



The  
**Maltby** Learning Trust

# MLT Honour Based Violence Policy

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Reviewed by: Executive Principal (Primary)  
Approved by: CEO

## INTRODUCTION

This policy provides information about practices related to Honour Based Abuse which are used to control behaviours within families to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or defend honour. It sets out the approaches to be taken within the Maltby Learning Trust to minimise the risk to children and young people within our Academies.

## WHAT IS HONOUR BASED ABUSE?

Victims of Honour Based Abuse are predominantly female; the practices empower males to control female autonomy, sexuality and sexual behaviour. However, there can also be instances when young males are victims.

Honour Based Abuse is often committed with a degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Crimes may take place across national and international boundaries, within extended families and communities, and cut across cultures, communities and faith groups. Honour Based Abuse often takes place in countries across Africa, the Middle East and East Asia but is also evident in the immigrant populations of Europe, America and Australia.

Honour Based Abuse is used as an umbrella term for a number of practices including most commonly:

- Honour Based Violence/Killing
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Breast Ironing

## WHY DOES HONOUR BASED ABUSE OCCUR?

Honour Based Abuse is perpetrated against children and young people for a number of reasons. These include:

- Protecting family 'honour' or 'Izzat'
- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (including perceived promiscuity or being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender)
- Responding to family, community or peer group pressure
- Strengthening family links
- Protecting perceived cultural and/or religious ideals (mis-guided or dated)
- Retaining wealth, property or land within the family
- Assisting claims for residence and citizenship in the UK
- Perceived immoral behaviour which could include inappropriate make-up or dress, possession and / or use of a mobile telephone, kissing or showing other forms of intimacy in public, rejecting a forced marriage, being a victim of rape or other serious sexual assault, inter-faith relationships, seeking a divorce.

## POLICY CONTEXT

Honour based abuse practices are cultural rather than religious practices which are criminal offences and an abuse of human rights. When they affect children, they

constitute a child protection issue. Children and young people who suffer Honour Based Abuse are at risk of significant harm, including potential risk to life, through physical, sexual, psychological and emotional harm. It is important that professionals and volunteers working for MLT are fully informed about these issues and are educated to be alert to signs of risk.

## POLICY STATEMENT

The safety and welfare of any victims of Honour Based Abuse and associated practices is paramount. In safeguarding children at risk of these practices it is imperative that:

- All agencies and staff, including volunteers, act in the interest of the rights of children, as stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). This includes the preservation of dignity through affording children privacy and involving them in decision making processes.
- All decisions or plans for an individual child should be based on thorough assessments which sensitively reflect the Protected Characteristics defined within the Equality Act 2010 including age, disability, gender (identity), race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Assumptions, stereotyping and stigmatisation of and about the child or their specific community is unacceptable and all measures to counter this must be taken. Staff must work in partnership with parents/carers to provide continuity of care to children/young people wherever possible.
- Agencies should work in partnership with members of affected local communities, to develop support networks and education appropriate programmes. It should be recognised that children at risk of Honour Based Abuse are extremely vulnerable and while wanting the abuse to stop, they are also likely to fear criminalising their parents/families and/or their faith group [as well as fearing being isolated from their own community].

## RISK FACTORS FOR HONOUR BASED ABUSE

The following should be considered as risk factors for all forms of Honour Based Abuse:

- Absence/persistent absence
- Fear of forthcoming school holidays
- Requests for extended leave of absence
- Failure to return from visits to country of origin
- Surveillance by siblings/cousins
- Changes in behavior/mood/appearance
- Self-harm
- Decline in academic achievement
- Prevented from going on to further education
- Early/forced marriage of siblings
- Acid attacks

## SPECIFIC TYPES OF HONOUR BASED ABUSE

The following are defined types of Honour Based Abuse. This list should not be considered comprehensive but covers the categories most commonly reported.

## HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE/KILLING

### Definition

*"Honour based violence' is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community."* (Crown Prosecution Service)

The term is used to describe violence, which sometimes results in a murder, in the name of so-called honour. Although predominantly affecting girls and women, boys can also be subject to Honour Based Violence and LGBT young people can be particularly vulnerable. Honour Based Violence occurs when the victim is injured or killed for perceived immoral behaviour, which is deemed to have breached the honour code of a family or community, causing shame.

### Context

A child or young woman who is at risk of honour based violence is at significant risk of physical harm (including being murdered) and / or neglect. Victims may also suffer significant emotional harm, as a result of a threat of violence or witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

Honour Based Violence may include murder, unexplained death (suicide), fear of or actual forced marriage, controlling sexual activity, domestic abuse, rape, kidnapping, false imprisonment, threats to kill, assault, harassment, forced abortion or female genital mutilation.

## FORCED MARRIAGE

### Definition

*'A forced marriage is where one or both people do not, or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot, consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used to force the event. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.'* (Gov.uk)

### Context

A forced marriage cannot be justified on cultural or religious grounds and no major world faith condones it. Although predominantly affecting girls and women between 13-30 years, evidence suggests that 15% of victims are male.

Victims may be taken abroad and then forced to marry, brought to the UK as a result of forced marriage or made to marry in the UK. The force can take the form of emotional pressure exerted by close and/or extended family members or it may involve threatening and violent behaviours including abduction, imprisonment and rape. In some cases a victim may be murdered if they refuse to comply.

It is important to differentiate between an arranged marriage, where the family arranges the marriage but both parties involved freely give their consent, and a forced marriage,

where one or both parties do not consent to the marriage which then takes place under duress.

## FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

### Definition

*'Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons' (World Health Organisation)*

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures, which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons:

- Type I — Partial or total removal of the clitoris and/or the prepuce (clitoridectomy)
- Type II — Partial or total removal of the clitoris and the labia minora, with or without excision of the labia majora (excision)
- Type III — Narrowing of the vaginal orifice with creation of a covering seal by cutting and appositioning the labia minora and/or the labia majora, with or without excision of the clitoris (infibulation)
- Type III(a), removal and apposition of the labia minora; Type III (b), removal and apposition of the labia majora.
- Type IV — All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization

### Context

FGM is traditionally carried out by a female with no medical training, without anaesthetics or antiseptic treatments, using knives, scissors, scalpels, pieces of glass or razor blades. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between 4 and 15, but in some cases, it is performed on new-born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life.

- Short term health consequences can include: bleeding/severe pain/shock/urine retention/infection/fracture of limbs (due to restraint) as well as death
- Longer term health consequences can include: Infertility, complications during childbirth (enhanced risk of death for mother and baby), psychological trauma

FGM is illegal in the UK and when performed out of the UK on or by a UK national/resident and there is no justification for it in either the Bible or the Koran. Religious leaders have spoken out against the practice.

Concerns correlate with those for all Honour Based Abuse, but particular attention should additionally be paid to:

### Vulnerabilities to FGM

Concerns correlate with those for all Honour Based Abuse, but particular attention should additionally be paid to the following common risk factors:

## **Pre-FGM Signs/indicators**

- Low level of integration into UK Society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- Parents who wish to withdraw their children from learning about FGM
- Talk of returning to country of origin/parents country of origin or 'at risk' country (especially at summer holiday period and particularly when this is extended by 2 weeks before/after – recovery period can be up to 8-10 weeks)
- Talk of a special occasion when the girl will 'become a woman'
- Talk of older female relative visiting from country of origin

## **Post-FGM Signs/Indicators**

- Asking to be excused from PE
- Spending a long time in toilets/bathrooms

## **Reporting FGM**

The Trust has due regard to the mandatory reporting duty which came into force in October 2015 (Serious Crime Act), of the FGM Act 2003, which places a statutory duty on , which requires social care professionals, healthcare professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth (see section 2.1a for further information).

For the purposes of the duty, the relevant age is the girl's age at the time of the disclosure/identification of FGM (i.e. it does not apply where a woman aged 18 or over discloses she had FGM when she was under 18). In cases where a woman is over 18 at the point of disclosure, this should be reported, but in line with standard reporting procedures as outlined in the Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.

The duty is a personal duty which requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report; the responsibility cannot be transferred. It is expected that staff in MLT Academies will be vigilant and refer FGM (or other Honour Based Abuse) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Officers and/or Principal would liaise with the individual professional to support this referral.

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

## **BREAST IRONING/FLATTENING**

### **Definition**

*'Breast Ironing also known as "Breast Flattening" is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely.'* (tri.x)

## Context

Breast Ironing is a harmful cultural practice which is carried out in the belief that young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education. As with other form of Honour Based Abuse it is child abuse.

The custom uses large stones, a hammer or spatulas that have been heated over scorching coals to compress the breast tissue of girls as young as 9 years old. Alternatively, an elastic belt may be used to press the breasts to prevent them from growing. As with FGM, the practice is commonly performed by the mother or another family member.

## RESPONSE BY SCHOOL STAFF

Any suspicions regarding Honour Based Abuse must be reported immediately as there is a high likelihood of serious risk of harm and reporting FGM particularly is a mandatory duty as outlined above.

If a direct disclosure has been made, it is important to recognise the courageousness of the child as they will likely be fearful of the consequences, worried about not being believed, and of bringing shame to their family. It is important that their safety is not further jeopardised, that they are taken seriously, and the following principles adhered to:

- Under no circumstances should the school allow the child's family or social network to find out about the disclosure, so as not to put the child at further risk of harm;
- Under no circumstances speak to victims in the presence of their relatives;
- Under no circumstances approach the family or community leaders, share any information with them or attempt any form of mediation. In particular, members of the local community should not be used as interpreters.

All forms of Honour Based Abuse are child abuse and therefore safeguarding procedures as defined in the Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy must be followed. This would usually be to the Designated Safeguarding Officers or Academy Principal in the first instance but via the Local Authority's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if necessary on 01709 336080 (Rotherham) or the Referral and Response Team on 01302 737777 (Doncaster) as applicable.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board**  
[http://www.rscb.org.uk/safeguarding/homepage/55/female\\_general\\_mutilation](http://www.rscb.org.uk/safeguarding/homepage/55/female_general_mutilation)  
<http://www.rscb.org.uk/>
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018 Part One:**  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/741315/Keeping\\_Children\\_Safe\\_in\\_Education\\_2018\\_Part\\_One\\_14.09.18.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741315/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_2018_Part_One_14.09.18.pdf)

- **Daughters of Eve:** <http://www.dofeve.org/>
- **FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development):**  
<http://forwarduk.org.uk/>
- **NHS Specialist Clinics for FGM:**  
<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/aboutnhservices/sexual-health-services/pages/fgm-health-services-for-women.aspx>
- **Karma Nirvana. Helpline Number: 0800 5999 247**
- **Henna Foundation. Tel 029 2049 6920**
- **Forced Marriage Unit. [fmufco.gov.uk](mailto:fmufco.gov.uk). Telephone: 020 7008 0151**