

## Azhar Academy Forced Marriage Policy 2016:

### The Aim of this policy

The Azhar Academy Forced Marriage Policy is to prevent forced marriages from occurring and that anyone who is a victim will receive support and necessary steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child. All members of the school staff, parents and pupils should have a full understanding of forced marriages. Furthermore, all members of school staff, parents and pupils should be made aware of the action that should be taken if faced with this sort of situation.

### The Definition of Forced Marriage

A Forced Marriage can be defined as a marriage which is conducted without valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is has been made a criminalised act under s21 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. This means anyone who is involved in such a practice can now be imprisoned for up to 7 years. This includes taking the child abroad to be married against their will or bringing a spouse into this country for a forced marriage.

### The Procedure

#### What to look for:

Pupils who are aware of a forced marriage being arranged for them may have a noticeable change from past behaviour. These may include the following:

- Decline in performance or punctuality;
- Low motivation at school;
- Poor exam results;
- Being withdrawn from education by those with Parental Responsibility and /or requests for extended leave;
- Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities;
- Depression;
- Social Isolation;
- Truancy
- General sadness or anger

#### If you are the victim:

Do not hesitate to approach a member of staff, Form tutor, Islamic Co-ordinator or the headteacher if you fear or are suspicious of any issue at home, it may be that you just need a trusted adult to talk to. If the case turns serious the school assuredly will be able to offer support and advice necessary. It is important that all pupils understand that help is available within the school as all staff have undergone the relevant training in accordance with the new law requirements. Any information shared will remain in confidence and all issues handled with the utmost sensitivity and care.

#### Other pupils or teachers who become aware of a situation:

If a friend or classmate or pupil mention any concern regarding this, it is important for both staff and pupils alike to take it seriously if they are worried and report. The possibility of a forced marriage must be ruled out so it is of primary importance that the school authorities are notified even if in the best cases, it is not a forced marriage. Remember to comfort and offer friendship to all

pupils as this is an ethos we as Muslims want to implement in our learning environment for everyone.

Policy created by Year 10 Students 2015/2016