



Female Genital Mutilation Policy

**Pre-school Manager: Nicky Benson-Dare
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Rebecca Ballard**

This policy will be reviewed annually. It will also be revised following any concerns and/or updates to national and local guidance and procedures.

Statement

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.

FGM refers to any procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs. Such procedures may lead to short term and long-lasting harmful consequences such as death, trauma, infections, flashbacks, infertility, kidney problems, sexual dysfunctions, incontinence, and traumatic stress disorder. It is known to be practiced in North African countries, the Middle-East, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. However, with migration worldwide it is also practiced in the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and elsewhere.

The United Nations calls FGM a violation of human rights. In the UK, FGM is a criminal offence as well as a harmful form of child abuse. Anyone involved in taking a girl outside the UK to have FGM carried out will be punished under the FGM Act 2003 and Serious Crime Act 2015.

FGM is not a religious practice.

There are a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM.

FGM often takes place in the summer holidays, as the recovery period after FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Professionals should be mindful of high risk times such as when children go on long holidays or are being visited by a female elder from their country of origin. Additionally, girls are considered at risk where their mother or sisters have undergone FGM, and girls are talking about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman.'

Post FGM symptoms can include, but are not limited to:

- Difficulty in walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending long periods of time in the bathroom/toilet
- Displaying unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- Parents/carers reluctant to explain reasons for absence
- Talking about themselves in the third person or talking about a "friend's" problem

Aim

St Peter's Busy Bees Pre-school aims to ensure the safety and well being of all children in our care. We aim to have well-trained knowledgeable staff, who have awareness of safeguarding issues, including FGM.

Procedures

We will aim to raise awareness of FGM by:

- Reading, holding and circulating materials about FGM

- Displaying relevant information (for example, details of the NSPCC's Helpline)
- Informing colleagues/raising awareness of the issues around FGM – as well as including appropriate training as part of staff's continuous professional development
- Having knowledgeable staff who have an understanding of the indicators, and know the correct safeguarding procedures to follow, if concerned about a child.