# **Physical Chastisement**

Schools have a statutory responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children both in and out of school.

#### **The law**

* UK law protects every child up to the age of 18 years from cruel and abusive treatment by their parents and carers.
* It is against the law for a parent to use physical punishment on their child that causes marks.
* It is illegal to use an implement to hit a child.
* Parents who cause deliberate harm to their child could face criminal prosecution.
* It is against the law for anyone who is not the child's parent to use ANY form of physical punishment.
* It is also illegal to use prolonged stress positions or to emotionally harm a child.

As a parent/guardian you are responsible for disciplining your child(ren) or those under your care when they are not in school. The use of physical force in disciplining them may be illegal in certain circumstances. This may include where an implement (e.g. belt, stick, slipper) has been used or where the use of that force has resulted in visible injury and the use of prolonged physical stress positions. (This is where children are placed in a position of discomfort for a long period of time). In these circumstances the school has a statutory duty to report such incidents to Children’s Social Care and the police may be asked to investigate.

Should you want further advice and information on statutory guidance, legislation and parenting support please see:

[Bexley Safeguarding Partnership](https://bexleysafeguardingpartnership.co.uk/families/disciplining-your-child/) website provides advice for parents and carers, including information on positive and effective disciplining metho

Below is the guidance from the borough of Bexley relating to disciplining your child.

* *Insert Bexley Physical Chastisement Leaflet.*
* Instead of saying, “Put your shoes on now!” try, “Would you like to wear the red shoes or the blue ones?”
* Encourage them to think of solutions when conflicts arise.

**Redirect & Distract**

* If your child is acting out, guide their attention to another activity before behavior escalates.

**Teach Through Connection, Not Fear**

* Use hugs, eye contact, and kind words to reinforce lessons.
* Let them know you love them, even when they misbehave.

**Final Thought**

Discipline means teaching, not punishing. By using these positive strategies, you help your child develop respect, self-discipline, and strong emotional skills—without fear or harm.