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## Female Genital Mutilation Policy

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<b>Senior Designated Safeguarding Lead (SDL)</b>	Anne Entwistle
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Estella Roberts & Natasha Hall
<b>Nominated Safeguarding Governor</b>	Daniela Shanly
<b>Policy Creator</b>	Estella Roberts & Natasha Hall
<b>Approved by</b>	Anne Entwistle

**This policy should be interpreted in the context of other relevant College Policies and Procedures, particularly BCA Safeguarding Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (December 2017), BCA Safeguarding Annual Audit December (December 2017) and the Single Equality Scheme (October 2017).**

**Purpose**

Providing high quality education that gives our students the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful in their chosen career.

**BCA Equality and Diversity Ethos Statement**

This policy and procedure is subject to The Equality Act 2010. The College is fully committed to promoting, maintaining and supporting equality and diversity in all aspects of its work. The College aims to create an environment where all individuals have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, and gain a feeling of self-esteem and respect for and from all others. The College expresses its opposition to all forms of inequality and discrimination.

## Facts

- Some 66,000 women in England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM. (Optimus Education 2013)
- 99% of females living in Egypt are subjected to this abuse today

## Definition

- ↳ Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part / all external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is not required by any major religion and is medically unnecessary, painful and has serious health consequences at the time it is carried out and in later life.
- ↳ The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 13, but is also performed on new born infants and on young women before marriage / pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure, from blood loss or infection.
- ↳ Girls may be circumcised or genitally mutilated illegally by doctors or traditional health workers in the UK, or sent abroad for the operation.

## Law

- ↳ Female circumcision, excision or infibulation (female genital mutilation) is illegal in this country by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, except on specific physical and mental health grounds. More information can be found on the Home Office website.

It is an offence to:

- ↳ Undertake the operation (except in specific physical or mental health grounds) ↳ Assist a girl to mutilate her own genitalia
- ↳ Assist a non-UK person to undertake FGM of a UK national outside UK (except in specific physical or mental health grounds)
- ↳ Assist a UK national or permanent UK resident to undertake FGM of a UK national outside the UK (except in specific physical or mental health grounds)

## Recognition

BCA staff should be aware of the following indicators and report any suspicions to the Safeguarding Team:

1. Any medical provision for a pregnant woman who has herself been the subject of female genital mutilation provides the opportunity for recognition of risk and preventative work with parents.
2. A student may be considered at risk if it is known older girls in the family have been subject to the procedure. Pre-pubescent girls 7 to 10 are at highest risk, though the practice has been reported amongst babies and young adults.

3. Suspicions may arise if a family is known to belong to a community in which FGM is practiced and is making preparations for the student to take a holiday, arranging vaccinations or planning college absence and the student may refer to a 'special procedure' taking place.

Indications that FGM may have already occurred include:

- ↳ Prolonged college absence with noticeable behaviour change on return
- ↳ Bladder and menstrual problems
- ↳ Reluctance to receive medical attention or participate in practical activities

### **Response Procedure**

If any member of staff has a suspicion of intended or actual FGM they must refer it to the Student Welfare Manager (SWM) who will inform Social Care, in accordance with the Referral and Assessment Procedure. A strategy meeting would then be organised at the earliest possible date involving multi-agencies.

Female genital mutilation is a one-off event of physical abuse (albeit one that may have grave permanent sexual, physical, and emotional consequences). As FGM is a form of child abuse, it will be dealt with in accordance with BCA's existing Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

### **Further Advice**

Useful contacts are:

Foundation for Women's Health,  
Research & Development,  
6th Floor  
50 Eastbourne Terrace,  
London  
W2 6LX  
Tel: 0207 725 2606  
Website: [www.forwarduk.org.uk](http://www.forwarduk.org.uk)

The African Well Women  
Clinic: Central Middlesex  
Hospital Acton Lane  
Park Royal  
NW 10 7  
NS  
Tel: 020 8965 5733 / 202 8963 7177