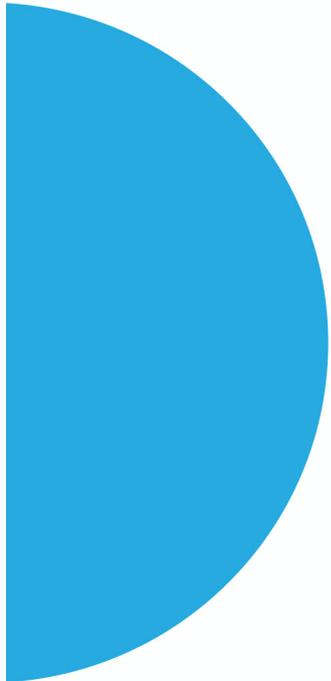
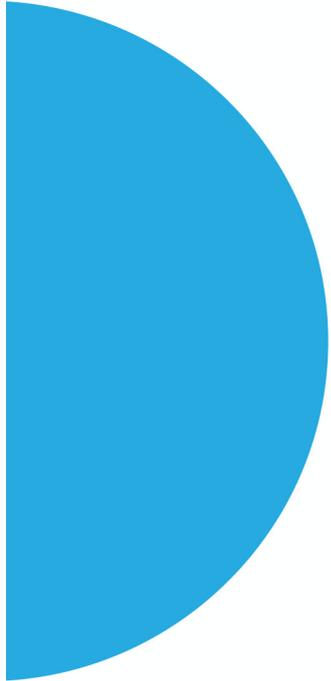


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# Ten Ten's Guidance on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Last updated: 14th December 2022

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## Introduction

This document provides guidance on teaching **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** and a summary of how Ten Ten supports Catholic primary schools in this teaching through our programme, **Life to the Full**.

In doing so, we are drawing together key insights from charities and organisations working towards ending the practice of FGM and demonstrating how this knowledge and guidance has been integrated as optional teaching in **Life to the Full**, presented within a framework of a Christian understanding of the human person.

### **Key Decision #6**

Where content in **Life to the Full** involves Sex Education (therefore, not statutory at primary level) or where there are particularly sensitive topics, **Ten Ten Resources** classes the topic as a 'Key Decision' which means it should only be taught after consultation with parents and carers.

The resources Ten Ten provide for teaching FGM are outlined as **Key Decision #6** and aim to provide primary schools with the opportunity to apply the guidance found in this document in a way which is integrated within the wider **Life to the Full** programme.

## What is the DFE guidance on teaching about FGM?

The **Life to the Full** programme fully meets the government statutory Relationships and Health Education (RHE) guidance for primary schools, which amongst other things states that by the end of primary school children should learn:

- About the concept of privacy and the implications of it for both children and adults; including that it is not always right to keep secrets if they relate to being safe.
- That each person's body belongs to them, and the differences between appropriate and inappropriate or unsafe physical, and other, contact.
- How to recognise and report feelings of being unsafe or feeling bad about any adult.
- How to ask for advice or help for themselves or others, and to keep trying until they are heard.
- How to report concerns or abuse, and the vocabulary and confidence needed to do so.
- Where to get advice e.g. family, school and/or other sources.  
([DFE RHE Guidance for Primary Schools](#))

The guidance on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) makes it compulsory for secondary schools to teach pupils about FGM and other harmful practices, including forced marriage and honour-based abuse:

‘By the end of secondary school, pupils should know the concepts of, and laws relating to, sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence and **FGM**, and how these can affect current and future relationships.’

([DFE RSE Guidance for Secondary Schools](#))

**Although the duty to teach about FGM is not statutory for primary schools, it can optionally be applied following consultation with parents and governors.**

The **National FGM Centre** advises that girls are at most risk at primary school age, and therefore [recommends that primary schools also teach about FGM](#) where possible.

## What does 'Life to the Full' teach about FGM?

The **Life to the Full** programme offers schools the opportunity to include teaching on FGM at KS1, LKS2 and UKS2, as part of **Unit 3: Keeping Safe** which is part of **Module 2: Created to Love Others**. An outline of the teaching content is provided below:

### Early Years Foundation Stage

**EYFS 2.3.2 'My Body, My Rules'** does not mention FGM, but introduces children to the idea of bodily privacy (including the NSPCC PANTS message that 'privates are privates') and the importance of talking to their 'special people' if anything troubles them. This is all underpinned by the religious teaching that we are created and loved by God, with bodies and minds that He wants us to keep safe.

### Key Stage One

The **KS1 2.3.3 'Physical Contact'**, session incorporates (with kind permission) the PANTS resources from the NSPCC to teach children that:

- **Privates are private**
- **Always remember your body belongs to you**
- **No means no**
- **Talk about secrets that upset you**
- **Speak up, someone can help**

Children discuss the way different kinds of touch can make them feel. They gain a basic understanding of when touch is appropriate or inappropriate, and the importance of talking to trusted adults about anything concerning them.

There is an optional section which briefly mentions the illegal practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and reinforces the key teaching that privates are private. FGM is not named explicitly, but described in the following terms:

**'You might want to mention that in some cultures people want to harm girls' private parts, and that is not OK. Reinforce and expand upon the PANTS rules: privates are private and should stay the same as when a girl was born.'**

The whole session is framed in the core belief that our bodies are made by God and given to us as wonderful gifts that deserve the respect of ourselves and others.

## Lower Key Stage Two

**LKS2 2.3.3 'Safe In My Body'** builds on KS1 learning to consider more deeply what physical contact is appropriate and inappropriate. Children are introduced to the term 'abuse' and discuss different kinds of abuse, including sexual abuse, here referred to as 'abuse of private parts'. Children are invited to think of trusted adults that they can talk to about any issues they may face. There is also an optional section which briefly explores another kind of abuse of private parts: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In terms of FGM teaching content, there is a reduced version which teachers can share from the session notes, or a longer version in **Appendix 3**, which we have copied below to give an overview of key knowledge for teaching staff:

- **FGM is when the outside part of a girl's genitalia (private parts) are changed or harmed**, not because the girl is ill and needs medical treatment, but for other reasons (see below).
- FGM is practised in at least 28 countries in Africa, parts of the Middle East and Asia. Some people from those countries continue to practice FGM among their communities when they come to the UK to live.
- These communities believe that cutting or changing and harming a girl's genitalia will uphold family honour, preserve tradition or ensure a girl's cleanliness and readiness for marriage.
- These are myths; **FGM can have serious consequences for a woman's health and in some instances can lead to death**. It is not a religious requirement and world religious leaders have spoken out against it.
- Female bodies change during puberty, and some of these changes affect the vulva (a girl's external genitalia), but otherwise **the vulva needs to stay the same as when a girl was born** – no one else should change it for them, unless for medical reasons that are very clearly explained by a doctor in the UK.
- **FGM is considered to be child abuse in the UK and it is illegal (not allowed)**. Anyone who involved in carrying out FGM faces up to 14 years in prison, and anyone found guilty of failing to protect a girl from FGM faces up to 7 years in prison.
- If anyone is worried about FGM they should never stay silent – there are lots of support services available. Any teacher, or trusted adults in or out of school can help. **Childline, run by the NSPCC, also has a free telephone help line** for anyone in the UK worried about FGM happening to them or someone they know, which can be found by searching 'FGM help'.

- **In an emergency situation, 999 should always be called.** It's always OK to seek support – there will always be someone who can help.

The session finishes by discussing appropriate touch that makes us feel positive, and a reflection on how much God loves us and wants us to stay safe.

*Note that there are two versions of the Presentation for this session, one which includes the FGM content and one which does not.*

## Upper Key Stage Two

Through 4 fictional stories, the [UKS2 2.3.3 'Types of Abuse'](#) session further deepens awareness of different kinds of abuse, including sexual (*which in LKS2 was described as 'abuse of private parts'*). Children are introduced to the concept of rights (including the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and how abuse violates their rights. They are asked to think of trusted adults that they can talk to about any issues they may face.

There is also an optional section which explains that children have the right to be safe and to be in control of their bodies, so that they need to be aware of a practice which violates these rights: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Children watch a film which goes beyond LKS2 learning by answering the following questions:

- What is FGM?
- How does FGM affect health?
- Who is at risk?
- Why does it happen?
- How are people trying to stop it?
- Who can I tell?

**Appendix 1** contains the script from the film, so teachers and parents can review content in advance and make decisions accordingly. There is then a selection of reflections, activities and tasks for teachers to choose from to help children respond to their learning about FGM.

The session finishes by discussing how, although bad things happen, that is not God's plan for us: He designed us, made us, loves us and wants us to love others too.

*Note that there are two versions of the Presentation for this session, one which includes the FGM content and one which does not.*

At each Key Stage where there is optional FGM teaching content, teachers are also signposted to this guidance and also resource provision higher up in the curriculum, so that teaching can be tailored carefully for the age, stage and risk level of the children in your care.

## Key Decision #6 – consulting with parents and carers

The RSE statutory guidance recommends that all schools should work closely with parents when planning and delivering FGM lessons in schools, particularly at primary school where this topic is optional.

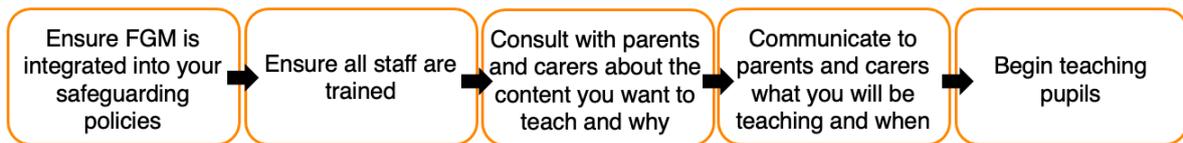
In terms of the **Life to the Full** programme, **it is crucial that schools consult with parents** over this Key Decision, and **then ensure parents know what will be taught and when**.

## How do you recommend integrating a whole school approach to tackling FGM?

Given that girls are at most risk between the ages of 5-12 years old, primary schools play an important part in safeguarding girls from FGM.

[Integrate UK](#), a charity committed to raising awareness of the issue of FGM within the context of violence against the rights of women and girls, explains that school governing bodies have a statutory duty to have a named governor responsible for Safeguarding. This person needs to be kept informed of work around FGM safeguarding and education in the school; they should ensure that the full governing body is aware of how the school is working to address the issue of FGM through Child Protection Policy, Staff Training, Attendance Policy and Lessons.

Inspired by the [National FGM Centre](#), we have put together the following graphic which illustrates well the steps required to integrate a whole school approach to teaching about and tackling FGM in your school:



Additionally, you might like to work with charity or governmental partners in your area to increase teaching provision and training opportunities. This will be particularly important in high-risk communities. The links below provide further guidance about how to raise awareness, safeguard children and engage them in the campaign to end FGM.

## Further reading/resources

**[A Statement Opposing FGM \(GOV.UK\)](#)** – This printable statement makes it clear that FGM is a serious criminal offence in the UK with a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison for anyone found guilty of carrying it out.

**[Department for Education Guidance on Relationships Education \(GOV.UK\)](#)** – This guidance was announced in 2019 and came into effect in September 2021.

**[Discussing Female Genital Mutilation \(FGM\) with Pupils in Primary Schools \(Integrate Bristol\)](#)** – This document offers guidance for schools in terms of policy, staff training, consultation with parents, teaching content, risk factors to be aware of etc.

**[Female Genital Mutilation: Guidance for Schools \(National FGM Centre\)](#)** - This document offers a really useful overview of what FGM is and the responsibilities schools have to talk about it and safeguard their pupils against it. There is also a comprehensive ‘further reading’ list at the bottom of this document.

**[Female Genital Mutilation: Resource Pack \(GOV.UK\)](#)** – This resource was developed in response to requests for clearer direction from central government about the safeguarding responsibilities of local authorities. Section 13 relates to Schools in England and has some useful documents on policy guidance, resources, videos etc.

**[FGM Awareness Video \(The Norbury School, Harrow\)](#)** – This video, from a Knowledge Centre school in London, shows why talking with primary aged pupils about FGM is so important, and the benefits of implementing a whole school, whole community approach to tackling FGM. The Norbury School also offers bespoke FGM Awareness training for schools, SENCOs and Inclusion Managers.

**[FGM: The Facts \(GOV.UK\)](#)** – This colourful, large-font document, outlines the facts and figures about FGM. Some schools might consider allowing UKS2 pupils to read and research from this document.

**[FORWARD: Schools and Higher Education \(Forward UK\)](#)** – Forward is the leading African women led organisation working to end Female Genital Mutilation, child marriage and violence against women and girls. They offer training and programmes for schools, parents, educators to understand the key issues that affect girls from affected communities.

**[Integrate UK](#)** – Integrate UK is a youth-led charity which works towards gender and racial equality. It provides FGM training to front-line professionals, such as teachers and medical professionals.

**[‘My Body, My Rules’ FGM animation \(Forward UK\)](#)** – This short, animated film, developed by FORWARD and Animage Films, is aimed at raising awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM) amongst primary school aged children in the UK. It is shared in the UKS2 session as optional activity but it might be appropriate for some LKS2 classes to see it too.

**[PANTS \(NSPCC\)](#)** – Integrated with kind permission into our EYFS and KS1 resources, the NSPCC has lots of lesson plans, classroom activities and more to help children talk PANTS. (The PANTS rules are: **P**rivates are Private; **A**lways remember your body belongs to you; **N**o means No; **T**alk about secrets that upset you; **S**peak up, someone can help!)

**[Petals \(Coventry University\)](#)** – Petals is the UK’s first FGM web app, a young person-friendly platform which gives information about FGM and advice on how to get support.