



## *National Association of School Nurses*

### **POSITION STATEMENT**

#### ***Corporal Punishment in Schools***

#### **HISTORY:**

By definition, corporal punishment is the intentional infliction of physical pain as a method of changing behavior. It may include methods such as hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, pinching, shaking, use of various objects (paddles, belts, sticks, or others), or painful body postures. Historically, corporal punishment was a method of disciplining children and youth in the school setting. Many states have now enacted legislation prohibiting corporal punishment in schools.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE:**

Corporal punishment has a strong potential to adversely affect the students' self-image and school achievement and to contribute to disruptive and violent behaviors. Students have been physically damaged by such punishment, requiring medical treatment for conditions including abrasions, muscle injuries, hematomas, whiplash, and nerve injuries. Social skills development after the use of corporal punishment may be severely altered, leading to aggressive behaviors. The use of corporal punishment also promotes the message that violence is an acceptable mode of behavior in our society.

#### **RATIONALE:**

The school nurse is an advocate for the total health and well-being of all students. The use of corporal punishment may result in physical or emotional harm. Alternative methods of behavioral management have proven more effective than corporal punishment.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It is the position of the National Association of School Nurses that school nurses do not support the use of corporal punishment and that it should be abolished in schools. School nurses must advocate for the rights of children by informing educators of the potential risk of harm in the use of corporal punishment. Administrative assistance must be sought to protect the student, preventing the use of corporal punishment. Additional avenues of behavioral management must be explored to ensure this change.

## References/Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics (2000). Policy Statement: Corporal punishment in schools (RE9754). *Pediatrics*, 106(2), 343.

Society for Adolescent Medicine (1992). Position paper of the Society for Adolescent Medicine on corporal punishment in schools. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 13, 240–246.  
[http://www.adolescenthealth.org/html/corporal\\_punishment\\_in\\_schools.html](http://www.adolescenthealth.org/html/corporal_punishment_in_schools.html)

National Association of School Nurses (2000). *Position Statement: Mental health of students*. Scarborough, ME: Author.

National Association of School Nurses (1998). *Position Statement: Healthy school environment*. Scarborough, ME: Author.

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