9.6 Female Genital Mutilation

We have robust and rigorous safeguarding procedures, and we take our responsibilities of child protection seriously. We keep up to date with the changes and Female Genital Mutilation has become a growing concern. FGM is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under my safeguarding policy. We have used the World Health Organisations definition below:

‘Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons’. (World Health Organisations – 1997)

We have taken guidance from the Government Home Office guidelines and the Ofsted guidelines from’ Inspecting Safeguarding’ The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM states;

‘FGM is considered as child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child’s right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention of the Rights of the Child.’

‘Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM. UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However woman from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani woman.’

All staff is aware of the guidance that is available in respect of FGM, all staff have read this policy and have been made aware of the signs and indicators of the potential of this being practised.

Indications that FGM has taken place;

* Prolonged absence from setting with noticeable behaviour change- especially after return from holiday.
* Change in toileting behaviour.
* Infections
* Being uncomfortable, walking, sitting, standing.
* Reluctant to be undressed.

Indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM

* Family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM-especially if there are elderly women present.
* In conversation a child talks about FGM or a family member having an experience.
* Anxiety about a special ceremony.
* Anxiety about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin.
* Parents/guardians inform you of extended holidays and talk about vaccinations and possible further time off.
* If a woman has already undergone FGM – and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any child protection implications e,g for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to social services or the police if appropriate.

If anyone is concerned that FGM has taken place or may take place the staff member should report this to the manager or the Designated Safeguarding Officers Mica Robinson and Rhiannon Grimsey together we will report the concerns to customer first and make a referral.

We may talk to the family in a very highly sensitively and informal manner, asking about their holiday and who may be going and who they are visiting, but only if we feel this will not cause harm to the child. If we feel it is appropriate, we will inform the parents that FGM is illegal regardless of it being performed abroad.

In light of the above information, we will ensure:

* Parents are encouraged to notify of any holidays or absences.
* Promote a safe and secure environment where children feel safe to talk to me about their concerns.
* Teach and promote children to understand their rights and age appropriate PSHE education.
* FGM discussions with parents of children from practising communities who are at risk.
* Build good strong relationships with parents and children.

Policy adopted by: Hadleigh Parkside Pre-School

On: March 2024

Review Date: March 2025

Signed on behalf of the provider:

Name of signatory: Mica Robinson

Role of signatory: Deputy Manager