

**280.21 Corporal punishment — burden of proof.**

1. An employee of a public school district, accredited nonpublic school, or area education agency shall not inflict, or cause to be inflicted, corporal punishment upon a student. For purposes of [this section](#), “*corporal punishment*” means the intentional physical punishment of a student. An employee’s physical contact with the body of a student shall not be considered corporal punishment if it is reasonable and necessary under the circumstances and is not designed or intended to cause pain or if the employee uses reasonable force, as defined under [section 704.1](#), for the protection of the employee, the student, or other students; to obtain the possession of a weapon or other dangerous object within a student’s control; or for the protection of property. The department of education shall adopt rules to implement [this section](#).

2. A school employee who, in the reasonable course of the employee’s employment responsibilities, comes into physical contact with a student shall be granted immunity from any civil or criminal liability which might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of such physical contact, if the physical contact is reasonable under the circumstances and involves any of the following:

- a. Encouraging, supporting, or disciplining the student.
- b. Protecting the employee, the student, or other students.
- c. Obtaining possession of a weapon or other dangerous object within a student’s control.
- d. Protecting employee, student, or school property.
- e. Quelling a disturbance or preventing an act threatening physical harm to any person.
- f. Removing a disruptive student from class or any area of the school premises, or from school-sponsored activities off school premises.
- g. Preventing a student from the self-infliction of harm.
- h. Self-defense.
- i. Any other legitimate educational activity.

3. To prevail in a civil action alleging a violation of [this section](#) the party bringing the action shall prove the violation by clear and convincing evidence. Any school employee determined in a civil action to have been wrongfully accused under [this section](#) shall be awarded reasonable monetary damages, in light of the circumstances involved, against the party bringing the action.

4. A school employee’s employer and the board of educational examiners shall not engage in reprisal or retaliation against a school employee who, in the reasonable course of the employee’s employment responsibilities, comes into physical contact with a student in accordance with [this section](#).

5. A public school district or area education agency shall provide to all teachers employed by the public school district or area education agency a copy of [this section](#) with the initial employment contract and with each notice of renewal of the employment contract.

[89 Acts, ch 71, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1218, §1; 94 Acts, ch 1131, §5; 98 Acts, ch 1195, §1; 2018 Acts, ch 1057, §10; 2020 Acts, ch 1108, §10, 11; 2023 Acts, ch 96, §9](#)

Referred to in [§232.71B, 232E.1, 256.9](#)