

Soapboxie

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Arguments For and Against the Use of Corporal Punishment in Schools

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The Corporal Punishment Debate

Corporal punishment in schools is an emotional and controversial topic for many people. The arguments for and against mainly revolve around the ethics and practicalities of using physical force as a way of maintaining student discipline.

People who are for corporal punishment in schools generally take the view that, if the physical force can be properly regulated, it can be an effective way of maintaining discipline in an educational setting...while those who are against it generally view it as an ineffective and/or unethical method of controlling human beings.

The idea behind the practice is to control students' behavior with pain that is deliberately inflicted, usually by a teacher. This punishment is given for an offense that the student has committed and serves not only as discipline but also a deterrent against future rule-breaking.

Typically, the punishment is performed by striking the pupil repeatedly with some sort of implement. For example, the palm of a hand might be hit with a ruler. Paddling (being spanked with a paddle) is common way of administering corporal punishment in the US.

In schools, corporal punishment is prohibited in over 30 countries globally, including Canada, Kenya, South Africa, New Zealand, and most of Europe. The United States tends to be split horizontally across the middle, with Northern states generally prohibiting the practice and Southern states generally allowing it.

In answer to the question: Should corporal punishment in schools be allowed? Here are the main arguments for and against that people use.

4 Arguments for Corporal Punishment in Schools

1. **Because it works.** That is why corporal punishment has been teachers' traditional punishment tool for so long—because it is effective. There is no other means of punishment that has the same effect as both a punishment and a deterrent for misbehavior. The psychological and physical immediacy of a short, sharp shock is simply the most effective way to affect behavior change in some circumstances.
2. **It's easy to administer.** As long as it is properly regulated, there should be no problems with it being used in schools. Some of the negative stories cited by people who are opposed to corporal punishment were the result of failures in regulation and leadership, not in corporal punishment itself.
3. **It can be administered quickly.** Afterward, the pupil can then continue with his or her learning, unlike other forms of punishment (such as suspension from school when they miss school time and their education is put on hold).
4. **It's an effective use of staff time,** unlike other forms of punishment (like detentions, when hours of staff time can be wasted supervising students who have misbehaved). It makes it possible for staff to spend more time educating or supporting students instead of punishing them.

4 Arguments Against Corporal Punishment in Schools

1. **It is a form of child abuse:** psychologically, as well as physically. It also sends out the message that violence is socially acceptable, which is entirely the wrong message to be giving out. You can't prevent violence with violence.
2. **It doesn't work.** There is no evidence that schools who use corporal punishment are any more disciplined or orderly than those that don't. If anything, the lasting effects of physical corrections are more negative than positive and undermine the teacher-pupil relationship.
3. **It's not administered fairly.** There is evidence that corporal punishment is not used in an even-handed way. For instance, statistically speaking, boys are more likely to be punished physically than girls, and African-American students more than white ones, for similar offenses. Children with disabilities are also more likely to be hit.
4. **Its "positive" effects don't last.** Physical discipline fixes a behavioral problem in the short term, but can cause psychological harm or make the child more aggressive in the longer term, according to many child psychologists. Building a trusting relationship and good discipline policy takes time and energy, but is worth it in the long run.

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.

– Mahatma Gandhi

State Laws About Corporal Punishment in Schools

The legality of corporal punishment is decided at a state level in the US, so laws vary in different parts of the country.

- Currently the practice is banned in public schools in 31 states, plus the District of Columbia.
- New Jersey and Iowa also ban the practice in private schools, too.
- New Jersey was the very first state to abolish school corporal punishment, in 1867.
- Corporal punishment is most often used in the South, mainly in public schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas.

Corporal punishment is as humiliating for him who gives it as for him who receives it; it is ineffective besides. Neither shame nor physical pain have any other effect than a hardening one.

– Ellen Key

Your opinion!

Questions & Answers

Question: What are ten perspectives against physical punishment in schools?

Answer: 1. It creates moral confusion if you tell a child that violence is wrong then subject them to physical punishment. 2. It may make the child fear the teacher, but that's not the same as respecting them. 3. It can cause a child psychological harm, many will remember the punishments well into adulthood. 4. It can be difficult to exactly define the line between what level of punishment is acceptable and not acceptable, much easier to ban it all together. 5. It is an out-dated way of controlling children and will present the school as old-fashioned and behind the times. 6. It may cause psychological damage to those administering the punishment. 7. All sorts of rules, training, vetting procedures need to be introduced to ensure that all is carried out correctly, increasing bureaucracy and expense. 8. Things go wrong, teachers punish children unjustly, too harshly, or can be abusive in other ways,. 9. Children learn from the teachers and use physical punishments on other children. 10. It is just plain immoral, we don't generally allow adults to hit each other to get their way, why should it be allowed in schools.

Question: Is corporal punishment necessary?

Answer: Proponents argue that corporal punishment acts as a strong deterrent as well as a punishment, that its effects are immediate, and that it is cost-effective.

Question: Why is corporal punishment not the best way to maintain discipline in schools?

Answer: Critics argue that it causes emotional as well as physical harm to children, encourages the idea that using violence is an acceptable method to get one's way, is difficult to oversee, is problematic to define what level of physical punishment is appropriate and what constitutes abuse, creates an atmosphere of fear rather than respect, and promotes an out-of-date methodology that doesn't work.

Question: What is the psychological effect of corporal punishment on a child?

Answer: Most psychologists oppose physical punishment and point to studies that show spanking, hitting and other methods of causing pain to children can lead to antisocial behavior, physical injury, increased aggression, and mental health problems.

Question: What are the benefits of corporal punishment?

Answer: Proponents argue that as a traditional form of punishment, it has a proven track record. It is also effective as a deterrent, quick to administer, and an efficient use of staff time.

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Comments

Rhoda on July 19, 2020:

I think canes should be allow in school. That is what think

PEONKYTELLATRACY on June 30, 2020:

Thanks for the information

Aisha Ahmad on March 11, 2020:

I think corporal punishment should be done in schools

Nicholas on February 22, 2020:

It is also administered fairly

Kyler J Falk from Corona, CA on February 21, 2020:

I only need one reason against corporal punishment, if you use it on my child I'm going to use it with relative, but equal force on you. Can't have adults physically abusing other adults, so why physically abuse children? That is to say, unless you'd be okay with your boss beating you over the hand with a ruler or taking a paddle to your rear, then I'd just have to say keep it in the bedroom.

Tosin on February 10, 2020:

It's good

Divya on February 10, 2020:

Corporal punishment should be stopped. I am perfectly againsts it. Corporal punishment makes a child feel ashamed and lowly of himself. So stop corporal punishment.

E Martin on February 09, 2020:

I and many other students suffered CP at the hands of an abusive Headmaster who was also my older siblings Headmaster between the 1950s-1967. We tried to stand up for ourselves especially when falsely accused. The Headmaster was finally removed he drew pictures of naked man peeing and women with large nipples on the blackboard regularly in class. It was his dirty secret our classes had to keep some students who said I'm gonna tell were strapped with a brown letter belt. If you removed your hand from him strapping you it meant you would get 6 the best However while we were writing one thousand lines afterschool (the brown fox jumped over the fence 7 times.) what relevance that had to do with correcting one's behavior was confusing. Thank God a concerned parent looking for her child after school saw us writing Lines in class while the Headmaster was out in his office and the Headmasters rude picture on the blackboard of the naked man and woman. She was yelling she would report his disgusting behavior and removed her child out . Then told us if you kids know what's good for you go home and tell your parents. The Headmaster was removed month's later. I didn't hesitate and walked home arrived after 5.30 as my mum reminded me asking questions for arriving home so late.

CP put fear in students causing them to scream pee vomit and literally run out of school to go home. That country school was never monitored by the board of education in NZ. The next Headmaster was bad tempered throwing box chalk duster ruler across the room making students cry. He was racist against foreigners Irish called frogs islanders (the Bastards Chinese slit eyes and Moari children black mongrels. We left the area. I heard that Headmaster was removed and replaced by a kind teacher. Those Headmasters were in their jobs too long the damage they caused for young vulnerable children for some was irreversible. Abuse of power.

non ya on December 10, 2019:

I am against

GRACY ORAON on December 09, 2019:

I think corporal punishment should really be abolished....But sometimes it is necessary for the students who have gone beyond control and without causing any injury teachers can teach them a good lesson that also for the well-being of their future

Doreen on December 01, 2019:

I think corporal punishment is good because it helps students to be discipline



Re-emerging on November 22, 2019:

I am against

Ritu majumdar on November 07, 2019:

Yes this is really important and also helpful

Bim on October 29, 2019:

it should be abolished in schools coz its unethical


JEN on October 17, 2019:

should be kids are really physco these days

kyane villiy james on October 16, 2019:

corporal punishment is rude and and do u like to see your kids in pain. it is cruel and it teaches kids that violenes is acceptable

Trust on October 15, 2019:

Corporal punishment should not go on because children like me may get some part of our body hurt all  cause of caning

MARVELOUS  UNU on October 06, 2019:

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS REALLY NOT AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO DISCIPLINE CHILDREN.PLEASE LET US STOP IT WHAT IF THE CHILD DIES IN OUR HANDS.PLEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE STOOOOOOP CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.SAY NOOOOOOOO TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

andreya on October 05, 2019:

it should not be allowed oh!.is it not the same school that teaches children to be against violence?

Amos Sangali Mwanga on October 04, 2019:

Corpral punishment make students to ne aggresive sometimes students may act against the punishments depending of the families they are comming from students discipline require many people to work collectively namely the communities,student's families,peer groups ,education institutions,religious institutions, science and technology communication institutions and the government

Stupid talker on July 29, 2019:

It should be there in school

Kebbie on June 18, 2019:

I am for corporal punishment because where am from (nigeria) it has helped a lot and students no longer insult teachers unlike america where the kids do anyhow their own way. Its actually causing terrible things in america what i see is terrible and it affects everyone at large

Ronald Nii okai Okine on June 12, 2019:

I think students should be canned because if they are not canned they Will think that they grown enough to do everything on their own. There is a proverb that says spare the rod and spoil the child. If they are not canned they Will be a white elephant in the school. Students just get up and insult a headmaster .THANK YOU.

Kelechukwu chiamaka mirabel on June 03, 2019:

I think they should also banned corporal punishment from my country (Nigeria) too.

munenyasha riside on May 21, 2019:

it is 100% abusive

Princess Karina. on May 16, 2019:

Corporal punishment has been used in many schools around the world. It has also been a way of handling disciplinary problems.

anonomus on May 16, 2019:

it is cruel and it teaches kids that violence is acceptable!

Jessica on May 10, 2019:

corporal punishment should be encouraged in schools.

whatt camrie on May 09, 2019:

i love to see kids in pain!!!!!!!

Mister Strict on May 05, 2019:

I am very much in favour of CP, having benefitted from a good thrashing on my bare buttocks from my middle school headmistress back in the 1970's. My misdemeanour was spying on girls getting changed after PE. The alternative to a caning would have been police involvement so she told me that she would give me twelve of the very best to avoid the need for that. I soon learned that it was very painful and extremely humiliating. Long term, that experience has been ever present in my psyche and I have been careful to avoid getting into any kind of trouble.

jim on May 03, 2019:

i think it works good i gave a student brain damage once but it works

gene on April 29, 2019:

Children are better able to make decisions about their behavior, exercise self-control, and be accountable for their actions when they understand the penalty they face for misbehaving is comparable to their actions.

Zakayo petro at Dodoma on April 29, 2019:

Corporal punishment for my side should be strictly avoided because it make the child to fear the teacher not only that there is other negative effect

Nana ama on April 10, 2019:

I need help im having a debate on this .please help me.

Mata on March 30, 2019:

Against all the way.

stylo gee on March 02, 2019:

please I need help on the topic corporal punishment should be abolish in second cycle institution

neymar on February 03, 2019:

punishment should stop in school

toyin on January 30, 2019:

It is not the best way to correct a child because it affect them psychologically and physically the best way to correct someone is by experience

Kiley on November 27, 2018:

I am against because it can cause a lot of damage!!

gerit anderson on November 27, 2018:

AGAINST All The Way

javaious on November 16, 2018:

sure

Nwachukwu trypheana. on November 07, 2018:

I need help i am having a debate on this topic and i am proposing

Luka T Jagaba on November 07, 2018:

pls I need help on the debate topic: the punishment of child should be illegal, am to oppose on the topic pls help

taylor on November 05, 2018:

I think it should be banned

Thami on October 24, 2018:

it a gud thing that skools should have punishments

Angela on October 23, 2018:

To me it's kinda good for those disrespectful student who like to raise there voices on there tachers and play them own big man and woman they weren't send school for that

arnab mondal on October 02, 2018:

against

Isholabilikis on October 01, 2018:

Totally against

Mitchy on September 01, 2018:

So why does it leaves scars on our bodies

Cade on August 22, 2018:

Why not ban all forms of punishment? After all being put in jail is humiliating and a violation of ones dignity, paying traffic fines is a waste of money, even scolding can hurt ones feelings. So yes, lets all just do as we please, with no consequences. "Do as thou wilt". Corporal punishment, if properly controlled and administered can be extremely effective. It also allows a teacher to protect the rights of other learners who are bullied and yes, sometimes commit suicide due to repeated bullying. With no real punishment and no effective deterrent, we are teaching kids that the bullies and the class clown rule the school.

Tannu yadav on August 11, 2018:

No, it is not a good way

Vandana on July 12, 2018:

I am completely against it

it is a type of bullying for kids

adotey on June 11, 2018:

it is not good at all

Mr stick on June 09, 2018:

corpral punishment should be banned everywere

Anshali on June 08, 2018:

I'm totally against corporal punishment.we will banned it.

This type of stupid, irrelevant and stupid things

anonymous user on May 16, 2018:

go corporal punishment

gift nwakolo on May 15, 2018:

against

dd on May 07, 2018:

I need help I am writing an argument essay at school and have no idea what to do for my introductory.

Paige and Charley on March 21, 2018:

i am totally against corporal punishment!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

luke on March 20, 2018:

against

Albert angstine on March 08, 2018:

I am totally against

Zoe on February 19, 2018:

I'm against corporal punishment.

Harsh Nigam on December 18, 2017:

I am totally against corporal punishment and I want that it should be banned.

Al on December 13, 2017:

I'm a high schooler from, and I really think that the northern states have to bring back corporal punishment. The amount of BS that teachers have to put up with from students is ridiculous. Some teachers will use the "I won't start class unless everyone is silent" method to quiet kids down, but that never works, and wastes valuable class time. Now if that same teacher would have given one of the students yapping away a nice clean smack on the forehead, I guarantee you that everyone would have shut up.

Now I know there is some controversy about "psychological trauma" but I have a solution. Only bring it back for 7th grade and above, where kids are not as easily malleable.

Ruby on December 10, 2017:

Against

lilyan on December 10, 2017:

i need help because i am writing a persuasive essay and i don't know what to do for my conclusion

by the way (BTW) i am against corporal punishments

Anshul on December 02, 2017:

I think it is very bad as we can see many examples that a teacher beat a student very badly it is not fair and even sometimes the children take profit of it like not doing work or not going to school there was an incident in my school also that a teacher beat a student so much that he got a fracture .

Bitsit Tesfaye on November 27, 2017:

I am not sure, what really matters is how he was raised. For example I know a kid who went to the social services just because his mom spanked him and I'm just sixteen and I have been punished many times it did not harm me but helped me and if your child is a good listener it's better to advice and show love cause love is better than punishment!

Galadriel Arwen from USA on November 10, 2017:

As a former student, teacher and social worker I am positive that power and control does not require violence. When my younger brother was in high school his teacher picked up his desk with him sitting and hung it off the 2nd floor of the high school walkway. He was passing notes in the class. My parents were extremely angry to have this happen to their only male child. My brother was usually shy so this was not common. He was transferred from that class and that teacher was excused for the remaining year.

Adults who have the need to exercise fear to control others especially children are bullies. Violence is never the answer and school is suppose to teach children how to behave and provide encouragement in a safe learning environment; not instruct how to torture others.

Suhas on November 08, 2017:

Corporal punishment should not be allowed should not be allowed in school because the teachers miss you shit and and sometimes it causes should the teachers Angry Bird Angry mood and students the teachers through testis testis on them and it on her out the serious serious and the it is a form of the abuse against the children psychology Jalsa well as a physical it also stands out the message then the violence socially acceptable acceptable which is entirely the wrong message giving out corporal punishment is email him who gives us for the him who received it and ineffective besides that the same or physical pain and the effect that are running some teachers misuse it before the government has banned it

Dapaah Stephanie on November 04, 2017:

I think it must be avoided.

sob on November 03, 2017:

christianna why would you want corporal punishment it is not good for kids

Christiana on October 11, 2017:

I think that corporal punishment helps to shape a child's behavior but it should be done in a right way.

William Charles on February 15, 2015:

Caning In Schools Used To Be Very Affective Punishment In Schools On Children,

And Do Believe Bring The Cane Back In Schools Will Restore Good Behavior Of Children In The Class,

Galadriel Arwen from USA on July 01, 2012:

I do not believe the threat of physical abuse is appropriate in any setting. If a student is disruptive and preventing the others to learn. He needs to be removed. As a former educator, I have never believed in negative reinforcement and have witnessed myself in a class that positive reinforcement works better. Instead of placing the names of bad people on the wall, I chose to place good, and erase the bad. WOW what a shock some had when instead of the attention they were used to receiving was gone; they were erased. The good students who were summarily not emotionally supported and commended received the much needed focus and attention. The rules changed when focus was no longer going to the miscreant, but the valued excellent students were awarded. These great children were allowed to participate in Friday's award film and win prizes for the right answers. The others were sent out of the room and to the library under guard. This way, everyone had a better experience in class and the misbehaviors were no more. P.S. Those who misbehaved changed their tune and became good also. Just a hint to those who do not believe good deserve all the attention!

Paul Goodman from Florida USA on June 26, 2012:

I think corporal punishment sends out the wrong message. You should be able to discipline kids without it.

Rebecka Vigus from Nancy KY on May 27, 2012:

No one needs corporal punishment, however teachers have their hands tied now in not being able to give consequences for actions. Kids have no respect for the institution of education.

If I had a nickel for every time I told a student, "If it's not yours don't touch it." I'd be one of the wealthiest women in the world. There is no respect for anything or anyone. That has to come from home.

Galadriel Arwen from USA on May 27, 2012:

Being able to strike another is a sign of brutality. Learning to mediate with conversation and reasoning an educated way to deal with others and a way toward peace and understanding. Today is the beginning of something great! You are learning something new today, maybe something important, maybe something small and silly, but definitely something fascinating! Your mental energy makes it easy to absorb so take it all in and enjoy! being in an environment of corporal punishment takes learning away and lends itself to anarchy.