



End Corporal
Punishment

Corporal punishment of children in Singapore

LAST UPDATED January 2025

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Child population 867,000 (UNICEF, 2020)

Summary of necessary legal reform to achieve full prohibition

Prohibition is still to be achieved in the home, alternative care settings, some day care, schools, penal institutions, as a sentence for crime and in military service.

The Penal Code 1872 states that “nothing, which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under 12 years of age, or of unsound mind, by or by consent, either express or implied, of the guardian or other person having lawful charge of that person, is an offence by reason of any harm it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause, to that person” (art. 89). English common law applies under article 3 of the Application of English Law Act, and this would include the defence of “reasonable chastisement”. The Women’s Charter 1961 provides for the use of force “by way of correction towards a child below 21 years of age” (art. 64). The Children and Young Persons Act 1993 (amended 2011) provides for the “use of such force as is reasonable and necessary” to compel obedience to orders in rehabilitation centres, places of safety, remand home and places of detention (art. 68). The widespread acceptance of corporal punishment in childrearing necessitates clarity in law that no corporal punishment is acceptable or lawful. These provisions should be repealed/amended and prohibition enacted of all corporal punishment of children in all settings and by all adults with authority over them.

Alternative care settings – Prohibition should be enacted of all corporal punishment in all alternative care settings (foster care, institutions, places of safety, emergency care, etc). Provisions authorising caning of children should be repealed, including those in the Children and Young Persons (Government Homes) Regulations 2011 and the Women’s Charter (Protection of Women and Girls) Rules 1974.

Day care – Corporal punishment is prohibited in early childhood development centres. Legislation should now be enacted to prohibit it in all other early childhood care (nurseries, crèches, kindergartens, preschools, family centres, etc) and all day care for older children (day centres, after-school childcare, childminding, etc).

Schools – The legal provisions for corporal punishment in schools in the Education (Schools) Regulations under the Education Act 1957 should be repealed, and prohibition enacted of corporal punishment in all education settings, public and private.

Penal institutions – All provisions for corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions should be repealed – in the Children and Young Persons (Remand Home) Regulations 1993, the Prisons Act 1939, the Criminal Procedure Code (Corrective Training and Preventive Detention) Regulations 2010, the Intoxicating Substances (Discipline in Approved Centres) Regulations 1987 and the Misuse of Drugs (Approved Institutions) (Discipline) Regulations 1979. Prohibition should be enacted in relation to all institutions accommodating children in conflict with the law.

Sentence for crime – All provisions for judicial corporal punishment, including in the Penal Code 1872, the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 and the Children and Young Persons Act 1993, should be repealed and all judicial corporal punishment of children prohibited.

Military service – The provisions for caning of boys in the Singapore Armed Forces Act and the Singapore Armed Forces (Disciplinary Barracks) Regulations should be repealed.

Current legality of corporal punishment

Home

Corporal punishment is lawful in the home. Article 89 of the Penal Code 1872 states that “nothing, which is done in good faith for the benefit of a person under 12 years of age, or of unsound mind, by or by consent, either express or implied, of the guardian or other person having lawful charge of that person, is an offence by reason of any harm it may cause, or be intended by the doer to cause, or be known by the doer to be likely to cause, to that person”, provided that it does not cause or is likely or intended to cause death or grievous hurt. Under article 3 of the Application of English Law Act 1993, English common law applies, which would include the legal defence of “reasonable chastisement”. Article 64 of the Women’s Charter 1961 prohibits family violence, but this “does not include any force lawfully used ... by way of correction towards a child below 21 years of age”.

Laws relating to children were extensively revised in 2011 but corporal punishment was not prohibited and was re-authorised in settings outside the home. Among the laws reviewed was the Children and Young Person Act 1993: this Act protects children from “ill-treatment” but includes in this only “unnecessary physical pain, suffering or injury” (art. 5, emphasis added). As of February 2019, the Children and Young Person Act 1993 was under review¹ but the proposed amendments did not address corporal punishment of children.

At the Universal Periodic Review of Singapore in 2016, the Government stated that corporal punishment of children “is the last resort” and “is subject to stringent safeguards, after counselling and alternative disciplinary methods have repeatedly failed”.² During the review with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in 2017, the Government stated it would “consider the issue” of introducing a ban of all corporal punishment of children.³ However, Singapore’s report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child highlights that it “does not view corporal punishment as torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment” and that corporal punishment “is not a common punishment in Singapore”.⁴

Alternative care settings

Corporal punishment is lawful in alternative care settings as for parents, under article 89 of the Penal Code 1872 and the common law defence of “reasonable chastisement”.

¹ 6 March 2019, CRC/C/SGP/Q/4-5/Add.1, Reply to list of issues, para. 21

² 15 April 2016, A/HRC/32/17, Report of the working group, para. 116

³ 1 November 2017, CEDAW/C/SR.1535, Summary records of the 1535th meeting

⁴ 3 November 2017, CRC/C/SGP/4-5, Fourth-fifth report, para. 69

Caning is specifically authorised for boys and girls in children's homes in the Children and Young Persons (Government Homes) Regulations 2011. Regulation 24 states: "(1) The Manager and the staff of a home shall make every effort to enforce discipline within the home without resort to corporal punishment. (2) The Manager of a home must be satisfied after an inquiry and before imposing any corporal punishment that the resident of the home is guilty of serious misconduct and that the misconduct is of such a nature as to warrant the imposition of corporal punishment. (3) The Manager of a home must seek the approval of the Director before imposing corporal punishment on any resident of the home. (4) The Manager of a home shall record in the discipline book the particulars and evidence of the alleged misconduct of a resident of the home, his findings on the evidence, and the grounds of his decision to impose corporal punishment on the resident. (5) Corporal punishment shall only be administered by way of caning and be subject to the following conditions: (a) where corporal punishment is to be administered to a male resident of a home — (i) it shall be administered by the Manager of the home, or a member of the staff of the home authorised by the Manager, in the presence of another member of the staff who shall sign in the punishment book as a witness to the carrying out of the punishment; (ii) the number of strokes inflicted shall not exceed 10; (iii) the strokes may be inflicted on the resident's palm or on his buttocks over his clothes; and (iv) it shall not be administered in the presence of any other resident of the home; and (b) where corporal punishment is to be administered to a female resident of a home — (i) it shall be administered by a female member of the staff of the home authorised by the Manager of the home in the presence of another female member of the staff who shall sign in the punishment book as a witness to the carrying out of the punishment; (ii) the number of strokes inflicted shall not exceed 10; (iii) the strokes shall be inflicted on the resident's palm only; and (iv) it shall not be administered in the presence of any other resident of the home. (6) Corporal punishment shall not be administered to any resident of a home who suffers from any physical or mental disability."

Regulation 25 prohibits "unauthorised" corporal punishment, including "striking, cuffing, shaking or punching a resident, or subjecting him to any other form of physical violence except for that permitted in accordance with regulation 24".

Caning is authorised in places of safety for girls in the Women's Charter (Protection of Women and Girls) Rules 1974. Rule 50 states: "(1) Every effort shall be made to enforce discipline in the place of safety without resort to corporal punishment. (2) Where corporal punishment is found to be necessary, its application shall be preceded by an inquiry held by the superintendent who shall record the evidence and the grounds of her decision." Rule 51 states: "Corporal punishment shall be subject to the following conditions: (a) it shall be inflicted on the palm of the hand with a cane of a type approved by the Director and shall not exceed 8 strokes on the palm of each hand; (b) it shall not be inflicted in the presence of other girls; (c) no girl with any physical or mental disability shall be so punished without the sanction of the Medical Officer; and (d) in any case in which corporal punishment is administered, the superintendent shall report the fact, together with the circumstances of the case, to the Director within 24 hours." Rule 53 prohibits forms of corporal punishment such as "striking, cuffing, shaking or any other form of physical violence".

Day care

Corporal punishment is unlawful in some but not all day care. The Early Childhood Development Centres Act was enacted in 2017 and repealed the Child Care Centres Act 1988 and the associated Child Care Centres Regulations, which explicitly prohibited corporal punishment in child care centres. Article 33 of the Early Childhood Development Centres Regulations 2018 (under the Early Childhood Development Centres Act 2017) explicitly prohibits corporal punishment in early childhood development centres: "(1) A licensee must ensure that none of the licensee's staff or education service providers commits any of the following acts on any child attending at the licensee's centre or subjects such child to any of the following behaviour, as the case may be: (a) sexual exploitation or abuse; (b) corporal punishment, including — (i) striking the child, directly or with any physical object; (ii) shaking, shoving, spanking or any other form of aggressive contact; and (iii) requiring or forcing the child to repeat physical movements on the pretext of disciplining the child; (c) giving the child harsh, humiliating, belittling or degrading response of any kind, whether it is a verbal, emotional or physical response; (d) neglecting the child, and deliberate absence of response; (e) depriving the child of any meal or other basic need; (f) isolation of the child unless the child is being supervised by a member of the licensee's staff who is within sight of the child, or physical restriction of any of the child's

movements; (g) putting the child at risk of being scalded or burnt; (h) causing psychological trauma to the child; (i) force feeding the child; (j) exposing the child to undesirable content, including pornography. (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1), a licensee must — (a) issue a set of rules regulating the conduct of the licensee's staff; (b) ensure that all members of the licensee's staff are aware of such rules; and (c) take measures to enforce such rules. (3) A licensee, a member of a licensee's staff or an education service provider engaged by a licensee must not commit any of the acts mentioned in paragraph (1) on a child attending at the licensee's centre or subject such child to any behaviour mentioned in that paragraph." An early childhood development centre is defined in the Early Childhood Development Centres Act 2017 (art. 2) as "any premises where any early childhood development service is provided or is to be provided", and "early childhood development service" is defined as "the provision of care or education, or care and education, habitually of 5 or more children who are below 7 years of age, for a fee, reward or profit by a person who is not a relative or guardian of all the children".

There is no prohibition of corporal punishment in other early childhood care or in day care for older children, where it is lawful as for parents under article 89 of the Penal Code 1872 and the common law defence of "reasonable chastisement".

Schools

Corporal punishment is lawful in schools under article 88 of the Education (Schools) Regulations under the Education Act 1957: "(1) No corporal punishment shall be administered to girl pupils. (2) The corporal punishment of boy pupils shall be administered with a light cane on the palms of the hands or on the buttocks over the clothing. No other form of corporal punishment shall be administered to boy pupils. (3) Where there is more than one teacher in a school, corporal punishment shall be inflicted by the principal only or under his express authority."

Penal institutions

Corporal punishment is lawful as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions. The Children and Young Persons Act 1993, as revised in 2011, states that the manager of a juvenile rehabilitation centre, a place of safety, a remand home or a place of detention may "use such force as is reasonable and necessary – to compel a person being detained in the rehabilitation centre, place of safety, remand home or place of detention to obey any order or requirement given or made by the manager under this section" (art. 68). Caning is specifically authorised in the Children and Young Persons (Remand Home) Regulations 1993 (art. 21), the Prisons Act 1939 (art. 77), the Criminal Procedure Code (Corrective Training and Preventive Detention) Regulations 2010 (arts. 10 and 13), the Intoxicating Substances (Discipline in Approved Centres) Regulations 1987 (art. 8) and the Misuse of Drugs (Approved Institutions) (Discipline) Regulations 1979 (art. 12).

Sentence for crime

Corporal punishment is lawful as a sentence for crime. Under article 33 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1993, children aged 7-15 are tried by the Juvenile Court, with the exception of offences triable only by the High Court; article 37 allows for sentencing to corporal punishment: "(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other written law, no child or young person shall be sentenced by any court other than the High Court to corporal punishment." Older children are tried as adults and under the Criminal Procedure Code 2010 may be sentenced to caning up to 12 strokes by a District Court, up to six strokes by a Magistrate's Court, and by a High Court to any sentence prescribed in law (art. 303). A Criminal Law Reform Bill to amend the Penal Code was introduced in 2019 and reportedly includes a provision raising the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 10 years old.⁵

Caning is prescribed as a punishment in many laws, including the Penal Code 1872, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1973, the Piracy Act 1993, the Arms Offences Act 1973, the Explosive Substances Act 1924, the Corrosive and Explosive Substances and Offensive Weapons Act 1973, the Vandalism Act 1966, the Immigration Act 1989, the Dangerous Fireworks Act 1988, the Kidnapping Act 1961, the Women's

⁵ 6 March 2019, CRC/C/SGP/Q/4-5/Add.1, Reply to list of issues, para. 97

Charter 1961, the Public Order (Preservation) Act 1958, the Railways Act 1905 and the Road Traffic Act 1993.

The Criminal Procedure Code 2010 (amended 2018) states that children aged 7-15 should be caned up to 10 strokes with a light rattan, older children up to 24 strokes with a rattan up to 1.27cm in diameter (arts. 328, 329 and 330). A medical officer must be present and must certify that the offender is fit to receive the caning (art. 331). Females may not be caned (art. 325).

During the Universal Periodic Review of Singapore in 2016, the Government stated that “the application of corporal punishment in Singapore is guided by necessity and proportionality”, that “there are absolute limits on the number of strokes” and that “it is administered under highly-regulated conditions”.⁶

Military service

Military service is compulsory for males. The Singapore Armed Forces (Detention and Imprisonment) Regulations 2003 and the Singapore Armed Forces (Disciplinary Barracks) Regulations 1990 allow for caning up to 24 strokes (10 strokes for boys under 16) for a variety of offences.

Universal Periodic Review of Singapore’s human rights record

Singapore was examined in the first cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2011 (session 11). The following recommendations were made:⁷

“Address the concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and xenophobia in relation to concerns about migrants and the living and working conditions of migrant workers, abolish corporal punishment for immigration offenders and enact an anti-discrimination law (United Kingdom);

“Immediately put a stop to caning as a form of punishment and repeal all laws providing for this punishment (Czech Republic); put an end in practice to all forms of corporal punishment and derogate the laws allowing for this practice (France);

“Put an end to all practices of corporal punishment that takes place in educational facilities and detention centres (Djibouti);

“Prohibit corporal punishment and put in place an educational system respectful of the physical and psychological integrity of minors (Switzerland);

“Fully incorporate the principles and provisions of CRC into the domestic legal system, especially those regarding corporal punishment (Poland)”

The Government rejected the recommendations.

Examination in the second cycle took place in 2016 (session 24). During the review, the Government defended the legality and use of corporal punishment of children, stating that it is used as “a last resort”, “highly regulated”, and “subject to stringent safeguards, after counselling and alternative disciplinary methods had repeatedly failed”.⁸

The following recommendations were made:⁹

“Take concrete steps towards the abolition of the death penalty and corporal punishment, including ratifying the Convention Against Torture and its Optional Protocol (Sweden);

“Abolish corporal punishment as a legal penalty, in particular caning (Switzerland);

“Eliminate the mandatory character of caning as a first step with a view to abolishing this

⁶ 15 April 2016, A/HRC/32/17, Report of the working group, para. 64

⁷ 11 July 2011, A/HRC/18/11, Report of the working group, paras. 96(32), 97(7), 97(8), 99(5) and 99(6)

⁸ 15 April 2016, A/HRC/32/17, Report of the working group, paras. 64 and 116

⁹ 15 April 2016, A/HRC/32/17, Report of the working group, paras. 166(33), 166(80), 166(169), 166(170), 166(171) and 166(172)

practice altogether (Germany);

“Put an end to the practice of corporal punishment (France);

“Cease the use of caning as a form of punishment (New Zealand);

“Abolish the punishment of caning, particularly those who have exceeded the period stated in the Visa or the residency (Lebanon)”

The Government did not accept the recommendations.¹⁰

Examination in the third cycle took place in 2021 (session 38). The following recommendations were made:¹¹

“Ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and abolish the use of corporal punishment, like caning (Austria);

“Take concrete steps towards the abolition of the death penalty and corporal punishment (Sweden);

“Consider adopting an official moratorium on the application of the death penalty and corporal punishment (Brazil);

“Ensure the strict prohibition of corporal punishment (Costa Rica);

“Prohibit and criminalize corporal punishment as a sentence for child offenders (Zambia);

“Abolish the practice of corporal punishment as a judicially imposed punishment (Norway);

“Consider undertaking legislative reforms to prohibit corporal punishment of children and develop awareness-raising campaigns about its harmful effects (Peru)”.

In noting the recommendations, the Government stated: “Corporal punishment is meted out only for serious crimes such as sexual and violent offences after due judicial process and is subject to strict medical safeguards. In schools, caning as a disciplinary measure utilised in the best interests of the child does not contravene the CRC. Caning can only be carried out as a last resort for very serious errant behaviour, with the overall approach being restorative.”¹²

Recommendations by human rights treaty bodies

Committee on the Rights of the Child

(31 May 2019, CRC/C/SGP/CO/4-5 Advance unedited version, Concluding observations on fourth/fifth report, paras. 5, 26, 27, 45 and 46)

“The Committee reminds the State party of the indivisibility and interdependence of all the rights enshrined in the Convention and emphasizes the importance of all the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. The Committee would like to draw the State party’s attention to the recommendations concerning the following areas, in respect of which urgent measures must be taken: definition of the child (para. 18), non-discrimination (para. 20), corporal punishment (para. 27), children deprived of a family environment (para. 32), education, including vocational training and guidance (para. 39) and administration of juvenile justice (para. 46).

“The Committee is deeply concerned that, despite repeated recommendations of international human rights mechanisms, including the Committee’s previous recommendation (CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, para. 40), and as reconfirmed by the delegation during the dialogue, corporal punishment remains legal in all settings, except in early childhood development centres.

“In the light of its general comments No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal

¹⁰ 13 June 2016, A/HRC/32/17/Add.1, Report of the working group: Addendum, para. 41

¹¹ 22 July 2021/A/HRC/48/16, Report of the working group, paras. 59(21), 59(124), 59(133), 59(134), 59(141), 59(142) and 59(261)

¹² 10 September 2021/A/HRC/48/16/Add.1, Report of the working group: Addendum

punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment and No. 13 (2011) on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence and taking note of target 16.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee urges the State party to:

- (a) Adopt, without further delay, legislation explicitly and unconditionally prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children in all settings, namely in the home, schools, alternative care settings and the administration of justice;
- (b) Collect, share and make publicly available data on all cases of corporal punishment and violence against children, including in educational institutions, alternative care institutions and in the home, disaggregated by sex, age, disability and ethnic origin of the child;
- (c) Further strengthen and expand programmes and policies aimed at combating violence against children, including evidence based positive parenting programs;
- (d) Conduct campaigns aimed at raising awareness on the harmful effects of corporal punishment with a view to changing the general attitude towards this practice and involve children, parents, teachers and other persons working with or for children so as to promote positive, non-violent and participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline.

“The Committee takes note of the proposed amendment to the Children and Young Persons Act, to raise the upper age limit of a child or young person to 18 years. The Committee further takes note that the State party has raised the age of criminal responsibility from 7 to 10 years of age through amendments to the Penal Code. The Committee is nonetheless seriously concerned that:

- (a) The current age of criminal responsibility, fixed at 10 years of age, remains low;
- (b) Children aged between 16 and 18 years are still treated as adults in the criminal justice system and may be sentenced to life imprisonment;
- (c) Corporal punishment is a lawful sentence for male children over the age of ten;
- (d) There is no child-specific pre-trial detention limit.

“In the light of its general comment No. 10 (2007) on children’s rights in juvenile justice, the Committee urges the State party to bring its juvenile justice system fully into line with the Convention and other relevant international standards. In particular, it reiterates its previous concluding observations (see CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, para. 69) and furthermore recommends that the State party:

- (a) Consider regularly reviewing the Criminal Law with a view to raising the age of criminal responsibility to an internationally accepted standard and give the child the benefit of the doubt, when age is in dispute;
- (b) Speed up the adoption of the proposed amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act with a view to raising the upper age limit to 18 years of age;
- (c) Abolish the sentence of life imprisonment of children under the age of 18 and promptly review the files of all prisoners serving a life sentence for crimes committed when under the age of 18, with a view to ensuring early release;
- (d) Ensure that children currently sentenced to life imprisonment receive education, treatment and care aimed at their release, reintegration and ability to play a constructive role in society;
- (e) Prohibit and criminalize, through the adoption of legislative, policy and administrative amendments, the use of corporal punishment for child offenders as a sentence;
- (f) Ensure that pre-trial detention of children is applied only as a measure of last resort and that its application is subject to strict time limitations and to regular review by a judge.”

Committee on the Rights of the Child

(19 September 2014, CRC/C/OPAC/SGP/CO/1 Advance Unedited Version, Concluding observations on initial report (OPAC), paras. 21 and 22)

“The Committee regrets the imposition of caning on members of the armed forces, including underage volunteers, for various offences under the Singapore Armed Forces Act.

“With reference to the Committee’s concluding observations under the Convention (CRC/C/SGP/CO/2-3, para. 40), and in view of the Committee’s general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee urges the State party to take prompt measures to amend legislation in order to unequivocally prohibit by law all forms of corporal punishment, including caning, in all settings.”

Committee on the Rights of the Child

(2 May 2011, CRC/C/SGP/2-3, Concluding observations on second/third report, paras. 39, 40, 68 and 69)

“While noting the education programmes and guidelines that restrict and discourage the use of corporal punishment, the Committee reiterates its deep concern that corporal punishment, including caning, is still considered a lawful form of discipline in the family, schools and institutions.

“In light of the Committee’s general comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment, the Committee recommends that the State party:

- a) prohibit unequivocally by law, without any further delay, all forms of corporal punishment, including caning, in all settings;
- b) continue to systematically train teachers and personnel working in institutions and youth detention centres on positive, non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment; and
- c) continue to sensitize and educate parents, guardians and professionals working with and for children on the harmful effects of corporal punishment with a view to changing the general attitude towards this practice, and promote positive, non-violent, participatory forms of child-rearing and discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment.

“While noting with appreciation the existence of a separate juvenile justice system in the State party, the Committee is deeply concerned that despite its previous concluding observations (para. 45): ...

- b) corporal punishment and solitary confinement are still used to discipline juvenile offenders;
- c) male children between the ages of 7 and 16 years are subjected to caning and other forms of punishment for many offences in the Penal Code and other laws....

“The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen its efforts to ensure the full implementation of juvenile justice standards, in particular articles 37, 39 and 40 of the Convention and other relevant international standards, such as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines) and the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty (the Havana Rules), taking into account the Committee’s general comment No. 10 (2007) on children’s rights in juvenile justice. It recommends that the State party: ...

- b) revise its legislation to prohibit the use of corporal punishment and solitary confinement in all detention institutions for juvenile offenders....”

Committee on the Rights of the Child

(27 October 2003, CRC/C/15/Add.220, Concluding observations on initial report, paras. 32, 33, 44 and 45)

“The Committee notes with concern that corporal punishment is permitted by law in the home, schools and institutions and as a form of punishment for male juvenile offenders.

“The Committee recommends that the State party amend its legislation to prohibit corporal punishment in the home, schools, institutions and the juvenile justice system. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party conduct well-targeted public awareness campaigns on the negative impact corporal punishment has on children, and provide training for teachers and personnel working in institutions and youth detention centres on non-violent forms of discipline as an alternative to corporal punishment.

“The Committee is concerned that the minimum age of criminal responsibility is too low, that all persons in conflict with the law under 18 are not afforded special protection, and that corporal punishment and solitary confinement are used to discipline juvenile offenders.

“The Committee recommends that the State party:

d) prohibit the use of corporal punishment, including whipping and caning, and solitary confinement in all detention institutions for juvenile offenders, including police stations....”

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

(17 November 2017, CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/5 Advance unedited version, Concluding observations on fifth report, paras. 20 and 21)

“The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to enhance legal protection of women from gender-based violence, including by amending the Women’s Charter in 2016. Nevertheless, the Committee remains concerned about: ...

(e) Corporal punishment continues to be legal under article 89 of the Penal Code, article 64 the Women’s Charter, Section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Licensing of Homes) Regulations, and Section 24 of the Children and Young Persons (Government Home) Regulations.

“Recalling its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (1992) on violence against women, and its previous recommendations (CEDAW/C/SGP/CO/4, para.24), the Committee recommends that the State party: ...

(f) Revise article 89 of the Penal Code, article 64 of the Women’s Charter, Section 27 of the Children and Young Persons (Licensing of Homes) Regulations, and Section 24 of the Children and Young Persons (Government Home) Regulations to prohibit and eliminate corporal punishment of children, including girls, in all settings.”

Prevalence/attitudinal research in the last ten years

Two public surveys conducted by the Singapore Children’s Society in 1994 and 2010 on various methods of physical punishment found a shift in public perception, with Singaporeans increasingly acknowledging caning as a form of child abuse and neglect. The results showed that the percentage of respondents that considered caning was “not child abuse and neglect” fell from 29% in 1994 to 19% in 2010.

(Reported in “More S’poreans turning away from corporal punishment”, The Straits Times, 24 August 2019)

[End Corporal Punishment](#) acts as a catalyst for progress towards universal prohibition and elimination of corporal punishment of children. We support and analyse national progress, monitor legality and implementation worldwide, partner with organisations at all levels, and engage with human rights treaty body systems. End Corporal Punishment is hosted by the World Health Organization and supported by a multi-partner Advisory Committee.