



## **Cornerstone Nurseries Safeguarding/Child Protection & Whistle Blowing Policy**

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well being of all children in our care, and we have a duty under The Children Act 1989 (section 47(1)) and 2004/2006 to work with parents and other agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of ALL children including the unborn child where we are working in partnership with any expectant parents.

The Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) provides a national framework for all agencies working with children to work in partnership to safeguard children effectively. The UK is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, an informative source of information for those caring for children.

The following policy and guidelines explain the process that staff will follow in the event that there is concern that a child may be at risk from any form of abuse. This includes emotional, sexual, physical abuse and neglect from any known or unknown person.

The policy explains about whistle-blowing and allegations against a member of staff and how we as a nursery aim to keep all children safe.

See also        Protocol for bruising on non mobile babies  
                    A flowchart for referral  
                    Guidance in referring concerns over abuse  
                    Hampshire guidance on bruising protocol  
                    Safeguarding children - contact details  
                    NHS leaflet - Bruising in babies

Our named Early Years Designated Safeguarding Leads (EYDSL) are:

**Cornerstone Day Nursery**    Lauren Geeson - Nursery Manager

In Lauren's absence Emma Mackay & Kirstie Powell are trained support staff.

**Cornerstone Miss Muffet**    Diana Lovell - Deputy Manager

In Diana's absence Carolyn Martyn & Tessa Twyman are trained support staff.

These staff are level 4 trained and attend the lead safeguarding support meetings provided by HCC, which is then cascaded to all other staff through staff meetings and additional training needed. There will always be a designated member of staff for safeguarding available.

The legislation that Cornerstone Nurseries adhere to is listed below:

### **PRIMARY LEGISLATION**

The Children Act 1989 – Section 47

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Data Protection Act 1998

The Children Act 2004/ 2006 (Every Child Matters)

## **GUIDANCE**

What to do if you are worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)  
The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families (2000)  
Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)  
Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021) - Part 1 and Annex A  
The Common Assessment Framework (2005)  
HIPS Unborn Baby Protocol (March 2021)

## **SECONDARY LEGISLATION**

Sexual Offences Act (2003)  
Criminal Justice and Court Services Act (2000)  
Human Rights Act (1999)  
Race Relations (Amendments) Act (2000)  
Race Relations (Amendment) Act (1976) Regulations  
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974)

### **The staff will:**

- Work within the guidance given by Services for Young Children (SFYC) and meet the safeguarding and promoting children's welfare of the EYFS (2021).
- Be vigilant at all times about the children in their care.
- Ensure the safety and protection of every child whilst they are in the day nursery.
- Keep careful records of any signs or symptoms exhibited by a child, which might indicate that the child is at risk.
- Keep those records in a locked and secure manner so that there can be no possibility of a breach of confidentiality.
- Ensure that any concerns are brought to the attention of the appropriate person at the earliest opportunity.
- Attempt to support children and their families to the extent that this is possible.
- Ensure that all parents know how to complain about a staff member or volunteer, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

## **GUIDELINES FOR ACTION FOR STAFF**

### **All staff must:**

- Be given a staff induction before starting at the Nursery where they will fill out a DBS application form online. This check would show if the person is subject to a direction under section 142 of the 2002 education act (i.e included on list 99), included on the poCA list or included on ISA's barred list.
- Be aware of and understand their responsibilities under the Children Act, to act at all times to ensure the safety and security of children in their care.
- Ensure that they do not place themselves in situations which could lead to an allegation being made for example never be in a room on their own with children.
- Be observant and watchful for any signs or symptoms that a child may be at risk.
- Make careful and accurate notes of anything, which seems pertinent and ensure that these notes are kept secure and in accordance with the safeguarding and promoting children's welfare of the EYFS and the Local Safeguarding Children partnership. Report any concerns directly to the EYDSL, or in their absence to the most senior member of staff present. Do not discuss any confidential information with anyone; this includes family and friends/colleagues both inside and outside the setting.
- Use every opportunity to help children learn about keeping themselves safe.

- Ensure that children are not exposed to sexually explicit language, items or pictures, by ensuring they are not brought onto the nursery property.
- All staff in the baby room are aware of the Bruising protocol from the 4lscb and all bruising noticed in non mobile babies will be recorded and referred on the same day
- Abide by the babysitting guidance which is within the parents as partners policy.

**The Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead (EYDSL) will:**

- Ensure that every member of staff, both permanent, temporary or bank and any student or volunteer who works in the setting for any period of time, is aware of the Safeguarding policy and guidelines and of their own area of responsibility within this. This will take place during their induction to the nursery. Up to date information and notes are kept in the nursery office and rooms.
- Ensure all staff undergo the appropriate checks in accordance with OFSTED guidelines and the DBS
- Seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the setting.
- Respond to a report from any member of staff without delay and familiarise themselves with the situation immediately.
- Coordinate and record all concerns using a centralised method which tracks any concerns.
- Review home and unexplained incidents over the time each child is at the setting and report any concerns.
- Refer parents to the Help Hub if it is deemed a family requires support or early intervention.
- Notify the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) & Ofsted if an allegation is made against a staff member **or** if a staff member leaves because of a Safeguarding issue.

**LADO contact details**

This service no longer provides a telephone service

Email: [childprotection@hants.gov.uk](mailto:childprotection@hants.gov.uk)

LADO Notification Form:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren/allegations>

- In the event of an allegation made the EYDSL will complete the LADO notification form and either email or fax it to the LADO without delay
- Take responsibility to contact **the Professional line for staff working in education 01329 225379** or **Children's services on 0300 555 1384** (8.30am-5pm Mon-Thurs. 8.30am-4.30pm Fri) at all times. Contact the **out-of-hours service on 0300 555 1373**.

**In an emergency dial 999**

- Complete the Inter Agency Referral Form when reporting child welfare or safeguarding concerns.

**Inter Agency Referral Form:**

[https://forms.hants.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form\\_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-7e6115a7-b0ba-484d-991f-084c1248ac72/AF-Stage-52cf8e73-0daf-47d4-bb55-0fad856d3e6/definition.json&redirectlink=/en&cancelRedirectLink=/en](https://forms.hants.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-7e6115a7-b0ba-484d-991f-084c1248ac72/AF-Stage-52cf8e73-0daf-47d4-bb55-0fad856d3e6/definition.json&redirectlink=/en&cancelRedirectLink=/en)

- Do their utmost to support everyone who might be involved in a Safeguarding situation including staff, children and their families
- Co-operate with any requests from the Area Safeguarding Committee for information.

### **Working Together to Resolve Professional Differences**

Professional challenges should be seen as part of 'healthy' professional working relationships. Practitioners should be encouraged to give or receive professional challenge in a constructive and positive way. Successful joint working is reliant upon resolving disagreements effectively, and a genuine belief in a partnership approach to safeguarding children.

The focus of "**Working together to resolve professional differences**" is to ensure that positive resolution of professional differences leads to better outcomes for children and the continuation of good partnership working.

Agencies should work to the principle of resolving disagreements and maintaining positive relationships at the lowest possible level, so that each agency is satisfied that their concerns have been listened to and the focus has been on achieving the most appropriate outcomes for children and families.

The **HIPS guidance supporting interagency professional challenge and resolution** relates to the resolution of differences between agencies. For disputes within agencies, in-house procedures should be followed."

See below for reference to policies that come under staff behaviour;

Supervision  
No smoking  
Affection code of conduct  
Anti bullying  
Health and safety  
Physical handling  
Capability and poor performance  
Confidentiality  
Staff awaiting their DBS  
Staff usage of social networking  
Tapestry  
Data Protection  
Lone Working Policy

### **Safeguarding Children Statement**

**Local Authorities** have a statutory duty to investigate where they have reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

**Parents/Carers** have the responsibility to report injuries their children may sustain outside the nursery and to provide an explanation of how the injury or accident occurred. Nursery staff in all cases will record the incident.

**Nursery Staff** have a responsibility to record and report injuries on their children, which are not consistent with the explanation given by the parent/carer, or where no explanation is given. The matter must be reported to the EYDSL and manager immediately.

The EYDSL and manager will seek an explanation from the parents/carers and if there are still concerns, a referral will be made to the safeguarding team of Social Services There should be no delay in reporting the matter.

**The local safeguarding children's board is a statutory body which coordinates, monitors and challenges its partner agencies in safeguarding children in Hampshire.**

## **The following information should be passed on;**

Name, address and telephone number of the nursery. The child's name, date of birth, address and details of the household. The ethnic origin of the child and their first language. Information about concern, alleged abuse/neglect, date and time of the incident. Whether observed by the referrer or reported to the team by nursery staff. Any significant known family history knowledge of any agencies, services or professionals involved with the family.

Policy for reporting concerns if you feel it has not been taken seriously or dealt with appropriately by the setting is known as "whistle blowing".

## **Whistle Blowing Policy/Allegations against a member of staff**

### **Aim**

To eliminate any area that allows or encourages behaviour or practice that is harmful or detrimental to any child or adult's welfare whilst at Nursery.

If a matter arises in the nursery that a member of staff has acted in a way that has been a breach of their professional conduct e.g. if a member of staff acts in an unacceptable manner towards a child, parent or member of staff, then it is the individual's duty to report the matter immediately to a member of management or the Operations Director.

Parents will be encouraged to show any concern through feedback on a regular basis using various methods of communication. All concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon immediately.

Confidentiality will be respected but it is not up to the individual to withhold information if it is likely to lead to any harm or reoccurrence.

### **Reasons for Whistleblowing**

Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour.

- To prevent the problem worsening or widening.
- To protect or reduce risks too often.
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself.

### **Concerns and complaints**

A concern may be treated as an expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought.

A complaint may be generally recognised as an expression or statement of dissatisfaction, however made, about actions or lack of actions.

### **What is a concern?**

- Inappropriate use of language, Shouting or swearing
- Discussing personal or sexual relationships in the presence of children
- Making unprofessional comments which scapegoat demean or humiliate children, or might be interpreted as such.
- Inappropriate touching, anything that feels wrong, makes you feel uncomfortable should be reported.

### **How staff can raise a concern**

Voice your concerns or suspicions as soon as possible, the earlier it is expressed the easier and sooner for action to be taken. Express what is concerning you and why.

Approach the EYDSL or Nursery manager or other senior staff.

Put all concerns in writing.

You will not be expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient information for the concern.

All allegations against members of staff will be passed on to the Operations Director and Named person.

The nursery has an 'allegations against staff' procedure which we ask all staff members to read

You will be kept informed on the progress of any enquiries. You will be protected from harassment or victimisation and no action will be taken against you if the concerns prove unfounded - however malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

After an internal investigation we would seek advice via our Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01962 876364, regarding the situation.

**These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.  
DON'T THINK WHAT IF I AM WRONG - THINK WHAT IF I AM RIGHT**

**Child protection is the responsibility of all staff.**

If you feel this setting, your management team or the EYDSL have not effectively and appropriately dealt with your concerns regarding any child, **it is your duty to report it yourself to the child protection team** on 0300 555 1381 (8.30am-5pm Mon-Thurs. 8.30am-4.30pm Fri) or the out of hours emergency line on 0300 555 1373.

Any incident will be recorded on an incident form and reported to the Nursery Manager immediately. If the incident is regarding the manager the Operations Director should be informed or the Nursery Owners.

Statements will be taken from all parties involved and a hearing will be organized similar to what is set out in the staff disciplinary and grievance procedures. Depending on the severity of the accusation, the member of staff may be suspended on full pay whilst the investigation takes place.

If a member of staff is not satisfied that their manager has taken appropriate action, they may make a referral themselves in the best interests of the child.

### **What is an allegation?**

Any incident where a staff member has:

\*Behaved in a way that harmed a child or may have harmed a child

\*Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child.

\*Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they pose a risk of harm to children.

### **If an allegation is made against you:**

Stay calm. Follow the instructions given by your manager. Cooperate with questions and enquiries. Seek advice and support. Keep detailed records of events including any conversations. It is a good idea to have a witness present at any meetings  
DO NOT CONFRONT YOUR ACCUSER

### **Children with Special Education Needs or Disabilities**

For many reasons, children with additional needs may be at an increased risk of abuse and neglect, therefore staff are expected to take extra care regarding signs of abuse or neglect of these children. Signs of abuse will be reported in the same way.

SEND services can be contacted on 01256 359002

## **Support of vulnerable children**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame.

The setting may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When attending the setting their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The setting will endeavour to support children through;

The key person's role

The content of the activities

The settings ethos which promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives children a sense of being valued

Liaison with other agencies supporting the child such as children's services, Children's centres, the SEND team and where appropriate initiate and/or contribute to a CAF and team around the child meetings.

In order to create a culture of safety in the setting, Cornerstone Nurseries will ensure that safeguarding is a standing item on all meetings agendas.

## **Staff lanyards**

All staff are asked to wear lanyards during their shift, with the exception of baby room staff who will be provided with lanyards, but do not have to wear them throughout the day due to them getting in the way of some personal care. The lanyards have information written on them which would be useful and informative to staff to use as a reminder if a safeguarding concern was to arise, this includes the name of the Safeguarding lead, the LADO's name and contact number and children's services contact number. The lanyard also has a red card for the staff member to hold up if a concern is raised by a child within the room so other staff can witness what is said without the child being aware.

## **The use of personal mobile phones, cameras and all other electronic devices**

Cornerstone Nurseries do not permit staff to take their own personal cameras, mobile phones or any other electrical devices that can take pictures into the playrooms/classrooms. Managers will spot check that this is adhered to.

Personal cameras and other electrical devices e.g. ipads should not be brought in to work and Staff are only permitted to wear devices such as but not restricted to, smartwatches, fit bits etc with notifications turned off.

The nursery manager/deputy can keep their mobiles in the office, as they may be used in an emergency situation.

For marketing purposes mobiles will be used to take photos of the children or nursery however the only staff allowed to do this are the marketing coordinator, EYDSL, deputy manager, manager or third in charge. Once photographs have been taken and uploaded they will be deleted from any mobile device.

If there is an exceptional reason for a tablet, personal laptop or any other device (this may include mobile phones) to be brought into the playrooms/classrooms the management team must be informed. This may include:

- Assessors observing students
- Ofsted during an inspection
- Anyone else who needs a device to carry out their work e.g. PAT testing.

- Staff members requiring a personal laptop or tablet in the setting to carry out courses/training. This may include the camera being used for virtual courses/training. If this is necessary it will be arranged between the staff member and the management team as a classroom may be required for the training to be completed.

If a visitor does not require any electrical devices for their visit, then these will be stored in the office.

If staff are found working in possession of their mobile phones or any other electrical devices, and have failed to inform the manager that they have brought in a personal device as described in the paragraph above, this **WILL** result in disciplinary action and possibly even suspension from work (without pay) whilst the matter is investigated.

We have a nursery mobile which is used and taken on nursery walks and outings which does not have a camera on. The only exceptions are stated below;

The management team would take their personal mobile phones out with them in an emergency e.g. if the fire alarm sounds as we may need to contact all parents using more than one device.

the marketing coordinator, EYDSL, deputy manager, manager or third in charge may take a mobile phone on an outing to take photographs.

If the nursery mobile is not available, the most senior person attending the outing (usually a room manager) may take their mobile phone on the trip but must only use this to take calls from the nursery or to use in an emergency situation (e.g. 999 calls)

Photographs of children in our care can be taken on the mobile devices mentioned above for marketing purposes, however they must be deleted once used. Photos taken on the nursery camera/tablets are to be deleted/cleared after printing/downloading/uploading to Tapestry. Children do have access to tablets with cameras on and staff can print these through the office computers. No photos will be saved to these computers. Through careful planning and activities children are taught about age and stage appropriate online risks. Staff should never take the camera memory card out to get developed without authorisation from the management team first.

Nursery tablets are stored securely in the setting. A separate policy on the tablets has been written.

We use online learning journals through the platform of 'Tapestry' which staff access using tablets. All staff have signed a disclaimer to state that they will not access any other websites through the internet browser, other than Tapestry, Noodle Now (for staff training) or websites dictated by the management team (to aid staff development), or share information.

A separate Tapestry policy has been written.

All staff should check a child's registration form, when they first start at the nursery and when they move to another room, to ensure the parent has signed to give permission for their child's photograph to be taken and used for nursery purposes.

We have obtained permission from parents for us to display and add photos of their children to our Facebook pages and website to help with marketing reasons and to show everyone what Cornerstone Nurseries and their families participate in daily.

Cornerstone Nurseries have a statutory duty to report the names of any member of staff dismissed under any safeguarding issues or anyone they feel to be unsuitable to work with children to the Secretary of State under the protection of children act 1999/ISA even if the staff member is no longer in our employment.

We ask all parents/carers to turn their mobile phones off or on 'silent' mode when on the nursery premises. A member of staff will ask you to hang up the phone if you are in the nursery and on the phone, to protect the children in our care.

Members of the public who attend a tour of the nursery are asked to switch their phones off or put them on 'silent' mode.

Members of the public (here for tours) and current parents/carers should NEVER get their phones out in the classrooms/playrooms.

We allow parents to bring in cameras and videos for any Christmas performance, Christmas parties or any nursery event. We ask all parents to ensure they **only take photos of their own children and ask for them not to be uploaded onto their personal social networking sites.**

Employees who are lone working in the building outside of 'normal' hours (8am-6pm) will need to have access to their phone, in case of an emergency. Please see the Lone Working Policy.

#### **Recognition of, and risk of peer on peer or child on child abuse**

We have a thorough anti bullying policy for both staff and children which recognises signs, please reference this policy for information needed.

#### **Recognition of Child abuse linked to faith or belief**

Staff are given training on signs of child abuse which is linked to faith or belief (previously referred to as "Witchcraft" This abuse is an often undetected crime with horrific outcomes.) Victoria Climbié aged 8 was killed in 2000 as a result of ritualistic abuse and this led to the green paper "Every child matters" and passed the children act 2004.

Perpetrators of faith linked abuse often brand children as evil, satanic, or possessed.

Children are accused of being able to influence negative occurrences such as poor health, miscarriage, lack of success. These children are often abused in horrific ways to exorcise the evil spirits from them. They are also often isolated and neglected.

Research indicates that some groups of children are more likely to be subjected to this form of abuse than others such as;

- Children living with relatives away from parents
- Children with SEND
- Left handed children
- Children with exceptional talents or skills

Signs of abuse include;

- Children speaking of witches or curses
- Children speaking negatively about themselves, for instance feeling negative issues are "their fault".
- Children talking about "evil deeds" or "misfortune"
- Higher levels of absence
- Signs of neglect

## **Attendance**

Cornerstone Nurseries have a duty of care to safeguard and promote each child's wellbeing. As part of this we believe that regular attendance to the setting supports this. Our aim is to work closely with parents to identify any unexplained absences as part of our commitment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each of the children

We at Cornerstone ask that parents/carers notify the setting via email or telephone if your child is absent from the setting due to sickness or holiday before they are due to arrive.

**Cornerstone Day Nursery** - Please call 01256 818118 if no one is able to answer please leave a message.

**Cornerstone Miss Muffet** - Please call 01256 840300 and if no one is able to answer please leave a message.

If you have booked a holiday please inform us of the dates so staff and management have acknowledgement of this.

## **Prevent Duty**

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into effect. One of its provisions was to place a duty on certain specified authorities and organisations to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the 'Prevent Duty'. The Prevent Duty came into force on 1 July 2015 and provides information on what an early years provider should be doing if they have concerns about any individual or family.

Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour. They may also be victims of the extremism behaviour of their family by being taken out of the country or away from their families as part of the action of the individual. As with any other child protection concern, we must take action to safeguard a child from the risk of significant harm. Our team are aware of how to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and know what to do when they are identified.. The risk of extremism on a child's family or individual members of the family can impact on the safety of the child.

### **The signs that our staff have been made aware of are...**

- Changes in family behaviour
- Changes in the children's behaviour, e.g. aggression towards others
- Comments made by a child which may cause concern, e.g. commenting on what their mummy or daddy has said, talking about fighting for 'the cause' etc.
- Comments made by family members, e.g. about certain faiths, beliefs, cultures
- Any other signs that family members may be showing extremism
- We are also aware of the increased risk of online radicalisation and have internet procedures in place for protecting children from risk. We highlight the risks of online dangers and how to safeguard children from harm online.

### **What to do if you have concerns?**

If a staff member has any concerns about a change in behaviour of any individual within the nursery environment, e.g. staff member, parents, extended family then we will do the following:

- If the child is not in immediate danger call 101 (the non-emergency police phone number)
- If the child is in immediate danger call 999
- You can also call the Department for Education dedicated telephone helpline (020 7340 7264) and ask for advice or you can email [counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk) and seek further advice
- Consider whether it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel programme. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for providers to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.
- If we are at all worried about the safety of a child then safeguarding procedures are followed to safeguard the child.

### **Channel Process**

The Channel Process is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risk they may face of being drawn into any terrorist - related activity.

Channel is about ensuring that vulnerable children and adults of any faith, ethnicity or background receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those that would want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in criminal terrorist related activity.

### **Referral Stage**

Referrals are often likely to be made in the first instance by individuals who come into contact with vulnerable people. When the initial referral is received, the CPP (Channel police practitioner) will assess whether or not the case is potentially appropriate for Channel. Part of the CPP's role is to filter out any inappropriate referrals.

If the initial information received through the referral shows a vulnerability that is not terrorist related then the case is not suitable for Channel; the CPP will refer the individual to other more appropriate support services. This will ensure that only those cases where there is a genuine vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism are processed through Channel.

All referrals that progress through to the Channel process will be subject to a thorough assessment of vulnerabilities by the Channel panel. The preliminary assessment is led by the CPP and will include their line manager and, if appropriate, senior personnel of panel partners. If necessary and appropriate, those listed in paragraph 24 may also be included.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies and individuals and groups in the 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 procedures of any alteration involving partial or total removal of the external female genital organs. The procedure may lead to short term and long-lasting harmful consequences such as death, trauma, infections, flashback, infertility, kidney problems, sexual dysfunctions, incontinence, post-traumatic stress disorder etc. It is known to be practised in the North African countries, the Middle-East, Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Pakistan. However, with migration worldwide it is also practised in the UK, the USA,

Canada, Australia etc.

The United Nations addresses FGM as violation of human rights. In the UK, FGM is a criminal offence and a harmful form of child abuse. It is illegal to practice in the UK and/or anyone involved in taking girls outside of 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.

### **Indicators**

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 time when children go on long holidays and/or are getting a visit by a female elder from their country of origin. Additionally, girls are considered at risk where their mother or sister 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 are reluctant to explain reasons for absence.
- Talking about themselves as the third person or talking about a 'friend's' problem.

### **Mandatory Reporting Duty**

Section 5C of the female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 75 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) gave the government powers to issue statutory guidance on FGM to relevant persons. The guidance provides professionals with the information they need to help them understand the issues around FGM; professionals' responsibilities on FGM linked to wider safeguarding duties and good practice; the range of legal interventions to deal with FGM; guidelines for key professionals including police, health care professionals, children's services and schools and colleges and working with community to prevent FGM.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with social workers and healthcare professions, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary actions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining children - it is likely that discovery will be made by disclosure by the student, parent or otherwise. These cases must be referred to the police.

**Immediate reporting is required if FGM has been performed recently and in historical cases, reporting must take place within one month.**

Unless the staff member has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the EYDSL and involve children's service as appropriate. While the duty is limited to the specified professionals described above, non - regulated practitioners also have a responsibility to take appropriate safeguarding action in relation to any identified or suspected case of FGM, in line with the procedures of their Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LCSP).

As a setting we will aim to raise awareness of FGM by:

Circulating and display materials about FGM

Displaying relevant information (for example, details of the NSPCC's helpline and appropriate black and minority ethnic women's groups)

Informing colleagues/raising awareness of the issues around FGM - as well as including appropriate training in continuing professional development

Reviewed 06/11/24 Review Annually