



NORFOLK
CONSTABULARY
Our Priority is You

Ref/ND/CM/JC

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Norfolk Constabulary

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Dear Head Teacher

Preventing Forced Marriage and FGM

With the long summer holidays only weeks away Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk County Council are taking the opportunity to urge schools to be vigilant in guarding against the dangers of female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM).

As safeguarding leads we would like to draw your attention to the FM and FGM guidelines which are designed to keep children safe.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Such legislation provides a clear definition of what forced marriage is, empowering both the victims and those of us responsible for protecting vulnerable people at risk of such an offence.

Nationally the Crown Prosecution Service estimates that there are between 8,000-10,000 forced marriages occurring each year within the UK. This equates to approximately 30 per day and highlights the nature of the issues facing us as professionals.

The Serious Crime Act, 2015 added new powers to protect those at risk of or who have been subjected to FGM. There is a mandatory duty for all regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report to the police, if, in the course of their duties: they are informed by a girl under the age of 18 that she has undergone an act of FGM.

Approximately 65,000 girls under the age of 13 who have been born in England and Wales are at risk of FGM. The Health and Social Care Information Centre reports that between Jan 2016 to March 2016 1242 newly recorded cases of FGM were reported, with 2,223 total attendances where FGM was identified or a procedure for FGM was undertaken.

All professionals working within statutory agencies including education, social and health care, police, housing, and the voluntary sector need to be aware of their responsibilities when they encounter these 'hidden crimes'.

We will answer letters within 10 working days, where information is available.
Where this is not possible, an explanation will be given for any delay.

If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support, that one chance to protect and safeguard them against harm may have been missed.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2015) outlines the expectation that school staff should be aware of the guidance in respect of FGM and FM, and be vigilant to the risk of it being practiced.

Multi-agency practice guidance relating to both of these issues highlights how staff can make a difference and offer practical support to victims. Awareness of these issues is particularly important when considering applications for absence for extend trips overseas and when children go missing from school.

Norfolk Constabulary in partnership with Norfolk County Council has produced resources that can be used within school to raise awareness of these issues. These resources including links to national and local guidance and e-learning can be accessed via the Norfolk Schools' website:

<http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/Behaviour-and-safety/Safeguarding/FGM-and-forced-marriage/index.htm>.

You can also visit the Norfolk Constabulary Website at:


www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/personalsafety/femalegenitalmutilation.aspx

www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/personalsafety/forcedmarriage.aspx


www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/personalsafety/honourbasedabuse.aspx

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support as we work together in partnership with the legislation to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities and bring to justice those responsible for such abhorrent crimes.

Yours faithfully



Nick Dean
Assistant Chief Constable



Catherine Mouser
Assistant Director Social Work