

15th June 2022

Confidentiality

Discussing pupils on the train leads to suspension of DSL

A school's Designated Safeguarding Lead was suspended this week after being overheard by a journalist on a busy commuter train discussing pupils and their safeguarding and mental health needs. The senior leader's role and school was easily identified from their visible lanyard.

It is of course essential to maintain confidentiality at all times and to be aware of appropriate places to have discussions about pupils.

In this particular case, the story was broken by a journalist who had the means to publicise the safeguarding breach, but on how many occasions might this have happened before.



Female Genital Mutilation reporting procedures

Where there is a disclosure of FGM it is important that staff know what their statutory response should be. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021), paragraph 40 says 'whilst ****all**** staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific ****legal duty on teachers****. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police'.

What is often less well-known is what a teacher should do next to make a report.

Below is a very short summary and must be read in conjunction with the mandatory reporting guidance.

The mandatory reporting procedures say:

'It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non-emergency number.'

'Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate'.

In most cases 'reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, and best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day'.

The procedures also set out what information is needed, in order to make a report.

See here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information-accessible-version#reporting>

