

# Arrests made at unregistered school over FGM concerns

Posted: Fri, 13th May 2022

The National Secular Society has expressed shock that female genital mutilation has been suspected at an unregistered school.

Police [investigated](#) the school in Birmingham on Tuesday after Ofsted inspectors raised concerns about "possible illegal practices".

The inspectors found a locked room with a bed and medical equipment at the unregistered school, according to [Mail Online](#). Police said two men had been arrested on suspicion of being involved in female genital mutilation.

A third man was arrested yesterday as part of the investigation. All three men have been bailed with "strict conditions".

## Female genital mutilation (FGM)

[Female genital mutilation \(FGM\)](#) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut for non-medical reasons. Some Muslims consider it a [religious requirement](#).

All forms of FGM are illegal in the UK.

A 2015 study estimated that around 60,000 girls aged 0-14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM. It also found that around 10,000 girls aged under 15 who have migrated to England and Wales are likely to have undergone FGM.

## Unregistered schools

It is illegal to run a full-time school without registering it with the Department for Education.

However, some religious groups operate [unregistered schools](#) in order to prioritise religious inculcation while avoiding scrutiny under the independent school standards.

This enables unregistered faith schools to teach a strictly religion-only curriculum, including extremist content, and to subject children to harmful activities including corporal punishment.

On Tuesday a bill was [announced](#) in the Queen's Speech that would give the government greater powers to tackle unregistered schools.

## NSS comment

NSS chief executive Stephen Evans said: "We've known for a long time that unregistered schools expose children to harm. But the idea that children may be subjected to female genital mutilation at these schools is horrific and disturbing on a whole new level.

"FGM is a barbaric and torturous procedure that causes lifelong pain and suffering.

"This shocking incident demonstrates a much more robust approach to illegal schooling and harmful cultural practices is necessary to uphold the human rights of children, particularly those growing up in insular religious communities."

Image: [Engin Akyurt](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## What the NSS stands for

The Secular Charter outlines 10 principles that guide us as we campaign for a secular democracy which safeguards all citizens' rights to freedom of and from religion.

- [Read the Secular Charter](#)
- [Share on What's App](#)
- [Share on Facebook](#)
- [Share on Twitter](#)
- [Share on Email](#)
- [Subscribe to RSS Feed](#)

Tags: [Genital cutting](#), [Unregistered schools](#)

## Related Campaigns

- 

### [End unregistered schools](#)

All children in all communities have the right to a decent education in safe settings.

[Read More](#)

- 

### [End forced genital cutting](#)

No child should be subjected to unnecessary genital cutting.

[Read More](#)

## Related Articles

### [Experts speak out against religious abuse](#)

Public authorities failing to tackle abuse in religious settings, panellists say at NSS event. [Read More »](#)

## **NSS address urges UN to call for government action on human rights**

Religious privilege is undermining rights of UK citizens, NSS tells UN committee. [Read More »](#)

## **Protect human rights from religious imposition, NSS urges UN**

NSS tells UN Human Rights Committee religious privilege is undermining rights in education, healthcare and around free speech. [Read More »](#)

## **NSS cautions DfE over “minimising” problem of unregistered schools**

NSS says guidance should make clear that unregistered schools are "never suitable" and "never safe". [Read More »](#)

## **Labour announces plan for register of children not in school**

Proposal to record children not attending school would help tackle unregistered faith schools, NSS says. [Read More »](#)