

POLICY BRIEF: MoES Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools

Head Teachers: How Do You Take Action To Stop Violence Against Children in Schools?

May 2017



Imagine if every child was safe at school.

A safe, positive and supportive school environment is a right of every child. As a head teacher, you have a very important role to play in creating a safe, positive school.

For support, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) developed this policy brief that summarizes the Reporting, Tracking, Referral, and Response (RTRR) Guidelines on Violence Against Children in Schools (2014).

This policy brief shows head teachers how to support children harmed by violence in schools.

Report

The head teacher takes a verbal or written statement on the violence inflicted on the child

Track

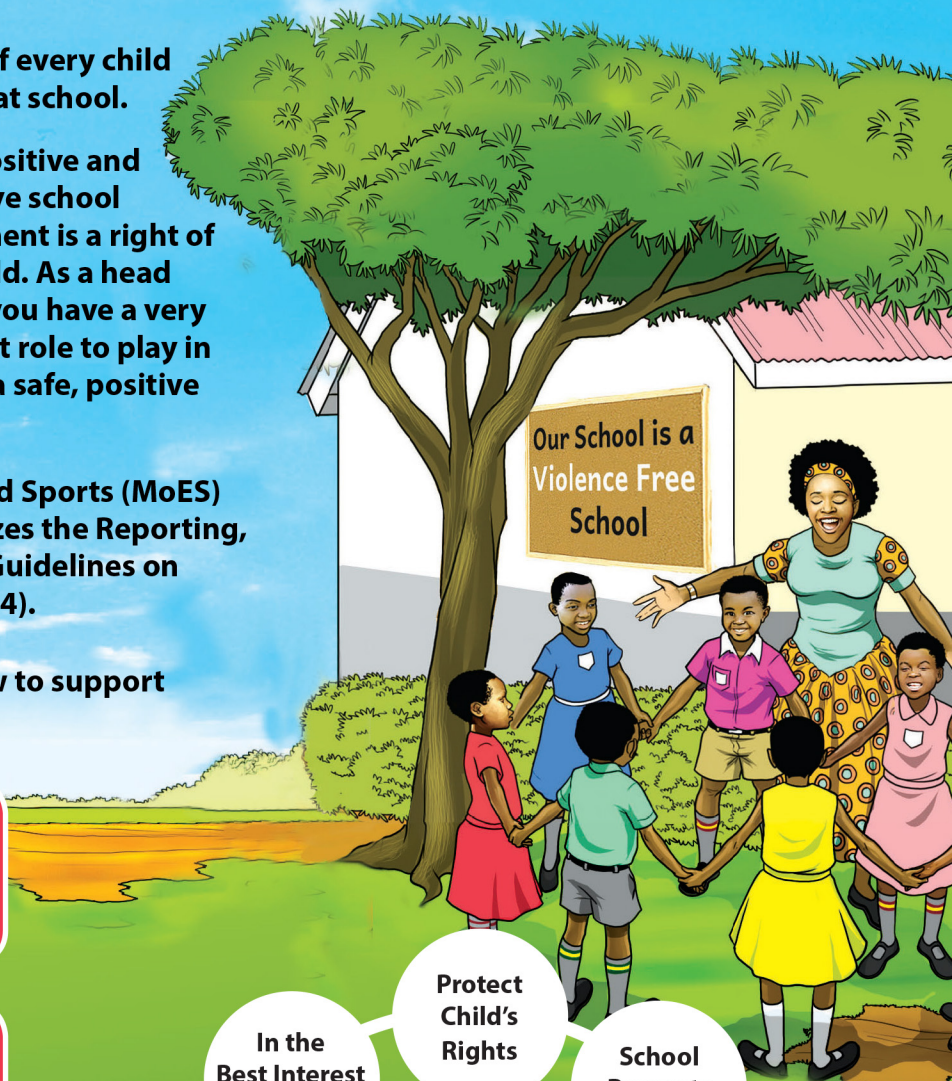
Track to verify that the child is getting the help they need and that perpetrators are disciplined or prosecuted

Refer

Refer the child, supported by a trusted adult, to service providers such as a hospital, community development officer, probation officer or police

Respond

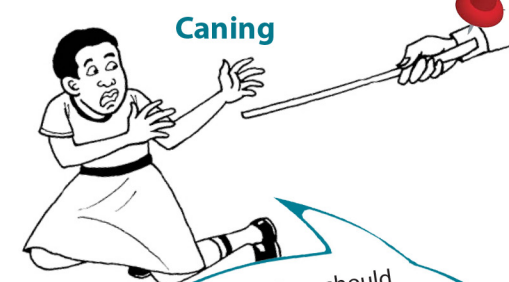
Head teachers work with teachers and parents to make sure the child is safe. Counseling and medical help are given. Culprits are disciplined or prosecuted



My Role, My Responsibility

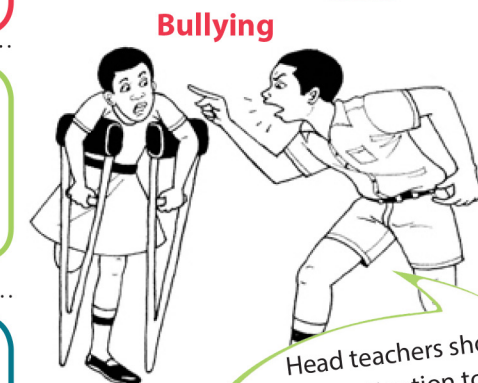
RTRR key actions on violence against children in schools!

	Definition	Examples	Reporting	Tracking	Referral	Response
Physical Violence (Includes Corporal Punishment)	Any form of physical contact intended to inflict pain. Can cause internal pain or show on the body through cuts, bruises and swelling.	Caning, beating, kicking, punching, slapping, shaking, pinching, uncomfortable positions, standing in the sun.	Head Teacher documents case and reports to the police. Parents are told if appropriate. A caring adult the child trusts can be told.	Head teacher contacts counseling and health services if required. Teacher or non teaching staff are disciplined and prosecuted.	Follow-up to make sure the child gets the help that they need. Have the child identify a trusted caring adult who can support them in the process.	Ensure learner is safe and if necessary receives health and counseling services. Teacher or staff member may be suspended and prosecuted. Retrain teachers and all staff in positive discipline. Parents are notified.
Emotional Violence	Any statement or act that makes a child feel worthless, unloved, unwanted with the aim of blaming, degrading, intimidating and exploiting learners.	Degrading language, shouting, screaming, intimidation, threats, isolating, humiliating, starting rumours.	Head teacher acknowledges the incident(s) and creates a report. Serious emotional violence is reported to the police.	Head teacher talks with teacher to prevent emotional violence from continuing. Teacher may be disciplined. Learner is counseled.	The child's consent and confidentiality must be considered. Ensure that the service providers do their part.	Make sure the abuse stops. Head Teacher reviews teacher or non teaching staff's position. Learner receives counseling. If appropriate, inform parents.
Sexual Violence	Involvement of a child in any sexual activity, or suggestion of sexual activity. Defilement is the act of unlawful sexual intercourse with a person under 18 years of age.	Touching private parts, exposing learners bodies. Exposing body to learners. Showing inappropriate material. Sexual statements. Defilement.	Head teacher reports immediately to the police and then updates the district authorities.	Head Teacher tracks. Verify the child is safe and getting the help they need. Track perpetrator is not able to continue to harm children and is prosecuted.	Depending on the child's needs, the referral can include working with health services, police, counselors and district officials.	Make certain the child is safe. After that, ensure access to health care, counseling, justice, rehabilitation, and follow-up. Family counseling where needed such as in the event of pregnancy, STI or HIV. Prosecution of culprit. Involve parents if safe to do so.



Caning

Head teachers should discuss positive discipline and the harm of caning with learners, teachers and all staff. Streamline who can provide discipline (i.e. only classroom teacher provides discipline, not cooks, support staff, or matrons).

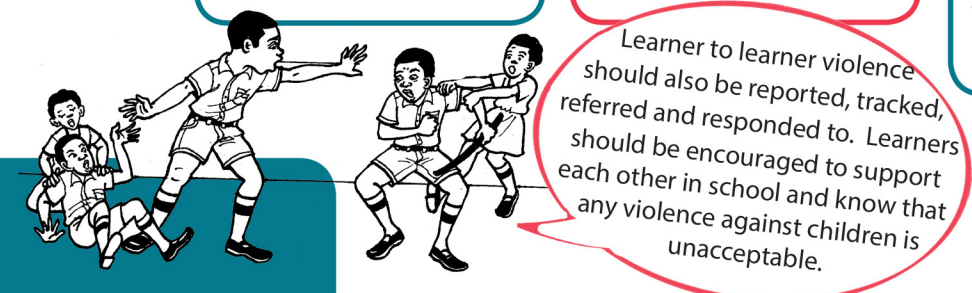


Bullying

Head teachers should give extra attention to learners with a disability as they are more vulnerable to abuse.



Reinforce school rules and regulations for teachers, all school staff and learners, such as staff quarters are out of bounds to learners. Emphasize that children watch and support one another.



Learner to learner violence should also be reported, tracked, referred and responded to. Learners should be encouraged to support each other in school and know that any violence against children is unacceptable.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Who must report?**
Anyone who sees violence must report but head teachers have a special responsibility, as described in this briefer. All acts of physical and sexual violence should be reported to the police and district officials. Emotional violence can also be reported to the district officials.
- Does caning improve a child's performance?**
No! Caning does not improve a child's performance in school. Caning and other forms of corporal punishment are forms of violence that inflict pain and traumatize children. Children learn best when they feel safe.
- I reported before and nothing happened?**
Find other service partners. If one partner is not fulfilling their role, try others. Be creative and resourceful. Community organizations, mothers groups, churches, mosques, or NGOs may be able to help. Depending on your location, some may support free of charge. Your colleagues at the school or at the SMC may have helpful information and a Community Based Case Management system.



LEGAL UPDATE!

- It is illegal for teachers to beat learners.** The Children's Act (Amendment), 2016 prohibits any form of physical punishment against learners. Teachers that cane, beat or otherwise commit physical violence risk three years in prison and or a fine of UGX 2,000,000.
- Sexual abuse is a crime.** Sexual abuse and indecent assault against children are criminal offenses. Misuse of authority to attain sex is also illegal (Sexual Offense Act, 2015).
- Trafficking is a risk.** Ugandan learners are vulnerable to human trafficking inside and outside Uganda (Prevention of Trafficking In Persons Act, 2009).
- Be careful with the internet.** Learners with access to computers are at risk of cyberbullying, inappropriate contact with adults, or exposure to improper material (Computer Misuse Act, 2011).

When violence happens to children at school:

REPORT

Reporting starts with taking a verbal or written statement from the learner shortly the incident. The sooner the better. Use the information to fill out the official forms (if available) or to write a statement with the essentials (who, what, where, and when) about the incident. Depending the situation, you may also need to get a report from the culprit and or witnesses. Inform a parent or trusted adult, if safe to do so.

- Step 1: Head teacher engages the child in a friendly manner and captures all the necessary information.
- Step 2: Head teacher fills in the reporting form.
- Step 3: Head teacher works with school staff to identify the witnesses and perpetrator to get information from them for evidence.
- Step 4: For cases managed beyond the school level, the head teacher submits the report to the police, DEO, DIS, and Chair of the School Management Committee (SMC).

TRACK

Tracking is the step that links all the other steps in RTRR. Tracking is the active, organized follow-up of the plan described in the initial report. The head teacher must track the case to ensure:

1. the right response in the short term to ensure the safety and protection of the child,
2. follow-up services overtime to support the recovery of the child (health, justice, education, and family services), and
3. culprit is appropriately disciplined (legal or school level).
4. if appropriate, parents can help child get care.

Tracking is a case by case, step by step activity. In tracking, the head teacher follows the case as the child gets the required police, health, legal, educational, or psychosocial services. Tracking is the deliberate effort to make sure that the learner gets the help that they need both at the time of the incident and during recovery.



REFER

In referral, the child's immediate needs are addressed by linking them to service providers.

Referral happens when the head teacher determines the child's needs and connects the child to the services required, such as police, health, or psychosocial help. Referral can also include referring the perpetrator to disciplinary action. Coordinate referral with parents, if appropriate.

Key Steps of Referral: To conduct referral, the head teacher must:

- Step 1: Determine the service providers required for the case.
- Step 2: Contact actors and provide a referral form (if necessary).
- Step 3: Follow up with the designated service providers to ensure action is taken.
- Step 4: Get updates and feedback from the designated service providers.
- Step 5: Monitor the child's recovery.
- Step 6: Identify gaps in services and report them to district officials.

RESPOND

Response is the most important and immediate step following an incident. For head teachers, the first response is to ensure the safety of the child. Once the child is safe, then link the child with referral partners that provide the health, justice, education, and family support needed for the child's recovery.

In response, all stakeholders must do their part to support the survivor, to discipline the perpetrator, and to prevent the same incident from happening again to child and at the school. Parents do their part to provide care.

To prevent repeated incidents at your school, the head teacher must educate learners about their rights and adults about their responsibilities. Prevention may require changing the rules and regulations, the practices or the physical space at the school. In response, a head teacher must:

1. First, make sure that the child is safe.
2. Second, connect the child to the necessary health, justice, education, and family support needed for the child's recovery.



Extra: Use the Uganda Child Helpline, a free phone number, call: 116

