

A Statement of Support from Muslim Leaders and Organisations for Law Reform to End Corporal Punishment of Children

Islam views all human life as a sacred gift from God. Islam does not advocate any violence against children. Corporal punishment and other forms of humiliating treatment of children conflict directly with the advice of the Prophet.

We affirm our respect for the human dignity of every child. This calls us to work together to confront the pain and humiliation inflicted against children through the practice of corporal punishment in homes and families, schools, religious institutions and other community settings.

We are available to put our faith into action and to speak out on behalf of all children who endure corporal punishment. There are no circumstances under which this harmful, humiliating practice can be justified either in the name of religion, in the guise of discipline or through the sacred texts and the tenets of our faith.

We are committed to taking leadership and working in solidarity with people from other sectors, communities and religious networks towards ending all corporal punishment of children. Giving children equal protection from assault is crucial because it says so much about the sort of society we want for all children.

Ending the commonplace practice of corporal punishment will reflect the seriousness with which we regard the human rights of every child to grow up free from the fear of being hit and humiliated by those whose duty it is to protect children from harm. This is not only a moral imperative, it is about giving children the respect to which they are entitled.

Discipline is about teaching and guiding children by adult example - not through hitting children and causing pain. It is important that law reform is accompanied by extensive public education promoting positive, non-violent discipline and access to resources and support for parents.

This is an opportunity for our values and hopes for our children and families to shape our laws and to make a positive difference. If we really want a less violent society and peace in our world we must end the legality of corporal punishment and treat our children with gentleness, love, compassion and respect.