



## Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: T J Swain, M A

4<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about an upcoming topic in your son's Religion, Philosophy & Ethics course. We are going to study the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM). As part of the presentation of this unit, the information will include anatomical line drawings that explain the procedure. These line drawings are produced by the American Association of Pediatrics. The diagrams will not be left in the possession of the pupils and will be taken in by the teacher at the end of the lesson. It was felt that it would be prudent to inform you of the intention to cover this topic before the sequence of lessons begins.

It is likely that your son will not have encountered this type of material before and we present the subject within the wider context of the school's policies on safeguarding and in accordance with statutory regulations issued by the Government. In the Department of Religion, Philosophy & Ethics we approach the topic primarily from within the wider subject of ethics and religion. As such our inquiries are largely intellectual, and are not sensational, graphic or frivolous. The intention is to allow pupils to engage with the reasons this crime is committed in an open and enquiring fashion in an environment of respect and safety and to address the perceived link between this crime and the practice of religion.

A topic like this is certain to arouse strong feelings and parents or others may wonder about the appropriateness of teaching this. Currently, it features as part of the PSHE curriculum and the Department of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is well placed to deliver a unit of study on this potentially difficult topic, especially as it often is linked to religious and cultural practice, especially in African and Muslim communities. The teachers are well trained in handling sensitive issues, and the school has in place a number of safeguarding procedures to assure that pupils who are affected by the issue have appropriate outlets to discuss their worries or raise concerns. We take seriously our responsibility to tackle this issue with care and academic rigour within the broader context of your son's religious and ethical education.

The topic of FGM is addressed in various ways and at various times in the school, not only in ethics lessons, but also in assemblies (especially in KS5) and, as you would expect, as part of the school's pastoral systems. I also encourage you to broach the subject with your son and, importantly, to assist us in assuring that his attitude is proper at all times while we talk about it. If you have particular concerns, then I am sure these can be accommodated and I advise you to contact me in the usual way.

Yours faithfully,

R T Bradley,  
Head of Religion, Philosophy & Ethics

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