

Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Ordinance, 2026 (I of 2026)

Published in the Punjab Gazette (Extraordinary Issue), 11 February 2026

Notification

Government of the Punjab – Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department Dated: 11 February 2026

No. Legis:13-01/2025 – The following Ordinance promulgated by the Governor of the Punjab is hereby published for general information:

The Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Ordinance, 2026

(I of 2026)

An Ordinance

to restrain the solemnization of child marriages in Punjab.

1. Short title, extent and commencement

- (1) This Ordinance may be cited as the *Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Ordinance, 2026*.
(2) It shall extend to the whole of Punjab. (3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions

- (a) “child” means a person, male or female, who is under eighteen years of age; (b) “child marriage” means an act of Nikah or solemnizing marriage where both or either of the contracting party is a child; (c) “Code” means the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (V of 1898); (d) “contracting party” means either of the party whose Nikah or marriage is, or about to be performed or solemnized; (e) “Court” means the Court of Session as provided under the Code; (f) “Government” means Government of the Punjab; (g) “guardian” means a natural guardian or a guardian appointed under the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 (VIII of 1890); (h) “Ordinance” means the Punjab Child Marriage Restraint Ordinance, 2026.

3. Registration of child marriages

- (1) No Nikah registrar shall register a child marriage. (2) Whoever contravenes sub-section (1) shall be punished with simple imprisonment up to one year and fine of one hundred thousand rupees.

4. Punishment for marrying a child

Whoever, being an adult above eighteen years of age, contracts a marriage with a child, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment of not less than two years and up to three years, and fine up to five hundred thousand rupees.

5. Child abuse and its punishment

(1) Any form of cohabitation before attaining eighteen years, with or without consent, resulting from a child marriage shall be deemed child abuse. (2) Any person who induces, forces, persuades, entices or coerces a child bride or groom to engage in child abuse shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than five years and up to seven years, and fine not less than one million rupees.

6. Child trafficking and its punishment

(1) Any person who compels a child to leave Punjab for the purpose of evading this Ordinance shall commit child trafficking and be punished with imprisonment of not less than five years and up to seven years, and fine up to one million rupees. (2) Any person who recruits, harbours, transports, provides or obtains a child for trafficking shall be punished with imprisonment up to three years and fine up to five hundred thousand rupees.

7. Punishment for guardian involved in child marriage

Any guardian or person who promotes, permits, or negligently fails to prevent child marriage shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment of not less than two years and up to three years, and fine up to five hundred thousand rupees.

8. Jurisdiction under the Ordinance

Only the Court of Session shall take cognizance of offences under this Ordinance.

9. Power to issue injunction

The Court may issue injunctions to prevent child marriages, with measures to protect the identity of informants. Disobedience of injunctions shall be punishable with imprisonment up to one year or fine up to one hundred thousand rupees, or both.

10. Offences to be non-bailable

All offences under this Ordinance shall be cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable.

11. Trial of offences

The Court shall conclude trials within ninety days.

12. Applicability of the Code

The provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 shall apply mutatis mutandis.

13. Power to make rules

The Government may make rules by notification in the official Gazette.

14. Repeal and savings

(1) The *Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 (XIX of 1929)* is hereby repealed. (2) All orders and decisions under the repealed Act shall remain valid.

Statement of Objects and Reasons

This Ordinance aims to restrain child marriages in Punjab, modernize child protection laws, remove gender-based distinctions, and set the minimum marriageable age for both male and female at eighteen years. It penalizes persons promoting child marriages, trafficking, and abuse for child protection.

(Sardar Saleem Haider Khan) Governor of the Punjab

Dated: 10 February 2026

(Muhammad Asif Balal Lodhi) Secretary, Government of the Punjab Law and Parliamentary Affairs Department