

Child Protection Policy

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PURPOSE	Policy covering the scope and responsibility for child protection within the school environment
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The policy reflects current legislation, accepted best practice and comply with the government guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015.

Other policies that may need to be taken into account with regard to Child Protection are:

- Safeguarding,
- Behaviour Management
- PSHCE
- Drugs
- Confidentiality
- Behaviour and Attendance
- Anti-Bullying and Discrimination
- School Code of Conduct
- Special Needs
- Health & Safety
- Safe Recruitment
- Physical Intervention
- E-Safety
- Management of Allegation
- Personal Care

Schools (including independent schools, non-maintained special schools, Academies and free schools) and Further Education (FE) institutions should give effect to their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils under section 175/157 the Education Act 2002 and where appropriate under the Children Act 1989 by:

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people; and,
- Identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate.

Schools also contribute through the curriculum by developing children's understanding, awareness, and resilience

1 Introduction & Context

All those who come into contact with children [young people] and families in their everyday work, including practitioners who do not have a specific role in relation to child protection have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children [and young people].

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part; working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children. In line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015'

- Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to providing a safe environment for [them] to learn ... and to identify those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and exploitation by taking appropriate action, making sure they are kept safe both at home and at school.
- Achieving these aims requires systems designed to prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people, promoting safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice, identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and initiate/take appropriate action to keep them safe and contribute to effective partnership working between all those providing services for children and young people.
- Where there are concerns about a child's welfare relevant agencies need to be involved at an early stage. If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns about a child's welfare, or if a child discloses that s/he is suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, the member of staff must speak to a designated person with a view to passing on the information.
- The safety and protection of children is of paramount importance to all those involved in Education.
- Children can develop a special and close relationship with school staff, and view them as significant and trustworthy adults. It is not surprising therefore that children, if they have been abused, may confide or disclose to a teacher or other member of staff.
- School staff are also in a unique position to notice any change in demeanour or circumstances. There is the opportunity to notice injuries, marks or bruises when children are doing PE, games or swimming which might indicate a child has been abused.

(Child Protection Procedures, Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board)

- 1.1 At Bridgnorth Endowed School, the governors and staff fully recognise the contribution the school makes to safeguarding children. We recognise that the safety and protection of all pupils is of paramount importance and that all staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm.
- 1.2 We believe that the school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of each pupil.

2 **Policy Statement**

- 2.1 Bridgnorth Endowed School shall ensure that instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare are recognised and identified and that appropriate action will be initiated/taken in order to keep the child safe and contribute to effective partnership working between all those providing services for children and young people.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by putting children at the centre of the system, and by every individual and agency playing their full part working together to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children in line with: Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015

2.2 **The aims of this policy are to:**

- 2.2.1 confirm that the pupils' development is supported in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- 2.2.2 raise the awareness of teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- 2.2.3 set out the structured procedure to be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected FGM, radicalisation, harm or abuse
- 2.2.4 emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff and those with designated responsibility for child protection
- 2.2.5 emphasise the links with school's policy for management of off-site vocational learning e.g. Idsall's Motor Vehicle Programme
- 2.2.6 emphasise the appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and arrangements of those service providers who use the school's premises through extended schools or provide any other before and after school activities
- 2.2.7 confirm the working relationship with Children's Services within the Children and Young People's Services Directorate of the County Council, other agencies and, where appropriate with similar services in neighbouring authorities.

3 **Responsibilities**

3.1 **The governing body:**

- 3.1.1 Has an appointed child protection trained link governor
- 3.1.2 Will ensure that the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place, operates safe recruitment procedures and makes appropriate staff and volunteer checks and has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff and volunteers that all comply in accordance with Shropshire Council, Safeguarding, People's Services Directorate and SSCB procedures.
- 3.1.3 Monitors adequacy of resources committed to child protection, and the staff and governor training profile
- 3.1.4 recognises that neither it, nor individual governors, have a role in dealing with individual cases or a right to know details of cases (except when exercising their disciplinary functions in respect of allegations against staff)
- 3.1.5 will make sure that the child protection policy is available to parents on request
- 3.1.6 will ensure this policy and practice integrates with other policies e.g. anti-bullying, including cyber bullying, health and safety, drug, to ensure safeguarding.

3.2 **The head teacher** will ensure that:

- 3.2.1 the policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are followed by all staff
- 3.2.2 designated staff review the six monthly updates of the SSCB procedures
- 3.2.3 the child protection policy is available to parents on request

- 3.2.4 sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated persons and other staff to discharge their responsibilities including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and to contribute to the assessment of children and young people
- 3.2.5 a list of all staff and volunteers, and their safeguarding training dates is maintained.
- 3.2.6 all staff and volunteers feel able to raise their concerns about poor and unsafe practice in regard of pupils, and such concerns are addressed in a timely manner in accordance with agreed policies.

3.3 **Designated child protection leads (“Designated Leads”). The Designated Lead – Deputy Headteacher will:**

- 3.3.1 attend child protection training and updates every two years
- 3.3.2 liaise in accordance with the Shropshire SCB procedures when referring a pupil where there are concerns about possible abuse or harm, and where there are concerns about a member of staff being involved,
- 3.3.3 ensure all staff, including supply teachers, visiting professionals working with pupils in the school (*e.g. counsellor*), those who support Relationships and Sex Education (*e.g. school nurse*) and volunteers *e.g.* supporting school visits, are informed in writing of the names and contact details of the designated leads and the school’s procedures for safeguarding children, for example, how to report their concerns, suspicions and how to receive, record and report disclosures:
 - a) through documentation on display in reception;
 - b) through a copy of this policy on Reports Manager;
 - c) through the Relationships and Sex Education Policy;
 - d) through whole staff training (every three years)
- 3.3.4 support staff who attend strategy meetings and/or case conferences
- 3.3.5 support staff and volunteers who may find safeguarding issues upsetting or stressful by enabling them to talk through their anxieties and to seek further support from the school leadership group or others as appropriate.
- 3.3.6 ensure involvement of other designated leads
 - a) where there are concerns about a pupil who is ‘looked after’
 - b) in the off-site vocational learning provider institution, where there are concerns about a pupil who is on a work related learning placement
 - c) providers of services for children and young people using the school site (extended schools activities)
- 3.3.7 ensure that:
 - a) written records of concerns are kept, even if there is no immediate need for referral
 - b) all child protection records are marked as such and kept securely locked
 - c) pupil records are kept separately, and marked as appropriate to indicate other confidential records are being held elsewhere

- d) all absence letters are noted in the Planner and phone calls about absences are similarly logged and dated
 - e) if there are concerns about attendance and a pupil's wellbeing and safety, the Education Welfare Officer is contacted
 - f) if a pupil who has a child protection plan is absent without explanation for two days, their key worker in Children's Services (**Safeguarding**) is contacted
 - g) attendance records are monitored for patterns by Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Co-ordinator & EWO on 2 weekly basis and appropriate action is taken
- 3.3.8 where a pupil has a child protection plan and transfers to another school, ensure that:
- a) the key worker in Children's Services (**Safeguarding**) is informed
 - b) appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover and separate from the pupil's main file to the:
 - i) designated leader for child protection of the pupil's new school in this authority as soon as possible (e.g. no longer than 3 weeks)
 - ii) or to the Social/Children's Services within the authority if the pupil is transferring to a school in another authority (e.g. no longer than 3 weeks)
- 3.3.10 Have their roles explicitly defined in their job descriptions.
- 3.3.11 Are given sufficient time, funding, supervision and support to fulfil their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively

3.4 **Staff**

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, volunteers and others working in school must:

- 3.4.1 be aware that to safeguard children, they have a duty to share information with the designated leads, and through the designated lead, with other agencies
- 3.4.2 have an awareness of what is considered professional conduct towards the young people in their care and that any concerns raised about their conduct will be treated with respectful uncertainty and as 3.4.3
- 3.4.3 know that concerns raised will be given serious consideration – with appropriate record made of concern and response
- 3.4.4 be alert to signs and symptoms of harm and abuse
- 3.4.5 know how to respond when they have concerns or when a pupil discloses to them and to act ***within the confidentiality policy, or where agreed with the school, the visitor's or providers own confidentiality policy***
- 3.4.6 know what should be recorded and how to record concerns.
- 3.4.7 Pursue complaints with Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Contact information will be available in the handbook provided to staff each academic year.

4 Framework

4.1 The trained designated leads for child protection are:

4.1.1 Mr Martin Davey (Child Protection Officer)

4.2 Additional trained designated leads may be appointed by the head teacher.

4.3 Reporting concerns to the designated lead – Mr Martin Davey

Any concern must be reported to ***the designated lead or in their absence the head teacher***, as soon as possible, at least by the end of the session (morning or afternoon) during which the concern comes to light.

4.4 Immediate response to the pupil

It is vital that your actions do not abuse the pupil further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

4.4.1 listen to the pupil, if you are shocked by what is being said, try not to show it

4.4.2 it is acceptable to observe bruises but not to ask a pupil to remove their clothing to observe them

4.4.3 if a disclosure is made,

a) accept what the pupil says

b) stay calm, the pace should be dictated by the pupil without them being pressed for detail by asking leading questions such as “what did s/he do next?” **It is your role to listen - not to investigate**

c) Use open questions such as “is there anything else you want to tell me?” or “yes?” or “and?”

d) be careful not to burden the pupil with guilt by asking questions like “why didn’t you tell me before?”

e) acknowledge how hard it was for the pupil to tell you

f) do not criticise the perpetrator, the pupil might have a relationship with them

g) **do not promise confidentiality**, reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated lead) and why; and, depending on the pupil’s age, what the next stage will be. It is important that you avoid making promises that you cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be all right now”.

4.5 Recording information

4.5.1 Using the ‘Concerns Form’ make notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of disclosure or concern, facts and not assumption or interpretation.

4.5.2 If it is observation of bruising or an injury accurate details will be recorded on the Concerns Form.

4.5.3 Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (try not to translate into “proper terms”).

4.5.4 It is important to pass the Concerns Form to Martin Davey as soon as possible.

4.6 **Supporting pupils**

- 4.6.1 The staff and governors recognise that a child or young person who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth. We recognise that in these circumstances pupils might feel helpless and humiliated, and that they might feel self blame.
- 4.6.2 We recognise that this school might provide the only stability in the lives of pupils who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 4.6.3 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a pupil in these circumstances might range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 4.6.4 The school will support all pupils by:
 - a) discussing child protection cases with due regard to safeguarding the pupil and his or her family
 - b) supporting individuals who are or thought to be in need or at risk in line with SCB procedures
 - c) encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness
 - d) challenging and not condoning aggression, bullying or discriminatory behaviour
 - e) promoting a caring, safe and positive environment.

4.7 **Confidentiality – *for further detail, please see school’s confidentiality policy***

- 4.7.1 A pupil’s views will be considered by the designated lead in deciding whether to inform the pupil’s family, particularly where the pupil is sufficiently mature to make informed judgements about the issues, and about consenting to that.
- 4.7.2 The personal information about all pupils’ families is regarded by those who work in this school as confidential. All staff and volunteers need to be aware of the confidential nature of personal information and will aim to maintain this confidentiality
- 4.7.3 Staff understand that they need know only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a pupil and to refer concerns appropriately. The designated leads and head teacher will disclose information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only. It is inappropriate to provide all staff with detailed information about the pupil, the incident, the family and the consequent actions.
- 4.7.4 Staff must be aware that:
 - a) they cannot promise a student complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the student or other students safe
 - b) Where there are concerns about a student’s welfare relevant agencies need to be involved at an early stage. If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns about a student’s welfare, or if a student discloses that s/he is suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, the member of staff should speak to their designated lead with a view to passing on the information.

4.8 Working with parents/carers

- 4.8.1 Parents and carers play an important role in protecting their children from harm and, in most cases the school will discuss concerns about a pupil with the family and, where appropriate, seek their agreement to making referrals to Initial Contact Team.
- 4.8.2 Where there are any doubts about the risks posed by discussing concerns with a pupil's family, the designated lead should clarify with Initial contact Team, whether, and if so when and by whom, the parents should be told about the referral.
- 4.8.3 The pupil's views will be considered in deciding whether to inform the family, particularly where the pupil is sufficiently mature to make informed judgements about the issues, and about consenting to that.

Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professional built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs.

- 4.8.4 The school aims to help parents understand that the school, like all others, has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare. The school may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a pupil's welfare.

5 Implementation and Professional development

5.1 Staff Training

- 5.1.1 The governors recognise that all staff who work with pupils aged up to 18 years need to have basic child protection training that equips staff to recognise and respond to pupil welfare concerns.
- 5.1.2 Ensure staff are given mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed.
- 5.1.3 The training including multi-agency training in the last 3 years undertaken by staff and governors to ensure their knowledge and skills are up to date includes:
 - a) The designated lead attended Level 3 child protection training April 2013 and will attend further training in December 2015
 - b) All staff and the Head teacher received child protection training led by Mansel Davies, Education Improvement Officer (safeguarding) for Shropshire LA in July 2015
- 5.1.4 The school recognises that child protection training should help staff to recognise signs of sexual grooming, radicalisation, FGM and the behaviours that may manifest from victims of exploitation. Staff should be aware that children who are vulnerable, have special educational needs, low self-esteem or a lack of confidence may be targets for sexual grooming and radicalisation. The school's behaviour management policy highlights a need for staff to look for patterns in behaviour and to report all such concerns to the designated leads.

5.2 Prevention in the Curriculum

- 5.2.1 The school recognises the importance of developing pupils' awareness of behaviour that is unacceptable towards them and others, and how they can help keep themselves and others safe.
- 5.2.2 The school was recognised for achieving the National Healthy School standard for child protection by being accredited for:
- emotional health and wellbeing in 2006
 - health and safety in 2006
 - a healthy school in 2006
- 5.2.3 The PSHCE/Core programme *in each key stage/ in KS3/4/5/* provides personal development opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping safe and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened. As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, pupils are taught to, for example:
- safely explore their own and others' attitudes
 - recognise and manage risks in different situations and how to behave
 - responsibly judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable
 - recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being and develop effective ways of resisting pressure; including knowing when and where to get help
 - use assertiveness techniques to resist unhelpful pressure.
- 5.2.4 The school demonstrates that it listens to and takes pupils' safety concerns seriously through a range of ways:
- in PSHCE/ student voice / surveys and questionnaires / school council
 - by displaying helpline information for all pupils for example, from Childline, NSPCC, CHAT, Names of designated Child Protection Leads
 - peer mentoring schemes
 - CHAT
 - Internet Safety

6 Monitoring

The Link Governor for Child Protection shall provide an annual report to the Governing body regarding compliance with this policy. Designated leads shall provide the link Governor with statistical and other non-personal information regarding compliance for the purposes of this report.

7 Policy review

- 7.1 The Child Protection Officer will lead the next policy review in 2015
- 7.2 This policy shall be reviewed by:
 - 7.2.1 The head teacher and senior leaders; and
 - 7.2.2 All governors.

Keeping Children Safe in Education July 2015

What BES Staff Should Know and Do

1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this policy as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
2. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.
3. Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action will be taken to protect that child. Action will also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.

The role of the school

4. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. School will work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
5. The school has a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.

The role of school and college staff

6. The Teachers' Standards 2012 state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. Such action might be taken under section 47 and section 44 of the Children Act 1989. Such action might be taken under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. The Teachers' Standards apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period (newly qualified teachers [NQTs]); and teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are subject to the Education (School Teachers' Appraisal) (England) Regulations 2012.
7. All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.
8. All school staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

9. In addition to working with the designated safeguarding lead staff members should be aware that they may be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children.

What school staff need to know

10. All staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these are explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes: the school's or college's child protection policy; the school's staff Code of Conduct policy; and the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

11. All staff members will receive appropriate child protection training. This will be regularly updated.

What school and college staff should look out for

12. All school staff members should make sure that they are aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. These are detailed in the staff handbook.

13. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

14. There are various expert sources of advice on the signs of abuse and neglect. Each area's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) should be able to advise on useful material, including training options. Types of abuse and neglect, and examples of specific safeguarding issues, are described in section of the handbook.

15. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead. In exceptional circumstances, such as in emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to children's social care.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

16. If staff members have concerns about a child they should raise these with the school's designated safeguarding lead. The safeguarding lead will decide whether to make a referral to children's social care. It is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly. Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs coordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor.

17. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

18. Staff should be aware of new reporting requirements with regards to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM).

19. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the

early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

20. The Department for Education has produced advice “ What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015” Advice for practitioners to help practitioners identify child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action in response.

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about another staff member

21. If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the headteacher. Where there are concerns about the headteacher this should be referred to the chair of governors.

What school or college staff should do if they have concerns about safeguarding practices within the school

22. Staff and volunteers should raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college’s safeguarding regime. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures, which are suitably reflected in staff training and staff behaviour policies, are in place for such concerns to be raised with the school’s management team.

23. Where a staff member feels unable to raise the issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channel will be open to them.

Prevent

From 1 July 2015 schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“the CTSA 2015”), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”¹⁴.

This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

This School will assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation and what to do to support them. This school has clear procedures in place for protecting children at risk of radicalisation (handbook)

The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs).

The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism as for the Terrorism Act 2000 (section 1(1) to (4) of that Act) and to challenge extremist ideas. This school is best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism.

School will ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. School will ensure that suitable filtering is in place. School will teach pupils about online safety more generally.

The Department for Education has also published advice for schools on the Prevent duty. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

Channel

School staff should understand when 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 schools 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.

Female Genital Mutilation

(FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It 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 relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.

Indicators

There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines , and Chapter 9 of those Guidelines (pp42-44) focuses on the role of schools and colleges.

Actions

If staff have a concern they should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. When mandatory reporting commences in October 2015 these procedures will remain when dealing with concerns regarding the potential for FGM to take place. Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there will be a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police.

Mandatory Reporting Duty Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place a statutory duty upon teachers¹¹, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, 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 sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining pupils, but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

The Mandatory reporting duty will commence in October 2015. Once introduced, teachers must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve children's social care as appropriate