

Forced Marriage

Forced Marriage became a criminal offence in June 2014. It is a form of child, adult and domestic abuse and, in line with statutory guidance, is treated as such by this Nursery. The Nursery is sensitive to differing family patterns and lifestyles and child-rearing patterns that vary across different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Child abuse cannot be condoned for religious or cultural reasons. We must equally be aware of supporting the adults known to us staff and parents who may disclose they are a victim and offer support in the same way as a child.



Overview - 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. Duress can include physical psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. 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. Forced marriage is an abuse of children's human rights under the UN convention on the rights of the child.

From 2014 the UK government made forced marriage illegal.

Forcing somebody to marry includes

- Taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether the marriage takes place or not)
- Using physical or emotional violence to force somebody to marry
- Marrying someone who lacks the capacity to consent to marriage

Some adults maybe "non-responsive" and fail to intervene as they dismiss forced marriage as a "cultural issue" or fear a backlash from powerful figures in minority communities it may be seen as an issue specific to the culture of the child. This is not something as a setting we must be culturally sensitive about, this is a child protection issue, and must be treated in the same way we follow our child protection procedures.

Forced Marriage Unit

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which was set up in January 2005 to lead on the Government's forced marriage policy, outreach and casework. It operates both **inside** the UK,

where support is provided to any individual, and **overseas**, where consular assistance is provided to British nationals, including dual nationals.

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from simple safety advice, through to aiding a victim to prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK ('reluctant sponsor' cases), and, in extreme circumstances, to rescues of victims held against their will overseas.

There are clear guidelines that show the important differences between an arranged marriage and a forced marriage

'An arranged marriage is one which families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage, but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses'



Characteristics that may indicate force marriage

While individual cases of forced marriage and attempted forced marriage are often very particular, they share a number of common and important characteristics including:

- An extended absence from school
- A drop in performance or sudden signs of low motivation
- Excessive parental restrictions and control of movements and friendships
- A history of a sibling leaving education early to marry
- Evidence of self harm social isolation a change in behaviour and possible eating disorders
- Evidence of family disputes/conflict, domestic abuse not wanting to go home or running away from home

The role of the Nursery we will endeavor to :

- Provide a safe and secure environment for the children and staff and parents
- Treat suspected case of forced marriage sensitively
- Encourage children to talk about their fears and for them to know they are listened to and believed
- Ensure all staff are aware of the signs of forced marriage and who to report too
- This is a child protection issue and should be treated as such

- If a staff member does not want to have a referral made advice can be sought from the FMU Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151



If a case of forced marriage is suspected, parents and carers will not be approached or involved in a referral to any other agencies.

Referrals go to the designated lead who will report to MASH - the multi agency safeguarding hub

For further information or support contact

- Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151
- Email: fmufco.gov.uk
- Email for outreach work: fmufcooutreach.gov.uk
- Facebook: [Forced Marriage page](#)
- [Information for people directly affected by forced marriage](#) is also available.
- Email: fmufco.gov.uk