



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

# POSITIVE DISCIPLINE/ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TRAINING MANUAL TO END VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

May, 2017

(Adapted from MoES, UNICEF, and Raising Voices Training Manuals)

**Adapted by:**

World Vision, Inc. SAGE-DREAMS project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports

Determined

Resilient

Empowered

AIDS-Free

Mentored

Safe



## FOREWORD

---

Poor quality of education services has been identified as a barrier both to children staying in school, attending regularly and to children learning effectively. This is exacerbated by extensive use of corporal punishment and other forms of violence by teachers to discipline students. Consultations with children revealed the widespread use of corporal punishment and other forms of violence and abuse by teachers aimed to discipline students.

The Government of the Republic of Uganda banned corporal punishment in 2006, but despite this, corporal punishments continue in schools. There is a general view that in order to eradicate harmful punishment in schools, it is vital to support and equip teachers with knowledge and skills to promote a positive environment in the classroom that encourages good behavior. This incorporates teaching and learning which is inclusive, child centered and activity based, and positive discipline rather than harmful punishment.

Corporal punishment is harmful and a policy which aims to eradicate it through Advisory Notices or Government Orders already exists. While the policy to ban is important, it is equally important to support teachers in making these bans realistic and effective. Teachers need support in managing classes through positive behavior and capacity building in alternative forms of discipline. This training manual has been adopted to provide tools and modules to assist education authorities and partners to support teachers in the making the classroom environment more child friendly and safe in order to eliminate corporal punishment and enhance positive discipline.

The intention of using positive discipline techniques is to build on available resources, experiences and knowledge. However, relevant changes in the module based on actual facilitation experience and feedback from participants should be encouraged. Focusing on positive techniques has been found to be more effective. Practice has shown that while focusing on positive techniques, participants move towards their own positive, creative state of mind and hence the tendency to justify physical punishments begins to fade. Such an attitude would automatically displace punishments. We hope that anybody using this training manual would retain this spirit.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	2
ABOUT THE SAGE-DREAMS PROGRAM .....	5
ABOUT THIS TRAINING MANUAL.....	6
TRAINING CONTENT .....	7
SESSION - I.....	8
SESSION – II.....	9
DESCRIPTION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND ITS DIFFERENT FORMS.....	9
SESSION – III.....	10
SESSION – IV .....	12
MYTH No. 2: "NOTHING ELSE WORKS!" OR "THEY ASK FOR IT!" .....	13
MYTH No. 4: "CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TEACHES OBEDIENCE." .....	13
SESSION – V.....	15
SESSION – VI.....	18
SESSION VII.....	20
REFERENCE MATERIALS .....	21
WHAT IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT? .....	21
IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT COMMON IN SCHOOLS AND HOMES?.....	21
WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT? .....	22
WHY IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT SO COMMONLY USED AND YET ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN IS SO DEVASTATING? .....	23
WHY SHOULD WE EXPECT OUR SCHOOLS TO CHANGE? .....	23
WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT’S POSITION ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT? .....	24
SAMPLE OF NATIONAL POLICY THAT SUPPORTS UGANDA’S POLICY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS .....	24
SAMPLE OF REGIONAL POLICY THAT SUPPORTS UGANDA’S POLICY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS .....	25
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH UGANDA’S LEGAL COMMITMENT.....	26
ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: POSITIVE DISCIPLINE WITHIN SAFER SCHOOLS .....	27
WHY DO CHILDREN BEHAVE AS THEY DO? .....	27
WHAT IS POSITIVE DISCIPLINE? .....	28
ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT .....	28
WHY SHOULD WE USE A POSITIVE DISCIPLINE APPROACH IN OUR SCHOOLS? .....	29
HOW DOES POSITIVE DISCIPLINE CREATE SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALS?.....	29
HOW DOES POSITIVE DISCIPLINE LEAD TO BETTER SCHOOLS? .....	30
WHY A SAFE AND VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOL? .....	30
VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOLS LEAD TO BETTER LEARNING AND HEALTHIER CHILDREN .....	31
WHY SHOULD WE CREATE VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOLS?.....	32
WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO CREATE SAFE AND VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOLS? .....	33
REFLECTION QUESTIONS .....	33
REFLECTION GUIDE .....	34
HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE? .....	37
HOW DO I RESPOND TO MISBEHAVIOR USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?.....	39
HOW DO I CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT?.....	41
WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN ACTION? .....	43
CONCLUSION .....	48

## INTRODUCTION

---

The Government of the Republic of Uganda (GOU) is committed to promoting children's fundamental right to obtain quality education in a conducive and safe learning environment that is free from violence.<sup>1</sup> Despite this commitment, four major studies on the experiences of violence conducted in Uganda revealed that corporal punishment, physical violence, emotional/psychological abuse and sexual violence/abuse is widespread and affects both boys and girls. Child negligence in homes renders children, especially those from poor family backgrounds, orphans and those in alternative care more vulnerable to violence in schools. Children in Ugandan schools experience various forms of abuse from teachers and other staff, parents, fellow learners and other adults. Children with special needs are often labeled as “unintelligent” by their teachers and fellow children, resulting in poor self-esteem and self-image that contribute to them dropping out of school.

Violence in schools undermines children's security and safety, and inflicts physical, psychological and emotional pain and fear among boys and girls. It is associated with profound physical, psychological and emotional consequences. Violence undermines the child's self-esteem damaging her or his potential to take advantage of existing learning opportunities. School-related Gender-based is a violation of children's right to education, protection and development, and a threat to children's retention and performance in schools.

Findings from a study (MoESTS and UNICEF, 2013) in eight districts involving 30 primary schools and 10 secondary schools showed that 74.3% of all surveyed children experienced **physical violence** at school at the hands of a teacher; whereas in 30% of the cases of physical violence were perpetrated by fellow students. **Sexual violence** at school was reported by 77.7% of all surveyed primary school children and 82% of secondary school students. 67% identified male teachers as the perpetrators of sexual violence in schools. In the study, 46% of surveyed children reported **emotional abuse**, which was more common in primary schools (56%) than in secondary school (41%). In both cases, respondents identified teachers as perpetrators about half the time. About 43% of respondents reported **bullying** in school (46% in primary and 31% in secondary).<sup>2</sup>

The ANPPCAN 2011 Annual Report including 990 primary school students in five districts found that 81.5% of surveyed children reported **physical violence**, 24% reported **verbal sexual harassment** (of these 63% were girls), and 25% reported being **touched/fondled** with girls outnumbering boy victims in a pattern similar to verbal harassment (66% and 34%, respectively) and 8% of children reported **forced sex**. Interviews revealed that some teachers, following the Bannan corporal punishment approach, resorted to **emotional violence** to maintain classroom control.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Children In Schools, 2015-2020; page 9

<sup>2</sup> Please see: Uganda Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Sports (MoESTS) & United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). 2013. Research briefing: Assessing child protection, safety, and security issues for children in Ugandan primary and secondary schools. Kampala, Uganda: MoESTS and UNICEF. Available at: [http://www.unicef.org/uganda/VACis\\_Study\\_Summary\\_July\\_8th\\_10.31am\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/uganda/VACis_Study_Summary_July_8th_10.31am(1).pdf)

<sup>3</sup> In terms of perpetration: In the study, 57% of the children reported experienced **Bullying and Threat** while at school. 73% of all physical violence was reported to be perpetrated by teachers and 15% by fellow students, while fellow children (32%) were the main perpetrators of verbal sexual harassment followed by teachers (12%). Being touched/fondled was reported to be perpetrated by other children, with only 5% reporting fondling from teachers. However, teachers made up of 26% of the perpetrators of forced sex. 62% of surveyed children cited fellow students as the perpetrators of bullying followed by teachers. For more information, please see: African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Uganda. 2011. Baseline Survey to

A 2005 Naker study conducted with 1,000 Ugandan children participants ages 8–18, both in and out of school, in five districts across the country found that 28.6% of the surveyed children experienced **physical violence** mainly at school, 24.3% reported experiences of **sexual violence** at school. Children in school were also more likely to report being **forced to kiss** on the mouth, experiencing **unwanted sexual exposure, forced to touch someone, and forced to have sex**, compared to children out of school, and 21.2% of children surveyed experienced **emotional violence** at school. This may possibly reflect the use of coerced sex to obtain school fees or better grades.<sup>4</sup>

Various interventions exist to address the problem of corporal punishment in schools. Key ones include: creating a safer school, the revised circular Teachers' Code of Conduct.<sup>5</sup>

However, there are many barriers to their effective implementation. Creating safer schools as an alternative to corporal punishment lacks effective methodology to deliver it. The SAGE-DREAMS team developed a teacher training manual to address this challenge.

## ABOUT THE SAGE-DREAMS PROGRAM

---

### OVERVIEW

Despite Uganda's success in combating HIV/AIDS, new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women aged 15-24 are on the rise. Young women are reporting increased cases of sexually transmitted infections and gender-based violence. The DREAMS Innovation Challenge funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); Janssen Pharmaceutica NV (Janssen), one of the Janssen pharmaceutical companies of Johnson & Johnson; and ViiV Healthcare – is an ambitious partnership to reduce new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women.

The goal of DREAMS is to help girls develop into Determined, Resilient, Empowered AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe women. The underlying principle of the Strengthening School – Community Accountability for Girls Education (SAGE) project is that girls can and often do reach their full potential when they are retained in school, have access to Youth Friendly Reproductive Services, are supported by parents, teachers and their communities; then they perceive themselves as both capable and resilient. SAGE-DREAMS will increase awareness on HIV prevention and engage the larger community in support of girls to achieve their hopes and aspirations using adolescent peer-led and stay in school community approaches.

---

Assess Violence against Children in Arua, Apac, Kitgum, Mukono, and Rakai Districts. Uganda: APPCAN. Available at: [http://www.anppcanug.org/wp-content/uploads/research\\_reports/Violence\\_Against\\_Children\\_in\\_schools\\_2011.pdf](http://www.anppcanug.org/wp-content/uploads/research_reports/Violence_Against_Children_in_schools_2011.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> In terms of perpetration: Respondents reported adults as the main perpetrators of sexual violence in schools, but many school-girls also reported pressure from older male students in addition to teachers. At schools, teachers and older students were named as the perpetrators of emotional violence. The study found also that many older boys felt teachers were more likely to humiliate them, competing with them for older girls' attention. Teachers might also have feared retaliation if they used physical violence against older boys and so resorted to emotional violence. For more information, please see: Naker, D. 2005. Violence against children: The voices of Ugandan children and adults. Kampala, Uganda: Raising Voices and Save the Children. Available at: [http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/downloads/resources/violence\\_against\\_children.pdf](http://raisingvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/downloads/resources/violence_against_children.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://moe.edu.tt/general\\_pdfs/National\\_Schools\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct.pdf](http://moe.edu.tt/general_pdfs/National_Schools_Code_of_Conduct.pdf)

The existing negative cultural norms and gender-based violence especially early marriages and early pregnancies expose adolescent girls to HIV infection that contributes to dropping out of school. However, if the capacity of these adolescent girls is enhanced to overcome the various challenges they face, their potential to foster an AIDS-free future will be improved.

### **EXPECTED RESULTS**

Over the next two years, SAGE-DREAMS will reach 45,000 adolescent girls through establishment of functional Peer-led Early Warning Systems (EWS), Stay in School Committees (SISC), Safe School Contracts and Safety Friends to achieve reduced new HIV infection rates and retention.

The project is expected to contribute to: Improved adolescent girls' health seeking behaviors and delayed sexual debut; prevention of school dropout, reduced violence and new HIV infection; adherence to anti-retroviral therapy; positive attitudes towards people living with HIV and reduced.

### **KEY INTERVENTIONS**

Key interventions for SAGE-DREAMS include: life skills training, community dialogue, outreaches, awareness raising on HIV/AIDS prevention, mentorship, coaching, and on-site support. These activities will engage adolescents through their peers, school and community stakeholders, health service providers, faith leaders, parents/care givers, school administrators, teachers, law enforcement personnel, district leaders, government officials and other implementing partners for meaningful involvement and expertise.

## **ABOUT THIS TRAINING MANUAL**

---

The positive discipline manual is designed for teachers and other stakeholders engaged with learners to end violence against children in schools. It aims at equipping them with skills and information to alternative forms of discipline to corporal punishment to end violence against children.

This manual is adopted from the safer schools; alternative to corporal punishment handbook. It introduces innovative methodologies to deliver content in a more participatory manner. It draws from the existing content. The training manual consist of the following:

- Definitions of corporal punishment
- Myths and facts about corporal punishment
- Research finding on causes and magnitude of the problem of corporal punishment
- International and national legal frameworks that address corporal punishment
- GOU efforts so far and persistence of corporal punishment in schools despite the devastating negative effects on learners.

The content also covers alternatives to corporal punishment sometimes referred to as positive discipline as a better way of helping learners develop into confident and responsible citizens of Uganda.

This training will be delivered in a two-day workshop by trained facilitators.

## **TRAINING GOAL**

**To create safer to contribute to the SAGE-DREAMS project goal**

## **OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the program, participants will be able to:

- Identify what constitutes corporal punishment in schools, its effects on learners, legal frameworks and the need to change the social norms and practices from corporal punishment to alternatives that promote positive discipline.
- To help teachers and other stakeholders embrace their roles as protectors of children and agents of change in preventing violence against children.
- To adopt alternative strategies to corporal punishment.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

This training program is intended to:

- Build the capacity of teachers to fully explore the advantages of positive discipline, non-violent attitudes and behaviors in classrooms - a reward that ultimately benefits each of them individually, their classrooms, schools, communities and the society at large.
- Promote a safer school learning environment, children's retention and participation in schools.

## **TRAINING CONTENT**

---

### **DURATION OF THE TRAINING**

- The duration of the orientation is usually 1 to 2 days depending on the size of the team, and the background of the participants in the team and the facilitator's ability to channel the discussions. By background we refer to participants' extent of familiarity with each other, the team, and their prior work experience with children because the depth of interactions is dependent on these factors.
- A few participants may be already self-critiquing whether they are doing the right thing by punishing the children. Once such participants feel assured that they would not be judged, they begin to voice their inner conflict pertaining to physical punishments. Such sharing should lead to discussions and debates.
- The success of the orientation is in facilitating a healthy debate towards a thinking process rather than providing quick-fix solutions. It is important to ensure that nobody feels 'Judged' or 'Misjudged' for being honest with their beliefs about punishments. However, it is equally important to drive home the message that it is inappropriate to physically and verbally abuse children.

## SESSION - I

### CLIMATE SETTING SESSION

<b>Introduction</b>	This session helps participants to learn more about one another and to establish trust while providing an overview and the goal of the training program. It will give them an opportunity to express their achievements in regard to children education.
<b>Objective</b>	This session allows participants to know each other and set the climate for delivery.
<b>Activity</b>	Introduction; self-reflection; setting workshop goals, ground rules, expectations and fears
<b>Materials</b>	Flip chart, sticky notes, markers and markers
<b>Methodology</b>	Group work
<b>Time</b>	45 minutes
<b>Facilitator's Guide</b> Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.	
<b>Instructions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify a volunteer to write down the points and another volunteer to present the group's points</li><li>2. Ask participants to introduce themselves by mentioning their names, and the school or institution they belong to.</li><li>3. Ask participants to share their achievements as teachers towards the cause of children's education.</li><li>4. Ask participants to write one expectation and fear on a sticky note and post them on designated flip chart.</li><li>5. Ask them to choose an interesting name for their group</li><li>6. Ask participants to brainstorm on ground rules which are written on a flipchart</li></ol>	

## SESSION – II

### DESCRIPTION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND ITS DIFFERENT FORMS

<b>Introduction</b>	In this session, participants will have a broader understanding of corporal punishment and its different forms
<b>Objective</b>	By the end of the session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the meaning of corporal punishment, its forms and effects on learners</li><li>• Have a shared understanding of corporal punishment</li></ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Interactive presentation or group
<b>Materials</b>	Flip charts and markers
<b>Methodology</b>	Catch me out game
<b>Time</b>	45 minutes
<b>Facilitator's Guide</b> Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.	
<b>Instructions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Invite participants to engage in catch me out game where participants actively do what the facilitator is doing. Participants who fail to do what the facilitator is doing will be punished using information on the sticky notes.</li><li>2. There is an observer standing in front of the class to identify any one who fails to do as requested.</li><li>3. Different forms of punishment will be written on sticky notes and given to participants at random.</li><li>4. When a participant is caught in the act! The ones with the sticky notes will come and administer the punishment written on the sticky notes.</li><li>5. The game is repeated until a winner is found. The winner is rewarded. However if all participants fail the game, then all are punished and the game comes to an end.</li></ol>	
<b>Activity: Catch Me Out</b>	

## SESSION – III

### EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON LEARNERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	In this session, participants will use their experiences and explore the effects of corporal punishment on learners, teachers and parents.
<b>Objective</b>	By the end of the session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the effects of corporal punishment</li></ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Group work
<b>Materials</b>	Flip charts, markers and masking tape, cards cut from manila paper
<b>Methodology</b>	Pair and share, group work and brain storming
<b>Time</b>	01 hour 10 minutes

#### Facilitator's Guide

Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.

#### Activity 1: Pair and Share

**Time: 20 minutes**

1. Explain to the participants that all people desire to discipline their children properly. This exercise will enable us reflect upon the disciplining strategies that were used while we were still in school.
2. Ask participants to pair up and share their personal experience when they were disciplined using corporal punishment (let them discuss how it made them feel and whether it forced them to change)
3. Ask 4 to 5 people to share with the larger group (be sensitive about the gender)
4. Conclude by saying that all of us at one time have been punished through use of corporal punishment. We have different experiences that we will continue to explore.

#### Activity 2: Group Work

**Time: 30 minutes**

1. Ask participants to form 3 groups. In each group, they identify a teacher/parent or a child and reflect on how they felt when they were in school and share their experiences of corporal punishments.
2. In each group, one person should be a teacher, the other a parent and another one a child.
3. Tell participants in their different roles to only describe their feelings about corporal punishments they received at school.
4. Ask the following questions:
  - As a parent or a teacher, what did you feel after giving corporal punishment to a child?
  - As a child, what did you feel after getting a corporal punishment?
5. Ask participants to put up their cards on the same flip chart or wall.
6. Ask a volunteer from each group to read out what is written on the cards

7. Summarize the discussions on corporal punishment by reminding the participants about the negative effects of corporal punishments on learners.
8. Give out resource materials on the topic to enable participants to read and remind themselves of the effects of corporal punishments.

### **Activity 3: Harmful Nature of Corporal Punishment on Learners**

**Time: 20 minutes**

1. Ask each participant to write the effects of corporal punishment on a sticky note and place it on a flip chart on the wall.
2. When participants have completed posting their ideas, the facilitator should put forth this questions:
  - Is there any use in resorting to a practice which causes more harms than benefits?"
  - What should we do to stop corporal punishments in our schools and communities?
  - Notes down the responses for these questions on a flip chart and places it on the wall for reference.
  - Summarize the session by emphasizes the need to end corporal punishments given the harms it causes to the learners, parents and children.

## SESSION – IV

### CHALLENGING WIDELY ACCEPTED BELIEF THAT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO DISCIPLINE AND HELP CHILDREN TO LEARN

<b>Objective</b>	By the end of the session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenge the widely accepted belief that corporal punishment is essential to discipline and help children learn</li></ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Interactive presentation and discussions
<b>Materials</b>	Prepared flip charts containing the following points, copies of the sheet containing myths and realities
<b>Time</b>	20 minutes

#### Facilitator's Guide

Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.

1. Emphasize that in the previous activity, participants shared their experiences on corporal punishment and its effects but now let us explore whether these beliefs are justifiable
2. Ask participants to form 3 to 4 groups where they come up with role plays on the following:
  - It happened to me and did no harm
  - Corporal punishment teaches obedience
  - Corporal punishment is part of our culture
  - It is the only way I can control the children in my class. I have too many.
3. Ask participants present in plenary
4. Invite 4 participants to comment on the different role plays
5. Challenge the myths and explain that corporal punishment brings temporally results. Echo that these are myths and not facts of life. It negatively impacts someone's behavior, character, relationships and the person disciplining.
6. Provide a copy to participants about the myths and facts on corporal punishment.

#### Myths and Realities<sup>6</sup>

Facilitator should do the following:

- Raises each statement, and then discuss why it is a myth and not a fact.
- Distribute copies at the end of the session.

#### Myth No. 1: "It happened to me and did me no harm."

**Fact:** Though they may have felt fear, anger, and mistrust from being hit by parents or teachers, people who use this argument often do it to reduce the guilt they have for using corporal punishment on their children today. In their minds, they are defending their violent actions against their children. However, their actions reveal that corporal punishment did, in fact, do them harm: it perpetuated the cycle of violence that they now inflict upon children, and similarly these children are more likely to perpetuate the violence for generations to come.

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO PUBLICATION (Toolkit for Creating Inclusive, Learning-Friendly Environments)

**Myth No. 2: "Nothing else works!" or "They ask for it!"**

**Fact:** The problem is the disciplinary approach, not the misbehavior of the children. Justifying that a child has asked for violence is really intended to make the perpetrator feel less guilty and transfer the blame to the victim. Besides, do you normally hit your boss, employee, spouse, or best friend when it appears that "nothing else works"? Hopefully not!

**Myth No. 3: "Corporal punishment works best. Other methods don't."**

**Fact:** Corporal punishment creates a sense of distrust and insecurity in the child, it destroys the teacher-child relationship. Children become angry at why someone who is supposed to teach and care for them is instead threatening, beating, or insulting them. While a single act of corporal punishment may seem to be effective, it only temporarily frightens a child into submission.

**Myth No. 4: "Corporal punishment teaches obedience."**

**Fact:** In the past, the practice was to teach children to obey authority without questioning. Now teachers adopt child-centered learning techniques to encourage children to explore, ask questions, and to learn the joy of finding answers as a major way of learning. Corporal punishment, however, stops a child from questioning, thinking critically, and achieving personal goals; yet these are qualities that both adults and children need to excel in a dynamic, competitive, and innovative society.

**Myth No. 5: "I only do it as a last resort. I had no choice."**

**Fact:** This argument is not acceptable; for example, is a husband justified in hitting his wife as a last resort? It should be no more acceptable when it comes to our students. Besides, it is quite common for parents and teachers to resort to physical punishment at the first instance not as a last resort.

**Myth No. 6: It's the only way I can control the children in my class. I have too many!**

**Fact:** This excuse is common among teachers who face large classes. It usually arises because the classroom has no set rules or routines; the children do not know what is expected of them and the consequences for misbehaving; and the teacher did not take the time to build a positive relationship with the children so they would want to be good. Like Myth 4 above, enforcing blind obedience through threats of physical violence does not encourage children to learn from the teacher, only to fear him or her. As a result, they don't want to learn, which makes our job harder, and they don't learn well, which reflects poorly on our performance as a teacher.

**Myth No. 7: "Corporal punishment is a part of our culture."**

**Fact:** Promoting alternatives to physical punishment is looked at as a "Western" imposition not considering Asian values. In Asian societies, age-related status hierarchies prevail and the expectation is that the young should respect, serve, and obey older people including teachers. Although physical punishment is widespread in Asia, there is no necessary connection between the two core values of Asian societies such as maintaining social harmony and learning to use mental abilities to discipline the body, amidst chaos. Violence through corporal punishment destroys the social harmony in the classroom in

terms of student-teacher relationship, and erodes children's confidence and self-esteem. Lack of self-control as a way to dominate others is made acceptable. The traditional ways that can be used as alternative forms of discipline includes for example, “Respected adults modeling good and non-violent behavior which children would imitate and learn.”

## SESSION – V

### LEARNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PUNISHMENT AND DISCIPLINE

<b>Introduction</b>	This session exposes participants to the difference between punishment and discipline
<b>Objective</b>	By the end of this session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the difference between punishment and discipline</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Interactive presentation and discussion
<b>Materials</b>	Flip charts, Masking tape, Markers, sticky notes
<b>Methodology</b>	Time line disciplining strategy, Gallery walk
<b>Time</b>	1 Hour: 30 minutes

#### **Facilitator’s Guide**

Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.

- Prepare 5 flip charts for the different age categories (0-3yrs, 4-6yrs, 7-13yrs, 14-20yrs)
2. Distribute sticky notes of various colors to participants and ask them to write two ways of disciplining children at different age groups as per the displayed charts
  3. Post the sticky notes on the charts
  4. Engage participants in a gallery walk to identify positive methods used.
  5. Let participants return to plenary and use the following questions to guide the discussion
    - a. Under what circumstances are the positive ways of discipline used? (Looking out for specific behaviors)
    - b. Why are they used in such circumstances?
    - c. What are the benefits of using the positive disciplining strategies?
  6. During the discussion, enrich the participants’ ideas and emphasize the different positive discipline methods as provided in the facilitator’s notes.
  7. Provide participants with a handout on discipline versus punishment

### UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive Discipline	Corporal Punishment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplining is a process of teaching or training someone to obey set rules and regulations in the short and long term.</li> <li>• It is a process of building a character of a person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punishment if meant to control a child’s behavior while discipline is meant to develop a child’s behavior especially in regarding how the child should conduct her/himself regardless of whether he is alone or with others.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive discipline is a nine-step process which recognizes and rewards appropriate behavior.</li> <li>• Discipline is meant to teach the child self-control and confidence of what we</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punishment is a one-off act focusing on what the child has done wrong.</li> <li>• Punishment humiliates, degrades, causes loss of confidence, dehumanizes, does not make the child learn, creates fear and</li> </ul>

<p>want the child to learn and what it the child can learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive discipline techniques:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The appropriate behavior is described and encouraged</li> <li>2. Clear rules and reasons are provided</li> <li>3. Acknowledgement is requested</li> <li>4. Correct behavior is rewarded while inappropriate behavior is discussed and rejected with reasons</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>resentment and does not help the child learn or build good character or behavior.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouragement is a type of reward that helps the child to work, learn and achieve.</li> <li>• It builds self-esteem because the child learns that he/she worked and was directly responsible for earning the reward or praise. Children may choose to work and earn it or not which makes them have control over their lives, a healthy way of establishing self-esteem.</li> <li>• Likewise, not giving encouragement for misbehavior such as throwing tantrums or negative attention seeking will help the child over time to learn that it is inappropriate behavior that is not good to reinforce.</li> <li>• Examples of positive discipline techniques:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Model orderly, predictable behavior, respectable communication and collaborative/peaceful conflict resolution strategies</li> <li>2. Use positive body language: nod, smile, look the student in the eye</li> <li>3. Lower yourself to the level of the child: bend, kneel or sit at the same level with the child</li> <li>4. Re-direct behavior positively; use mistakes to correct behavior other than abuse the child.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punishment causes pain which discourages children from learning.</li> </ul>

## DISCIPLINE VS. PUNISHMENT

<b><i>Discipline is ...</i></b>	<b><i>Punishment is ...</i></b>
Giving children positive alternatives	Telling children only what NOT to do
Acknowledging or rewarding efforts and good behavior	Reacting rather than responding to misbehavior
When children follow rules because the rules are discussed and agreed upon	When children follow rules because they are threatened or bribed
Consistent, firm guidance	Controlling, shaming
Positive, respectful	Negative, disrespectful
Nonviolent	Violent
Consequences that are directly related to the misbehavior	Consequences that are unrelated to the misbehavior
When children realize their behavior affects others and know how their behavior affects others	When children are punished for hurting others, but not aware of how the behavior affects others
“Time-outs” That are open-ended and governed by a child’s readiness to gain self-control	“Time-outs” that banish a child for a set amount of time governed by the adult
Understanding individual abilities, needs, circumstances and developmental stages	Not taking into consideration individual abilities, needs and circumstances
Teaching children to maintain self-control	Constantly reprimanding children for minor infractions, causing them to ignore you
Reflection and effective communication	Forcing children to comply with illogical rules “just because I say so”
Using mistakes as learning opportunities	Teaching children to behave only to avoid punishment
Teaching empathy and healthy remorse by showing it	Being sarcastic or demeaning
Directed at the child’s behavior, never the child	Directed at the child, rather than the child’s behavior

## SESSION – VI

### APPLYING THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TO THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE

<b>Introduction</b>	In this session, participants will be exposed to ways of applying the knowledge about corporal punishment and positive discipline to their own experience.
<b>Objective</b>	By the end of the session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apply the knowledge about corporal punishment and positive discipline to their own experiences</li></ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Group discussions using case studies
<b>Materials</b>	Sample case studies used for group work
<b>Methodology</b>	Group discussions using case studies
<b>Time</b>	30 minutes
<b>Facilitator’s Guide</b>	
Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Distribute the sample case studies to the participants</li><li>2. Ask participants in their groups to discuss the case study given to them and agree what they would do if faced with such a scenario?</li><li>3. Ask participants to write down their suggestions and present them in plenary</li></ol>	
<b>Case study 1</b>	
Mary is a student in senior 3 in Wampisi S.S.S in Rakai district. Her parents are very poor and chronically ill. Mary is always troublesome in the class, disturbing everyone whenever the teacher is out of the class. She makes noise and distracts the whole class.	
<b>Guiding questions:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is the fundamental problem in this case?</li><li>• How should the teacher’s approach to Mary be?</li><li>• What is the role of Mary’s classmates in supporting her?</li></ul>	
<b>Case study 2</b>	
Joy and Angella re in Senior two in Olet S.S. S in Lira district. On an examination day last term, they arrived early for their afternoon session. The teacher notices them entering the examination room rushed to meet them and slapped both of them on their faces. Both girls cried and their faces that were happy and bright suddenly turned gloomy and full of tears.	
The teacher justified her actions by saying, who will manage them when they come before time.	
<b>Guiding questions:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are your comments about the teacher’s behavior?</li><li>• How else could the teacher have handled the situation to help the girls learn?</li></ul>	

### **Case study 3**

During last paper for the mock examinations in Kikubamutwe S.S.S, the students did not pack their lunch or bring books for the afternoon because they assumed that they will not have classes after their examinations and return home for lunch. However, Ms. Rita, their chemistry teacher knew she had a lesson with the class after their last examinations. When she learnt that the students had not brought lunch or books to study, she thought they deliberately left their books and lunch to escape from her class. She took the matter to the head teacher immediately. The head teacher made the girls stand in the hot sun in front of his office for hours, hungry, feeling bad and humiliated because everyone passing could see them being punished.

#### **Guiding questions for discussion:**

- What was wrong with the teacher's approach?
- What did the teacher achieve?
- How could the teacher have handled the situation differently?

## SESSION VII

### COMMITTING TO ERADICATE HARMFUL PUNISHMENTS AND ADOPTING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE TECHNIQUES IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

<b>Introduction</b>	This session solicits commitment from the participants about adopting positive discipline techniques in schools as opposed to corporal punishment.
<b>Objective</b>	By the end of the session, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit to eradication harmful punishment and adopting positive discipline techniques in their schools and communities</li> </ul>
<b>Activity</b>	Commitment to Positive discipline
<b>Materials</b>	Manila papers, markers, pastels, Flip charts
<b>Methodology</b>	Group work
<b>Time</b>	1 hour :30 minutes
<b>Facilitator's Guide</b>	
Introduce the session, objectives, and duration.	
<b>Activity 1: Commitment to Positive Discipline</b>	
<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask participants to get into groups according to their schools</li> <li>2. Distribute one manila paper and markers to participants per school</li> <li>3. Ask participants to trace one hand on the Manila paper using a marker</li> <li>4. Ask participants to write their commitment inside the traced hand. These will be displayed in their schools in a place of choice.</li> </ol>	
<b>Activity 2: Action Planning</b>	
<b>Time: 45 minutes</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask participants to get into groups according to their schools</li> <li>2. Provide them with flip charts and markers</li> <li>3. Guide participants on how to come up with action plans (Activity, time frame, personal responsible) on how they are to effect positive discipline in their schools</li> <li>4. The project team and the teachers get copies of the action plans (to be used for support supervision and M&amp;E)</li> <li>5. Emphasize the need for action planning as a measure of transferring the knowledge and skills acquired to promote positive discipline in schools.</li> </ol>	

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

### WHAT IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?

“Any punishment in which physical force is used intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting (smacking, slapping, spanking) children with the hand or with an implement e.g. whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, burning, scalding, or forced ingestion (for example, washing children’s mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow something). In addition, there are other non-physical forms of punishment which are also cruel and degrading and thus incompatible with the Convention. These include, for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.”

“Corporal punishment is always degrading and has no place in the home or our schools”.  
UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

### IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT COMMON IN SCHOOLS AND HOMES?

In a recent survey done in Uganda on corporal punishment:

- More than 98 percent of the children surveyed reported experiencing corporal punishment. More than a third of these children said they experienced it at least once a week;
- 20 percent said they had been burnt as a form of punishment; and
- More than 60 percent of the children said they experienced corporal punishment at school regularly. One out of every seven children said they experienced it every day.
- Caning was the most popular form of corporal punishment, followed closely by slapping and pinching.

### REGARDING EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

- Younger children reported the highest amount of ad hoc physical punishment,
- Older children reported being harassed or humiliated by teachers.
- Girls reported a considerable amount of sexual harassment, and one in five girls reported being forced to have sex. A lot of the bullying, teasing and humiliation of girls revolved around their sexuality.
- Older boys reported the most severe incidents of physical beating, probably due to the prevailing gender stereotypes of physical resilience and notions of tough masculinity.
- Many older children seemed to mimic the behavior of adults, and as a result, they victimized younger children. Bullying was reported as a major problem, especially as an experience of girls and younger children.

**Note that:** When children grow up they keep what was done to them in mind, and in the end they also do the same to those younger than them, especially at school.

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?

- Corporal punishment can lead to lifelong psychological damage, such as depression, inhibition, rigidity, heightened anxiety and suicidal thoughts.
- Corporal punishment causes children to lose interest in school and learning.
  - Children resent the learning experience and, as a result, do not value education.
  - Children learn to hate a subject or teacher.
  - Education does not thrive when children live in fear of those who teach them.
  - School absenteeism and dropout increase. Children lose interest.
- Corporal punishment breeds cruelty and violence. Violence breeds more violence.
  - It is common knowledge that a significant number of people who commit crime and violence were physically punished when they were children.
- Corporal punishment tarnishes the school's image.
  - Some parents do not take their children to schools known for degrading and humiliating children.
- It costs money to treat injured children.
  - When children are injured from corporal punishment, the school must take responsibility for paying the medical expenses.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT HAS PHYSICAL CONSEQUENCES

Many children suffer physical injury as a result of corporal punishment, such as broken bones, infections and physical illness. These physical consequences can be painful for children and costly for families. Injuries can affect children's physical development and can have an economic impact on the entire community.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT HAS EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

When children are beaten, they often feel anger and shame at the same time, which leads to a feeling of humiliation. When we force children to tolerate an injustice, we damage their sense of dignity and self-confidence. Children may also stop trusting adults who repeatedly use corporal punishment against them. These negative experiences can lead children to depression, thoughts of suicide, desires for revenge and aggression toward others.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT HAS BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCES

Many children who experience corporal punishment bully other children, or as adults, use domestic violence. Corporal punishment teaches children that violence is an acceptable way of imposing their views on someone less powerful than themselves.

## CORPORAL PUNISHMENT HAS DEVELOPMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Many children who experience corporal punishment on a regular basis live with slowed or interrupted cognitive and emotional development. They become withdrawn and fearful of trying new things. They feel ashamed of themselves due to regular humiliation. They need more time to learn social and academic skills. Their performance at school deteriorates, and their ability to form healthy, satisfying relationships can be severely affected.

## WHY IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT SO COMMONLY USED AND YET ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN IS SO DEVASTATING?

Several false arguments and myths are used by adults and older children to use corporal punishment on children. Below are some of myths about corporal punishment.

1. Spare the rod and spoil the child.
2. Without pain there is no gain.
3. Good teachers are always in control of their students.
4. I was beaten and I learned how to behave better.
5. I only use corporal punishment sparingly
6. I only use corporal punishment as a last resort.
7. The ears of African children are on the buttocks.
8. Adults do not know what other methods to use to discipline children.

***Think back to your own experience of school. How many times a week did you experience corporal punishment? How many times a day?***

- If you explore your own experiences or speak with today's students, you will realize that all corporal punishment does is make children fearful and ashamed. It does not teach them what is wrong with their behavior.
- It does not instill in them the joy of learning and the ability to apply their skills to new situations.
- Imagine what your education would have been like if your school had provided these experiences?

## WHY SHOULD WE EXPECT OUR SCHOOLS TO CHANGE?

It is sometimes argued that schools reflect the norms of our communities. If more than 90 percent of adults say that in their community children are beaten, shouted at and denied food or other basic needs as a form of punishment, is it any surprise that corporal punishment is widely practiced in the schools of those communities? Why do we have a higher expectation of schools, given the prevailing norms?

As a society, we expect our schools to be places where new ideas emerge. We expect our schools to nurture our best minds and to develop new directions for the progress of society. Our schools should be places where we learn to think critically, evaluate ideas, develop new ways of relating with each other and develop the skills that will help us progress as a nation. That is why we have high expectations for the values our schools should embody. That is why we invest our hope in creating good schools—schools that will help our children achieve their aspirations. That is why safer schools are crucial to the development of Uganda.

## WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT?

Due to the negative consequences of violence against children and the challenges of adopting a nonviolent approach, the Ministry of Education and Sports has taken a clear stance against corporal punishment in Ugandan schools. The MOESTS expressed this policy position through three circulars as well as other guidelines that have been widely disseminated.

### KEY COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MOES

**10 June 1997:** The first circular was issued by the Commissioner for Education and copied to all district education officers, inspectors of schools, head teachers and principals to communicate a temporary ban on the use of corporal punishment in schools and colleges.

**9 September 1998:** The Guidelines on Policy, Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders was issued for implementing Universal Primary Education, and in Clause 3.4 (iii) it explicitly forbids use of corporal punishment in schools.

**10 September 2001:** The second circular was issued by the Permanent Secretary and copied to head teachers of government-aided secondary schools to communicate guidelines for handling of discipline in secondary schools (see Appendix 2).

**7 August 2006:** The third circular was issued by the Director of Education and copied to primary schools, post-primary institutions, tertiary institutions, colleges and polytechnics to expressly forbid corporal punishment in any school in Uganda. This circular requires each school's Management Committee or Board of Governors to approve a school disciplinary policy. It further requires that any incident of punishment must be recorded in a specific punishment book maintained by the school. The circular clearly states that anyone ignoring these guidelines would be committing an offence and would be held responsible in the courts of law (see Appendix 3).

## SAMPLE OF NATIONAL POLICY THAT SUPPORTS UGANDA'S POLICY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

### The Constitution of Uganda

The Constitution protects the dignity and the safety of every Ugandan, including children. **Article 24** of the 1995 Constitution protects every person, including children, from torturous, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. **Article 44** under section (a) makes the provisions under Article 24 non-derogable, meaning there can be no justification for contravening these rights. These provisions ensure that our children have a constitutional right to be educated without humiliating and degrading treatment.

### Children Act Cap 59

**Section 5** explicitly states that anyone entrusted with the care of a child has a duty to maintain that child and to provide for her or his basic rights. Under section 5 (2) the Act

emphasizes the responsibility of the same duty-bearers to protect children from discrimination, violence, abuse or neglect. This means that parents, community members and teachers have a responsibility to ensure that when children are in their care, their safety is protected. In schools this means teachers have a responsibility to prevent violence against children, such as in the form of corporal punishment or bullying.

### **The Penal Code Act Cap 106**

**Section 221** explicitly states that any person who causes harm to another by an act of omission or commission is guilty of misdemeanor and liable to imprisonment for up to six months. Under section 81 and 228, the Act states that any person who threatens or assaults another person causing actual bodily harm is guilty of misdemeanor and is liable to imprisonment for up to five years.

### **The Education Act 1970 amended in 2008**

Under *Government Standing Orders*, chapter 127, the Act explains that the Director of Education shall, on advice from the Education Service Commission or on her or his own motion, remove from the teachers register the name of any teacher who is convicted of a criminal offence involving amoral behavior or who has been found guilty of misconduct, which in the opinion of the Education Service Commission or Director of Education renders the individual an unsuitable person for employment as a teacher. These as well as many other policy commitments are intended to ensure that children's rights are protected, particularly children's right to access an education in a safe environment.

**The Teacher's Professional Code of Conduct** provides guidelines for governing behavior regarding the teacher-learner relationship, including the following:

- Teachers must ensure that a learner develops as an integral whole (body, mind, soul, character and personality).
- Teachers must refrain from any kind of misconduct that will harm the physical, mental and moral welfare of a learner.
- Teachers should not have any sexual relationship with a learner.
- Teachers should not use a learner's labor for private or personal gain.

## SAMPLE OF REGIONAL POLICY THAT SUPPORTS UGANDA'S POLICY AGAINST CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IN SCHOOLS

### **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**

**Article 11** of this document requires taking "all appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is subjected to school or parental discipline shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the child and in conformity with the present Charter." (Articles 16, 17 and 20).

### **African Charter of Human and People's Rights**

This document declares that every individual, including children, is inviolable (**Article 3**), is entitled to respect for life and the integrity of person (**Article 4**) and has a right to be protected from degrading punishment (**Article 5**).

## INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS WITH UGANDA'S LEGAL COMMITMENT

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Both agreements declare the right to human dignity and physical integrity including that of children.

### **The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

**Article 19** explicitly requires the Government to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence.

**Article 28** specifically says that the discipline administered in school must be consistent with human dignity.

**Article 37** requires the state to ensure that children are not subjected to cruel or inhuman treatment.

As a result of these provisions, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the body mandated to provide official interpretation of the Convention, has consistently interpreted the CRC to require a complete prohibition of corporal punishment in Uganda and the global movement to prevent violence against children.

In December 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that called for the elimination of all forms of corporal punishment against children in schools and detention facilities.

Also, the Secretary General of the United Nations published a multi-country study in 2006 that unequivocally supports the policy stance taken by the Government of Uganda. The report of the independent expert who coordinated the study states: "The study marks a turning point—an end to adult violence against children, whether accepted as 'tradition' or disguised as 'discipline'. There can be no compromise in challenging violence against children."

At the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal (2000), representatives including those from Uganda committed to act on the basis of six collectively identified Education for All (EFA) goals. Three of the EFA goals (Goals 2, 5 and 6) are explicitly linked to quality of education and commit governments to invest in creating safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments.

At a global level, more and more countries are introducing legislation to protect children from corporal punishment. Ugandan children are amongst the 42 percent of the world's child population who are legally protected from corporal punishment at school. Our

challenge is to ensure that all our children enjoy this protection in reality, rather than just on paper.

## ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT: POSITIVE DISCIPLINE WITHIN SAFER SCHOOLS

- Prohibiting corporal punishment, a common response to children's misbehavior will only succeed if schools are given workable alternatives.
- Alternative of using positive discipline in the context of a safer school offers an opportunity for children to learn while they develop self-discipline without having to go through pain.

## WHY DO CHILDREN BEHAVE AS THEY DO?

- We need to understand what motivates children's behavior if we want to guide children by using alternatives to corporal punishment.
- Just as children have basic physical needs, they also have basic emotional and psychological needs. For children to develop to their full potential, these emotional and psychological needs must be met. These needs include the following:
  - The need to belong to the group they find themselves a part of.
  - The need to be accepted by people who matter the most to them.
  - The need to feel emotionally and physically secure.
  - The need to feel respected by their peers.

When these needs are met, children are far more likely to become self-respecting individuals who make positive contributions to their communities. However, if these needs are not met, children will display unhealthy behaviors as they attempt to meet these needs for themselves. Take for example children who are noisy or disrespectful in class. They may be behaving this way because they do not feel accepted by their peers. For some reason, they are feeling vulnerable and insecure in that class and, in turn, are trying to make themselves look brave and strong.

Think of other common misbehaviors at your school. Could they be understood as children trying to fill their emotional and psychological needs?

- A child's behavior may also be influenced by the gender roles imposed by the community or the child's social status within the community. For example, girls are often expected to carry a larger burden of the work at home and to be submissive to their male counterparts. This may affect their attendance and participation at school.
- Children with a disability are often stigmatized and ridiculed within the community. This may affect their ability to respond to the teacher's questions, because they may fear additional ridicule.
- When teachers understand children's behavior in this way, they will find it easier to determine nonviolent responses that will benefit everyone. They will discover new ways of guiding children's behavior. Sometimes a teacher will realize that the behavior is not the child's fault and that the child needs support rather than punishment.
- At other times a disciplinary consequence will be necessary. Many times, a teacher will find effective and creative ways to respond to children's behavior, without disrupting the class with disciplinary action.

## WHAT IS POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?

- Positive discipline is a way of guiding children’s behavior by paying attention to their emotional and psychological needs.
- It helps children take responsibility for making good decisions and understand why those decisions were in their best interests.
- Positive discipline helps children learn self-discipline without fear. It involves giving children clear guidelines for what behavior is acceptable and then supporting them as they learn to abide by these guidelines.
- Positive discipline includes nonviolent consequences for poor behavior. It uses consequences that replace the experience of humiliation with the following:
  - Considering the effects of one’s behavior and
  - Identifying alternative and preferred behaviors
  - Demonstrating understanding of why a preferred behavior is important
  - Replacing harmful social, cultural norms with safe environment

This approach may require students to engage in various activities to change their behavior from bad to positive. These may include:

- writing essays about the effects of bad behavior
- making apologies to the person they have wronged
- performing chores in the classroom i.e. activities that make them stop, think and demonstrate their intention to act differently in the future without making them feel humiliated.

**Note:** Positive discipline does not reward children for poor behavior. It provides children with an opportunity to grow as individuals by understanding their mistakes and appreciating how appropriate behavior can bring them positive experiences and opportunities.

## ALTERNATIVES TO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- A positive discipline approach is child-centric, placing at the heart of every interaction the best interests of the child. Central to this approach is the relationship between teacher and child: its tone, its nature and the compassion and respect within it. Teachers create these relationships based on basic knowledge of children’s developmental needs and frame their responses to children with the aim of helping them learn and grow.
- Positive discipline depends on the teacher’s role as mentor and guide. It involves providing positive reinforcement for good choices as well as consequences for poor choices.
- A positive discipline approach rejects the use of violence as a tool for teaching. It’s about making a long-term investment in a child’s development, rather than grasping for immediate compliance.

## WHY SHOULD WE USE A POSITIVE DISCIPLINE APPROACH IN OUR SCHOOLS?

- Corporal punishment is ineffective as a means of discipline. There are positive ways to teach, correct or discipline children that do not include physical and humiliating punishments. These methods improve children's development and their relationships with their parents and community.
- If we legitimize physical and humiliating punishments through our actions, it becomes difficult to protect children. We must show through our leadership that there are no acceptable forms of violence against children.
- Physical and humiliating punishments increase the use of violence in society and make violence acceptable in the eyes of subsequent generations.
- A commitment to positive discipline teaches children that violence is an unacceptable and inappropriate strategy for resolving conflicts or getting people to do what you want.

## HOW DOES POSITIVE DISCIPLINE CREATE SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUALS?

Experiencing positive discipline instills a desire to possess and demonstrate self-discipline. People who learn through positive discipline show its positive effects in their personalities.

- They have clear goals.
- They believe in themselves.
- They are self-motivated.
- They are willing to work hard for their goals.
- They trust their own judgment.
- They think of new ways to solve old problems.
- They are persistent.

Their self-discipline comes from within, because they feel positive about themselves and the people around them. They respect themselves and recognize that each person has a meaningful contribution to make to our collective development. Through many different experiences, they realize that their decisions and actions determine whether or not they will succeed. They learn to accept responsibility for their destiny.

***Think of your school as a child. Did it help you develop this strong self-confidence and desire to succeed?***

Unfortunately, as educators we have inherited the idea that we should intimidate the students in our classrooms instead of cultivating their confidence. We beat children and humiliate them with the aim of creating obedient students. We even refer to this process as imposing discipline. However, by intimidating children, we are not equipping them to respond to the challenges of life.

The children we are educating today will need a wide range of skills and abilities to compete for jobs and make wise decisions. We need to help them develop self-discipline by allowing them to experience positive discipline.

## HOW DOES POSITIVE DISCIPLINE LEAD TO BETTER SCHOOLS?

By using positive discipline we change what we know as education. Instead of children coming to school to obey rules and memorize information, they experience school as a place where they discover and define the kind of person they want to be.

Inspired by the outcomes of positive discipline, schools around the world are now supporting all aspects of children's growth, rather than just giving children information. This is a life-changing opportunity for many children, but they will only take advantage of it if they feel physically and emotionally safe.

Positive discipline helps children feel safe and supported, but this sense of safety must extend beyond the classroom. We must ensure that everything about a school makes children feel as safe and supported as possible in all areas of their development, in all aspects of growing up. This new kind of school is what we call a "safer school."

A safer school ensures that its structures and policies respect children's rights, include children as valued stakeholders and support children in growing their skills as leaders and thinkers. A positive discipline approach succeeds when implemented within a safer school, because a safer school demonstrates the same investment in children's development. Without this school-wide consistency, children will lack trust in the system and positive discipline will fail. Positive discipline, therefore, inspires us and requires us to develop safer schools.

***A positive discipline approach succeeds when implemented within a violence free and safe school.***

## WHY A SAFE AND VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOL?

There is a positive association between school safety and average reading achievement, and a demonstrated correlation between safe environment and children's inclination to stay in school, as well as parents' willingness to send or continue sending their children to school, thereby increasing attendance and retention rates.<sup>7</sup>

A violence free and safe school provides an environment, relationships and governance structures that enable children to grow to their full potential. A violence free and safe school enables children to become compassionate, responsible, creative and thoughtful individuals.

A safe and violence free school is one that implements a zero-tolerance policy on violence in the school. It involves all stakeholders (teachers, pupils, school administrators, support

---

<sup>7</sup> Mullis et al. 2007

staff, SMC/PTA and parents) are involved in the development of the policy, and all stakeholders understand and respect it. When a school is safe and the entire learning environment is safe and supportive, students are motivated to attend school every day especially when they also feel safe traveling to and from school. This system makes pupils feel safe and their ability to concentrate on their studies will improve.

Students who perform well at school develop high self-esteem than those who do not. Children are happy to engage in learning because their teachers are friendly and supportive. In violent free schools, students are encouraged to actively participate in and out of classroom activities without fear of humiliation or punishment even when their answers are not correct.

If pupils have people at school and at home who they trust to share their challenges related to studies, personal safety, peer and staff relations, they will not be afraid to report experiences of violence and ask for support when needed. Additionally, if these cases are handled properly and the culprits dealt with, the pupils will feel safe and free to report and violence can be eliminated.

## VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOLS LEAD TO BETTER LEARNING AND HEALTHIER CHILDREN

### A VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOL EDUCATES THE WHOLE CHILD

Helps children build courage and confidence in all three areas of their development: cognitive development (how children think), social development (how children interact with others) and ethical development (how children become responsible citizens). Contributing to children's holistic development is the right thing to do. This enables children to have various services e.g. access to clean and safe water, clean and separate toilets for boys and girls, compound and classrooms. All these contribute positively to their good health. Ensuring holistic development of a child calls for inter-sectoral approach as one program may not provide these. Ultimately, the health of our nation will be judged by the way we treat and educate our children.

### COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

A safe school goes beyond teaching children to memorize information. It helps children feel safe experimenting with the information they learn. It helps them gain the courage and skills to examine the information presented to them, to ask questions about the information and to try using it outside the classroom.

### SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

A safe school goes beyond the elimination of corporal punishment. It makes children feel accepted and valued as members of their community. It develops children's self-confidence and ability to trust their own judgment. It provides children with an opportunity to build strong relationships with others and understand how to positively contribute to those relationships. It enables children to develop positive attitude towards school and develop interest in learning to achieve their goals. Children focus on their studies and perform well because they are not afraid of corporal punishment.

## ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

A safe school makes children feel safe asking questions about values and about their responsibilities. It engages children in democratic school processes and in the creation of progressive school policies. The adults at a safe school role model clear ethical standards and guide children in developing a lifelong value system.

## SELF-DISCIPLINE

A safe school helps children develop self-discipline by providing children with mentoring, clear guidelines and ongoing support. Through positive discipline, children develop clear goals for themselves and help them build the skills and character to achieve those goals. It inspires children to be persistent and recognize that achieving worthy goals takes hard work. It motivates children to look forward to coming early to school daily because school is fun, and there is time and space for playing games and sports that makes them physically healthy and fit. Playing with their friends helps children develop social skills for healthy relationships.

## SERVES ALL CHILDREN EQUALLY

A safe school is sensitive to the varying needs of children. Girls may need special protection from sexual violence, including harassment from teachers and older boys. They may have specific needs relating to their reproductive health, such as during menstruation. A safe school meets the needs of children with disabilities by equally including them in the learning process and ensuring their participation is not undermined by bullying and stigma.

## WHY SHOULD WE CREATE VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOLS?

A safe and violence free school provides the following benefits:

### 1. BETTER BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM

Once you invest in creating helpful relationships with children, and present the work in the classroom as collaboration between the teacher and the students, the classroom environment will likely change. Once students realize that their views and opinions matter and that you take them seriously, they may invest in contributing more positively rather than focusing on disrupting the class or misbehaving to gain attention. As a result, their behavior in the classroom will improve.

### 2. INCREASED TEACHER SATISFACTION

When you have a class full of students who are interested in what you must teach, instead of feeling intimidated by your presence, teaching can become more fulfilling. The satisfaction of seeing students fully attentive and excited about learning is what makes teaching a meaningful activity.

### 3. IMPROVED CLASSROOM LEARNING

When students are encouraged to explore ideas and ask questions, they learn more efficiently. They are better able to remember the information and apply it to new situations. You may also see better academic performance on tests and exams.

#### **4. BETTER SCHOOL REPUTATION**

Enthusiastic students are great ambassadors for schools. As they share their pride in their school with their family and community, the school will gain a reputation for being outstanding. In their direct and indirect representation of the school, you will see the positive effects of implementing alternatives to corporal punishment.

#### **5. GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITIES AND THE NATION**

Creative, bright students who can apply their knowledge and skills are not only good for our schools but also for our communities and country. They will become the problem solvers of the future. They will become active participants in our economy and the leaders of our nation.

#### **6. SHARED CONFIDENCE IN DOING THE RIGHT THING**

Contributing to children's holistic development is the right thing to do. Ultimately, the health of our nation will be judged by the way we treat and educate our children. By getting that right, we can make a substantial contribution to everyone's future.

### **WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT TO CREATE SAFE AND VIOLENCE FREE SCHOOLS?**

Everyone has the responsibility to insist on safe and violence free schools in our communities. Governments have the responsibility to develop policy guidelines and laws that help educators create safer schools. Educators such as head teachers, teachers, school administrators and the public officials involved in education have the collective responsibility to turn their schools into safe and violence free schools and to engage all stakeholders, including children, in that process.

### **REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

- Did the school teach you skills that you could use to keep growing as a person?
- Beyond teaching you reading, writing and basic arithmetic, did your school teach you the life skills you needed to become successful?
- Did your school allow you to participate in making decisions that affected you?
- Were you taught in an environment and with methods that made you feel excited about learning and confident that your teachers were interested in helping you learn?
- Did your school build your confidence to make a positive contribution to your family, community, school and country?

Think back to your experience and answer these questions honestly. If you answered "no" to any of these questions, you are not alone.

You may have found a way to manage with the opportunities you were given, but imagine what your possibilities might have been. We can do so much more for the children in our schools today.

- We can prepare our children to compete in the global economy by improving our style of education along with the rest of the world.
- We can update our professional skills and methods so that children are excited about leading our nation rather than intimidated into following our commands. We need to create safe and violence schools to ensure our nation's success.

It is clear that children who are taught in an encouraging environment, in which they feel respected and valued, get more out of their school experience i.e. more skills to apply to their daily lives, more experiences for improving their minds and more opportunities to learn leadership and self-discipline. Everyone wants to give children better opportunities than they themselves had. You are in a position to make this possible. Imagine the effect you could have on the lives of children if you took the steps to create a different kind of school.

## REFLECTION GUIDE

Imagine a school in which children feel safe to learn. Imagine a school in which children are active participants. Imagine a school in which children not only learn all the basic skills but also explore new ways of thinking, so that they can succeed in changing the world around them. If you do that, you will have imagined a safe and violence free school. Everybody has the responsibility to make our schools safe and free of violence.

## POSITIVE DISCIPLINE, VIOLENCE FREE AND SAFE SCHOOLS IN ACTION

### ***What are the first steps for creating a safe and violence free school?***

Creating a safe and violence free school requires a school-wide commitment. It will require the teachers, non-teaching staff and prefects to learn new skills and collectively reflect on the methods the school uses to discipline children. If you want to create a safe school, consider starting with the following steps:

#### **1. EDUCATE YOURSELF**

- Do some background reading of publications on safe, supportive and positive schools,
- Visit selected safe and violence free schools that have already begun this process and learn about the approaches they are using, what is working , what does not work, what is challenging.
- Write down your ideas of what you think might be possible or needed in creating a safe and violence free school.

#### **2. CREATE A SHARED VISION**

- If you want to create a safe and violence free school, all stakeholders need to get involved. It will take everyone’s time, effort and patience to create such a school. Stakeholders are more likely to own the process and remain committed if you engage them right from the beginning and develop a shared vision.
- As a group the stakeholders need to answer the following questions:
  - Why does our school exist?
  - Does it exist to produce outstanding learners who will become creative, thoughtful and disciplined members of the community?
  - Or does it exist simply to contain children in a classroom?
  - Will we be satisfied if children emerge with basic skills? Or do we want to provide a higher standard of education?
  - What kind of individuals do we want to have graduate from our school? And what kind of educational environment do we want them to graduate from?
  - What kind of school do we want five years from now?

### 3. SHARE IDEAS AND GENERATE INTEREST

#### **Share your ideas with potential supporters.**

These could include non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that may be interested in influencing the quality of education at your school, as well as local district officials in your area. Create a short presentation on safe and violence free schools and how this will benefit everyone in the community.

#### **Ask for a special meeting with teachers.**

Include the head teacher and school administrators, to discuss how these approaches could help the school achieve better results.

- Discuss how these approaches could be implemented and who would lead the school through this process.
- Emphasize that creating a safe and violence free school may seem hard at first but is in the best interests of everyone concerned.

**Design special lessons and classroom discussions** about positive discipline and why your school is choosing to apply it. Explain carefully what it is and what it isn’t. For example, emphasize that with positive discipline teachers still have a responsibility to guide children and may still give consequences for children’s poor behavior.

**Organize an open day for parents.** Explain how your school is improving their children’s education. Encourage parents to get involved and apply the positive discipline ideas at home.

### 4. CREATE WRITTEN POLICIES

**Develop a written policy on positive discipline at school.** This document should include a basic explanation of positive discipline and the responsibilities of teachers and students in applying it. Once finalized, launch the policy publicly with the support and involvement of students, governing bodies, teachers, parents and community leaders.

**Write a Code of Conduct** that specifically tells teachers what they can and can’t do when they discipline at school.

- This document should clearly outline consequences for the breach of school standards.
- It should also describe what support the school is willing to offer teachers to help them fulfill their role professionally.

**Develop a written action plan** for how you will create a safer school, and review the plan once a month to monitor progress.

- Ensure that this plan takes into account the varying needs of children in your school.
- Think about the special needs girls may have based on the beliefs and stereotypes in your community.
- Consider the gender norms that may influence how teachers discipline boys differently from girls.
- Think about children who have a disability and how you will ensure that they are not excluded from participating in school activities.

**Ensure that the entire community is aware** of the school's transformation and is committed to the process. If appropriate, you could engage community members, including community leaders, in signing a community-wide agreement that supports and promotes the new policies and plans.

## 5. CREATE STRUCTURES THAT WILL KEEP ALL STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

**Establish an elected student's body** that has a clear say in all of the above decisions.

**Establish a teachers' committee** that, together with the student's body, has the day-to-day responsibility to spearhead the process of creating a safe and violence free school.

**Create a regular forum for teachers and students** through which they can share their ideas and experiences of creating a safe and violence free school.

- It could be a school-wide essay writing competition,
- Picture drawing competition,
- Suggestion boxes,
- School assembly presentations,
- Music, Dance and dramas, Skits, short stories
- Poems or any other method through which ideas can be shared.
- Sharing ideas and experiences can also take place through formal class projects or peer education projects.

## 6. BUILD TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY USE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

Positive discipline is a critical component of safe and violence free schools. It is important to train all teachers and school administrators and provide each school with resources for them on how to use positive discipline.

***What are the first steps for creating a safe and violence free school?***

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?

The following table will help you analyze your current approach to teaching. Read through the table and compare the two columns. Consider how you would rate yourself based on the guide provided. Assess yourself by circling a number for each row (rows A to F). Be as honest as possible, since this activity is entirely for your own learning.

### CHOOSING A NUMBER

**1 means** your approach is completely described by the positive discipline column.

**2 means** your approach is mostly described by the positive discipline column, although you have some doubts.

**3 means** you are not sure. You agree with parts of the descriptions in both columns.

**4 means** your approach is mostly described by the corporal punishment column, although you have some doubts.

**5 means** your approach is completely described by the corporal punishment column.

### INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

Once you have circled a number for each row, add up the circled numbers to determine your score.

A total score of **6 to 14 means you are already practicing the ideas of positive discipline.** You could be a valuable role model for other teachers in your school and could take a leadership role in creating a safe school for your community.

A total score of **15 to 21 means you agree with some ideas of positive discipline** and would also gain from building your understanding and skills. Review the contents of this handbook and meet with your colleagues to discuss the ideas presented. Through discussions with colleagues you can advance your skills and knowledge with greater ease and support.

A total score of **22 to 30 means you approach education using the ideas of corporal punishment.** We hope you will choose to engage with some of the ideas in this handbook and begin to think about the effectiveness of using a positive discipline approach.

Take a few days to reflect on your results. Then repeat the questionnaire, except this time choose numbers based on what kind of an educator you aspire to be. Compare your two scores. As you improve your knowledge and skills for using positive discipline, continue to re-evaluate yourself. Aim to decrease the difference between the two scores.

	Positive Discipline		Corporal Punishment		
	<b>Motivates.</b> You never use violence and instead role model values and behaviors that children aspire to acquire. While doing so, you provide a clear indication of rewards and consequences for choices.		<b>Punishes.</b> You use fear or shame to ensure that children think or behave in a prescribed way. You use such punishments as beating, insulting and humiliating.		
<b>A</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Aims to empower children.</b> You help children take responsibility for making good decisions by providing them with the skills and environment to freely explore ideas.		<b>Aims to create obedient children.</b> You create a classroom environment in which children learn to obey what they are told instead of think for themselves.		
<b>B</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Child-centric.</b> You consider all issues from a child's perspective and calculate all your responses based on how they will help children learn from their mistakes.		Teacher-centric. Your priorities prevail in all considerations and your point of view determines the right course of action.		
<b>C</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Democratic.</b> You tolerate different ideas and even mistakes if they may lead to constructive learning. Your aim is to create workable rules that are mutually beneficial.		<b>Authoritarian.</b> You tell children what to do and punish them if they choose another course of action.		
<b>D</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Values and respects individuality.</b> You accept that all of us are individuals with a variety of views and priorities. You welcome these differences.		<b>Values conformity.</b> You reward those who behave and think like you do and punish those who do not.		
<b>E</b>	1	2	3	4	5
	<b>Long-term development.</b> Your approach is based on nurturing the development of the whole child over a long period of time.		<b>Short-term compliance.</b> Your approach aims to create obedience in a specific situation. It only gives secondary and indirect consideration to the long-term development of the child.		
<b>F</b>	1	2	3	4	5

## HOW DO I RESPOND TO MISBEHAVIOR USING POSITIVE DISCIPLINE?

Many teachers agree that when they discuss or read about positive discipline it makes sense, but when they attempt to practice positive discipline on a day-to-day basis it becomes harder to understand. They are able to eliminate physical violence from their responses, such as no longer using a cane, but still feel dependent on other equally humiliating punishments.

### **Note that:**

Changing to a positive discipline approach is not easy. It is a process that requires patience and persistence. In collaboration with your colleagues, you will need to build your understanding of the principles of positive discipline and learn practical positive discipline techniques.

## THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE

In a positive discipline approach, a disciplinary response should be:

1. Relevant to the misbehavior
2. Proportional to the offence
3. Focused on correcting the behavior not humiliating the student
4. Aimed at rehabilitation (learning from mistakes) not retribution (payback)

However, your first action when using positive discipline is not to apply these four principles in your disciplinary response but rather to decide if discipline is even appropriate. When it seems a student has misbehaved, your first challenge is to ensure you understand the reasons for the child's behavior and to evaluate whether the behavior actually deserves a disciplinary response.

Often poor behavior results from factors outside a child's control and, therefore, disciplining the child will not eliminate the behavior. Instead, other interventions and support for the child are required. For example, sometimes children come late to school because they were sent by parents to run errands.

Other times, however, children make poor choices based on flawed beliefs. For example, sometimes children make no effort to arrive on time for school because they do not believe that punctuality is important. These types of beliefs should be corrected through a disciplinary response—they are correctable beliefs.

Once you have established that the behavior is based on a correctable belief, as opposed to circumstances beyond the child's control, you can begin to respond with disciplinary measures that adhere to the four principles of positive discipline.

## THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE RESPONSES

In order to follow the four principles of positive discipline you will need to customize your disciplinary response for each child and each misbehavior. This process will become easier with practice. Within the following four categories of positive discipline responses you will find a variety of practical ideas for responding to varying degrees of misbehavior. These

ideas can be applied alone or in combination. The four categories of responses are *Reflection, Penalty, Reparation and Last Resort*.

### 1. REFLECTION

For minor day-to-day problems, such as coming late to school or being disruptive in class, a teacher could ask children to think about their misbehavior by using one of the following techniques:

- **Imposing a time-out.**
  - This would involve asking children to either leave the class or sit in a quiet place for 10 minutes to think about their behavior.
  - To be released they have to articulate what they did wrong and how they will avoid repeating the mistake. This should be done firmly, but without humiliating the child.
- **Letter writing.**
  - This could involve asking children to write a letter or even an essay on why they behaved in a certain way and what they will do to avoid repeating the mistake. If appropriate the writing should include an apology.
- **Oral apology.**
  - This involves asking children to apologize to the wronged person and to ask for forgiveness.

### 2. PENALTY

For offences that are persistent and detrimental for all concerned, such as continually coming late without an adequate explanation, missing school without an adequate explanation or insulting other students, a teacher could impose an appropriate penalty. Penalties within a positive discipline approach include the following:

- Withdrawal of privileges, such as children not being allowed to go out during recess or to play games during school.
- Additional time at school (detention), such as children remaining for an extra half hour after school to reflect on what they did wrong.

**Note that:**

- Care must be taken to ensure that the penalty meets the principles of positive discipline.
- The penalty should also provide children with an opportunity to think about their behavior and to think of an alternative behavior for future similar circumstances.
- At the end of a penalty, teachers should help children learn what was wrong with their behavior and how not to repeat the same mistake.

### 3. REPARATION

For offences that cause damage to a third party, such as hitting other students, bullying younger children, damaging property, or fighting and causing general disorder in school, a teacher could insist that a child undertake public reparation, such as the following:

- The child apologizes in the assembly to the entire school.
- If feasible, the child contributes toward replacing or repairing the damage, such as erecting a fence, chopping wood or repainting a wall (based on the capacity of the child and the damage made).

- The child receives a written notice in the school disciplinary record and commits to change his/her behavior.
- The school involves parents in preventing a repeat of the behavior.

#### 4. LAST RESORT

For persistent and serious offences, such as violating other children or serious damage to the school property or reputation, the head teacher could take action as a last resort, using interventions such as the following:

- Summon and discuss with parents the possible next steps, as a warning to the child.
- Implement a time-limited suspension (e.g., one week) with a written warning and referral to a counselor or probation officer.
- As a very last resort, refer the case to the Director of Education with a specific recommendation for expulsion from school, including the involvement of a probation officer and an action plan for next steps to help the child.

## HOW DO I CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT?

Positive discipline guides children in understanding their misbehavior and in building a personal desire to make better choices in the future. However, it is far more than just responses to misbehavior. It combines nonviolent disciplinary action with a positive classroom environment, an environment that encourages students to get involved in defining the conditions for success.

This approach involves establishing a different kind of relationship with students and new methods for engaging and supporting them over the long-term. In the beginning, it may be difficult, as you get used to a new way of doing things. However, over a period of time, it will become easier and you will notice positive changes in your students' behaviors, both inside and outside the classroom. Here are a few ideas for getting started.

All of these activities aim to share decision making power with students and create an environment in which students can feel invested in their school. These activities are part of a positive discipline approach, because they encourage students to identify themselves as key stakeholders in their school and, as a result, feel more accountable for their behavior.

### 1. SET SHARED GROUND RULES FOR LEARNING

Engage students in jointly developing class ground rules for learning. Explain that you want to involve the class in creating a new way of learning together and provide them with some examples of possible class ground rules. Examples of rules could include any of the following:

- Everyone must come on time.
- The lesson will start and finish on time.
- Questions are encouraged.
- Only one person can speak at a time.
- We will listen to everyone's ideas with respect.

- Everyone is responsible for her or his own learning. This means if you don't understand, you will ask questions.
- Students will pay attention when the teacher is talking.
- The class will decide what to do when someone breaks a rule, based on guidelines discussed earlier by the class.
- Teachers and students will both give and get respect.
  - Write the rules on paper or cardboard and tape them on the wall for the class to refer to on an ongoing basis.
  - Be aware that at first the class may find it difficult to stick to the rules, but over a period of time they will get used to it.
  - Be patient, but remain consistent and firm in applying the rules.

## **2. ENGAGE STUDENTS IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Establish an elected student committee that is responsible for representing students' views in the class.

- This committee could also serve as a peer disciplinary committee that responds to anyone who breaks the class rules persistently. However, these students must receive and follow guidelines regarding positive discipline so that they do not abuse fellow students.
- At the beginning of each term, call a class meeting and explain the work that needs to be covered during that term. Make a plan as a class for how the work will be accomplished and identify the students responsible for monitoring progress.
- Keep track of each disciplinary incident and monitor the overall trend.
- Motivate the class to improve performance by setting targets (e.g., next month we will reduce disciplinary incidents by 20 percent).
- Make a chart that tracks progress and rewards the class for outstanding achievements.
- Introduce a classroom-based or school – wide forum for discussing how the school could serve its students better.
- Encourage constructive ideas and ensure that practical ones are put into action. For example, if students prioritized access to drinking water or sanitary supplies, then the school could try to prioritize these in its budget or ask parents to support.

## **1. CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE SUCCESS**

- Create “Student of the Month” and “Teacher of the Month” programs that ask each student every month to nominate one child and one teacher as potential candidates.
- Announce clear qualifying criteria, such as timeliness, helpfulness to others, good performance in class and acting as a role model to students.
- Announce the winners at the school assembly.
- Introduce a “School Pride Day” for which students can share and implement ideas that involve everyone taking pride in their school. Some ideas could include cleaning the school compound, planting trees, appreciating a helpful teacher in assembly or helping someone with homework.

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE IN ACTION?

Remember, a positive discipline approach combines nonviolent disciplinary action with a positive classroom environment. Through practice you will begin to witness how these two ideas support one another. You can also build this understanding by reading, analyzing and discussing the following skill-building scenarios.

The following five scenarios involve common perceived misbehaviors for which adults often use corporal punishment. For each scenario, try to identify alternatives to corporal punishment and then read the alternatives provided.

Remember, it is crucial that you begin by understanding the reasons for the child's behavior. Sometimes there may be a justifiable explanation, and in that case, it is far more useful to help the child find a solution to the situation than to enforce a punishment.

### SCENARIO 1: ARRIVING LATE TO SCHOOL

**Sabina:** I live two kilometers from my school. In the morning, sometimes I have to fetch water and sweep the compound around our house before I can go to school. I have no money for transport, so I walk to school. I know that being beaten is just the way things are at our school. Sometimes, because I am tired, I take it easy. I will just take the three canes. Sometimes, I try to hide in the bush until the teacher leaves, but most of the time there is no escape. I just have to take the beating.

**Sabina's teacher:** I have to make sure the children understand that coming late to school is not acceptable. They have to know that there are consequences for their lateness. I always give them three canes. Some of them are even used to it. They just offer themselves up because they know I don't listen to any excuses.

## WHAT ARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVES?

In this situation, beating Sabina does not teach her what is wrong with coming late to school. It just teaches her that she will experience pain. She may get used to it and, therefore, never learn from her mistake. After all, if beatings taught her what was wrong with arriving late, she would try to arrive on time.

### Consider the following alternatives:

- a) The teacher could begin by trying to understand why Sabina comes late. The teacher could get in touch with her parents to see if together they could help Sabina get to school on time.
- b) The teacher could hold discussions in class about the importance of being on time and the values behind punctuality. The class could make a list of reasons for being on time, such as:
  - The lessons can start and finish on time.
  - You will not miss part of the lesson because you are late.
  - It shows respect for your fellow students, teachers and school.
  - It shows that you take pride in your conduct and enjoy being at school.

- c) Sabina could be offered counseling on how to ensure that she is on time. This approach could involve listening to her reasons for being late and taking into consideration her situation.
- d) It may involve getting her to write a letter to explain why she comes late or asking her to apologize to her class for arriving late.
- e) It may involve sending a note home to her parents or, if it is a small community, arranging personal communication with her parents to explain why Sabina needs to arrive at school on time.

If Sabina is persistently late, the teacher could tell her that she is not allowed to enter the classroom late and, therefore, not able to join the first class. This will cause her performance in this class to suffer, and she will see how her behavior has consequences. She will learn that she has the power to change her own situation by coming on time. However, it is important that other options have been tried before this one is exercised.

### SCENARIO 2: MAKING NOISE IN CLASS AND DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR

**James:** I was feeling good today. I was telling funny stories and everyone was laughing. The teacher tried to tell me to stop talking, but I wanted to show everyone that I was not afraid. I am tough and can't be bossed around by a teacher.

**James' teacher:** I have to ensure that they fear me in this class. Otherwise, they will just get out of control and I will not be able to teach. The students will take over and other teachers will laugh at me. I will put James in his place by embarrassing him publicly and beating him. I will make an example out of James so that students will not dare to show disrespect by making noise in my class.

### WHAT ARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVES?

In this case, James may be trying to get some attention and praise rather than wanting to be disruptive for the sake of it. Consider the following alternatives:

a) The teacher could begin the term by developing class ground rules. The class would agree on these rules together. These rules could include:

- No side talking during the lessons.
- All the lessons will start and finish on time.
- The teacher will not humiliate students if they don't know the answer to a question.
- Students will take responsibility for trying hard by asking questions when they don't understand.
- Everyone will respect each other in class.
- If a person breaks any of the rules, the teacher will take an appropriate action already discussed with the class.
- In the case of persistent offenders, the class disciplinary committee will follow pre-written guidelines to determine the appropriate discipline.

b) The teacher could get James to write a letter to the class regarding his behavior and what effect he thinks it has on the class.

c) The teacher could exclude James from the class for 10 minutes to help him reflect on his actions.

### SCENARIO 3: FAILING A TEST OR GIVING A WRONG ANSWER TO A QUESTION

**John:** I am so nervous in class. I am afraid that the teacher is going to pick on me and ask a question when I don't know the answer. Even if the answer is obvious, sometimes when the teacher looks at me, I can't speak. I become scared and just remain quiet. I know everyone is staring at me and laughing, but what can I do. I just can't risk giving the wrong answer. Even in tests, I feel so afraid and always fail, because I don't know how to answer the questions. I just don't understand anything that is being taught, and I don't want to be laughed at. The best thing is to stay quiet or just leave that question blank on the test.

**John's teacher:** This boy is rude and stupid! He is insulting me by not paying attention. How many times have I taught this thing? Is he not listening? I am tired of trying hard when this class just doesn't care. Last week almost everyone failed the test and now they don't even know the answer to this simple question. I am going to teach this class a lesson. I am going to thrash this boy so that everyone will learn that when I teach they have to pay attention. They should know the right answer before I ask the question!

### WHAT ARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVES?

Learning is a delicate process. The ability to learn depends on the emotional and mental state of the learner. Even if the lesson is simple, some learners may still experience difficulty absorbing the information.

#### Consider the following alternatives:

- a) The class could agree to the following rules for learning:
  - The teacher will present the information in many different ways—so that children who can't understand one way have an opportunity to understand another way.
  - The teacher will frequently check to see if children understand what is being taught.
  - The teacher will happily repeat information and will welcome students' questions.
  - The teacher will not punish students for giving wrong answers.
- b) The teacher could adopt practices that support cautious and slower learners, such as the following:
  - When possible, the teacher offers extra help after class to children who had difficulty with the lesson.
  - If a child does not know the answer to a question, the teacher moves to another child. The teacher never keeps attention focused on just one or two children.
  - The teacher explains that wrong answers are part of learning and that students should not be afraid of giving a wrong answer.
  - When students try hard but give wrong answers, the teacher congratulates the students for trying and then guides them in understanding the correct answer.

### SCENARIO 4: MISSING CLASS OR BEING ABSENT WITHOUT PERMISSION

**Amina:** Sometimes my mother sends me to sell things at the market and I can't go to school. Sometimes I feel bored on the way to school and visit my friend instead of going to school. Sometimes I don't like being in a class where the teacher asks me questions all the time and looks at me in a funny way. I know that I am not going far after primary school ends, so what's the point? I might as well do what I want.

**Head teacher at Amina’s school:** We can’t have a child missing class whenever she wants. She has to be made an example of so that her behavior doesn’t spread. In the morning assembly, I will single her out, cane her six times and give her a final warning. If she doesn’t listen, she is out of this school. We can’t have children undermining authority at this school.

### WHAT ARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVES?

- Amina needs help to see the value of education and feel hopeful that the school has something important to offer her.
- She may also need help convincing her family that if she does well at school, she deserves a chance to continue with her studies.

#### **Consider the following alternatives:**

- a) The head teacher could try to find out why Amina is missing classes and try to convince Amana’s parents to priorities her education.
- b) The head teacher could refer Amina to a counselor who could help her see that if she invested in her education now, her life could be different.
- c) The head teacher could ask Amina to write a letter regarding what the school means to her.
- d) The head teacher could ask a trusted teacher to encourage and motivate Amina during this difficult time.
- e) The head teacher could pair Amina with another student who could encourage her participation in school.

### SCENARIO 5: BULLYING OTHER CHILDREN

**Peter:** I am the toughest boy in this school. Everyone fears me, and I need to make sure that no one gets away with undermining my status. I keep others’ respect by showing them what might happen if they don’t fear me. I tease small girls, and sometimes rough-up an annoying boy. Everyone in school knows not to cross me. They know my father is tough at home and I am tough at school.

**Peter’s teacher:** This boy is a problem. He is making other children miserable and giving our school a bad name. Today in assembly, I am going to humiliate him. I will slap him a few times and ask another teacher to cane him six times. I will then announce that we don’t tolerate such behavior from anyone. I will warn him publicly that if he persists we will throw him out of this school.

### WHAT ARE POSITIVE DISCIPLINE ALTERNATIVES?

Peter’s behavior may be motivated by the humiliation he is subjected to at home or elsewhere. Thus, further humiliation at school is unlikely to be helpful. Before taking any firm action, it is important to find out the root cause of his behavior, through counseling as well as enquiring within the community. However, it is also important to provide immediate protection for other children.

#### **Consider the following alternatives:**

- a) The school could develop a written policy about zero tolerance for bullying and post it on a public board.

- b) The school could ensure Peter receives counseling for his problem. If the problem persists, the school could involve other community members, such as a parent, relative, religious leader or other community leader.
- c) If the problem still persists, the school could consider referring Peter to another school that is able to deal with the problem more effectively.
- d) The school could involve a probation officer or the Secretary for Children’s Affairs in the local area.
- f) The head teacher could talk about the incidents during the school assembly and emphasize that violence against children is unacceptable—regardless of whom it comes from. To do so effectively, the head teacher would focus on talking about the behavior rather than about Peter.

### **A TESTIMONY FROM A TEACHER ABOUT VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

“I was born in a village in a family where my father had two wives. He was a respected man because he had land. He provided for both families, but me and my brothers and sisters were afraid of him. He was so harsh. He would beat you for any small mistake.

“He beat me and shouted at me all the time. If I didn’t do the housework or did not do my homework or did not greet somebody properly, he would beat and he would shout. He was terrible to all my siblings and me. He gave our mother money for food and expenses and said that it was no business of hers how he chose to discipline his children. My mother tried to help us but what could she do?

“All through my school years, I feared everyone and remained quiet and obedient. I tried to avoid troubles. I thought men were just like that and there is nothing I can do. But then when I was 22, I met my current husband. He is kind and never shouts. At first I thought he was just trying to tempt me, but till now he has remained like that. Perhaps violence is not about being a man or a woman but what kind of person you are.

“We have two children and at first I used to beat them and shout at them just like my father used to do to me. One day I saw how afraid my daughter was about everything and I thought of how I was when my father used to beat me. I talked to my friend about it and she helped me see what I was doing to my daughter. I felt sorry and apologized to her. Then I attended a workshop about children’s rights and learned that it does not have to be like that. My husband and I talked about it and have decided that we will never beat our children the way we were beaten by our parents. I do not want my children to be afraid of everything, the way I was. We even try to help our neighbor’s children when they beat them too much. “I don’t know if it was the workshop that changed me. I knew in my heart that violence was wrong because I know what it feels like. The workshop helped me understand what was in my heart. Now I work at this school where the headmistress has made a rule that corporal punishment is not allowed. Sometimes it is hard, but I also think it is right. I wish all schools were like ours.”

## CONCLUSION

Common reasons given for practicing corporal punishment are no longer applicable. There are many laws and government policies that condemn it. A large number of teachers are speaking out against it and corporal punishment prevents children from realizing their full potential as students and subsequently as members of their communities. It is not right to continue to violate our children in this way. All that remains is for you to take action based on what you know. The question is will you end violence against children today?