

Forced Marriage

Bilbrough Country Classroom is fully committed to safeguarding all children and young people who we work with. As a childcare provider we recognise that safeguarding against Forced Marriages is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability

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. 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.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.

Legislation on Forced Marriage

[The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#) makes it a criminal offence to force someone to marry this includes:

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- Marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)
- Breaching a Forced Marriage Protection Order is also a criminal offence
- The civil remedy of obtaining a Forced Marriage Protection Order through the family courts will continue to exist alongside the new criminal offence, so victims can choose how they wish to be assisted
- Forcing someone to marry can result in a sentence of up to 7 years in prison

If you suspect a student is being forced into marriage:

- Speak to the student about your concerns
- Collect as much information as possible
- Liaise with the Head Teacher who will seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit

Do Not:

- Treat such allegations merely as a domestic issue and send the student back to the family home.
- Ignore what the student has told you or dismiss out of hand the need for immediate protection.
- Decide that it is not your responsibility to follow-up the allegation.
- Approach the student's family or those with influence within the community, without the express consent of the student, as this will alert them to your concerns and may place the student in danger.
- Contact the family in advance of any enquiries by the police, the Forced Marriage Unit, adult or children's social care, either by telephone or letter.
- Share information outside information sharing protocols without the express consent of the student.

- Attempt to be a mediator or encourage mediation, reconciliation, arbitration or family counselling.

If a student stops attending school:

If a teacher or other member of staff suspects that a student has been removed from, or prevented from, attending education as a result of forced marriage, a referral should be made to the local authority adult or children's social care and the police.

- Liaise with the local police domestic abuse unit.
- Contact the Forced Marriage Unit.
- Try to obtain as much information about the student as possible.
- Establish if there is a history of siblings being forced to marry.
- Consider speaking to the student's friends.

DO NOT:

- Remove the student from the register without first making enquiries and referring the case to police and local authority adult or children's social care.
 - Dismiss the student as taking unauthorised absence.
- The **Forced Marriage Unit** operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to practitioners dealing with cases.

For queries or reporting guidance, please contact your LSCB or the Forced Marriage Unit