

# Violence against children in and around schools in Lesotho

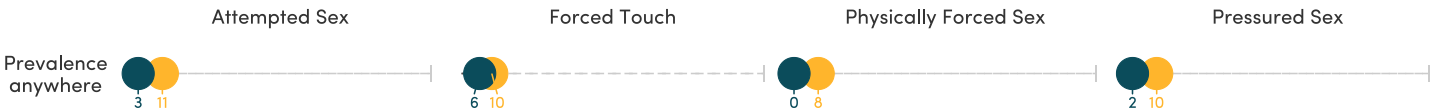
Violence against children is preventable, and the education sector can play a critical role in driving change through schools and school systems. This note summarizes the state of school related violence in Lesotho, and highlights key data gaps.

**Bullying** refers to repeated emotional or physical aggressive behaviours including any form of isolating, rejecting or excluding from a group, or hitting, kicking, pushing by peers. Overall data on bullying is not available.<sup>1</sup> 2% girls and 7% boys experienced physical attacks from peers in their lifetime.<sup>2</sup>



## Sexual Violence

**Sexual violence** takes different forms, and includes non-consensual completed or attempted sexual contact or acts of a sexual nature that do not involve physical contact, and any form of coercion into sexual situations. Available data indicate 13% of children experienced sexual violence before the age of 18.<sup>2</sup>

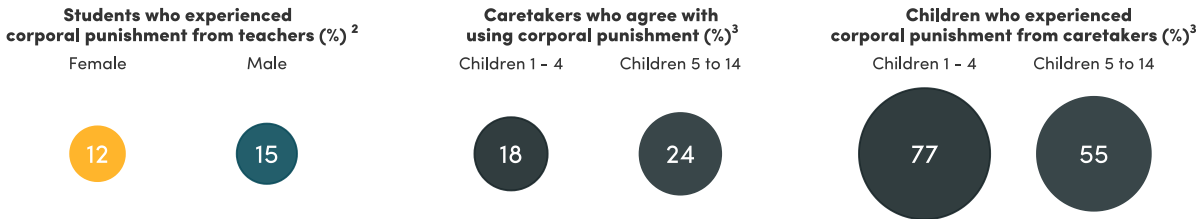


Among those exposed to any form of sexual violence in their lives, 17% occurred at school.



## Corporal Punishment

**Corporal punishment** refers to any form of punishment involving physical force intended to cause pain or discomfort. 14% of children reported experiencing corporal punishment from teachers.



## Is corporal punishment banned in these settings...<sup>4</sup>



## Data Gaps

**VACS 2018** covers child prevalence of physical and sexual violence by peers, parents, partners, and teachers, and emotional violence from parents. **MICS 2018** provides data on physical attacks<sup>3\*</sup>, and corporal punishment by caretakers. MICS can be broken down by disability status, while other data cannot be disaggregated by LGBT+ or disability status.<sup>5</sup> The table below denotes where data is available.

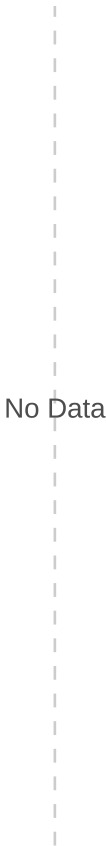
Type of Violence	Aged 6 to 12	Aged 13 to 22	2008 - 2012	2013 - 2018	2019 or after
Physical (Peers)	✓	✓		VACS,	
Emotional (Peers)		✓		VACS	
Sexual (Peers)		✓		VACS	
Sexual (Teachers)		✓		VACS	
Corporal Punishment (Teachers)		✓		VACS	
Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)	✓	✓		MICS	

# Lesotho Compared to Other Countries

The graphs below include only countries with data from the same international survey, which means the data were collected from children of similar ages using the same questions. **Below are country averages.**



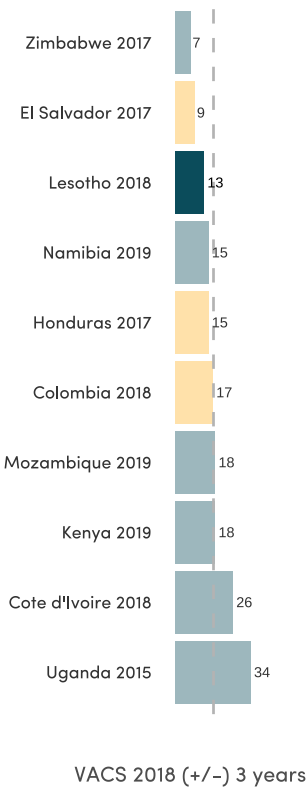
Bullying data is not available



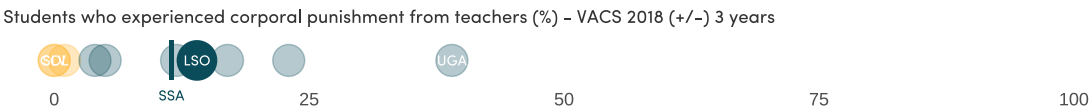
**Physical Attacks are...**  
About the same as the Sub-Saharan Africa average, and about the same as the average for low- and middle-income countries with data.



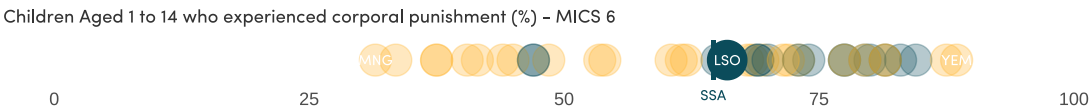
**Sexual Violence is...**  
6 percentage points lower than the Sub-Saharan Africa average, and 4 percentage points lower than the average for low- and middle-income countries with data.



## Corporal Punishment (Teachers)



## Corporal Punishment (Caretakers)



## Notes

- International surveys cover different forms of violence and do not use a standard definition of violence.
- This brief covers international survey data. We recommend complementing it with national surveys (e.g., household surveys) when available.
- The violence figures included in this brief are likely an underestimate, as many victims do not disclose their experiences of violence.<sup>7</sup>
- Country comparisons created with DHS, VACS, and GSHS data, include low- and middle-income countries within +/- 3 years of Lesotho's survey round. Graphs created with MICS, TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA, PISA-D, and ERCE, include low- and middle-income countries with data on the same survey round.

## Sources

1. Examples of surveys that include questions on bullying are PIRLS, PISA, TIMSS, and GSHS.
2. Calculations using VACS 2018. Surveys ages 13 to 24.
3. Calculations using MICS 2018.
4. [End Corporal Punishment of Children](#), data accessed 2024. Note: "Some" represents cases where prohibition is stated for specific provisions (eg., [forms of corporal punishment or school levels](#)). Alternative Care refers to cases where a child's primary caregiver is not their parents (eg. foster care).
5. [Evans, Hares, Smarrelli, and Wu](#). CGD 2023.
6. While DHS asks about teacher and peer perpetrators of physical violence, we exclude from our analysis as the age range does not reflect the period when children are most likely to experience corporal punishment. If the focus is on physical violence against women by teachers starting at age 15, DHS data can provide relevant insights.
7. [Smarrelli, Wu, Baago-Rasmussen, Hares, and Naker](#). CGD 2024.