



2014/0018171POSoS

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
Secretary of State

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Dr Fiona Cornish and Dr Naomi Low-Bear
By email: admin.mwf@btconnect.com

Dr Fiona & Naomi

Zoh March 2014

Thank you for your email of 21 February about my meeting with Ms Fahma Mohamed and her campaign to end female genital mutilation (FGM).

I met Fahma on 25 February, along with other FGM campaigners, to discuss how best to tackle this appalling abuse. Following the meeting, I confirmed that I would contact every school in the country with updated guidance on keeping children safe, with specific material to help staff tackle FGM.

On 28 February, I was pleased to visit Fahma's school in Bristol, where I met staff and pupils and sat in on a classroom discussion on FGM. Ministers in my department have also met head teacher and teacher associations and unions to discuss how to raise awareness in schools of FGM and similar child protection issues.

There is no room for equivocation on this issue. FGM is unacceptable. It is child abuse and a criminal offence. Any school that has concerns that a pupil is at risk should contact their local authority safeguarding team immediately.

Guidance from the government on FGM is already available in *Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation*. This advice document can be downloaded at: <http://tinyurl.com/FGM-practice-guidelines>. There is a chapter specifically for schools and colleges.

My department is also funding voluntary organisations that work on safeguarding issues, including FGM, in the relevant minority communities. Between 2013 and 2015, we will be providing a total of over £730,000 to the Victoria Climbié Foundation and AFRUCA (Africans Unite Against Child Abuse) for their essential work within these communities. We are also providing more than £275,000 over the same two years to Children and Families Across Borders for their work on international social work issues, which has included the production of a training app on FGM.

Thank you for writing to me on this important matter. I hope my response is helpful to you.

Y-S

A handwritten signature consisting of the letters 'Y-S' followed by a long, horizontal, slightly curved line that ends in a small arrowhead pointing to the right.

MICHAEL GOVE