

Ellesmere Port Catholic High School

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Action Plan

Background

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) defines female genital mutilation as: “all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons”. As a school, we have a responsibility to protect pupils from the risks associated with FGM.

FGM is practiced in more than 28 countries in Africa and in some countries in Asia and the Middle East. African countries where FGM is most practised are Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan (Eliminating female genital mutilation: an interagency statement(WHO, 2008)). Pupils who have family backgrounds from these countries are also thought to be at potential risk of being taken there for the procedure to be performed. Within our school we currently (as at January 2015) have no students from any of these countries though we still need to be aware of, and be ready to deal with, issues relating to FGM.

FGM is most commonly practiced on young girls aged 5-8 years according to FORWARD (A statistical study to estimate the prevalence of female genital mutilation in England and Wales (FORWARD et al, 2007). Again this means that pupils in the High School are at reduced risks of incidences of FGM occurring (though does not rule out the possibility of this having already taken place or happening in the future.

In November 2014, the school nurse was consulted with regards to the risk level of FGM for pupils in the school and the belief was that likely risks were low.

School response

Staff to be made aware of risks of FGM and potential signs/symptoms and appropriate responses.

All female pupils to be introduced to the school nurse at early opportunity (best done through vaccination scheme already in place).

School nurse to be available on a weekly basis in school for pupils to have confidential conversations if they wish.

Pupils to be made aware of risks of FGM and how to ensure their body integrity. Cultural issues around FGM have been raised previously in discussions around linked school in Tanzania; pupils will be taught about the rights over their own bodies in PSHCE lessons with some input on FGM to be included.

Unauthorised school absences for significant periods of time to be monitored by appropriate school parties.

Summer safety assemblies will include risks and management of risks of FGM for all pupils (e.g. teaspoon response) in order to highlight that this is a time when girls are at particular risk of being taken overseas to undergo FGM.