charity or a family member).

For more information on obtaining an order click [here](#).

## Failure to protect a girl from FGM

The offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM was introduced in October 2015 and is committed against a girl **under the age of 16**. This offence caters for situations where those with responsibility for the girl leave her with family members who then subject her to FGM. The onus is on defendants to demonstrate that there was not a significant risk of FGM, or that they had taken reasonable steps to prevent it happening.

This legislation provides additional support to girls at risk of FGM, particularly when they travel abroad. This offence can result in prison sentences of up to 7 years.

## Forced Marriage (FM)

This is defined as 'a marriage conducted without the valid consent of both parties, and where duress or abuse is a factor.'

There is a clear distinction between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage. The choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the spouses.

In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with severe learning disabilities) cannot consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical violence, psychological pressure (for instance made to feel as if they are bringing shame on their family), sexual violence, plus financial and emotional pressure.

In some cases, children and young people may be taken abroad without knowing they are to be married. When they arrive in that country, their passport(s) and /or travel documents may be taken from them to prevent their return to the UK.

### Signs that an individual may be facing Forced Marriage

- Absence or persistent absence from school or college
- Request for extended leave of absence and/or failure to return from travel to country of origin
- Fear about forthcoming school/college holidays
- Surveillance by siblings or cousins in, and/or outside of, school or college
- Decline in behaviour, performance, or punctuality
- Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility
- Removal from a day centre of a person with a physical or learning difficulty
- Prevented from going to further/higher education
- Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- Fear of going home

## Family history that could suggest increased risk of Forced Marriage

- Siblings forced to marry
- Early marriage of siblings
- Self-harm or suicide of siblings
- Death of a parent
- Family disputes
- Running away from home
- Unreasonable restrictions: i.e. kept at home by parents (house arrest) & financial restrictions

## Some reasons why Forced Marriage happen

- Parents belief that religion or culture is being preserved
- Pressure from peers or family members to carry on perceived cultural traditions
- Protecting 'family honour' or 'izzat' (izzat is a universal cultural term roughly translated as 'honour')
- Preventing unwanted relationships outside the ethnicity, culture, religion or caste
- Belief that it will strengthen family links
- Financial gain (land, property, wealth remains within a family )
- Control unwanted behaviour or sexuality (e.g. promiscuity, being lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT+), alcohol abuse, drug abuse, wearing make-up and westernised behaviour)
- Settling family disputes (e.g. pay off accumulated debts or compensating for the actions of other family members)
- Assisting claims for country residence
- Obtaining a long term carer for a person with a disability and assistance for aging parents
- Believing the marriage will somehow 'cure' a disability or 'possession/jinn

## Forced Marriage and Next Steps for Schools and Colleges

A referral to the designated safeguarding lead will activate local safeguarding procedures. Advise the child not to travel overseas and suggest that if they fear being forced to travel by plane, guidance from forced marriage charities suggests or contact the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU).

It is important to reassure victims about confidentiality where appropriate (i.e. practitioners will not inform their family of the disclosure). As the risks may be imminent and serious, early involvement of Police may be appropriate so this matter is responded to as an emergency.

Do **not** attempt to mediate or encourage mediation, reconciliation, arbitration with family members as this could put the child at risk.

The [Forced Marriage Unit](#) (FMU)<sup>12</sup> is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both inside the UK (where support is provided to any individual) and overseas (where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals).

Multi-agency guidelines on handling Forced Marriage cases have been developed by the FMU and can be accessed [here](#).

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from safety advice, through to helping a forced marriage victim prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases). In extreme circumstances the FMU will assist with rescues of victims held against their will overseas.

The FMU can be contacted via telephone: **0207 008 0151 / (+44) (0) 207 008 1500** Global Response Centre (out of hours) or via email: [fmu@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fmu@fco.gov.uk)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

The FMU advise that the following information be obtained where possible:

- Name and date of birth as shown on passport
- Passport number (with date and place of issue)
- Overseas contact details and address of where they will be staying
- Number of secret mobile phone taken overseas
- Address and telephone number (including mobile) in the UK
- A recent photograph
- Contact details of a trusted third party in the UK
- Parents' names and address
- Departure and expected return date (copies of tickets if possible)
- Names of those they are travelling with
- Names of any family members remaining in the UK
- Any other useful information such as any secret code words

This will allow authorities to take action and/or place an 'all ports alert' where appropriate.

If the victim has already been taken abroad, give as many details as you can, for example:

- where the person has gone
- when they were due back
- when you last heard from them
- any other useful information (including hearsay)

The FMU will contact the relevant embassy and if they are a British national, the embassy will try to contact the person and help them get back to the UK if that is what they want.

The FMU have developed a free forced marriage e-learning package that can be accessed [here](#).

This course is aimed at all professionals who have a responsibility to safeguard vulnerable children, young people and adults at risk and is aimed specifically at child protection services, health professionals, education professionals, police officers, children's social care, adult social care and housing authorities.

The learning objectives are to:

- Recognise the warning signs of forced marriage
- Take the right actions to help protect the potential victim
- Co-operate effectively with other agencies

## Forced Marriage Legislation

The legislation relating to Forced Marriage is wide ranging in scope. It deals with three main scenarios:

- An individual who fears they may be forced to marry in the UK or overseas
- An individual who has already been forced to marry in the UK or overseas
- A spouse who has come to the UK as a result of a forced marriage

The main elements of the legislation are that:

- It criminalises the act of forcing someone to marry against their will
- It criminalises the act of the luring of a person to a territory of a state for the purpose of forcing them to enter into marriage without consent
- It criminalises the act of using deception with the intention of causing a person to leave the UK with the intention of forcing that person to marry
- If a person lacks the capacity to consent, the offence is also capable of being committed by any conduct carried out for the purpose of causing the victim to marry, whether or not it amounts to violence, threats or any other form of coercion
- It criminalises the breach of a Forced Marriage Protection Order



## Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPO)

A Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) is made for the purposes of protecting

- Someone who has been forced into marriage
- Someone who is facing being forced into marriage

FMPO are heard by the family courts – initially the High Court and a specified number of county courts. Breach of a FMPO is a criminal offence with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

The order can include prohibitions, restrictions or requirements to protect a victim from a spouse, family member or anyone involved. Involvement can include aiding, abetting, counseling, procuring, encouraging, or assisting another person to force or attempt to force a person to marry.

Examples of the terms the court might include:

- Surrender of passport or travel documents
- Prevent the victim from being taken abroad
- Stop the forced marriage taking place
- No contact with the victim
- Forbidding harassment, force or threat of force
- Presenting the victim to an Embassy (if already abroad)

You can apply for a forced marriage protection order yourself or if you are one of the following:

- relative or friend
- voluntary worker or someone else official who's been asked for help
- any other person with the permission of the court

Anyone can apply for a court order – even a child under 18. Children do not have to have someone to help them if:

- the court agrees
- they have a legal representative

For more information on FMPO's click [here](#).

## Breast Ironing (also known as Breast Flattening)

Breast Ironing (also known as breast flattening), is the process during which young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged, flattened and/or pounded down over a period of time (sometimes years) in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.

In some cases large stones, a hammer or spatula that have been heated over scorching coals can be used to compress the breast tissue. Other methods include the use of an elastic belt or binder to press the breasts so as to prevent them from growing.

Breast ironing usually starts with the first signs of puberty, which can be as young as nine years old and is usually carried out by female relatives.

Breast ironing has been documented primarily in Cameroon but is also practised in Benin, Chad, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Togo, Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa. According to United Nations (UN) figures, Breast Ironing affects 3.8 million women worldwide.

### Warning signs that a girl could be at risk of breast ironing or breast flattening:

- A girl is embarrassed about her body
- A girl is born to a woman who has undergone breast flattening
- A girl has an older sibling or cousin who has undergone breast flattening
- If there are references to breast flattening in conversation, for example a girl may tell other children about it
- A girl may request help from a teacher or another adult if she is aware or suspects that she is at immediate risk
- A girl from an affected community is withdrawn from Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and/or Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education as her parents wish to keep her uninformed about her rights
- One or both parents or elder family members consider breast flattening integral to their cultural identity
- The family indicate that there are strong levels of influence held by elders who are involved in bringing up female children and support breast flattening
- A girl/family has limited level of integration within UK community

### **Warning signs that a girl is undergoing breast ironing or flattening:**

- A girl may disclose to a teacher, social worker, GP or another medical professional.
- Some girls may ask for help, perhaps talk about pain or discomfort in their chest area, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear
- A girl may display reluctance to undergo medical examination
- A girl may be fearful of changing for physical activities due to scars showing or bandages being visible

### **Health consequences of breast ironing / breast flattening:**

Due to the type of instruments that may be used, the type of force and the lack of aftercare, significant health and developmental issue may occur, such as:

- Abscesses
- Cysts
- Itching
- Tissue damage
- Infection
- Discharge of milk
- Dissymmetry of the breasts
- Severe fever
- Even the complete disappearance of one or both breasts.

There is likely to be an impact on the child's social and psychological well-being.

Although there is no specific law within the UK around breast flattening or breast ironing, it is a form of physical abuse and if professionals are concerned a child may be at risk of, or suffering significant harm, they must refer to their local safeguarding procedure.

For more information on breast ironing / breast flattening, visit National FGM Centre website by clicking [here](#).

## Actions police take when investigating Harmful Practices<sup>13</sup> involving children

The welfare of the child is paramount. A risk assessment will be carried out to ascertain what safeguarding measures, if any, need to be implemented and appropriate interventions considered. These could include taking a young person into police protection, voluntary accommodation elsewhere or children services applying for an Emergency Protection Order.

The allegation will be recorded and a joint strategy agreed between police and children services for the investigation of the offence and the safeguarding of the child. A health professional may also attend the meeting, as required, and will contribute to the investigation. A strategy meeting may be held either as soon as is practicable, or in any case within 48 hours, to discuss the implications for the child and the coordination of the criminal investigation.

There is a risk that the fear of prosecution will prevent those concerned from seeking help resulting in possible health complications, thus police action will be in partnership with other agencies and communities. This should also be used as an opportunity to assess the need for support services such as counseling and medical help as appropriate.

An Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview may take place with the agreement of the child. This is a digitally recorded interview of the child that enables them to give their best evidence in criminal proceedings.

Corroborative evidence will be sought through a medical examination conducted by a qualified paediatrician/doctor. Consideration is to be given as to a specialist FGM nurse being present during any such examination.

Where a child refuses to be interviewed or undergo medical examination, assistance is to be sought from an intermediary or community organisation.

Consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service takes place as early as possible. Experience shows from previous FGM/HBA cases that delays in commencing the investigation and review stage can be damaging to the victim/survivor and increases the risk of them being pressurised by family and their community. As such, early consultation between police and CPS (alongside our other statutory child protection partners) is key in bringing cases to the criminal courts swiftly.

<sup>13</sup> FGM, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Abuse, Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief, Breast Ironing

# Schools Charter on Ending Harmful Practices

## What is the Schools Charter on Ending Harmful Practices?

The Schools Charter seeks to encourage the delivery of high quality, safeguarding focused inputs on harmful practices across all Schools and Colleges. This is to promote a preventative approach to tackling these sensitive issues and inspire collaboration between stakeholders in education, police and third sector organisations.

The London Harmful Practices Working Group has developed the Schools Charter. This is a strategic multi-agency forum facilitated by the Metropolitan Police Service and brings together a myriad of third sector organisations, legal experts and key stakeholders from the criminal justice sector, health and education.

It is important to encourage and normalise conversations about harmful practices so that we collectively can identify and address vulnerability and ultimately prevent victimisation.

## What do we mean by harmful practices?

Harmful practices cover a range of practices, not all of which are covered by current legislation. They can be traditional, re-emerging or emerging practices. From a policing perspective, harmful practices include Forced Marriage, Honour Based Abuse, Female Genital Mutilation, Breast Ironing and Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief.

According to the United Nations harmful practices are 'persistent practices and behaviours that are grounded on discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, age and other grounds as well as multiple and/or intersecting forms of discrimination that often involve violence and cause physical and/or psychological harm or suffering'.

## How to use the Schools Charter?

The Schools Charter is a tangible and direct commitment from schools to promote the delivery of inputs in schools that address harmful practices.

The Charter principles can be incorporated into harmful practices lesson plans that are delivered by external providers or conversely, developed and delivered by school staff.

### These principles are:

- Harmful Practices as a Human Rights violation and a violation of the Rights of the Child
- Health implications of Harmful Practices in its different forms
- Highlight the legal position in the UK relating to Harmful Practices
- Have a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) focus
- Address issues regarding consent and capacity to choose (and the vulnerability of those who cannot consent)
- Are evidence based (for instance highlighting the prevalence of abuse)

The Schools Charter promotes the appropriate sharing of information via existing referral pathways to ensure.

### Statutory and third sector organisations have clear protocols that address:

- What to do when safeguarding disclosures are made
- How they share information via existing local referral pathways
- How they share community information/intelligence with police

Organisations delivering inputs on harmful practices in schools are encouraged to sign up to the principles it promotes.

The Schools Charter is a framework that schools and external delivery providers can use as a reference point when developing or promoting inputs.

To support schools and teaching staff an online resource will be made available at [www.theschoolscharter.co.uk](http://www.theschoolscharter.co.uk). This seeks to:

- Outline the aims and objectives of the Schools Charter
- Download the Charter
- Access links to resources and specialist services

## Why now?

From September 2020 Relationships Education for all primary pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) for all secondary pupils; and Health Education for all pupils will be compulsory.

HM Government has also been clear that, as part RSE for secondary pupils, schools include content on female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

The charter encourages schools to prioritise professional development and teacher training on harmful practices to empower teachers. It recognises the need for this to be in collaboration with the third sector and key stakeholders and that a response from the education sector in isolation would not be as effective.

Engagement will be voluntary, inclusive and build on existing protocols and prior learning of the rights for children.

It will further encourage adult participation especially parents, teachers, carers, communities and policy makers who have the responsibility to ensure that these rights are adhered.

# Schools Charter on Ending Harmful Practices

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NAME OF ESTABLISHMENT

## Hereby agree to adhere to the Harmful Practices Schools Charter

We are committed to reducing all forms of harmful practices to ensure our students are actively aware of their [human rights](#) under the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

We welcome the support of recognised local and national partners to address these issues throughout our schools PSHE, citizenship and curricular programmes.

We take a zero tolerance approach to all forms of Harmful Practices, including but not limited to: Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage, Child Linked Faith Based Abuse (Witchcraft/Spirit Possession and Breast Ironing).

We pledge to actively engage with recognised Third Sector Organisations to deliver Harmful Practices training that:

- Includes Harmful Practices as a Human Rights violation and a violation of the rights of the child
- Includes Health implications of Harmful Practices in its different forms
- Highlights the legal position in the UK relating to Harmful Practices
- Is focused on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Addresses issues regarding consent, capacity to consent (and the vulnerability of those who cannot consent)
- Is evidence based (for instance highlighting the prevalence of abuse)

**We welcome feedback and evaluation of all inputs with the view of improving our services and sharing good practice**

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SIGNED ON BEHALF OF

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HEAD TEACHER



# Harmful Practices Schools Charter

## Helpful Resources

In an emergency call the Police on **999** or **101** for non-urgent matters and always refer to your school's safeguarding policies and protocols.

HM Government: The Right to Choose:  
Multi-agency statutory guidance for  
dealing with forced marriage

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/322310/HMG\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_publication\\_180614\\_Final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322310/HMG_Statutory_Guidance_publication_180614_Final.pdf)

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/322307/HMG\\_MULTI\\_AGENCY\\_PRACTICE\\_GUIDELINES\\_v1\\_180614\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322307/HMG_MULTI_AGENCY_PRACTICE_GUIDELINES_v1_180614_FINAL.pdf)

HM Government Forced Marriage  
E-Learning Package

[www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/awareness-of-forced-marriage](http://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/awareness-of-forced-marriage)

Home Office FGM E-Learning Package  
[www.fgmelearning.co.uk/](http://www.fgmelearning.co.uk/)

Home Office FM E-Learning Package  
<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses/awareness-of-forced-marriage>

Multiagency statutory guidance on FGM –  
HM Government 2016

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/746560/6-1914-HO-Multi\\_Agency\\_Statutory\\_Guidance\\_on\\_FGM\\_-\\_MASTER\\_V7\\_-\\_FINAL\\_-\\_Amended081018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/746560/6-1914-HO-Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance_on_FGM_-_MASTER_V7_-_FINAL_-_Amended081018.pdf)

Mandatory Reporting of FGM – procedural  
information – HM Government 2015

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/573782/FGM\\_Mandatory\\_Reporting\\_-\\_procedural\\_information\\_nov16\\_FINAL.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/573782/FGM_Mandatory_Reporting_-_procedural_information_nov16_FINAL.pdf)

NHS

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/>

Let's talk FGM

<https://www.letstalkfgm.nhs.uk/>

## Harmful Practices Schools Charter

### Helpful National Services and Organisations

#### Police Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit (DAISU)

Call **101** (or **999** in an emergency) and speak to DAISU who have specially trained officers who deal with Honour Based Abuse.

#### Forced Marriage Unit

0207 008 0151

A government unit who can assist with individual cases offering support and advice to anyone affected by Forced Marriage. Can also arrange the safe repatriation of British Nationals who have been taken abroad.

[gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage](http://gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage)

#### National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

24-hour helpline run in partnership between Women's Aid & Refuge [nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk) for access to local FGM, FM and HBA specialist services.

#### 28 Too Many (FGM)

Provides access to research on prevalence, information and resources relating to FGM.

<https://www.28toomany.org/>

#### National FGM Centre

Providing access to training, resources and toolkits relating to FGM.

<http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/>

#### NSPCC

0800 028 3550

FGM and Child Abuse Linked to Faith of Belief Helpline for professionals and teaching resources, safeguarding advice, training and consultancy for schools and colleges.

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

#### Sharan Project

0844 504 3231

A national BAME specialist service for women at risk of being disowned due to Forced Marriage or Honour Based Abuse <http://sharan.org.uk/> Lead partner for Our Girl – a national forced marriage prevention and awareness campaign.

[www.ourgirl.co.uk](http://www.ourgirl.co.uk)

#### Karma Nirvana

0800 5999247

A helpline for anyone affected by Honour Based Abuse or Forced Marriage.

[karmanirvana.org.uk](http://karmanirvana.org.uk)

#### Children and Families Across Borders

0207 735 8941

Free advice on international child protection and international family cases. Provision of training and international casework services.

<http://cfab.org.uk/>

# Considerations for Schools and Colleges

- 1 What is our biggest safeguarding concern in school and how are we tackling it?
- 2 What are the local risks which may pose a threat to our children and young people, and what are we doing about these?
- 3 How do we promote a culture in school where safeguarding is everybody's responsibility?
- 4 How do we know that all staff are confident to take the right action if they have concerns that a child may be in immediate danger or at risk of harm?
- 5 If a child's behaviour is out of character or gives rise for concern, will staff speak to them to ascertain any safeguarding concerns or underlying issues?
- 6 Are staff alert to signs of abuse addressed in this guidance and recognise what constitutes harmful practice?
- 7 Are we confident that all staff know how to deal with disclosures appropriately and effectively – and know who to escalate to?
- 8 Are staff aware that if concerns about the safety and welfare of a child are not being dealt with by their manager or designated safeguarding lead that it is their responsibility to act?
- 9 Are we confident of when to involve parents and conversely when not to involve parents following a disclosure?
- 10 Are we at risk of normalising abusive behaviour if staff do not recognise, respond and then refer it appropriately?
- 11 Are all staff aware of their powers to 'Search, Screen and Confiscate'?
- 12 Are all regulated professionals within our school aware of the mandatory duty they personally hold to report known or disclosed cases of FGM to police?
- 13 Are we confident our school has a clearly defined policy on mobile phones which clearly outlines any sanctions for breaking the rules and that all staff, pupils and parents know this policy?
- 14 If the matter is peer on peer and involves young people from the same school, are we confident in how we manage these situations?
- 15 If a serious crime has been committed, who takes the decision to notify police and at what stage?
- 16 If there is a potential crime scene, are staff aware that they should secure it to ensure evidence is not lost or damaged?
- 17 If social media is involved, are we confident in how we deal with the challenges this presents?
- 18 Can we assist in any investigation by establishing the facts? (i.e. who, what, where, when, why, how)
- 19 Can we assist further investigation by reviewing/preparing CCTV and establishing witnesses?
- 20 Do we have strong relationships with our professional partners based on trust and effective communication?

## Schools Guidance

### Further Information and Resources

Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – July 2018 (updated 2019)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/779401/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard-Children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/779401/Working_Together_to_Safeguard-Children.pdf)

Department for Education: Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2018

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

HM Government Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vRB.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF)

HM Government Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-2020 – Strategy Refresh 2019

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/783596/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_Refresh\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783596/VAWG_Strategy_Refresh_Web_Accessible.pdf)

HM Government Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls – March 2019

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