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# Bangalore schools say no to cane

The decision comes in the wake of the arrest of the principal of a Kolkata school on charges of abetting the suicide of a class VIII student

Maitreyee Boruah

Bangalore schools are taking a stand and devising ways to put a full stop to corporal punishment which has left a scar on many students. The schools believe that by developing a friendly relationship between teacher and students, they can solve the issues pertaining to discipline amicably, and therefore bring an end to corporal punishment.

The decision came in the wake of the arrest of the principal and three teachers of La Martiniere School for boys, Kolkata, on charges of abetting the suicide of a class VIII student who was allegedly subjected to corporal punishment.

Schools in the city have also come up with a set of strict rules to end corporal punishment on their campuses. They have prepared a list of dos and don'ts to be followed by all teachers. The teachers found guilty of violating the rules will be severely punished. Many schools are already counselling teachers on how to deal with students.

"It's through love and friendship that teachers can win over students. Our teachers are friends to the students. Corporal punishment is never practised here," said Manjula Raman, principal, Army Public School.

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## CANE & ABLE

- ▶ Incidents of corporal punishment have been reported frequently in schools in the city.
- ▶ In June this year, Bangalore boy Mohammed Ayman, a class IV student of Baldwin Boys High School, was hit hard by his teacher, which left his front tooth broken.
- ▶ The father of the boy, Mohammed Irfan filed a complaint against the teacher, Irene Shah, with the Ashok Nagar police in an attempt to put an end to such horrendous acts in schools.
- ▶ The police have registered a case under Section 326 of the Indian Penal Code (for voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means) and Section 23 of the Juvenile Justice Act.

wanath, principal of Jain Heritage School said that the school has been strictly following a 'no corporal punishment' policy since its inception.

"We conduct regular counselling for teachers. We actively engage students and teachers in one-on-one discussions to bridge



City schools have come up with a set of rules to erase corporal punishment from their campuses. A friendly behaviour from teachers towards students can impart a sense of discipline, they say.

the gap that may exist between them," she said.

Supreme Court had banned corporal punishment in schools in 2000. The Section 17 of Right to Education Act, which came into effect on April 1, states: "No child shall be subjected to physical punishment and mental harassment".

Taking cognisance of the Kolkata-boy Rouvanjit Rawla suicide case, Union Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry has begun formulating stringent guidelines against corporal punishment in schools.

The guidelines will examine ways to take penal action against

such schools, award compensation to affected students, besides giving more teeth to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR).

However, Karnataka Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (KCPCR) says that awareness holds the key to root out the

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Tina Mathews, Student

practice from campuses. The commission has so far received five cases of corporal punishment this year and they fear many more have gone unnoticed.

"As part of our awareness programme, we are asking schools to do everything to put an end to this menace," said Vasudev Sharma, member, KCPCR.

Students too hope that the practice would be banned in all schools. "Earlier, corporal punishments were common in schools. But today, the society is aware about the laws governing child rights and its implications," said Raja Hedge, a student of class IX, who did not wish to name his school.

"Corporal punishment is not the solution for bringing discipline among children. A teacher should be a friend, philosopher and guide to students," said Tina Mathews, a student.

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