



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ending physical punishment in Wales

Information for organisations and people who work with, volunteer or care for children, outside of formal education and childcare

Physically punishing children is **illegal** in Wales. We want to protect children and their rights, to help give them the best start in life.

Do you work with, volunteer or care for children in unregulated settings (those not regulated/inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales)? For example, at sports clubs, youth groups, activity clubs, unregistered out of school clubs, faith groups or baby-sitters.

If so, here's what you need to know about the new law.

What is physical punishment?

There are lots of types of physical punishment. It can mean smacking, hitting, slapping and shaking. But there are other types too.

It isn't possible to give a set list of what makes up physical punishment because it can be anything where a child is punished using physical force. Research suggests that any type of physical punishment could be harmful to children.



Does this law apply to everybody in Wales?

Yes, it applies to everyone - parents or anyone who is responsible for a child while the parent is absent.

And as with other laws, it applies to visitors to Wales too.

Physical punishment has been illegal in schools, children's homes, local authority foster care homes and childcare settings for some time.

What's the law on physical punishment in Wales?

- All physical punishment is **illegal** in Wales.
- Children have the same protection from assault as adults.
- This means the law is clear - easy for children, parents, professionals and the public to understand.

Stopio Cosbi
Corfforol

Ending Physical
Punishment



What happens if people physically punish a child?

Anyone who physically punishes a child:

- will be breaking the law
- risks being arrested or charged with assault
- may get a criminal record, which is the same for any criminal offence.

Information, advice and support is available for anyone who needs it, to help them find positive ways to manage children's behaviour and to help avoid such a situation ever happening.

What should I do if I see a child being physically punished or if I am concerned about a child?

- Contact your local social services department.
- You can also call the police in an emergency, or if a child is in immediate danger.



Where can I find out more?

Continue to keep up to date with updates to guidance and training which apply to you.

For more information on ending physical punishment in Wales go to: gov.wales/EndPhysicalPunishment

Wales Safeguarding Procedures detail the essential roles and responsibilities for practitioners to ensure that they safeguard children who are at risk of abuse and neglect: safeguarding.wales

Wales Safeguarding Procedures (Practice Guide); a practice guide related to physical punishment of children is available here: [*Safeguarding children in relation to the Children \(Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment\) \(Wales\) Act 2020*](#)

[*Parenting. Give it time*](#) provides positive parenting tips and expert advice to encourage good behaviour from children and alternatives to physical punishment. Their [*parenting support page*](#) offers links to further support and helplines.

Universal parenting support and advice is provided by midwives, health visitors, GPs and your local authority, including [*Family Information Services*](#).

Early help programmes such as [*Flying Start*](#) (if you live in a Flying Start area) and [*Families First*](#).

Times have changed. Attitudes have changed.
There is no place for physical punishment in a modern Wales.