**School corporal punishment**

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**Legality of corporal punishment in the United States**



Darker Shade -  Corporal punishment prohibited in schools only (blue)

  Lighter Shade - Corporal punishment **NOT** prohibited in schools or

 in the home (red)

**School corporal punishment**, a form of [corporal punishment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporal_punishment), covers official punishments of school students for misbehavior that involve striking the student a given number of times in a generally methodical and premeditated ceremony. The punishment is usually administered either across the buttocks[]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_corporal_punishment#cite_note-1) or on the hands, with an implement specially kept for the purpose such as a rattan [cane](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caning), wooden [paddle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paddle_%28spanking%29), [slipper](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slippering_%28punishment%29), leather [strap](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strapping_%28punishment%29) or a wooden [yardstick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yardstick). Less commonly, it could also include [spanking](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanking) or smacking the student in a deliberate manner on a specific part of the body with the open hand, especially at the [elementary school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elementary_school) level.

Advocates of school corporal punishment argue that it provides an immediate response to indiscipline and that the student is quickly back in the classroom learning, rather than being suspended from school. Opponents believe that other disciplinary methods are equally or more effective. Some regard it as tantamount to violence or abuse.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, and generally in the English-speaking world, the use by schools of corporal punishment has historically been covered by the common law doctrine of [in loco parentis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In_loco_parentis), whereby a school has the same rights over minors as their parents.

In most places nowadays where it is allowed, corporal punishment in [public schools](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_school_%28government_funded%29) is governed by official regulations laid down by governments or local education authorities, defining such things as the implement to be used, the number of strokes that may be administered, which members of staff may carry it out, and whether parents must be informed or consulted. Depending on how narrowly the regulations are drawn and how rigorously enforced, this has the effect of making the punishment a structured ceremony that is legally defensible in a given jurisdiction and of inhibiting staff from lashing out on the spur of the moment.

The first country in the world to prohibit corporal punishment was Poland, in 1783.

## Justification and criticism

Principal of [John C. Calhoun Elementary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_places_named_for_John_C._Calhoun) in Calhoun Hills, [South Carolina](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Carolina), David Nixon, a supporter of corporal punishment in schools, says that as soon as the student has been punished he can go back to his class and continue learning,[]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_corporal_punishment#cite_note-15) in contrast to out-of-school suspension, which removes him from the educational process[]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_corporal_punishment#cite_note-16) and gives him a free "holiday".

Philip Berrigan, a Catholic priest, who taught at St. Augustine High School in New Orleans, was another supporter of corporal punishment. Berrigan said that corporal punishment saved much staff time that would otherwise have been devoted to supervising detention classes or in-school suspension, and managing the bureaucracy that goes with these punishments. Parents, too, often complain about the inconvenience occasioned by penalties such as detention or Saturday school.

One argument made against corporal punishments is that some research has shown it to be not as effective as positive means for managing student behavior. These studies have linked corporal punishment to adverse physical, psychological and educational outcomes including, "increased aggressive and destructive behavior, increased disruptive classroom behavior, vandalism, poor school achievement, poor attention span, increased drop-out rate, school avoidance and school phobia, low self-esteem, anxiety, somatic complaints, depression, suicide and retaliation against teacher."

Medical, pediatric or psychological societies opposing school corporal punishment include: the [American Medical Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Medical_Association), the [American Academy of Pediatrics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Academy_of_Pediatrics), the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the [American Psychological Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Psychological_Association), the [Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_College_of_Paediatrics_and_Child_Health), the [Royal College of Psychiatrists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_College_of_Psychiatrists), the [Canadian Paediatric Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Paediatric_Society) and the [Australian Psychological Society](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Psychological_Society). School corporal punishment is also opposed by the (U.S.) [National Association of Secondary School Principals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Association_of_Secondary_School_Principals).