

PRESBYTERIAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA

FACULTY OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF  
CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TO DISCIPLINE AND HUMAN  
DEVELOPMENT

A dissertation submitted to the Department of Rural and Community Development  
of the Faculty of Development Studies, Presbyterian University College, Ghana in  
partial fulfilment for the award of a Master in Arts Degree in International

Development Studies

BY

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## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this Dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere

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### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this Dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of project work laid down by the Presbyterian University College, Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

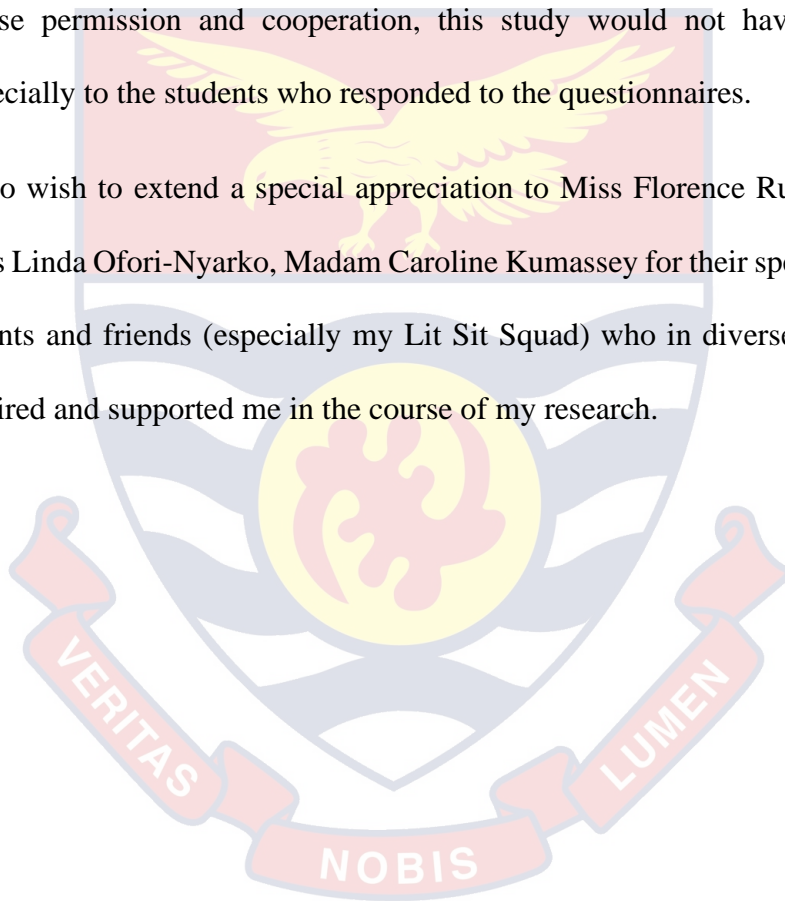
This study sought to find out the students' perception on the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline. Students of Labone Senior High School in the La Dade-Kotopon Municipality were the population for the study. The target population 400 conveniently selected students in Labone Senior High School. Primary data was collected through questionnaire and interview. The data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. More than half of the students that were sampled were of the view that corporal punishment teaches respect for authority and helps monitor discipline effectively especially in school. Corporal punishment amongst other types of punishment methods for the effective discipline of students was most preferred by the majority of the sampled students. Caning and kneeling were the commonest types of corporal punishments meted out to students in and outside the classroom; in the school environment. Teachers employed the use of corporal punishment as a discipline tool sparingly so most of the students do not often get scarred by such experience. The students were of the view that corporal punishment was not an avenue for teachers to vent their anger. Well trained teachers were of the view that the laws of Ghana should make provisions so that recalcitrant students can be taken into reformation custody. Furthermore, stakeholders of the education sector should work closely with students and teachers so as to bring positive impact to the student concerned.

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## DEDICATION

To Rev Prof. B. A. Ntreh and family.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Punishment has been used in several ways by several people to instil discipline in offenders. Parents and teachers in particular uses punishment to correct children for the to develop and become responsible citizens and adults. Punishment has become to be a common feature in our society because man continues to go contrary to the set rules and regulations. More often, before a punishment is meted out to an offender, the age and level of the offender and the gravity of the offence are taken into consideration. The UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 37 enjoins party states of which Ghana is a member to ensure that no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment and punishment. Article 28(2) of the same convention states that “State parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child’s human dignity and in conformity with the present condition” (UNICEF, 2009).

Some people are of the view that of the view that some people are punished beyond their offence while others are of the view that culprits are not punished when they ought to. Criminal punishment is commonly meted out in the following ways: incapacitation, deterrence, retribution, rehabilitation and restoration. Each of these punishments is to reform the criminal and bring the person or criminal back on track. When a criminal is incapacitated, he or she is physically taken away from society with the aim of preventing future crime. During the colonial times, this was the punishment meted out to convicts and

undesirables. Presently, this punishment has grown to encompass house arrest, incarceration and death penalty. Deterrence persuades citizens and spectators to conform to rules and laws. This could be specific where an analysis is done to determine how effective the punishment will be on the future of the individual to be punished. General deterrence could be employed to understand how punishing an individual could serve as deterrence to other individuals. At other times, the deterrence employed is marginal where a reconciliation of effective combination of punishment types is done. The partial deterrence looks at the situation in which the threat of penalty has some deterrent value even when someone has been found to be on the wrong side of the law. There are times when punishment prevents crime by giving the victim a sense of satisfaction that a defendant has been appropriately punished. This is retribution. Currently, fines and mandatory sentences are categorized as retribution. Sometimes in punishing criminals, there is a focus on helping them overcome the barriers that pushed them into committing the crimes. This punishment, rehabilitation, is ultimately aimed at transition and remoulding offenders back into the society. When the restoration method is used, offender(s) and victim(s) are afforded the opportunity to meet and dialogue. Amends are made and offender(s) are forgiven.

Eggleton (2001) sees discipline as a necessary tool for the effective running of any school. He defines discipline as training that corrects moulds or perfects the mental faculties or moral character, obedience to authority or rules; punishment to correct poor behaviour. Alhassan (2000) explained the concept of discipline to mean training that enables an individual to develop an orderly conduct and self-control as well as self-direction. According to Tudor-Hart, discipline is a human characteristic which has existed ever since man became human, and this

would be at least 100,000 years ago (Mundy-Castle, 1976). Discipline does not necessarily mean corporal punishment but in the school environment, corporal punishment is synonymous with school discipline (Slee, 1995; Rosen, 1995). It is believed that corporal punishment is the sure means to eschew unwanted behaviours and imprint the wanted behaviours in the minds of students. Some countries in the West such as Norway, Denmark and Finland consider corporal punishment as a source of school violence hence its ban. (Larzelere, 1995 as cited by Darez *et al.*, 2011 ). Graziano (1995), as cited by Darez, *et al.* (2011) is against corporal punishment because he cannot fathom why it is legally prohibited to strike other adults but it is ok to strike a child. African parents usually draw their discipline method; the corporal punishment, from the bible verse that says that “A child loves to do silly things. You must hit him (her) when he (she) does wrong. If you do, he (she) will learn to do the right things” (**Proverbs 22:15**). Hyman (1988) as cited by Darez *et al.* (2011) posits that adults who are supportive of corporal punishment were physically punished in their childhood. These adults believe in the saying “what is good for the goose is good for the gander” thus if they went through it, it should continue as it is essential to help imbibe certain values such as respect, obedience honesty and humility which they deem as necessary for living. At an early age, it is necessary to get them to take in these values and just as hot metals, they ought to be beaten to shape before they grow old. According to Donnelly and Straus (2005), the term corporal punishment is the use of physical force with the intention of causing the child to experience pain, for the purpose of correcting or controlling the child’s behaviour. Emphasis is made on the use of physical force with an intention of making the child experience pain. This means that the force is

intentional and directed at a particular person but not with the intention to cause injury. Pain could be felt without being injurious. Rohner (1991) as cited by Darez, *et al.* (2011) in his presentation on “Cultural Spill over” argues that when a society uses force for socially legitimate ends, there is a greater propensity for those engaged in socially illegitimate behaviour to use counter force to attain what they desire.

Discipline is the guidance of children’s moral, emotional and physical development, enabling children to take responsibility for themselves when they are older (Holden, 2202; Wissow, 2002). It involves teaching the child what the boundaries are. What is acceptable and what is not acceptable. What the acceptable values of their family and society are. Discipline can be positive or negative depending on the method that is used. When a child is praised for doing something good or for discontinuing a negative action, then discipline can be said to be positive. Discipline can be negative when it involves causing harm to the hold.

Researchers who challenge the use of corporal punishment as a means of managing the discipline of students in schools noted that parents, guardians and teachers who employ harsh approaches in disciplining children or students may succeed in making them conformists to a targeted standard but sooner or later, a certain kind of resentment will be reflective in the child’s behaviour. This could happen both at home and in school (Kaur, 2005). There have been times when teachers have dominated the headlines in national dailies over their ‘wrong’ use of corporal punishment. Sometimes it says that students have died, collapsed or have been maimed in a teacher’s attempt to employ corporal punishment as a



discipline tool. Even though some teachers have been using this method for years, they have not complained if having issues with the law.

According to Kubeka, (2004), Tanzanian teachers were of the view that without employing corporal punishment as a disciplinary tool, discipline cannot and will not be maintained in school. Students will also not show discipline to do their work, in and out of the classroom, on the school compound, they will need to be beaten or threatened that they will be beaten before they work. Corporal punishment gives teachers a form of power.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been a back and forth on corporal punishment in Ghana. Supporters of corporal punishment are of the view that it is the only thing students respond to in terms of preparing and managing them. Corporal punishment carries an advantage in the sense that it is quick and easier to administer as compared to the other methods that require skill, patience and time. It also serves as a deterrent to other students because if wrongs are left unpunished, the offender and other students will think it is right to engage in those acts. In 2017, the Ghana Education Service, officially banned all forms of corporal punishment in private and public schools and subsequently in January 2019, in a letter signed by the deputy director general (MS), acting in the capacity of the director general, issued an order to all teachers in pre-tertiary institutions to adopt the “Positive Discipline Toolkit” for correcting pupils and students (GES/G&C-HQ/C/VOL.3). With the re enforcement of the ban many groups, -parents, teachers, school administrators, educationists, media and the students

themselves, expressed various sentiments and views as to why this measure would or would not help.

Corporal punishment is a practice that has its roots in the pre- revolutionary colonial era. At that time, schooling was seen as a means of passing on pious values, and discipline as a means of dealing with sin from children. Both parents and teachers believed that they had the collective responsibility to correct children with the help of the rod as prescribed by the bible. By the time the American Constitution was adopted and ratified, schools, religious underpinnings had faded and a new enlightened view of civic responsibility had emerged. In the mid 1800's there was more emphasis on moral suasion and nurturing child development thus radically altering the use of physical punishment in schools. During the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, standards were established for the use of corporal punishment and authorised its use when 'reasonable 'or 'necessary'. In 2019, the Ghana Education Service issued a circular abolishing the use of corporal punishment and calling for alternative punishment to be used(GES/G&C-HQ/C/VOL.3). While some parents, teachers and students hailed this announcement, others expressed their displeasure. However, discussions and research on child and teenage discipline has focused mostly on the use corporal punishment. Schools and for that matter teachers have used this method of discipline for a long time in Ghana and therefore any directive or policy to stop it faces opposition. It is against this background that the researcher has decided to find out students' perception about the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline and human development.



### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out students' perception of corporal punishment on discipline and human development.

The study specifically sought to:

1. assess students' perception on the usefulness of corporal punishment in enhancing their learning discipline in secondary schools.
2. assess students' perceptions on the contribution of corporal punishment in instilling discipline in secondary schools.
3. examine the disciplinary measures adopted by the school administrators and teachers to shape students' learning outcomes.
4. analyse the policy implementation on students' development and discipline behaviour.

### 1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the students' perceptions on the usefulness of corporal punishment in enhancing their learning discipline in secondary schools?
2. What are the students' perceptions on the contribution of corporal punishment in instilling discipline in secondary schools?
3. What are the disciplinary measures adopted by the school administrators and teachers to shape students' learning outcomes?
4. How has the policy implementation affected students' development and discipline behaviour?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study is primarily for the benefit of two people; supporters for corporal punishments and advocates against corporal punishment. It will be a reference point for the body that is concerned basically with pre-tertiary education, Ghana Education Service, parents, school teachers, school administrators. It will also inform citizens who are “are not bothered”, and make them know what students perceive as the contribution of corporal punishment to their discipline. It could be a reference point for the legislators to pass a legislative instrument with regards to the issue of corporal punishment.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

The study was conducted using one senior high school, Labone Senior High School in the La Dade Kotopon Municipal Assembly (LADMA) of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. There are four senior high schools in the Municipality and the researcher looked at one because of its special nature; it is a coeducational institution and also runs both day and boarding systems. The study looked at the perception of second year and final year Senior High School students on the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study made use of a questionnaire but due to the close ended nature of some of the questions, respondents could not express their views on certain subjects asked in the questionnaire. For the interview guide, most of the respondents were a bit hesitant in answering the questions thus the researcher had to conduct an informal interview to help the study.

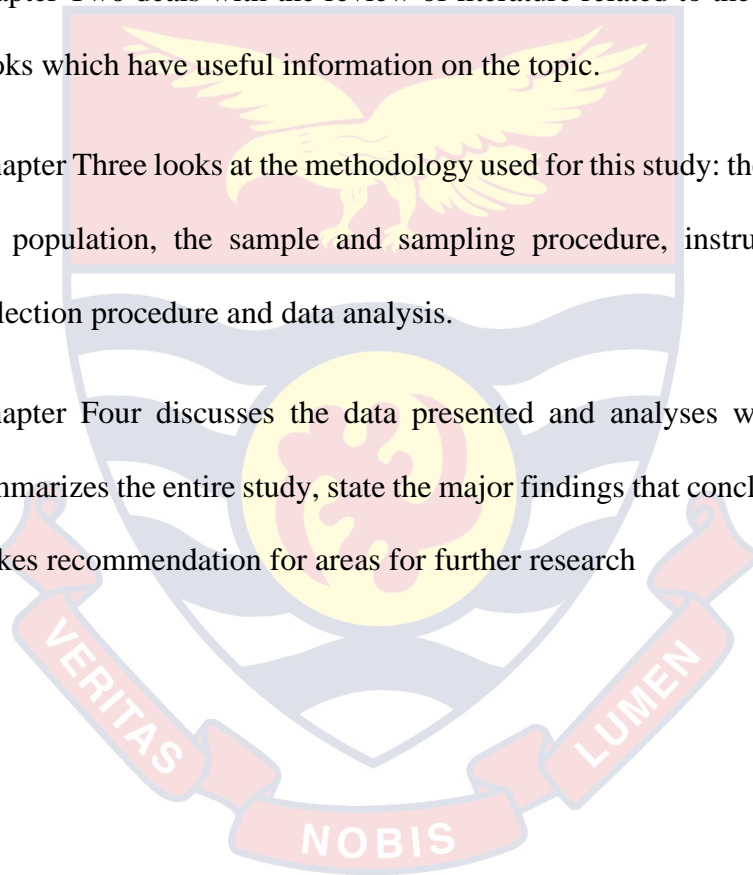
## 1.8 Organization of the rest of the Study

This study is organised into five chapters. Chapter One consists of the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and the organisation of the study.

Chapter Two deals with the review of literature related to the study. It looks at books which have useful information on the topic.

Chapter Three looks at the methodology used for this study: the research design, the population, the sample and sampling procedure, instruments used data collection procedure and data analysis.

Chapter Four discusses the data presented and analyses while chapter five summarizes the entire study, state the major findings that conclude the study and makes recommendation for areas for further research



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

The review of related literature means identifying, locating and analysing of documents containing relevant information related to the research problem. The review makes the researcher aware of strategies, procedures and instruments that have already been used and what needs to be done in that area of investigation.

#### 2.2 Current Legality of Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment is allowed in the home. The Children's Act of 1998, Article 13(2) forbids "cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment including any cultural practice which dehumanises or is injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a child". The Act allows for a degree of "reasonable" and "justifiable" punishment of children, stating that "no correction of a child is justifiable which is unreasonable in kind or in degree according to the age, physical and mental condition of the child and no correction is justifiable if the child by reason of tender age or otherwise is incapable of understanding the purpose of the correction".

Accepting or otherwise of corporal punishment is debateable (Alhassan, 2013). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana states in article 28(3) that, "A child shall not be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." Neither these provisions nor the provisions against violence and abuse in the Criminal Code 1960, the Domestic Violence Act 2007 and the Children's Act 1998 are interpreted as prohibiting all corporal punishment in childrearing and upbringing. Throughout the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)

of Ghana in 2008, the Government defended the legality of “reasonable” corporal punishment. The Government went on to repudiate majority of recommendations that the Commission reached concerning children’s rights, stating that “there are sufficient laws which address the interests of children and the challenge has to do with implementing them”. Nonetheless, the Government accepted recommendations to prohibit corporal punishment made during the Universal Periodic Review in 2012.

Corporal punishment is lawful in schools. According to the Education Act 1961, the Ghana Education Code of Discipline for second cycle institution affords for caning up to six strokes by a head teacher or person empowered by the head teacher.

National Child Friendly School Standards for basic schools have been drafted by the Ghana Education Service which declares that “school is a safe setting for pedagogy for all children and staff (free from any form of bullying, violence and abuse including corporal punishment and sexual abuse) regardless of race, sex, background and abilities” and those national standards were expected to be rolled out in 2012. An indication has been given of progress towards a law reform to prohibit corporal punishment. A positive discipline toolkit has been rolled out by the Ghana Education Service to take the place of corporal punishment.

### **2.3 Perception of Corporal Punishment**

Punishment is a word used in operant conditioning to suggest any change that transpires after a behaviour that reduces the possibility that behaviour will occur

again in the future. While positive and negative reinforcements are used to increase behaviours, punishment is focused on reducing or eliminating unwanted behaviours (Leach, & Humphrey, 2007). According to Acton (1969), punishment is equated to law-making, penalisation, finding guilty, pronouncing a sentence. In this instance, it serves as a system used in lessening the incidence of one's behaviour either by deterring the likely offenders or by incapacitating and preventing them from repeating the offence or by reforming them into a law-abiding student.

In the educational system, research indicates that teachers are not the only people who may perpetrate punishment but also other staff and schoolmates on children through corporal punishment and other modes of punishment (Dunne *et al.*, 2005; Leach *et al.*, 2003). Punishment in schools intends to modify the behaviour that it follows. Punishment is only a system of disciplining and in schools, corporal punishment is only one aspect often used (Sanderson, 2003). Corporal punishment is the use of physical force causing pain, but not wounds, as a means of disciplining students in schools (Leach, & Humphrey 2007, as cited by Tabane, R 2014). Spanking, knocking on the head and slapping are modes of corporal punishment which are typically used in schools. The use of corporal punishment is firmly rooted in our society and is passed on from one generation to the other. However, this does not suggest that corporal punishment is justified. Scarre (2003) also explains the word "corporal" to mean to any punishment applied on the body including assault or any means that are intended to cause physical injury or humiliation.

The lawfulness of corporal punishment is still a contentious issue to many societies including Ghana. From a pedagogical perspective, Ritchie and Ritchie



(1981) claimed that corporal punishment is an assault on the dignity of an individual and aggressive act upon the dignity of the teaching field.

McGrath (1991) opined that corporal punishment reflects a failure on the part of the teachers. Punishing means subjecting a penalty for an offence and usually includes inflicting some pain; in this regard, to Thomas and Peterson, a method of discipline in which, something unpleasant is used, or positive reinforces are withdrawn following behaviour so that it occurs less often in future. In general, these explanations seek to denote that corporal punishment is the use of physical force upon an individual. All these severe disciplinary measures adopted by authoritarian/totalitarian parents, teachers and school administrators to discipline children lead to antisocial behaviour and contribute to academic failure and social rejection.

#### **2.4 Discipline in and outside the Classroom**

In every classroom, there ought to be order. This order which is code of conduct, punishment and strategies put together to regulate the students is discipline and it impacts positively on the school environment. Discipline is concerned with the behaviour, habits, attitudes and actions of a student. Establishing a good relationship as a teacher or school manager with students is very crucial in promoting all the learning that is happening in the classroom and without the classroom, the school environment. The formation of this cordial relationship is an aspect of discipline. Discipline helps to maintain order even though it is sometimes gone through unwillingly by students.

For every civilised and well cultured society, discipline and nature go hand in hand. A society that is disciplined is calm and well organized but a society that

lacks discipline is chaotic. Discipline is achieved through motivation. When a child is motivated and is allowed to make his/her own choice, discipline becomes a natural way of life. In modern times, students equate discipline to rigidity and stiffness. They feel it is an encroachment or an infringement of their rights as freedom as world citizens. Discipline is neither under the umbrella of suppression or under the assertion of one's authority, rather it is another form of intrinsic motivation that helps that helps to control a person, his/her emotion and thus desires to live in an orderly manner. The universe in itself is disciplined that is why we have times and seasons. In school, teachers and school administrators exercise discipline from morning assembly, devotion, time table, uniforms, break time, break sessions, various competition and classroom teaching and learning (Blandford, 2003).

## **2.5 Prevalence of Corporal Punishment**

The prevalence of corporal punishment of children in schools remains high in the United States. Despite many education and other national groups calling for corporal punishment in schools to be banned, the United States is one of the rare industrialised countries allowing corporal punishment in 30 states (Greydanus *et al.*, 2003; Gershoff & Bitenski, 2007). In the United States of America, corporal punishment is legal in both public and private schools in nineteen (19) of its fifty (50) states. According to the Office of Civil Rights (2007), school officials, including instructors, administered corporal punishment to 223,190 school teenagers across the nation during the 2006-2007 school years (Poole, 1988). Experts note that there are about 1.5 million reported cases of physical punishment in school per year, but calculated the actual number to be at least 2-



3 million; as a result of such punishment, 10,000-20,000 students request subsequent medical treatment each year.8,9,12

During this same period, the top ten states for students being hit were, in order of highest to lowest frequency: Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, Missouri, and Florida (Pratt & Greydanus, 2000). Current researches indicate that physical punishment is more popular in kindergarten through eighth grade (versus high school), in rural schools (versus urban), in boys (versus girls), and disadvantaged as well as non-Caucasian children (versus middle-class and upper-class Caucasians) (Greydanus *et al.*, 2003). The lowest occurrence tends to be in those states and school districts that have outlawed corporal punishment (Gershoff & Bitenski, 2007; McClure & May, 2008).

Youth who attend rural southern schools and who are male or who are African-American are more likely to be victims of corporal punishment (Office for Civil Rights, 2007). In fact, according to data from the US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, African American students comprise 17% of all state school students in the U.S., but are 36% of those who are sufferers of corporal punishment; this is more than twice the rate of white students. Looking at facts from only the 13 states that punish more than 1,000 per year, African-American students make up 24.8 per cent of the student population but 35.9 per cent of those paddled. Additionally, almost 40% of all the cases of corporal punishment occur in just two states: Texas and Mississippi; also, if one adds Arkansas, Alabama, and Georgia, these five states account for almost three-quarters of all the children experiencing corporal punishment in schools (McClure & May, 2008). In Zimbabwe, corporal punishment in school is lawful and normal unlike

South Africa where the practice has been banned yet research reveals that it is still prevalent within many schools (Egwuyenga, 2009).

## **2.6 Reasons for using Corporal Punishment**

Proponents of school corporal punishment, hold the view that this kind of punishment could instantly deter students from wrong behaviours and help them teach better (Du Plessis, 2008). According to Du Plessis (2008), reasons for given punishment in schools could be grouped into two; teacher-based reasons and pupils'-based reasons which are related to my study. All of these reasons in some form affect many of our pupils and are usually interrelated as an adage goes, "Spare the rod, and spoil the child". Corporal punishment viewed as an efficient way to teach student correct behaviours and to make them study harder. By this, Johnson (2004) reports that many instructors usually carry out corporal punishment to sustain discipline in schools without the headmaster been made aware of it.

From research as well as newspaper editorials, it is obvious that some still view corporal punishment as having a place in education (Skinner Arcus, 2002). Many teachers believe that without corporal punishment classrooms are away from control. Moreover, they feel that they are not equipped with other options to adequately deal with classroom management, nor do they feel supported by appropriate education departments. On a global level, research findings unveil that teachers who received corporal punishment are highly liable to use it and approve of its usage (Jehle, 2004).

Traditionally, parents who consider corporal punishment as being the only vehicle for discipline are not supposed to object to teachers punishing their

children at school (Jehle, 2004). Some of the ideas that feed corporal punishment in schools could be either family-based or school-based. To begin with, the family-based factors, Zayed, (2007) suggest that families use punishment as the only means of reforming children's behaviour and raising them. Another factor that centres under the parasol of school is the instructor. It is clear to the understanding that some teachers are not competent enough to discipline students by any means other than corporal punishment (Moussa, & Al Ayesh, 2009). This could be followed to the fact that corporal punishment is thought of as being the only way to maintain teachers' respect (Salama, 2000). Traditionally, teachers utilise it for being the most popular means to control the class because they are not qualified on any other methods during the university time or later in the school, or they use corporal punishment for other purposes such as forcing students to pay school fees (charges) and extra classes. Research has been conducted into the use of corporal punishment in schools. Nevertheless, within the African context limited research such as that of Morell (2001) and Roos (2003) amongst others attempt to provide evidence of why the shift away from corporal punishment has been difficult for teachers. Gale *et al.*, (2004) warn that intimidation and bullying could cause psychological harm, to not only the victims but also bystanders. In addition to the psychological harm caused by violence or situations in which there is a menace of brutality, developmental harm may also transpire in the form of anxiety about the intimidations of the likely harm. When this occurs anxiety of this sort can disrupt the educational process. Developmental harm has been described as the harm that occurs due to events or conditions that preclude or inhibit pupils from

achieving their maximum physical, social or academic potential (Gale *et al.*, 2004).

In Egypt, one of the most recent successful projects launched by the Save the Children organisation that was efficiently piloted in four public schools in Alexandria is the project of Community-based Child Protection Pilot Project in Alexandria which started in 2007. It had the purpose of investigating, preventing, and reporting violations of child rights as stated in article 19 including erosion of corporal punishment. In this regard, the project managed to activate the role of social workers in schools, train teachers for alternative techniques for discipline, and hold sessions to parents and students to raise their awareness of child rights. The project runs jointly with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Family and Population. The project ended and is now in the process or renegotiation to be extended due to the minister change in 2010.

Agbenyega (2006) made a summarised statement on the practice of corporal punishment in two basic schools in the Greater Accra in Ghana. He found out that an overwhelming majority of the teachers (between 94 and 98 per cent) use corporal punishment to strengthen school discipline. The results show that the majority of the teachers in both school sites inflict corporal punishment to students who perform badly in academic work. This signifies that students with unique learning difficulties who are not officially known may be punished often for poor performance.

Another unusual perspective of this result is that a considerable quantity of teachers from all the schools registers their unwillingness to discontinue corporal punishment in their schools. Evidence from a study conducted among pupils, teachers and Ministry of Education (MOE) in Kenya by Human Rights Watch

(2007) showed that teachers continue to cane students while others rely on other forms of physical mortification such as standing in the hot sun with their hands in the air for several hours. Others include kneeling on the ground for extended periods, slapping and pinching. In some situations, physical abuse by teachers has led to severe and lasting injuries. Teachers also discipline children by giving them harsh tasks such as running long distances or uprooting tree stumps.

Alhassan (2012; 1993) identified sixty items of unacceptable behaviours which are classified as conduct problems (vandalism, fighting, disregards of the rights of other students, verbal abuse, verbally threatens teachers, rudeness, disrespecting teachers, and damages class furniture); personality problems (stealing, cheating at examinations, mid-school truancy, lateness, impoliteness, failure to do homework, non-completion of homework, temper tantrum); problems of emotional and social immaturity (restlessness, hyperactive and having a short attention span). Truancy is a disciplinary problem. It is one of the delinquencies perpetrated by youths in Nigeria that often leads to unacceptable acts such as maladjustment, poor academic performance, school drop-out and substance abuse (Alhassan, 1992; Adeloye, 2009). As a result, corporal punishment becomes a disciplinary method and measure in which a supervising adult deliberately inflicts pain upon a child in acknowledgement to a child's unacceptable behaviour or inappropriate language.

To buttress this position, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (2001) sees corporal punishment as 'any punishment in which physical force is used and expected to generate some level of pain or discomfort, however light.' The punishment is usually given either across the buttocks as

stated in the Student/Parent Information Guide and Code of Conduct, 2008 - 2009 or on the hands (Globe, Mail, & Toronto, 1971) with an implement mainly kept for the intention such as a rattan cane, wooden paddle, slipper, leather strap or a wooden yardstick. Less commonly, it could also include spanking or deliberately smacking the student on a particular part of the body with the open hand, notably at the elementary school level.

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2006) and Agbenyega (2006) suggest that corporal punishment in Ghanaian schools is a direct result of the beliefs, values and norms of Ghanaian society; historical precedents and the legacy of power-oriented teacher education in which pupils are expected to understand without question what is transmitted to them by their master (teacher).

## **2.7 Mental health outcomes**

Corporal punishment adverse physical, psychological and educational outcomes including, increased aggressive and destructive behaviour, increased disruptive classroom behaviour, vandalism, poor school achievement, reduced attention span, increased dropout rate, school avoidance and school phobia, low self-esteem, anxiety, somatic complaints, depression, suicide and retaliation against teacher (Poole *et al.*, 1991). This sector is less visible but it is very devastating. There are people who develop internalising problems such as depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety and other mental health concerns that are not properly addressed. According to Strauss (1991), mental health problems associated with physical punishment comes from anger that has been suppressed during



childhood because the child was hit by an adult who was supposed to be depended on for love and nurture but could not retaliate immediately.

The use of corporal punishment affects children beyond temporary pain inflicted. Severe psychological and emotional problems have been found to occur in children who have been the target of corporal punishment. These effects can influence one's life well into adulthood (Gershoff, 2002). Moreover, Gershoff (2002) revealed that corporal punishment had been associated with poorer mental health (i.e. depression, substance use, suicidal tendency and low self-esteem) in childhood and adulthood. A positive association has been discovered between the use of corporal punishment and psychological distress, specifically depressive symptoms. Students who witness or are sufferers of corporal punishment in school are at the prospect of developing a range of psychosocial predicaments, including depression, suicidal ideation and anxiety (Turner & Finkelhor, 1996). Corporal punishment has been determined to be a risk factor for future development of antisocial and violent behaviour (Straus & Mouradian, 1998). He also stated that the long-term use of corporal punishment leads to increase the probability of deviant and antisocial behaviours, such as aggression; adolescent delinquency and violent acts inside and outside the school (Straus, 1991).

Corporal punishment breeds psychological damages that are reflected certainly on the child's self-esteem and self-confidence and having other adverse long-term personality effects (UNICEF, 2007). A study found out the adverse side effects of punishment cover running away; being truant; fearing teachers or school; feeling high levels of anxiety, incompetence, and humiliation; and being aggressive or destructive at home and school (Griffin, Robinson & Carpenter,

2000). A research unveiled that corporal punishment affects child by inflicting not only physical pain but also mental harassment, feeling of helplessness, worthlessness, depression, aggression, shame and self-doubt, guilt, social withdrawal, feeling of inferiority, rigidity, lowered self-esteem, stress and intensified anxiety which may reduce his/her self-confidence (Pandey, 2001). Moreover, adolescents who have experienced corporal punishment exhibit higher levels of depression and sentiments of hopelessness as well as a developed propensity to use violence (DuRant *et al.*, 1994). Goodman *et al.* (1998) confirms this assertion that Children with behaviour, anxiety, or disruptive disorders are more likely to describe previous harsh physical punishment.

## 2.8 Physical health outcomes

An analysis of research on physical punishment of children over the past 20 years indicates that such punishment is potentially harmful to their long-term development ((Andero & Stewart, 2002; Gershoff, 2008). A study conducted by Gershoff (2008) shows that physical punishment is associated with increases in delinquency, antisocial behaviour, and aggression in children, and decreases in the quality of the parent-child relationship, children's mental health, and children's capacity to internalize socially acceptable behaviour. Adults who have been subjected to physical punishment as children are more likely to abuse their own child or spouse and to manifest criminal behaviour.

A study conducted in United State by Katherine and Aucoin, (2006) to assess the corporal punishment and child adjustment and found that use of corporal punishment was associated with problems in both emotional and behavioural adjustment. However, these associations were strongest for children who



experienced high levels of corporal punishment, for children who were impulsive, and for children who did not experience a warm and supportive family climate.

## 2.9 Educational outcomes

The use of corporal punishment in schools is related to damaging physical and psychological outcomes that can influence some children for the rest of their lives. Emotional trauma from corporal punishment comprises of deterioration in family life, as parents were forced to withdraw students from school and resort to home-schooling, depression, and an increase of violent behaviours (Dupper & Dingus, 2008). A study revealed that nearly one-half of students who are subjected to severe punishment contract an ailment called Educationally Induced Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (EIPSD). In this dysfunction, there is symptomatology analogous to the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). As with PTSD, EIPSD can be identified by a varying combination of symptoms typical of depression and anxiety. This mental health imbalance is caused by significant stress; with EIPSD the stress is the inflicted punishment (Hyman *et al.*, 1996).

The student who suffered corporal punishment had trouble in sleeping, fatigue, feelings of sadness and worthlessness, suicidal ideas, anxiety episodes, increased anger with feelings of resentment and outbursts of aggression. Others include deteriorating peer relationships, difficulty with concentration, lowered school achievement, antisocial behaviour, intense dislike of authority, somatic complaints, the tendency for school avoidance, school drop-out, and other evidence of negative high-risk adolescent behaviour (Greydanus, 2003).

Moreover, dismissing or sending away a student from class and physically punishing them raise the percentage of students leaving school before the school day finishes (Wasef, 2011). It should be noted that corporal punishment in schools is interrelated with many other social difficulties that are not the primary concern in this research. For instance, corporal punishment in schools has a direct relation to increasing the number of street children (UNICEF, 2002). The use of canes also symbolises the teacher's power over students. The Society for Adolescent (2003) and Straus (2000) have shown a correlation between the use of corporal punishment and increased in school truancy, dropout rate, violence and vandalism. This is also supported by Roussow (2003) who explains that a student who is punished regularly show symptoms of poor academic performance, dejection in studies and have poor participation in the whole process of teaching and learning.

Agbenyaga (2006) adds that corporal punishment does not achieve the end-a culture of teaching and learning in schools because; it does not build a culture of human right, tolerance and respect, stop bad behaviours, not nurture self-discipline rather aggression and revenge attitude. Again, corporal punishment does not inculcate a sense of responsibility to students instead creates fear; it breaks teacher-pupil relationship which results in pupil truancy and unwillingness to attend or go to school.

It is now globally recognized that corporal punishment in any form or kind in school comes in the way of the development of the full potential of children (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, 2010). It could be inferred that although corporal punishment is used in schools with the purpose of controlling the students' behaviour and discipline, data above prove that it

produces an adverse effect of what it is meant to achieve particularly student's deferral from school and failure (2004), school dropouts (Mansour, & Khalil, 2008) and damage to school assets (Moussa, & Al Ayesh, 2009). Additionally, there is no clear evidence that corporal punishment will lead to better control in the classroom, enhance moral character development in children, or increase the students' respect for teachers or other authority figures.

According to Morrel (2000), corporal punishment has an influence on school attendance. There are students who remain absent from school due to corporal punishment and when they stay away for long, it finally causes them to withdraw from school. This assertion is supported by Peretomode (1992) who says corporal punishment is cruel and inhuman, unreasonable corporal punishment is too difficult to prove in court, and corporal punishment is a potential door that is used to abuse children.

### **2.10 Human Development**

The term human development may be defined to look at the expansion of human capabilities, a wide variety or an array of choices, an enhancement of freedom and a fulfilment of human rights. In 1990, the first UNDP report that was published stated that: "The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives". That same report defined human development as "a process of enlarging people's choices. From the definition of human development, the following are identified as critical: leading a long and healthy life, being educated, and enjoying a decent standard of living.

Development looks at a progressive series of changes that occur in an orderly predictable manner influenced by maturation and experience. According to Erik Erickson (1998), who was a student of Sigmund Freud developmental change in humans happens through the following stages: Infancy; from birth to eighteen (18) months, Early Childhood; from 18 months to three (3) years, Middle Childhood; from three (3) years to five (5) years, late childhood; from five (5) years to twelve (12) years, Adolescence; from twelve (12) years to twenty (20) years, Early Adulthood; from twenty (20) years to thirty(30) years, Mature Adulthood; from thirty(30) years to sixty-five (65) years and Old Age; from sixty-five (65) years till death. For each of these stages, Erickson gives certain characteristics. He refers to the Infant stage as the age of trust and mistrust because for him, this is where the infant's caretaker anticipates and fulfils the need of the infant to cause the infant to trust him or her. If the infant fails to get the needed support he or she requires from the caretaker, he or she develops mistrust. Either ways, the trust or mistrust that has been learned by the infant has an effect on his or her personality in the future. The Early Childhood stage for Erickson is where the crisis of autonomy versus doubt is faced. The child is eager to acquire new skills at this point. If the child is in an extremely permissive environment, and the child encounters difficulties that cannot be handled by him or her, the child develops doubts about his or her capabilities. Similarly, if there is severe external interference, the child feels worthless and also doubts his or her capabilities. To help in proper development, it is advised that caretakers take a middle position, respect the child's environment and constantly give the child attention. In middle childhood, the childhood, the childhood is faced with the crisis of initiative and guilt. When the child's caretaker recognises the creative

effort of the child in attempting to exercise his independence, it is advisable to encourage the child rather than continuous discouragement which will cause the child to develop feelings of guilt. In late childhood, the child is looking at developing a feeling of competence. The caretaker's contribution at this stage is to guide the child to take tasks that are appropriate to contribute to industrious behaviour if not the child will develop feelings of inferiority. Adolescence is a transitioning period. This stage according to Stanley Hall is best described as a period of "storms and stress". They should be more encouragement to help the child develop a sense of identity if not the child will suffer from role or identity confusion. In Early Adulthood, most people are faced with the crisis of intimacy versus isolation. These problems are solved by love, affection and family support so that the individual will lead a normal life and not that of alienation and isolation. Mature Adulthood comes with the crises of generativity versus stagnation. The individual at this stage is concerned with the well-being of humanity rather than being selfish. If this goal is not achieved, then the individual feels disappointed and stagnant. The last stage of human development for Erickson is Old Age. This is the stage where people's abilities have become limited. The crises at this stage is integrity versus despair. This crisis is solved when the person finds meaning in certain goals or even in suffering. At every stage, there is a disciplinary measure that is associated with it (Erikson, 1998).

### **2.11 Corporal Punishment and Child development.**

Spanking, is one of the methods of correcting the behaviour of children since the beginning of time (Scot, 1996). People from various quarters have called for parents to stop spanking their children but it has been met with fierce battles

from various quarters (Dobson, 1992; Baumarind, Larzelere, & Cowan, 2002) in 2010, UNICEF reported that half of the children in a 33- country survey have been physical punished by their parents (UNICEF, 2010).

In 1978, Vygotsky did a study and said that Corporal punishment is associated with the aggression of children and other anti-social behaviour towards their siblings, playmates, their parents and other adults. He also added that corporal punishment has the ability to legitimise violence amongst children. This could affect their interpersonal relationships because they tend to internalise the social relations they experience. If they view the method of punishment as abusive then they will internalise violence and exhibit it at a later time. Regardless of how high or low corporal punishment is regarded, it can negatively impact on the social behaviour of the child.

Strauss (2001) does not only believe in corporal punishment negatively affecting the social life of the child but the cognitive as well; corporal punishment cognitive effects as well. Gershoff (2002) did a meta-analysis study but did not include in his studies any link to prove whether or not corporal punishment has cognitive effects on the child. Seven different studies located by Smith, 2005 show that there is actually a relationship between harsh discipline and poor academic performance and cognitive development.

For people who are against spanking, they believe that it is ineffective in changing children's behaviour. It also contributes to unintended and undesirable outcomes that can be viewed as adverse side effects. Prominent associations such as the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP, 2012) The American Humane Association, American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP, 1998), the National Association of Paediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP,



2011), and the National Association of Social Workers. Even though these professional bodies have issued official policy statements, several other leading organizations who work with and on behalf of children endorsed a report that was commissioned by the Phoenix Children's Hospital asking parents to move away from spanking and replace it with non-punitive discipline (Gershoff, 2008).

### **2.12 Corporal Punishment and Human Rights**

In unison, human rights advocates are of the view that corporal punishment violates internationally recognised human rights to freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment and freedom from physical violence. For them the case of corporal punishment goes against the prohibition of discriminating against children when it comes to education. As far back as November 1959, the United Nations Assembly adopted the declaration on the Right of the Child, which recognized that, "the child by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection before as well as after birth".

All these are looking at the issue of corporal punishment from the lens of teachers, school administrators and policy makers leaving out the central/focal point; students. What are the receivers; students, saying about how corporal punishment is helping or not helping them. Atkins (2002) also asserted that students who show the highest frequency of behavioural problems not only maintain their problems throughout the entire time they are in school, but are also those who receive the most discipline and have academic and behavioural deficit.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the framework of the methodology the researcher used in the study. It discusses the study area, methods used to collect data looking at the research design, the data sources, sample size, data collection instrument, sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### 3.2 Study Area

The research was conducted in one of the four secondary schools in the La Dade Kotopon Municipality of the Greater Accra Region; Labone Senior High School. Other senior high schools in the municipality are; Forces Senior High School, Burma- Camp, Presbyterian Secondary School, La (La Presec) and St Thomas Aquinas Senior High School.

The following are some areas that make up the Municipality: La, Labone, Cantonments, East Cantonments, Tse Addo and South La. Labone Secondary school is located a few metres away from the famous Osu Children's Home in the Municipality.

#### 3.3 Research Design

The researcher's aim was to look at the phenomena under discussion in order to give a precise description of the influence of corporal punishment and its continuous relevance in the lives of the respondents. The study was designed to find out what students think the influence of corporal punishment is on their discipline within and without the school walls and human development. The



researchers employed the non- probability research design owing to the qualitative nature of the research. Descriptive research design is used when one wants to get information on the current status of a person or an object. It is used to describe what is in existence in respect to conditions or variables that are found in a given instrument This design was very good and convenient because it helped the researcher to describe the existing situation by asking respondents to respond to questions in order to gather data to draw successful evaluations.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The target population for the study include all senior secondary school students in the La Dade Kotopon Municipal Assembly. There are 4 senior high schools in the municipality. Each school had an equal chance of participating in the study but due to the homogenous characteristics of the respondents, – they are all in schools where some form of corporal punishment is administered- first year and final year students of senior high school students in the area, the researcher had to choose one school to help the study.

### **3.5 Sample Size**

Labone Senior High School was selected because of the nature of the school. It is a coeducational that admits students for both day and boarding. This characteristic is not found in any other school in the Municipality. A sample size of four hundred and seven (407) respondents comprising of four hundred (400) students and seven (7) disciplinary teachers were used for the research.

### 3.6 Sampling Method

When the school was selected, the researcher further wrote down all the classes under the various programmes and put them in pots (Pot 1- General Arts, Pot 2- Business, Pot 3 – General Science, Pot 4- Visual Arts, and Pot 5 – Home Economics). The following classes were selected from the pots General Arts 3, Business 2, General Science 2, Visual Arts 1 and Home Economics 1

### 3.7 Data Collection Instrument

In order to capture the best and useful data for the study, a self-developed questionnaire was the main research instruments for the study. The researcher considered the use of questionnaires because questionnaires can be used to capture large amounts of data while the interviews were used to due to their ability to capture information that would otherwise not be captured by questionnaires. The questionnaire was chosen because members of the targeted population were considered to be functional literates which will minimize the interpretation of the questions for their understanding to capture reliable information.

Other reasons why questionnaires were used was that, many people can be tested quickly, it eased the generation of quantitative data and analysis through the use of software package and also it has limited effect to validity and reliability of results. Each questionnaire had on it, instructions that clearly explained the purposes of the study. The questionnaires divided into sections; personal information of respondents, students' perception on the usefulness of corporal punishment in enhancing their learning discipline in secondary schools, students' perceptions on the contribution of corporal punishment in shaping their

behaviour in secondary schools and students' perception on how corporal punishment enhances students' self-control in society.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Prior to the administering of the questionnaire, permission was sought from the school authorities after which a briefing was done with the questionnaires. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality regarding the information that they provided. On the part of the questionnaire the randomly selected students were required to answer the questionnaire. The researcher administered the instruments to the respondents with the help of some friends. The respondents were given ample time to respond to the questions. Clarifications sought by the respondents were addressed by the researcher. The questionnaires were collected by the researcher and aides as soon as they were completed by the respondents. This ensured an achievement of a good return rate.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data from completed questionnaire was statistically analysed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS- version 21) was used as an aid in coding and processing the raw data for interpretation.

The processed data was represented on frequency tables to describe the data from the questionnaire. Prior to that, the researcher sorted all data sets according to topics, themes, and issues important to the study. The researcher then analysed the codes and identified common emerging themes.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Presentation of Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is going to discuss the data collected by the researchers with the aid of the questionnaires. The data was analysed item by item and the discussion will follow the same format. During analyses, answers found to be close were put together and analysed for effective discussion. The data has been tabulated in percentages for better understanding.

#### 4.2 Background information of the Students' Respondents

Table 1 shows the various programmes of study of the respondents, 16.8% of the respondents (67) offer Business, 19.2 % of the students (77) offer General Arts, 11.8% of them (47) offer Visual Arts, 17.0 % (68) offer Home Economics, 21.5% (86) offer General Science and 13.8% (55) offer Agricultural Science.

**Table1: Programme of Study of Respondents**

Description	No.	%
Business	67	16.8
General Arts	77	19.2
Visual Arts	47	11.8
Home Economics	68	17.0
General Science	86	21.5
Agricultural Science	55	13.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data 2019

Table 2 shows the age categories of the respondents. Per the age distribution of Ghana with regards to formal education, most people are in secondary school by the age of 15. Most of the respondents fall within the 16-17 age brackets; 64.8%. the number of respondents who fall between the ages of 14-15 is slightly lower than those between the ages of 20 and above; 7.5% and 8.5% respectively. The second highest age range of respondents is 18-19; they represent a percentage of 19.2. it is only fair that most of the respondents, a little above 90% are under the age of 20 years.

**Table 2: Respondents' Age**

Description	No.	%
14-15	30	7.5
16-17	259	64.8
18-19	77	19.2
20 and above	34	8.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 3 shows that 47% of the respondents are males and 53% of them are females implying that more females than males took part in the study.

**Table 3: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Description	No.	%
Males	188	47
Females	212	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From table 4, boarders who took part in the study represent 46.8% of the total population while day students represent 53.2% of the population. Thus, further tells us that more day students than boarders took part in the study. This is true as the study area has more day students than boarders.

**Table 4: Residential Status of Respondents**

Description	No.	%
Boarding	187	46.8
Day	213	53.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

During the study there were only form 1 and 3 students in school. Table 5 shows that Form 1 students who took part in the study represent 44.3% while Form 3 students represent 55.7%; a little more than half of the population were form 3 students. The background data of the respondents is to provide a fair knowledge as to who really formed the respondents.

**Table 5: Form of Respondents**

Description	No.	%
Form 1	223	44.3
Form 3	177	55.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 6 shows that less than half of the respondents are from one of the three main religions in Ghana (Christianity, Islam and West African Traditional

Religion). A little less than half of the respondents; 48% of the respondents identify with the Christian religion while 43.3% of the respondents identify with Islam. The remaining 3.7% do not identify with either of the two religions mentioned.

**Table 6: Religion of Respondents**

Description	No.	%
Christians	192	48
Muslims	173	43.3
Others	35	8.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From Table 7, it is evident that when it comes to discipline, thirteen (13) teachers are involved. Even though it is not an equal representation of both sexes, the number of females involved is an appreciable number. 61.5% of the people responsible for discipline are males while the remaining 38.5% are females.

**Table 7: Sex distribution of teachers as respondents.**

Description	No.	%
Male	8	61.5
Female	5	38.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From Table 8, it can be deduced that only one of the teachers representing 7.8% on the disciplinary committee has been at post for a year. For three of the teachers, representing 23.0% they have been at post for between two (2) to ten (10) years. Majority of the teachers, representing 69.2% have been at post for



more than ten (10) years. One of the teachers who was interviewed is not a teacher but rather a library assistant who because is committed to students' discipline has been put on the committee.

**Table 8: Number of years teachers have been teaching.**

Description	No.	%
A year or less	1	7.8
2-10 years	3	23.0
More than 10 years	9	69.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

#### 4.3 Students Perception about Usefulness of Corporal Punishment

The researcher asked four questions to help answer research question one, thus there are four tables under this section. From Table 9, 25.8% of the respondents that is a quarter of the respondents strongly agree that corporal punishment is good for the purpose of discipline. A little more than half; 55.2% agree that corporal punishment is good for the purpose of discipline. For 7.0% of the respondents they disagree with the statement while 12.0% strongly disagree that corporal punishment is good for the purposes of discipline. Thus a total of 81% of the respondents agree that when it comes to discipline, corporal punishment is good.

**Table 9: Corporal punishment is good for the purposes of discipline**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	103	25.8
Agree	221	55.2

Disagree	28	7.0
Strongly Disagree	48	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From Table 10, less than a quarter of the respondents; 21.0% are strongly of the opinion that corporal punishment teaches the student respect for authority while a little less than half; 47.8% agree that corporal punishment teaches the student respect for authority. A little over 30%; 31.2% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree, 19.2% and 12.0%, respectively, with this opinion. Most of the respondents think that corporal punishment teaches student to respect authority.

**Table 10: Corporal punishment teaches the student to respect authority**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	84	21.0
Agree	191	47.8
Disagree	77	19.2
Strongly Disagree	48	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From Table 11, 19.0% of the respondents strongly agree that corporal punishment is an attack on students. Almost one third of the respondents; 32.2% and 33.0%, agree and disagree respectively that corporal punishment is an attack on students. For those who strongly disagree, the make 15.8% of the respondents. A total of 65.2% of the respondents think that corporal punishment is an attack on students.

**Table 11: Corporal punishment is an attack on students**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	76	19.0
Agree	129	32.2
Disagree	132	33.0
Strongly Disagree	63	15.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Various types of corporal punishment are employed in Ghanaian schools and for the respondents, the respondents highlighted three of the most popular ones; caning, kneeling, and slapping; they experience in school. More than half of the respondents (58.2%) labelled canning as the commonest (see Table 12). This is followed by kneeling which 23.5% of the respondents say happen. For slapping, 13.5% mentioned it as the commonest form of punishment. 13.5% agree that a combination of both caning and kneeling is common. Only 0.2% of the respondents said that caning and slapping are common. For the remaining 1.2%, Kneeling and slapping are very common types of corporal punishment used.

**Table 12: Types of corporal punishment employed in the school**

Description	No	%
Caning	233	58.2
Kneeling	94	23.5
Slapping	13	3.2
Caning and Kneeling	54	13.5
Caning and Slapping	1	0.2

Kneeling and Slapping	5	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

#### 4.4 Students Perception on the Contribution of Corporal Punishment in Shaping Behaviour

Table 13 shows the frequency of corporal punishment employed by the teachers of the respondents. A little more than half (51.2%) of the respondents say that corporal punishment is sometimes used by their teachers. This means that the use of corporal punishment is with a certain level of discretion. 13.5% of the respondents say their teachers almost always makes use of corporal punishment. For those whose teachers rarely or almost never employ corporal punishment, they are 29.2%, 15.7% more than those whose teachers use it often. For 6.0% of the respondents, their teachers never employ corporal punishment.

**Table 13: How frequent does your teacher employ corporal punishment?**

Description	No.	%
Often	54	13.5
Sometimes	205	51.2
Rarely	117	29.2
Never	24	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 14 looks at how frequent the respondents have been punished. For half of the respondents; 50.5%, they are rarely punished while a quarter of them, 25.5%, say they are sometimes punished. A little less than a quarter of the respondents are on the extremes, often and never. 9.0% are punished often while the remaining 15.0% are never punished.

**Table 14: Frequency of student's punishment**

Description	No.	%
Often	36	9.0
Sometimes	102	25.5
Rarely	202	50.5
Never	60	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 15 states when last respondents received or tasted any form of corporal punishment. The highest category is the category of respondents who say they last received corporal punishment over a year ago. They make up 40.0% of the respondents. The remaining 60.0% last received corporal punishment, the previous week- 19.8%, last month-18.5%, and six months ago- 21.8%.

**Table 15: Most recent taste of corporal punishment**

Description	No.	%
Last week	79	19.8

Last Month	74	18.5
Six months ago	87	21.8
A year ago	160	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Source field data 2019

The researcher sought to find out from respondents if they think that corporal punishment was a means by which teachers vent out their anger on students. From Table 16, 35.0% of the respondents disagree to this and they make the majority they are followed closely by the category of respondents who agree to this statement;28.0%. for those at the extreme ends, the difference is only 0.6%. 18.8% strongly agree while 18.2% strongly disagree. A total of 53.2% of the respondents agree that corporal punishment allows teachers to vent out their anger on students.

**Table 16: Corporal punishment allows teachers to vent their frustrations on students**

Description	No.	%
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Strongly Agree	75	18.8
Agree	112	28.0
Disagree	140	35.0
Strongly Disagree	73	18.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 17 looks at whether the respondents think that corporal punishment is the most effective tool when it comes to discipline. 40.8% of the respondents agree to the statement while 29.2% disagree. The remaining 30.0% includes those who strongly agree and strongly disagree. They are 10.5% and 19.5% respectively.

**Table 17: Corporal punishment is the most effective discipline tool**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	42	10.5
Agree	163	40.8
Disagree	117	29.2
Strongly Disagree	78	19.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From table 18, 31.5% of the respondents are of the view that corporal punishment allows teachers to assault students. For 28.8% of the respondents, they disagree with this statement. The number of respondents that strongly agree and strongly disagree are almost the same. 19.8% strongly agree to this while 20.0% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

**Table 18: Corporal punishment allows teachers to assault students**



Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	79	19.8
Agree	126	31.5
Disagree	115	28.8
Strongly Disagree	80	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data 2019

Character formation contributes to development and from table 19, 41.2% of the respondents are of the view that corporal punishment contributes to good character formation. 29.5% of the respondents disagree with this statement. 21.0% of the respondents strongly agree while less than 10% of the respondents, 8.2%, of the respondents strongly disagree.

**Table 19: Corporal punishment contributes to good character formation**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	84	21.0
Agree	165	41.2
Disagree	118	29.5
Strongly Disagree	33	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data 2019

From table 20, 41.5% which is 8.5% less than half of the respondents say they agree that corporal punishment is an attack on students by teachers. 21.5% disagree to this. 19.5% of the respondents strongly agree that corporal punishment is an attack on students by teachers.

**Table 20: Corporal punishment is an attack on students**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	78	19.5
Agree	166	41.5
Disagree	86	21.5
Strongly Disagree	70	17.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data 2019

In table 21, 41.2% of the respondents disagree that corporal punishment helps build a harmonious relationship between students and teachers. A quarter of the respondents plus 0.8% say they agree that corporal punishment helps build a harmonious relationship between students and teachers (25.8%). For 22.5%, they strongly disagree with the statement while the remaining 10.5% strongly agree with the statement.

**Table 21: Corporal punishment helps build a harmonious relationship between students and teachers**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	42	10.5
Agree	103	25.8
Disagree	165	41.2
Strongly Disagree	90	22.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

In table 22, 41.2% of the respondents agree that students feel threatened when corporal punishment is used. 29.5% disagree while 6.2% strongly disagree that

students feel threatened when corporal punishment is used. The remaining 23.0% strongly agree that when corporal punishment is used, students feel threatened.

**Table 22: Students feel threatened when corporal punishment is used**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	92	23.0
Agree	165	41.2
Disagree	118	29.5
Strongly Disagree	25	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

From table 23, 33.8% of the respondents agree that when corporal punishment is administered by a male teacher, it humiliates the female student at the receiving end. For 31.0% of the respondents, they disagree with the statement. Meanwhile 22.5% of the respondents strongly agree with 12.8% strongly disagreeing to the statement that female students are humiliated when corporal punishment is meted out to a female by a male teacher.

**Table 23: Female students are humiliated when corporal punishment is administered by a male teacher**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	90	22.5
Agree	135	33.8
Disagree	124	31.0
Strongly Disagree	51	12.8

<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>
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Source: Field Data, 2019

From table 24, 40.5% of the respondents disagree that male students are humiliated when corporal punishment is meted out to them by female teachers. For 24.8% of the respondents, they agree that male students are humiliated when a female teacher employs corporal punishment. For 22.8% of the respondents, they strongly agree while the remaining 12.0% of the respondents strongly disagree to the statement. This means that a total number of 46.8% of the respondents feel that when a female teacher administers corporal punishment to a male student, he is humiliated. More than half of the respondents, 53.2% do not agree at all to this. To them, male students are not humiliated when female teachers administer corporal punishment to male students.

**Table 24: Male students are humiliated when corporal punishment is administered by a female teacher**

<b>Description</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly Agree	91	22.8
Agree	99	24.8
Disagree	162	40.5
Strongly Disagree	48	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

In schools, teachers are mainly the administrators of corporal punishment. From Table 25, a total of 58.0% of the respondents, strongly agree and disagree (29.0% respectively) that regardless of who (male or female) administers corporal punishment the student finds it humiliating. For 35.0%, they agree that it is

humiliating whether a male or female administers corporal punishment. For less than 10.0% of the respondents, 6.2% they strongly disagree. For them whether a male or female teacher administers it, it is not humiliating.

**Table 25: Regardless of who administers corporal punishment it is humiliating**

Description	No.	%
Strongly Agree	116	29.0
Agree	143	35.8
Disagree	116	29.0
Strongly Disagree	25	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2019

Table 26 tackles one of the biggest if not the biggest question when it comes to corporal punishment; its abolishment. Four of the respondents representing 1.0% of the respondents are not sure as to whether corporal punishment should or should not be abolished. The percentage of respondents who want corporal punishment abolished are 0.8% more than those who do not want corporal punishment to be abolished. (49.8% and 49.0% respectively. One of the respondents representing 0.2 could not make his or her mind on whether it should be abolished or not.

Before the discussion of research questions 3 and 4, the background data of the respondents (teachers) will be discussed.

**Table 26: Corporal punishment should be abolished.**

Description	No.	%
Yes	199	49.8
Maybe	4	1.0
No	196	49.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>99.8</b>

Source: Field Data 2019

#### **4.5 Disciplinary Measures Adopted by School Administrators and Teachers to Shape Students' Learning Outcome**

Three questions were asked teachers to help the researcher answer this question. Most of the respondents were of the view that in the last five years the effectiveness of corporal punishment has not been as effective as it used to be mostly because parents were not supportive of this kind of punishment but nonetheless it has proven effective in homes where parents have been supportive and students themselves understand that the punishment is a means to reform not harm or in extreme cases not to show them hatred. One of the respondents said that for students coming from particular areas corporal punishment is really not the way for them as they have 'outgrown' corporal punishment and suggested that more stringent forms of punishment be employed. All that needs to make it effective is that the student understands why he is being punished so as to make the punishment effective and achieve its result.

The respondents were further asked what other methods can be used to discipline students apart from corporal punishment.



The respondents view corporal punishment as the most effective but suspension- both internal and external- coupled with counselling, painting especially for those who write on the walls and some masonry work for those who scale the wall. Scrubbing and working at the school's dump site could also be used instead of the corporal punishment.

For one of the respondents she is of the view that weeding should not be included because: *When students are asked to weed they make fun of the Agricultural Science students. They make the students feel that their programme of study is a punishment. These utterances make the teachers who teach them struggle because day in day out their teachers need to psyche them up and if this also adds up, the teachers work ends up been frustrating rather than enjoyable besides it is tiring giving this type of punishment as the teacher in charge has to inspect the progress of the punishment. Mind you we have large classes and the work load keeps increasing by the day so sometimes adding some of these responsibilities to our normal schedules is a bit uncomfortable.*

After the respondents mentioned other methods that could be used to discipline students in the stead of corporal punishment, they were asked if the methods are effective in shaping students behaviours?

Most of the respondents are of the view that this has not been helpful as students see these other types of punishment as a way to avoid classes as most of the students who are usually in 'trouble' do not enjoy sitting in class.

The final question in this section was if the school administration is sometimes faced with police cases.

Fortunately, the school administration has not recorded any police case in its use of corporal punishment. What is common is parents and ‘thugs’ coming to the school to attack teachers who met out punishment or who take students who have erred to the disciplinary committee. It is the school administration that cautions such people not to attack else they will report to the police and that ‘kills’ the case. The punishment can be carried out by the student or in worse cases, parents who are not in agreement with the punishment are advised to withdraw their wards. The latter is not common though.

#### **4.6 Policy Implementation On Students’ Development and Discipline Behavior?**

Students go to school not only to acquire reading and writing skills also it is expected that they go in and come out as better people. Everything in Ghana is governed and protected by laws so is teaching and all that which happens in school. The respondents are of the view that the government and stakeholders should be consulted before corporal punishment is banned totally. The government and its agencies in charge of education are trumpeting the ban on corporal punishment but they have not put alternative measures in place. The structures are just not working. More and more students are littering in and out of the school and do not find anything wrong with it. These students go back into the society with this ‘lawlessness’ and the government is still trumpeting and is still insistence on the ban? education goes beyond the certificate, the individual should be fully developed at every stage and corporal punishment will contribute better to this development.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the summary of the entire study carried out, the major findings and makes recommendations for further study.

#### 5.2 Summary of Findings

After careful analysis of our data collected with the aid of the questionnaire and interview guide, some findings were observed. Most of the students, 68%, are of the view that corporal punishment teaches them respect for authority and helps monitor their discipline effectively. To them corporal punishment is the best punishment method. Even though Corporal punishment is the best punishment method, 51.2% of the respondents agree it permits teachers to attack students. Caning and kneeling are the most common types of corporal punishments that students experience in and outside the classroom; in the school environment according to 81.7% of the respondents. Even though teachers employ the use of corporal punishment as a discipline tool, they use it sparingly so most of the students do not experience corporal punishment. More than half of the

respondents, 74.7%, last experienced corporal punishment six months ago or more.

The students are of the view that corporal punishment is not an avenue for teachers to vent their anger. Even though corporal punishment is not an attack, they believe that teachers use corporal punishment to assault students. The laws of Ghana should make provisions so that recalcitrant students can be taken into deformatory custody. Security personnel should be detailed to the various Senior high schools to occasionally conduct a snoop in order to keep some of the students in check.

## 5.2 Conclusion

From the findings of the study some conclusions have been drawn. Students are of the view that corporal punishments help to make them responsible citizens as it deters students from making certain mistakes and even if they should make the mistake, it prevents them from repeating those mistakes. They believe that it has an effect on discipline but then instead of abolishing and striking it out, it should be used sparingly and monitored by the head of the school or people be put in place to monitor it. For others corporal punishment should be the last option. It should only be used after all disciplinary methods have been explored. For others, the complete absence of corporal punishment will make students go wayward.

The teachers acknowledged some of the negative effects of corporal punishment, but most of them believed the benefits outweighed the negatives, which in turn led them to perceive corporal punishment as beneficial in managing classrooms with forty (40) or more students. From the research, it seems that most

proponents of corporal punishment support it because it mainly to make people comply. is that what should be? No! what happens when corporal punishment is no longer been employed? Does it mean the individual can no longer comply? Unfortunately, punishment is only effective in keeping away behaviours deemed inappropriate. Children come to comply because they fear that their possessions; toys, privileges, preferences and even safety and well-being will be taken away, revoked or used against them respectively. Children mostly comply not because they understand but because they do not a choice.

### **5.3 Recommendation for Practice**

Based on the findings of conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service should revisit the issue of corporal punishment and listen to the students who do not wish its complete absence from the school training. It should and can be combined with other ways to make students better citizens of the country and the world at large.
2. Teachers should administer corporal punishment in a much kinder and loving way so students do not see it as an attack on them.
3. In the case of corporal punishment, parents ought to realise that they are partners with teachers in the training of their children and not attack teachers when they administer corporal punishment.
4. For parents who do want corporal punishment to be administered by teachers against their wards, they should be willing to cooperate with

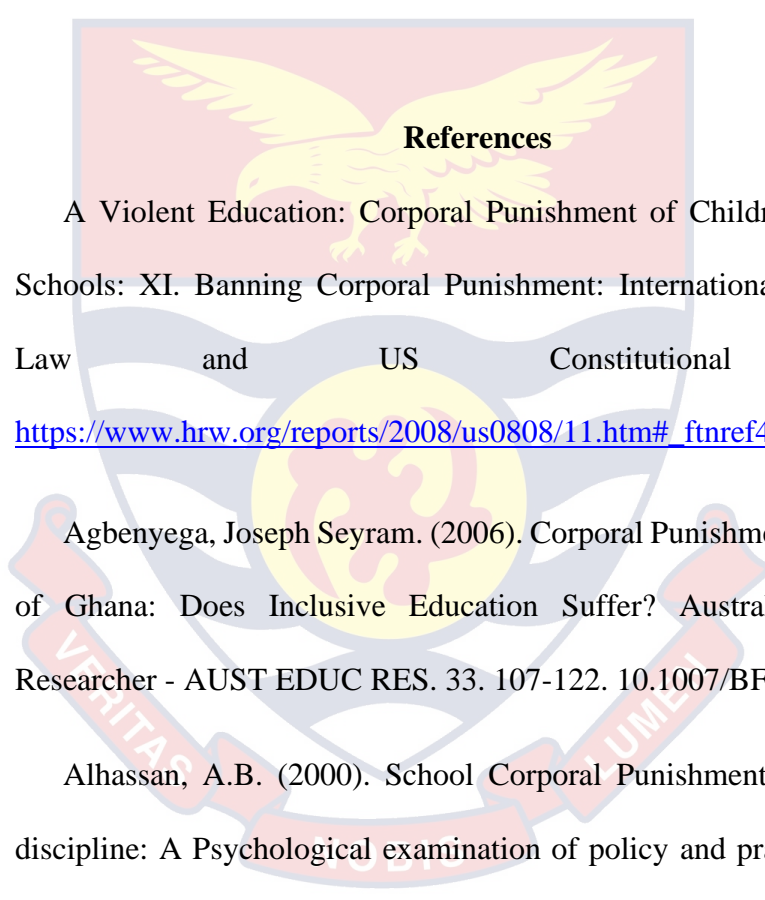
school administrators on other ways of punishing their wards when they are found on the wrong side of the law.

5. More counsellors should be employed and counselling centres in the schools be better equipped to deal with students who fall foul of the law.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

The study looked at students' perception on the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline and human development. Other researchers can focus on the perception of parents on the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline and human development. Researchers could also turn their interest to finding out teachers' perception on the effect of corporal punishment to discipline and academic performance. Research can be carried out is the contribution of corporal punishment to teaching and learning of a particular subject- English, Mathematics, General Science-. The effects corporal punishment has on day students and boarders could also be an area of research. Researchers could also make a comparison of the perception of students from single sex school and coeducational schools on the effect that corporal punishment has had on them in the secondary school. Last but not the least area that could be explored by researchers is to find out if corporal punishment is a tool for correction or a tool for abuse.





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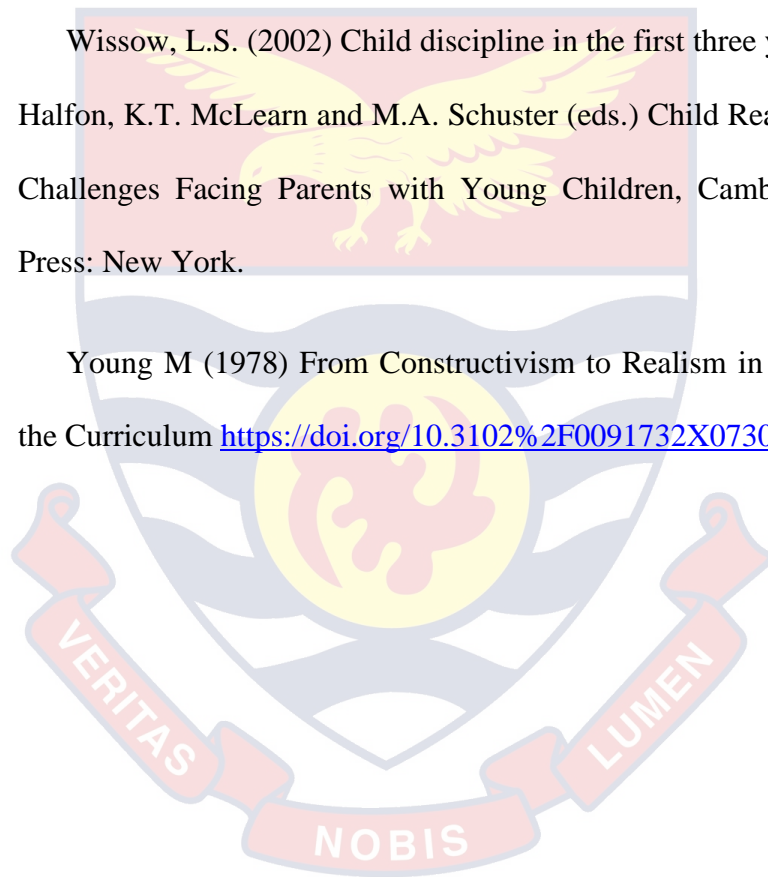
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STUDENT'S PERCEPTION ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT  
TO DISCIPLINE.

This data will enable the researchers to analyse the perception of senior high school students on the contribution of corporal punishment to discipline. Respondents will be required to tick against their choice(s) in the boxes provided by the options, and provide their own responses where appropriate.

Section A: (Please tick the appropriate response)

**Personal information of Respondents**

1. **Programme of Study:** General Arts       Agricultural Science       General Science   
Home Economics       Business       Visual Arts
2. **Age of Respondent:** 14-15     16-17     18- 19     20+
3. **Sex:**                      Male                       Female
4. **Residential Status:**    Boarding                       Day
5. **Form:**                      Form 1                       Form 3
6. **Religion**

Section B

7. **What is your perception on the usefulness of corporal punishment in enhancing your learning discipline?**

Tick whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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<p>Corporal punishment is good for disciplinary purposes</p>				
<p>Corporal punishment teaches the child respect for authority.</p>				
<p>Corporal punishment is a direct attack of teachers on students.</p>				

8. Which type of corporal punishment is often used in your school? (rate them from 1-3 where one is the most used corporal punishment)

- I. Caning [ ]
- II. Kneeling [ ]
- III. Slapping [ ]

**9. What is your perception on the contribution of corporal punishment in shaping your behaviour?**

Tick whether **often, sometimes, rarely, or never.**

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
10. How frequent is your teacher's use of corporal punishment?				
11. How frequent are you punished?				

**12. When was the last time you experienced corporal punishment?**

Last week ( ) last month ( ), six months ago ( ) a year ago ( )

**13. What is your perception on how corporal punishment enhances self-discipline in the society?**

Tick whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.**

Perception	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

It allows teachers to vent their frustrations on students.				
It is the most effective method of discipline.				
It gives teachers the power to assault students.				
It contributes to good character formation.				
It will help you be a responsible adult.				

**D. How harmful is corporal punishment from your perspective?**

Tick whether you **strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14. It creates harmonious relationship between teachers and students.				

15. Students feel threatened when corporal punishment is used.				
16. It humiliates a girl student when it is administered by a male teacher.				
17. It humiliates a boy student when it is administered by a female teacher.				
18. Regardless of who administers the corporal punishment, it humiliates both boys and girls.				

19. Which of the following habits has corporal punishment helped to reduce? Rate them with 1 being the highest

I. Truancy ( )

II. Drop out ( )

III. Absenteeism ( )

IV Bullying ( )

20. Do you agree that corporal punishment should be abolished in schools?

.....



# Ghana Education Service

Guidance and Counselling Unit

Tools for Positive Discipline in Basic Schools

## Tools for Positive Discipline in Basic Schools

### 1.0. Introduction

The Ghana Education Service (GES) is implementing a package of interventions aimed at making all basic schools child friendly. A component of the child friendly school programme is creating a 'safe protective school environment'. The safe protective school environment package is essentially focused on three violence related behaviours i.e. bullying, sexual harassment and corporal punishment. The negative effects of corporal punishment is making Ghanaians, particularly, more and more committed on the need to bring an end to its practice in Ghanaian schools. Unfortunately, teachers lack the tools and skills to implement disciplinary measures without resorting to corporal punishment. It is within this context that GES with the support of UNICEF has developed a set of tools for implementing positive discipline in schools.

This toolkit was drafted as a key product of a stakeholder engagement workshop held in February 2016. Participants at the stakeholder's workshop included GES personnel, UNICEF representatives, teachers, teacher union representatives and NGOs. Key issues likely to have an impact on the implementation of positive discipline tools in Ghana were identified at the stakeholder engagement workshop. These issues, which are listed below, informed the development of the tools and the proposed approach for their implementation.

### 1.1. Key issues from the stakeholder engagement workshop:

- Teachers may lack the patience required to stay committed to the continued use of positive discipline tools; especially under circumstances where children appear unresponsive to the tools or when they exhibit extremely provocative behaviour
- Teachers may feel like they have been deprived of some degree of power/authority because they can no longer punish corporally
- Some students may initially see the introduction of positive discipline tools as an opportunity to challenge the authority of the teacher
- Some teachers may be afraid of losing control of the classroom
- Due to the high teacher student ratios that exist in Ghanaian schools, their often very busy schedules, and an erroneous perception of corporal punishment as a quicker and less complicated approach some teachers may feel that these tools will make things more difficult and would therefore be less receptive to them
- Parents that support corporal punishment may disapprove of the introduction of the tools

The draft toolkit was subsequently pre-tested in Karaga and KEEA districts in the Northern and Central Regions respectively and the feedback incorporated. A workshop was held with all the 10 Regional and the two District Coordinators of Guidance and Counselling as well as the National Unit to validate the toolkit. UNICEF is providing additional support to implement the toolkit in the two districts which will serve as learning centres for the implementation of positive discipline in the country. The data from the districts will feed into the development of a comprehensive toolkit on safe schools.



## 1.2. Rationale behind the Development of the Tools

Corporal punishment as a tool for maintaining discipline in schools has been as old as formal education in the country. The practice relies on the use of harsh punitive measures as a means of establishing a strong deterrence to undesirable behaviour. The Ghana Education Service (GES) has over years taken a number of actions towards making the school environment safe from violence - which includes corporal punishment. For instance, in the Head teachers' handbook (1994), provision was made for the conditions that may require corporal punishment and the mechanisms for administering the punishment. The 2010 revised handbook appears to have proscribed corporal punishment with this statement: 'In your attempt to punish any pupil you should remember ..... Illegal punishment, violence, abuses and brutal acts against pupils are offences for which the teacher can be prosecuted in a court of law' (Source: Head teachers' Handbook (2010) page 42). Despite the provisions in the 2010 handbook, the use of corporal punishment remains a preferred tool for disciplining school children. Apart from the physical pain corporal punishment inflicts on children, this approach also causes significant emotional damage. Some of the lasting effects of this method of disciplining school children include physical scars, emotional scars (trauma, fear, timidity etc.) and violent behaviour. The disadvantages associated with the use of corporal punishment to discipline children is however not limited to its damaging effect on children. It has been observed that children subjected to corporal punishment consistently repeat the offences for which they are punished. Some children even end up becoming hardened and more entrenched in their resistance to what they at times perceive as a forceful imposition of behaviours/values that they have not consented to. The focus of these disciplinary tools will be to inculcate desired behaviours into school children. This will be realized through:

- Participatory approaches,
- Promoting mutual respect between the teacher and student,
- Involving children in the setting of values, expected standards of behaviour and disciplinary measures, and

- Employing reformative responses to misbehaviour that are commensurate to the offence committed

## 2.0. Levels of Application of the Positive Discipline Tools

One of the biggest shortfalls of corporal punishment that renders it ineffective in many instances is the resort to blanket response for all types and levels of inappropriate behaviour. This toolkit offers options for effectively applying positive discipline for different forms of misbehaviour and proposes suitable proactive or reactive measure for addressing them.

### 2.1. Classification of the toolkit

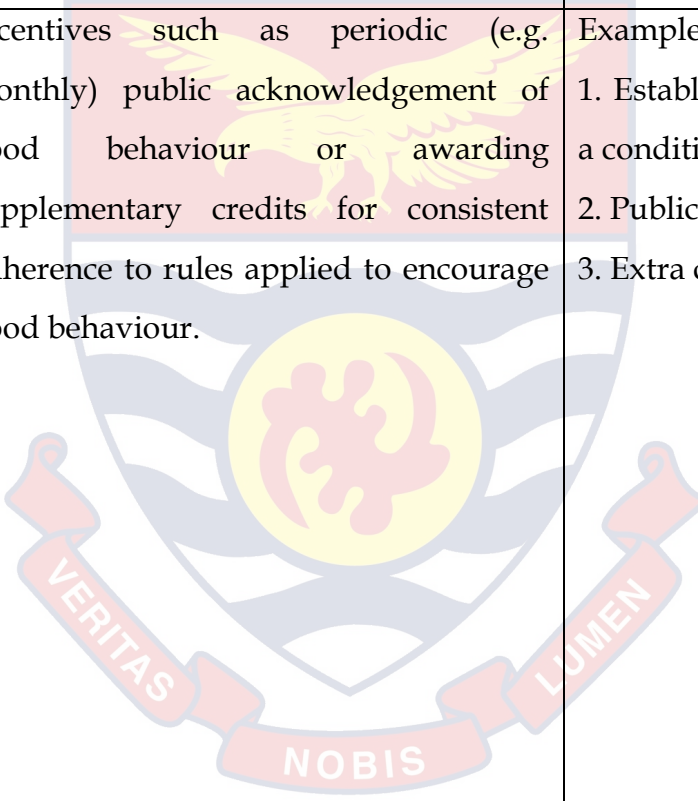
The various levels of application of the toolkit are classified as follows:

Classification – Level of Misbehaviour	Response
Level One – Creating a disciplined environment	<b>Proactive/preventive measures:</b> Clearly spelling out rules and setting expectations from students, expressing approval of and encouraging good behaviour, setting an environment of mutual respect that recognizes the authority of the teacher. This should also be part of the orientation given to students at the beginning of every academic year and reinforced at the start of each school term
Level Two – Minor/first time offences	<b>Early detection/intervention:</b> Non-punitive actions intended to remind students of laid out standards of behaviour and

	expectations and the importance of conforming to them. The teacher would also need to, at this level, investigate the reasons behind the identified misbehaviour or the conditions that encouraged it in order to address
Level Three - Repeated/more serious offences	<b>Corrective Measures:</b> Attention of the student is drawn to the severity of the offence or the fact that it has been repeated several times. The teacher at this level must combine deterrent measures with counselling, agreements and consistent follow ups on the students response to the actions taken
Level Four - Chronic, dangerous and disruptive behaviour	<b>Rehabilitative Measures:</b> Invite other members of the school administration and the child's family to support in the assessment of the child's behaviour and determination of an appropriate response. Intensive counselling and monitoring must be undertaken at this level.

### 3.0. Tools for Positive Discipline

Tool	Description	Steps
<b>Level One - Proactive Measures</b>		
Schoolwide Rule Book	Rules that govern the general expected behaviours from both teachers and students	To be done in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders (i.e. GES, guidance and counselling personnel, school administration, etc.)
Classroom Rule Book	A small note book that contains entries on the standards of behaviour expected from students.	Step 1. Set classroom rules at a school wide level Step 2. Clearly explain rules to the students (allow feedback from them) Step 3. Hand over the rule book to the class prefect/peer educator who will periodically remind class members of the rules
Notice Board Poster	Classroom rules posted on notice boards as a visual reminder of expected	Step 1. Set classroom rules at a school wide level

	behaviours from the students	<p>Step 2. Clearly explain rules to the students (allow feedback from them)</p> <p>Step 3. Post rules on the notice board for future reference</p>
<p><b>Encouragement</b></p> <p>At this stage the students can play lead roles. Rather than tease colleagues that energy can be redirected to encourage those who do well or are making the effort to improve. School prefects and peer educators/education are mechanisms to support this initiative</p> <p>Students to discuss and adopt sanctions for different misbehaviours</p>	<p>Incentives such as periodic (e.g. monthly) public acknowledgement of good behaviour or awarding supplementary credits for consistent adherence to rules applied to encourage good behaviour.</p> 	<p>Examples:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishing consistent good behaviour as a condition for prefectship</li> <li>2. Publicly acknowledging good behaviour</li> <li>3. Extra credits for good behaviour</li> </ol>
<p><b>Classroom Behaviour Statement</b></p>	<p>A brief statement to be recited periodically by students agreeing to</p>	<p>Step 1. Draft statement at a school wide level</p> <p>Step 2. Clearly explain statement to students</p>

<p>Statement can be recited to begin and finish the class peer education sessions</p>	<p>adhere to standards of behaviour set for the classroom. Students may be asked to find creative ways to present the statement (e.g. as a poem, a song or in pictures)</p>	<p>Step 3. Ask students to recite the statement in class Step 4. Post statement on classroom notice board for future reference</p>
<p><b>LEVEL TWO - EARLY DETECTION/INTERVENTION</b></p>		
<p><b>Explanation</b></p>	<p>The teacher would take time to explain to the child why a certain behaviour he/she has exhibited is unacceptable</p>	<p>Step 1. Set an appropriate time for both the student and teacher to have the conversation (e.g. Just before/after class or at the beginning/end of the day) Step 2. Explain to the student the behaviour you have observed him/her exhibit and offer advice on how and why he/she should do otherwise</p>
<p><b>Caution</b></p>	<p>Teacher points out to the student that he/she has gone against the laid out rules and reminds the student of possible consequences of repeating such behaviour</p>	<p>Step 1. Ask the student if he/she is aware of the consequence of the offence they have committed Step 2. If the student says yes ask him/her to state what they know it to be (correct the child if the answer is wrong) If he/she says</p>

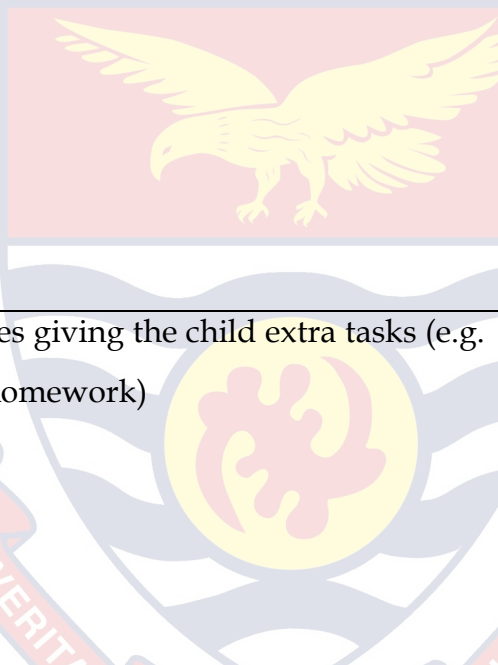
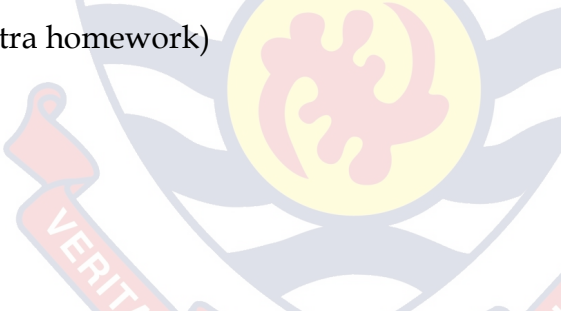

		no refer to the classroom rules and tell the student what the consequence will be
<b>Agreement</b>	The teacher agrees with the child that a particular behaviour should not be repeated and also agree on what the consequence of breaking the agreement should be	<p>Optional - Develop a template for written agreements/bond between the teacher and students</p> <p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Discuss the consequences of repeating it</p> <p>Step 3. Agree with the student verbally or by signing a written document that repeating such behaviour will be followed by the sanction discussed with him/her</p>
<b>Interview</b>	The teacher creates a safe environment outside the classroom to try and find out what some of the underlying issues resulting in the child's misbehaviour may be	<p>Step 1. Set an appropriate time for both the student and teacher to have the conversation</p> <p>Step 2. Relax the student by assuring him/her that there is nothing to worry about</p> <p>Step 3. Ask questions that will help to identify the source of the behaviour being exhibited by the student (e.g. for a student</p>



		that is consistently late – Who brings you to school? What time do you leave the house? What is your mode of transportation?)
<b>Student Behaviour Log</b>	Involves entering infractions into a log book. Repeated entries for the same offence will bear a consequence. This will serve as a deterrent as the child would have to opportunity to alter his/her behaviour in order to avoid reaching the threshold number of entries.	<p>Step 1. Introduce the behaviour log to the class by clearly explaining what it will be used for and how it will be used</p> <p>Optional - Delegate the entering of infractions into the log book to a student (e.g. class prefect)</p> <p>Step 2. Register infractions into the log book</p>
<b>LEVEL THREE- CORRECTIVE MEASURES</b>		
<b>Reflection period</b>	The student would be required to report to a designated room at a particular time for a specified amount of time. Ideally this time should be used for an activity that will encourage a transformative reflection on the infraction committed.	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Inform the student that he/she will be required to participate in a reflection period as a result of the misbehaviour</p> <p>Step 3. Determine the appropriate time for the child to have the reflection period</p> <p>Step 4. Develop an activity for the child to</p>

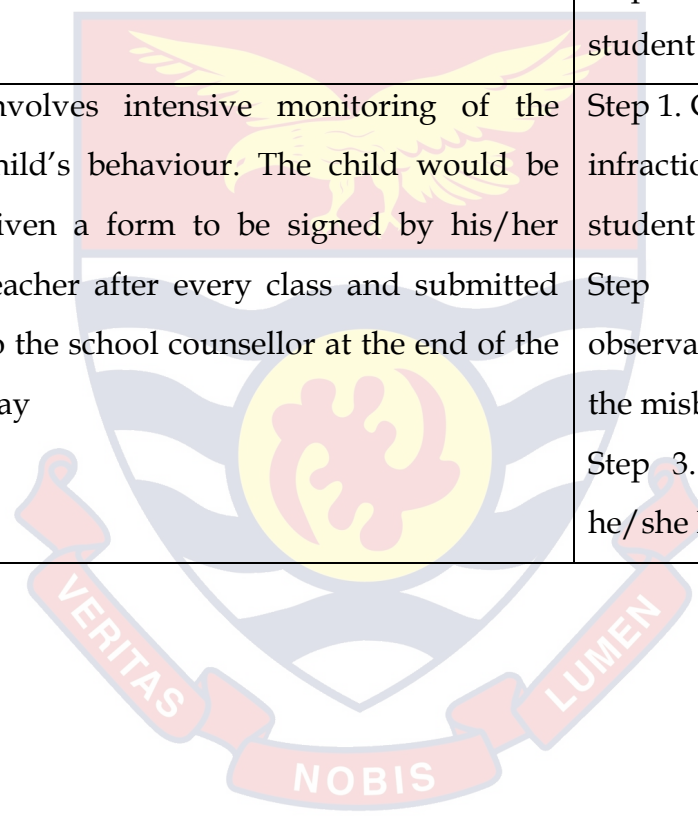
		carry out during the reflection period that will prompt him/her to ponder on their behaviour and will also encourage positive change
<b>Writing Lines</b>	The child is given a sentence to write several times over. The sentence should positively reinforce that child's need and ability to adhere to the recommended forms of behaviour	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Identify the availability of the necessary logistics for writing lines</p> <p>Step 3. Inform the student that he/she will have to write lines as a result of the misbehaviour</p> <p>Step 4. Draft the sentence the student would have to write and give him/her a deadline for submission of the lines</p>
<b>Cleaning</b> (e.g. picking litter, arranging seats in the classroom)	Involves students being asked to undertake some form of community service such as picking litter or cleaning some particular area in the school. But certainly not the toilets	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Inform the student that he/she will clean (e.g. pick rubbish) as a result of the misbehaviour</p> <p>Step 3. Determine the appropriate time for</p>

		<p>the child to perform the task</p> <p>Step 4. Ensure that the child carries out the sanction</p>
<b>Designated Seating Position</b>	<p>Involves seating the student right in front of or beside the teacher in order to keep an eye on him/her or to move the student from a position that encourages him/her to engage in disruptive behaviour</p>	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Inform the student that he/she will be asked to sit at a particular location as a result of the misbehaviour</p> <p>Step 3. Ask the student to move to the specified location</p>
<b>Counselling</b>	<p>With the consent of student, refer him/her to the school counsellor along with background on the students behaviour over time to be counselled</p>	<p>Step 1. Check log book for all entries on infractions committed by the student</p> <p>Step 2. Discuss the behaviour of the student and infractions recorded with the counsellor</p> <p>Step 3. Clearly explain the purpose of the counselling to the student</p> <p>Step 4. Set appropriate meeting time for the student to meet with the counsellor</p>
<b>Agreement</b>	<p>The teacher agrees with the child that a particular behaviour should not be</p>	<p>Optional - Develop a template for written agreements/bond between the teacher and</p>

	<p>repeated and also agree on what the consequence of breaking the agreement should be</p> 	<p>students</p> <p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Discuss the consequences of repeating it</p> <p>Step 3. Agree with the student verbally or by signing a written document that repeating such behaviour will be followed by the sanction discussed with him/her</p>
<b>Extra Tasks</b>	<p>Involves giving the child extra tasks (e.g. extra homework)</p> 	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the misbehaviour observed to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Inform the child about the extra task he/she would be expected to do</p> <p>Step 3. Follow up to ensure the task is completed</p>
<b>LEVEL FOUR - REHABILITATIVE MEASURES</b>		
<b>Withdrawing a Responsibility</b>	<p>Leadership positions and other responsibilities can be temporarily or permanently withdrawn from the child (e.g. position on the school soccer team)</p> 	<p>Step 1. Clearly explain the implications of the infraction and its consequences to the student</p> <p>Step 2. Inform the child and other</p>

	or prefectship)	affected/concerned parties about withdrawal of the responsibility (including whether it will be permanent or temporary)
<b>Letter to parents</b>	Involves writing to the child's parents to inform them about the infraction or chronic behaviour exhibited by the child	Optional - Draft template letter for communicating level four infractions to parents Step 1. Clearly explain the implications of the infraction and its consequences to the student Step 2. Write letter and deliver it to the students guardian
<b>Parent teacher meeting</b>	Meeting with the child's parent's to assess the child's behaviour and determine what steps need to be taken to reform his/her behaviour	Step 1. Clearly explain the implications of the infraction and its consequences to the student Step 2. Determine appropriate time to meet with the parents and send out an invitation to them
<b>Counselling</b>	Refer the student to the school counsellor along with background on the students behaviour over time to be	Step 1. Check log book for all entries on infractions committed by the student Step 2. Discuss the behaviour of the student

	counselled	and infractions recorded with the counsellor Step 3. Clearly explain the purpose of the counselling to the student Step 4. Set appropriate meeting time for the student to meet with the counsellor
<b>Daily Report</b>	Involves intensive monitoring of the child's behaviour. The child would be given a form to be signed by his/her teacher after every class and submitted to the school counsellor at the end of the day	Step 1. Clearly explain the implications of the infraction and its consequences to the student Step 2. Determine an appropriate observation period suitable for monitoring the misbehaviour Step 3. Inform the students teacher that he/she has been placed on daily report





# GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

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**TO: ALL REGIONAL DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION**

## ADOPTION OF POSITIVE DISCIPLINE MEASURES IN PRE-TERTIARY SCHOOLS

The Ghana Education Service officially banned all forms of corporal punishment of children in public and private schools in 2017 as part of efforts aimed at promoting a safe and protective learning environment for children.

In view of this, the Positive Discipline Toolkit containing positive and constructive alternatives to correcting children was developed in 2016 as a component of the Safe Schools Resource Pack.

By a copy of this letter, Management is directing teachers in all pre-tertiary schools (public and private) in Ghana with immediate effect, to adopt the *Positive Discipline Toolkit (copy enclosed)* together with other sanctions prescribed in appendix 2 (Unified Code of Discipline for Basic Education Schools) of the Head Teachers' Handbook (2012 edition) as measures for correcting pupils and students in schools.

We count heavily on the cooperation of Directors in this respect.

Thank you.

**ANTHONY BOATENG**  
**DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (MS)**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL**