

# SAFE TO LEARN PROGRESS 2019-2023 - GHANA

(UPDATED AS OF DECEMBER 2023)

## SUMMARY TABLE OF BENCHMARK ASSESSMENT

### IMPLEMENT LAWS AND POLICIES

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.1	The national government includes prevention of violence in around schools as a specific strategy in education sector policies, plans and budgets.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Ghana <u>Education Strategic Plan 2018-2030</u> aims to increase enrolment in basic schools particularly in disadvantaged communities. It includes improving ease of, and safety of access for all children including limiting distance to school in rural areas and increasing access for children with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups. The ESP mentions the improvement of teacher training in positive discipline and effective classroom management. The provision of a Safe School environment for all learners, especially those with disabilities and girls has been further strengthened in the Education Sector Medium Term Development Plan (ESMTDP) 2022-2025. The national education budget has been on a reducing trend and there is no specific allocation to tackle violence in schools. However, development partners including UNICEF, CAMFED, Fairtrade Africa, PEAS, T-TEL, and others are supporting the promotion of safe schools in diverse initiatives. The Safe School Policy has been developed by the GES in a consultative manner and is currently under review and approval process. The Policy includes prevention of violence in and around schools within the scope.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
1.2	There is explicit prohibition of corporal punishment in schools, and policies are in place to support positive discipline and effective classroom management.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Prohibition of corporal punishment is still to be fully achieved in schools.</p> <p>The Ministerial Directives against corporal punishment in schools and the discouragement not to use corporal punishment under the National Child Friendly School Standards should be confirmed through law reform which repeals the provisions for corporal punishment in the Education Code of Discipline and clearly prohibits all corporal punishment in education settings, public and private, at all levels.</p> <p>Despite the existing legal gap, between 2018 and 2020, the Ministry of Education - Ghana Education Service (GES) undertook a review of the Code of Conduct for Teachers. The Teacher Code of Conduct that binds on teaching and learning activities describe corporal punishment as illegal punishment and actions are taken against teacher perpetrators with some incidents leading to dismissal by the Ghana Education Service. The GES not only prohibited the practice but also developed inter-ministerial guidelines for reporting incidents of violence. The <u>Education Strategic Plan (ESP) for 2018-2023</u> (BE 2.3.4) incorporates the enhancement of teacher training in positive discipline and classroom management techniques.</p>
1.3	The roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence are clearly set out in the multi-sectoral national child protection policy framework.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Since 2021, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has been implementing a <u>Safe Schools Programme, along with accompanying resources available in a Safe Schools Resource Pack</u>. The adapted Safe Schools resource pack for special schools continued to benefit over 4,000 special school learners across the 62 special schools in Ghana. The government <u>has also established a monitoring and evaluation (M&amp;E) framework for violence prevention in schools</u>.</p> <p>In 2023, the MoE/GES launched the Safe School logo and Safest School recognition awards as an annual event to support ignite schools' interest to adhere to the Safe Schools protocols. <u>The National Strategic Framework for Ending Child Marriage 2017-2026</u> specifies the roles of the Ministry of Education in prevention and response to child marriage and includes the Guidelines for the education sector on the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and retention of young mothers in schools, <u>adopted prior to endorsing the STL Call to Action</u>.</p>

			<p>The Inter-sectoral Standard Operating Procedures for Child Protection and Family Welfare and the <u>Children and Family Welfare Policy</u> are the multi-sectoral national child protection frameworks that recognize the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education in response and referral to incidents of violence.</p> <p>The Government of Ghana has a <u>Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy for the Protection of Children in Ghana 2016-2020</u>, led by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, which includes the Guidance and Counselling Unit of the Ghana Education Service among the leading institutions for implementation (see further information below, under <u>Call to Action component 3</u>). In 2022, the Government of Ghana, including GES, and CSOs, with support from UNFPA and UNICEF, conducted a gender assessment and joint action planning, applying the Gender Transformative Accelerator Tool for Ending Child Marriage, developed by the UNFPA and UNICEF New York Headquarters as part of the Global Programme to End Child Marriage. As a result, the <u>Gender Transformative Accelerator Roadmap for Ghana</u> has been published, with key actions to be taken for integrating a gender-transformative approach into programming.</p>
1.4	<p>The country has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration and in situations of armed conflict is implementing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In Progress</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<p>Ghana <u>endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in November 2020</u>.</p>

## STRENGTHEN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
2.1	Key violence prevention strategies are embedded in curriculum-based activities for children.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>In 2023, the Safe School programme extended to additional 20 districts (making 40 districts) with UNICEF's support; mobilizing 2,791 (female: 1,517) stakeholders as change agents to influence school safety in all special schools. In addition, 52,772 head teachers/school-based counsellors/teachers and 27,392 (13,760 girls) students gained practical skills to promote safety in Schools. UNICEF in collaboration with the GES and the Environmental protection authority continued to utilise the Safe School programme as an entry to ensuring the safe school environment for girls and boys. 97,822 students (JHS – 47,305, SHS – 50,517) and 4,144 teachers benefitted from the Safe School and environmental protection orientation and capacity building training sessions; with 599 students identified as champions to promote safe schools within 14 districts. 599 students were engaged and empowered to play an active role in environmental advocacy. UNESCO is supporting capacity building of teachers on the Safe school programme.</p> <p>The MoE/GES's Digital Literacy Package to support the development of students' digital literacy skills, including for keeping students safe online has been <u>developed and approved by the Director General of the GES for national roll-out.</u></p>
2.2	Child safeguarding principles and procedures are in place in schools, inclusive of codes of conduct, and safe recruitment standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>A Safe School Resource Pack published by the MoE-GES and partners in 2018 provides: Teacher's Handbook on Safe Schools, Training Manual for facilitators, Peer to peer materials, Posters and a brochure to support school-based violence reporting. The Resource Pack was then disseminated and operationalized, including by adapting it for operationalization in special schools. A more detailed Sexual Harassment manual for Senior High Schools was developed and is being implemented by the GES with funding from Transformed Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL). The GES also contributed to developing inter-ministerial guidelines for reporting mechanisms were set up in 825 schools within 20 districts as a pilot for scale-up (<u>data updated as of 2020</u>).</p> <p>The Safe School Policy has been developed by the GES in a consultative manner and is currently under review and approval process. The Policy includes reporting mechanisms and referral pathways with other service providers. The student's behavior standards supported by UNICEF has been finalised and approved by the GES management for roll-out.</p>

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2.3	Each school has at least one focal point who is capacitated to provide front-line mental health/psychosocial support to children experiencing violence.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>The GES has developed and operationalized a Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) handout for teachers, caregivers and students. [1]</p> <p>All schools in Ghana have School-based counsellors who have as their mandate to ensure psychological wellness of students and teachers as part of the Safe Schools leadership roles. However, the GES is under resourced to train all the school-based counsellors especially at the basic school level. Strategically PSS delivery has been focused on areas experiencing emergencies-over 250 teachers in the Upper East (Sahel Spill over), Volta, Eastern, and Greater Accra Regions (Flooding) were trained in providing psychological first aid.</p>
2.4	The physical environment in and around schools is safe and designed with the wellbeing of children in mind.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Schools in Ghana are designed to embrace the child friendly school concept and environment; with seating, WASH facilities, play materials, playing ground, etc. Hexagonal, round table and comfortable desks are provided for the KG and lower classes to allow for group work and play, with mono, dual, and tri desks at the upper classes. Toilets are supposed to have age-appropriate seating and changing rooms for girls (e.g. ramps, staircases etc.) It is also critical for access for all children including those with special needs. School food vendors are screened by the environmental health officers to ensure hygienic and quality foods are provided. Environmental protection and sanitation are usually a daily routine of a school. However, the extent to which some of these safe physical environment practices are adhered to can be strengthened.</p>

## SHIFT SOCIAL NORMS AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
3.1	There is wide dissemination and engagement with stakeholders to build knowledge and appreciation of child rights and laws prohibiting violence.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Since 2017, Communication through mass media and social media as part of the <u>Ghanaians Against Child Abuse (GACA) social drive/campaign</u> reached over 5 million people with messages on child protection.</p> <p>To further mobilize stakeholders in April 2023, the Ministry of Education and the <u>GES</u> launched the <u>Safe School Annual Awards</u> as part of the Safe School Programme, under the theme ‘Harnessing our collective effort to promote a safe, protective, and inclusive school environment’.</p>
3.2	Specific, evidence-informed interventions are researched and implemented, addressing social norms that drive key forms of violence and/or helping children manage risks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Government of Ghana developed an <u>SBC Communication Strategy for the Protection of Children 2016-2020</u>, which includes schools among its three main strategic strands, and the GES among key institutions for implementation. The Strategy was developed based on evidence generated through a baseline survey.</p> <p>Findings from a UNICEF endline survey to assess community’s knowledge, attitudes and practices on child protection conducted in 2021 suggest that ‘social norms promoting or encouraging violence against children and women in Ghana remain widespread and deeply rooted’ and that ‘structural drivers, such as poverty, and risk factors including low education levels contribute to high rates of violence’. The study also <u>concluded that addressing violence requires holistic and multi-sectoral response to address these root causes and drivers</u>. Evidence indicates that existing social and behaviour change interventions, such as GACA and the Child Protection Community Facilitation Toolkits, have achieved significant reach and gained public approval, however, there has been a less of change with regard to social and behavioural drivers of corporal punishment and child marriage in rural areas and among less educated families. Following the KAP survey, UNICEF is conducting a gender analysis of social and behaviour change programming to make the existing interventions more context-specific and gender-transformative and develop more nuanced content.</p>

			<p>The INGO Right to Play developed and trained teachers on gender-responsive continuum of teacher training (GR-CoTT) modules. According to a <u>2023 publication by UNGEI with the Partner Coalition for Ending Gender Stereotypes in Schools</u>, 95 per cent of participating teachers exhibited improvements in implementing gender-responsive, play-based teaching methods, leading to enhanced learning outcomes. GRPBL has been incorporated into the national coaching and mentoring framework of the National Teaching Council, Ministry of Education.</p> <p>The GES with UNICEF support conducted an <i>Analysis of violence against children in public basic schools in Ghana</i> to measure the level of impact of the Safe Schools programme.</p>
3.3	<p>Young people, parents, teachers, and community members in and around schools are engaged and active on school violence.</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In Progress</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<p>A national, regional and district cadre of 120 trainers on Safe Schools was developed (<u>data updated as of end 2020</u>). Trainers and school-level champions are mobilised and active for safe schools and support the rolling out of safe school activities in primary schools and junior high schools. Over 50 stakeholder organizations, including teacher education unions, are active in Ghana to support the Safe Schools initiative.</p> <p>The Digital Literacy Package developed by the Ministry of Education to protect students online includes components to mobilize and engage parents/caregivers in supporting students keeping safe online.</p> <p>The Government, NGOs and UNICEF have developed and are implementing <u>Child Protection Community Engagement Toolkits</u>. These target parents/caretakers, teachers, children, community members, traditional and religious leaders to <u>facilitate dialogue on various issues of concern, including violence against children in and around school</u>.</p> <p>Community engagement activities have been implemented with the use of the Toolkits in 170 districts of all 16 regions (over 65 per cent of all the districts in the country), concurrently with <u>the Integrated Social Service (ISS)</u> approach with the aim of strengthening multi-sectoral service delivery mechanisms to address the needs of children and their families, including violence in and around schools.</p>

## INVEST RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.1	Domestic resources allocated to support interventions and capacity building activities to prevent and respond to violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>The Guidance and Counselling Unit and other key units of the Ghana Education Service in 2022 undertook advocacy on the need to include a budget for violence prevention in schools. UNICEF Ghana has supported this work and has trained its own staff on Public Finance for Children. This aims to <u>better enable UNICEF to undertake strategic advocacy at government level towards increased and targeted budgetary allocations for violence prevention within the education sector.</u></p>
4.2	Development partners provide resources targeting national or subnational level to end violence in schools, investing in effective approaches.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>GPE has a Multiplier ESPIG, with The World Bank as grant agent which includes support to ending school violence and school related gender-based violence (SRGBV) / training district education officers on violence in school and revision of teachers' handbook/code of conduct to address GBV. UNICEF has been supporting the government to prevent and respond to violence in school for many years, including by supporting the GES and through its education, child protection programmes as well as SBC work which includes cross sectoral SBC and technical assistance on gender discriminatory roles and practices. It also supports changing social norms harmful to children through the joint UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) provided support through UNICEF Ghana during 2018-2020. UNICEF supports the work on the National Safe School Policy and teachers training. CSO Forum members Plan International, Fairtrade Africa, Amnesty International, PEAS, and World Vision work on Safe Schools programming, strengthening local systems and advocacy with government and local CSO partners. [2]</p> <p>Other development partners including CAMFED, Fairtrade Africa, PEAS, T-TEL are promoting safe schools through diverse initiatives.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
4.3	There is private sector engagement in the provision of financial and non-financial resources including technical support, expertise and advocacy towards ending violence in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>UNICEF Canada NatCom, and Barcelona Football Club Foundation (FCBF) funded UNICEF Ghana initiatives to tackle violence in school during 2018-2020.</p> <p>Since 2024, UNICEF in technical collaboration with the International Cocoa Initiative has introduced a <u>Multisectoral and Multistakeholder Public-Private Partnership (PPP)</u> to address the root causes of child labour in collaboration with various Government partners, including the Ghana Education Services, and the private sector (i.e SWISS Platform for Sustainable Cocoa, Fairtrade and Tony's Chocology). While the entry point is child labour, the PPP targets prevention and response of protection risks, such as violence against children, across sectors including education.</p>

## GENERATE AND USE EVIDENCE

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
5.1	Information and reporting of incidents allow for disaggregated baseline information and monitoring of trends and that reflect needs and gaps in the system.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>Ghana has operationalized the <u>Social Welfare Information Management System (CPIMS+)</u> with the aim of facilitating case management services in line with the <u>Inter-Sectoral Standard Operating Procedures for Child Protection and Family Welfare</u> and improving data collection and management, including the data on violence against children as one of the primary protection concerns. It provides disaggregated data by age, sex, disability and type of violence, and helps improve programming by monitoring trends and identifying gaps.</p> <p>As of May 2024, SWIMS is used in 170 districts out of 261 districts in Ghana.</p>

N.	BENCHMARK	ASSESSMENT FINDING	PROGRESS SUMMARY
5.2	There is regular data collection on prevalence and forms of violence in schools using methods that follow high ethical standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>A Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) was conducted in 2022 (does not provide data on violence in school but has data on domestic violence). As of 2023 <u>a report on key indicators</u> is available.</p> <p><u>2020 MICS-EAGLE Ghana Education Fact Sheets</u> provides analysis of MICS Ghana data including on child marriage and education; child labour and education; and disability-inclusive education. Produced as part of the MICS- EAGLE (Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys -Education Analysis for Global Learning and Equity) Initiative, it aims to contribute to addressing gaps in key education indicators and in effective data utilization by governments and education stakeholders.</p>
5.3	Decisions on replication and scale-up of violence prevention initiatives are based on evaluations of trialled models and approaches.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Unable to Assess <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<p>A Knowledges, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) end-line survey was conducted in 2021 (as follow up to a 2013 baseline) to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to child protection, including violence against children in and around schools, in UNICEF intervention areas. <u>See more information in benchmark 3.2.</u></p>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] UNICEF WCARO Safe To Learn - Mapping West and Central Africa Region (WCAR)

[2] STL Country Engagement Task Force (CETF) Mapping 2023.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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