

POLICY BRIEF

Mainstreaming VAPP Act education in schools and communities from an early age



- Federal Ministry of Education
- Federal Ministry of Youth, Women Affairs
- Federal & State governments
- Faith Institutions, CSO's, Development Partners, School Authorities

Executive Summary

Despite the passage of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP Act), awareness, understanding, and practical use of the law remain low especially among children, adolescents, parents, and community gatekeepers. This gap limits prevention, early reporting, and access to justice for victims of violence.

Discussions from the Building Safe Childhood: Understanding GBV, Digital Safety and the VAPP Act webinar highlighted the urgent need to move beyond reactive responses to violence and adopt early and age-appropriate policy literacy approaches.

This policy brief proposes integrating VAPP Act literacy into schools, digital spaces, and community structures from a young age to build a culture of prevention, protection, and accountability.

Problem Statement

- The VAPP Act is often perceived as a legal document only for adults, lawyers, or crisis situations.
- Children and adolescents experience violence (physical, sexual, emotional, online) without understanding their rights or where to report.
- Schools lack safeguarding policies and standardized frameworks to teach consent, boundaries, reporting pathways, and digital safety.
- Community norms, silence, and misinformation continue to normalize harmful practices.
- Teachers, parents, religious leaders, and community heads often lack simplified, practical knowledge of the VAPP Act.

Policy Goal

To institutionalize early, continuous, and accessible VAPP Act literacy within schools and communities in order to:

- ▶ Empower children and adolescents to recognize abuse.
- ▶ Improve reporting and response mechanisms.
- ▶ Build a culture that upholds dignity, consent and protection.
- ▶ Prevent violence before it occurs.

Policy Recommendations

Ministry of Education, NERDC, School Boards

Integrate VAPP Act Education into School Curricula:

Embed age-appropriate VAPP Act content into Civic Education, Social Studies, Health Education, and Guidance & Counselling.

School Authorities

Train teachers and safeguarding officers as first responders :

Mandatory training should equip school staff to identify abuse, respond safely, and apply safeguarding procedures.

CSO's, School Authorities, Religious Leaders

Institutionalize Community-Based VAPP Act Literacy:

Integrate VAPP Act education into community platforms using local languages and CSO-supported, culturally relevant tools.

Community Leaders, School Authorities

Strengthen Reporting and Referral Pathways:

Create visible and confidential reporting channels within schools and communities.

Call to Action

To translate the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act from policy to practice, deliberate and coordinated action is required now.

We call on:

Government Ministries & Agencies:

Integrate VAPP Act education into schools and youth programmes, issue safeguarding guidelines, and fund training and community sensitisation.

School Leaders & Education Stakeholders:

Adopt VAPP-aligned safeguarding policies, train staff to respond to violence, and provide safe, child-friendly reporting systems.

Community & Religious Leaders:

Lead open discussions on violence prevention, challenge harmful norms, and partner with CSOs for local VAPP Act awareness.

Civil Society & Development Partners:

Develop child-friendly VAPP resources, support prevention programmes, and strengthen referral and survivor support systems.

Parents, Caregivers & Young People:

Promote open conversations on rights and safety, encourage reporting, and demand accountability from institutions.



Conclusion

Mainstreaming VAPP Act literacy from a young age is essential for sustainable violence prevention. Policy literacy ensures that the VAPP Act is not just a law on paper, but a living tool for safety, dignity, and justice. By embedding these conversations into schools, communities, and digital spaces, Nigeria can move from reactive responses to proactive protection.

Contact

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