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Norfolk Constabulary

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Dear Head Teacher

### **Preventing Forced Marriage and FGM**

With the long summer holidays only weeks away Norfolk Constabulary and Norfolk County Council are taking the opportunity to urge schools to be vigilant in guarding against the dangers of female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (FM).

As safeguarding leads we would like to draw your attention to the updated guidelines which are designed to keep girls safe before the start of the summer break.

This guidance also comes on the eve of a national day of remembrance being held on Tuesday 14 July 2015. Entitled '**Britain's Lost Women**' the aim of the day will be to remember those killed in honour crimes. The 14 July is the birthday of Shafiea Ahmed, the 17-year-old grade 'A' student who was killed by her parents for being too westernised and who rejected an 'arranged' marriage.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry. Such legislation provides a clear definition of what forced marriage is, empowering both the victims and those of us responsible for protecting vulnerable people at risk of such an offence.

All professionals working within statutory agencies including education, social and health care, police, housing, and the voluntary sector need to be aware of their responsibilities when they encounter this 'hidden crime'.

If the victim is allowed to walk out of the door without support, that one chance to protect and safeguard them against harm may have been missed.

Nationally the Crown Prosecution Service estimates that there are between 8,000-10,000 forced marriages occurring each year within the UK. This equates to approximately 30 per day and highlights the nature of the issues facing us as professionals.

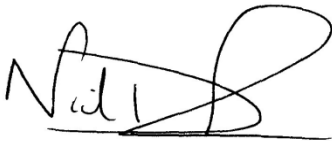
'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2015) outlines the expectation that school staff should be aware of the guidance in respect of FGM and FM, and be vigilant to the risk of it being practiced.

Multi-agency practice guidance relating to both of these issues highlights how staff can make a difference and offer practical support to victims. Awareness of these issues is particularly important when considering applications for absence for extend trips overseas and when children go missing from school.

Norfolk Constabulary in partnership with Norfolk County Council has produced resources that can be used within school to raise awareness of these issues. These resources including links to national and local guidance and e-learning can be accessed via the Norfolk Schools' website: <http://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/Behaviour-and-safety/Safeguarding/FGM-and-forced-marriage/index.htm>. You can also visit the Norfolk Constabulary website at: [www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/personalsafety/femalegenitalmutilation.aspx](http://www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/personalsafety/femalegenitalmutilation.aspx).

May we take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support as we work together in partnership with the legislation to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities and bring to justice those responsible for such abhorrent crimes.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Dean', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Nick Dean**  
T/Assistant Chief Constable

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine Mouser', written in a cursive style.

**Catherine Mouser**  
Assistant Director Social Work