



Wood End Park Academy

Forced Marriage

2021-2022

What is forced marriage?

There is a clear difference between a forced marriage and an arranged marriage. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the individuals.

In a forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the arrangement of the marriage and some elements of duress are involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. This also included adults that 'lack capacity' under the Mental Capacity act 2005. They are classed as not being able to consent.

Forced marriage involving anyone under the age of 18 constitutes a form of child abuse. A child who is forced into marriage is likely to suffer Significant Harm through physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Forced marriage can have a negative impact on a child's health and development, and can result in sexual violence including rape. If a child is forced to marry, he or she may be taken abroad for an extended period of time, which could amount to child abduction. In addition, a child in such a situation would be absent from school resulting in the loss of educational opportunities. Even if the child is not taken abroad, they are likely to be taken out of school to ensure that they do not talk about their situation with their peers.

Why do they happen?

- To control behaviour and sexuality
- To prevent other relationships
- Family honour and commitments made (sometimes before birth)
- Family pressure/ cultural ideals/ strengthen links
- Wealth and land
- Reduce stigma of a disability
- Passports

More often than not, families believe that it is right.

Crimes

Crimes associated with forced marriages:

- Domestic Violence
- Restrictions of freedom (slavery)
- Abductions
- Rape
- Murder

Barriers to seeking support

There are many reasons that an individual may not seek support:

- Feel threatened
- Dishonour the family
- Losing children or family members
- Guilt and shame
- Controlled by partner or their family
- Lack of confidentiality
- Lack of trust
- Language barriers
- Fear of being found
- Immigration

Early signs in schools

Warning signs that a child or young person may be at risk of forced marriage or may have been forced to marry may include:

- Extended absences from school/college, truancy, drop in performance, low motivation, excessive parental restriction and control of movements and history of siblings leaving education early to marry.
- A child talking about an upcoming family holiday that they are worried about, fears that they will be taken out of education and kept abroad.
- Evidence of self-harm, depression, social isolation and eating disorders
- Evidence of family disputes/conflict or domestic abuse
- Unreasonable restrictions such as being kept at home by their parents or being unable to complete their education.
- A child being in conflict with their parents.
- A child going missing/running away.
- A child directly disclosing that they are worried s/he will be forced to marry.
- A children not being able to participate in clubs or activities after school to discourage mixing.
- A child not associating with their peers (especially those of opposite sex)
- A child being withdrawn and not allowed to partake in group activities
- A child having many responsibilities in the home. This can include housework, caring for siblings or relatives.

Actions to be taken

If you are concerned that a child may be subjected to a forced marriage then you need to immediately report it to the DSL and the Safeguarding team.