

Physical and Verbal Aggression Towards Primary and Intermediate Staff

Report of a National Survey of New Zealand Educational Institute Members prepared for NZEI Te Riu Roa

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NZEI • TE RIU ROA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa (NZEI) is the organisation representing primary school staff and other groups within the education sector in New Zealand. NZEI maintains a number of industrial, professional and support functions on behalf of its total membership of 45,752. There are 25,577 primary teacher members and 7586 primary support staff members. Together those groups constitute almost three-quarters of the total membership. There are 1926 primary principal members. NZEI has members in at least 90 per cent of state primary schools.

During 2006, anecdotal evidence from primary school members, and personal cases taken by NZEI Regional Offices on behalf of members, showed that increasingly, members were being put at risk in the workplace. These risks to staff arose from an increasing number of instances of reported physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontation by students and parents/caregivers.

With this anecdotal evidence as the backdrop, NZEI commissioned this national survey to investigate the extent and nature of physical assaults and aggressive verbal confrontation of staff in a national sample of primary schools. The initial concerns were for the health and safety of NZEI members. What were the risks associated with working in primary and intermediate schools?, What was the nature of physical assault on staff?, How widespread were the behaviours reported by members?, What might be the national incidence of these behaviours?, What follow-up/support was available to members, and what services may be needed in future?

Evidence from this national survey was to be considered further alongside the rights, obligations and responsibilities of all parties involved in the public education system in New Zealand – government, teachers, students, parents/caregivers, among others. A synthesis of information from this survey would then form the basis of a discussion paper for the wider membership of NZEI to engage with.

Aim of project

The aim of the project was to survey by questionnaire, samples of principals, teachers and support staff in primary schools, regarding instances of physical assault and/or aggressive verbal confrontations by students and/or parents caregivers.

The questionnaires would seek information about the nature of these instances, what may have prompted them, the students involved, responses of staff, management and Board of Trustees, impacts of the assaults on principals and staff, and so forth.

The national incidence of physical assaults and aggressive verbal confrontations within primary schools would be estimated on the basis of responses from the samples of principals, teachers and support staff.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

Data for this national survey of principals, teachers, and support staff were collected by questionnaires posted to schools. Two questionnaires were developed, one for principals, the other for teachers and support staff. The questionnaires covered the following areas of information:

Principal questionnaire

- (1) Details of staff assaulted physically by students;
- (2) Details of student(s) reported as assaulting staff physically;
- (3) Views on the most frequent cause(s) of the reported assault(s);
- (4) Views on changes to the frequencies of physical assaults by students on staff during each principal's time at the present school;
- (5) Medical or first-aid treatment required by staff following physical assault(s);
- (6) Effect(s) of physical assault(s) on principal and staff personally;
- (7) Reporting and subsequent management of physical assault(s) by principals and Boards of Trustees;
- (8) Records/statistics/reports of physical assault(s) on staff by students;
- (9) Actions taken against students reported as assaulting staff physically;
- (10) Agencies contacted to assist principals following a physical assault on staff, plus responsiveness and effectiveness;
- (11) Parent/caregiver physical assault(s) over any matter relating directly to a student;
- (12) Details of staff confronted verbally in an aggressive manner by single students, two or more students, or parents/caregivers;
- (13) Boards of Trustees' policies for managing incidents of physical assault or verbal confrontations of staff;
- (14) Provisions for further professional development to assist staff manage situations that may result in physical assault or verbal confrontation.

Principals were invited to comment on "any other matters about this survey".

Teacher and support staff questionnaire

- (1) Details of the nature of any physical assault experienced by staff and the number of instances;
- (2) For the most recent physical assault reported:
 - (i) details of the student(s) committing the assault;
 - (ii) details of where the assault took place;
 - (iii) description of the staff member's immediate response(s) to the assault;
 - (iv) whether the student was formally identified as having Special Education Needs;
 - (v) views on what may have prompted the assault;
 - (vi) injuries sustained and medical or first-aid treatment required;
 - (vii) effects on staff personally;
 - (viii) reporting and subsequent management;

- (ix) actions taken against the student(s)
- (3) Parent/caregiver physical assault(s) over any matter relating directly to a student;
- (4) Details of verbal confrontations in any aggressive manner by single students, two or more students, or parents/caregivers.

Teachers and support staff were invited also, to comment on “any other matters about this survey”.

The questionnaires were developed with the assistance and expert knowledge of senior staff within NZEI. Following the initial drafting, NZEI staff piloted the questionnaires with focus groups of NZEI members. Both questionnaires were modified in terms of the feedback from the focus groups.

The two questionnaires are included in the Appendix.

The questionnaire survey was designed to cover the 2006 school year. Questionnaires were sent to samples of principals, teachers and support staff on November 16 and 17, 2006. Returns were monitored and a reminder letter was sent to non-respondents in early December. Returns were accepted up to 30/1/2007.

2. SAMPLES

Three samples of respondents were drawn for this questionnaire survey. The numbers in each sample, the numbers returning their questionnaires and the numbers of questionnaires analysed subsequently were as follows:

- (i) 100 principals sampled, 68 responded, 67 analysed;
- (ii) 325 teachers sampled, 156 responded, 150 analysed;
- (iii) 75 support staff sampled, 47 responded, 47 analysed.

Prior to drawing the sample of principals, 100 schools were first selected from the NZEI database of schools. The sample of schools was stratified by size, type, geographic location and decile, with random selection from the database. If a selected school was from strata in the sampling frame where the required number of schools had been chosen, (e.g. rural, full primary, roll less than 100, decile 4-7) the next school on the database was selected. Once the 100 schools were selected, the principal was identified from NZEI membership lists. If the principal was not an NZEI member, the school was to be removed and another was to be chosen randomly. This was not necessary.

It was decided to sample 400 NZEI members from within the categories teachers and support staff. When the proportions of teachers and support staff in the membership lists were rounded and applied to the total pool of 400, 325 teachers and 75 support staff were to be chosen randomly. All members within each of the two categories had an equal probability of being selected for the survey, provided they were not:

- a teaching principal;
- on the staff of a special facility e.g. visual resource centre, unit for physically impaired students;

- on the staff of a specialist service e.g. Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour, Group Special Education.

To be eligible remaining staff were required to:

- work on a regular and daily basis with students up to and including Year 8;
- be a teacher, senior teacher, deputy principal, assistant principal or support staff.

Once the three samples were drawn randomly, a check was made of their schools by size, type, geographic location and decile group, to ensure that the samples were from a representative group of New Zealand primary schools. No resampling was needed as the strata noted above were represented validly.

Information about the three responding samples is presented in the tables that follow.

Table 1: *Responding samples of principals, teachers and support staff by grade, type and decile of school*

	Principals		Teachers		Support staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
School Grade						
U1 – U3	33	49.3%	36	34.0%	10	35.7%
U4 – U7	34	50.7%	62	58.5%	18	64.3%
U8 – U10	-	-	8	7.5%	-	-
No. responding	67		106		28	
School Type						
Area	2	3.0%	8	5.5%	-	-
Contributing	30	44.8%	54	37.0%	15	33.3%
Full Primary	32	47.7%	61	41.8%	27	60.0%
Intermediate	3	4.5%	23	15.7%	3	6.7%
No. responding	67		146		45	
Decile Group						
1 – 3	19	28.8%	44	30.6%	16	37.2%
4 – 7	25	37.9%	50	35.0%	16	37.2%
8 – 10	22	33.3%	49	34.4%	11	25.6%
No. responding	66		144		43	

Table 1 shows that the sample of respondents did not include principals from U8 – U10 schools. Schools of this size are predominantly secondary schools. Eight teachers from U8 – U10 schools were included in the responding sample, but there were no support staff.

Forty-four teachers and 19 support staff did not include the school grade in their questionnaires. These omissions distort the information reported about the proportions of teachers and support staff by school grade, but do not influence the representativeness of this group for the other variables. Generally, the three samples are comparable in their

proportions and reflect satisfactorily the national distribution of state primary and intermediate schools.

Table 2: Responding samples of principals, teachers and support staff by gender, age, experience and year levels taught

	Principals		Teachers		Support staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Gender						
Female	35	53.8%	128	86.5%	44	97.8%
Male	30	46.2%	20	13.5%	1	2.2%
No. responding	65		148		45	
Age Group						
20 – 29	1	1.5%	27	18.2%	1	2.2%
30 – 39	7	10.6%	28	18.9%	6	13.3%
40 – 49	18	27.3%	42	28.4%	16	35.6%
50+	40	60.6%	51	34.5%	22	48.9%
No. responding	66		148		45	
Years as Principal/ Teacher/Support						
1 – 4	25	38.5%	23	16.2%	14	30.4%
5 – 9	14	21.5%	32	22.5%	14	30.4%
10 – 20	13	20.0%	39	27.5%	13	28.3%
21 – 30	12	18.5%	29	20.4%	3	6.5%
31+	1	1.5%	19	13.4%	2	4.3%
No. responding	65		142		46	
Year levels taught/ worked with						
Years 1 – 3	N/A		67	36.8%	29	40.8%
Years 4 – 6	N/A		63	34.6%	27	38.0%
Years 7 – 8	N/A		52	28.6%	15	21.1%
Total year levels reported			182		71	

Table 2 shows how the samples were distributed for gender, age, years of experience, and the year levels of students taught. These characteristics are widely represented in each sample.

As to be expected, the samples of teachers and support staff are weighted heavily with females. Principals show more even proportions of men and women. As far as age groups are concerned, more than 80 per cent of principals and support staff are aged 40 years or over. Teachers are spread more evenly over the age groups. However, the modal age group for the three samples is 50+, reflecting an ageing primary school workforce.

In terms of their experience as principal, teacher, or support staff, more than half the principals and support staff reported up to nine years. For teachers the distribution is a little different, as well over one-half report 10 years or more, with an appreciable group reporting 31 years or more. Most support staff worked with Year 1-3. Most teachers worked with Year 4-6. The total year levels reported show that many staff reported working with or teaching multiple year groups.

The sample of teachers included assistant principals, deputy principals, senior teachers and teachers. The 150 respondents are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Responding sample for teacher questionnaire by positions within school

Positions	No.	Percentage
Assistant principal	7	4.7%
Deputy principal	10	6.7%
Senior teacher	24	16.0%
Teacher	<u>109</u>	72.7%
No. responding	150	

As to be expected, staff with the position of teacher predominate. The inclusion of assistant principals and deputy principals in the sample of teachers for the purposes of this survey has influenced the number of “teachers” at Table 2, showing 31+ years experience. Most of this group of 19 were deputy principals or assistant principals.

The gender and age breakdowns of the sample match the national statistics for primary teachers. There are no comparable national data for the other characteristics of the samples as described above.

3. ANALYSIS

A coding schedule was developed for the open-ended and “Please describe” sections of questions in both questionnaires. For the principals questionnaire the coding schedule was applied to Questions: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 23.

For the teacher/support staff questionnaires’ the coding schedule was for Questions: 1, 2(vi), 2(viii), 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 15.

Following the hand-coding of responses data from the 264 questionnaires for analysis were entered to the Epistat software package. Seven questionnaires were not included as they came from respondents who had joined their school staff part-way through 2006. Frequencies of response for all sections of each questionnaire were tabulated, with the 95 per cent confidence limits of each frequency calculated. (The 95 per cent confidence limits show the range of frequencies that equate with the statistical significance at the one-chance-in-twenty level).

In addition to calculating frequencies of response and the associated confidence limits, selected questions were cross-tabulated with the data on school size, school type, decile group, gender of principal (principals’ questionnaire only), years in present school, body type, height, and gender of staff member (teacher/support staff questionnaire only).

For the principals’ questionnaire, cross-tabulations were at Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 17. For the teacher/support staff questionnaire, cross-tabulations were undertaken separately for teachers and support staff at Questions 2, 12, 13, and 15.

3. RESULTS

1. PHYSICAL ASSAULT

1.1 Physical assault on staff reported by principals

At Q.1 of their questionnaire principals were asked if students at the present school had assaulted staff members, and if so, how many staff had been assaulted. Principals from 21/67 schools (31.3%) reported at least one member of staff had been assaulted physically by a student in 2006. The responses varied from all 21 principals reporting assaults on teachers, to three principals recording assaults on caretakers/cleaners. Further details of the assaults reported are set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Physical assaults on staff by students as reported by 21 principals

	No. of schools	Percentage of schools
Principals reporting assaults on staff	21	31.3%
Staff groups:		
Teachers	21	31.3%
Teacher Aide	12	17.9%
Principal	9	13.4%
Caretaker/Cleaner	3	4.4%

Teachers were reported as being assaulted in all 21 schools. Teacher aides (12 schools) and principals (9 schools) were the next most reported groups. No principal reported assaults on Other Support Staff i.e. office staff, library assistant, principal's secretary. In 15 schools two or more groups of staff were reported as assaulted.

Table 5 shows the number of staff in the four groups assaulted in 21 schools.

Table 5: Numbers of staff by group assaulted in 21 schools

Staff groups	No.	Percentage of staff
Teacher	48	63.2%
Teacher Aide	16	21.1%
Principal	9	11.8%
Caretaker/Cleaner	3	3.9%
	76	

More teachers than other staff groups were reported as being assaulted. Teachers account for 63 per cent of assaults, teacher aides for 21 per cent. Table 6 shows the frequency of these assaults within the 21 schools where principals reported assaults.

Table 6: Numbers of teachers, teacher aides and principals reported as assaulted in 21 schools

Staff	No. of schools	No. assaulted in school	Total No. assaulted
Teachers	7	1	7
	9	2	18
	4	3	12
	1	11	11
	<u>21</u>		<u>48</u>
Teacher aides	9	1	9
	2	2	4
	1	3	3
	<u>12</u>		<u>16</u>
Principals	9	1	9
	<u>9</u>		<u>9</u>

Table 6 indicates that one or two staff assaulted physically were the modal values for the 21 schools. Nine schools reported two teachers assaulted; nine schools reported one teacher aide assaulted. In an extreme case one school reported 11 teachers and two teacher-aids assaulted. In the nine schools reporting the principal assaulted, this had happened once only.

Seventy-six staff were reported as being assaulted in the 21 schools. This averages out at three or four staff assaulted physically per school in 2006. The extreme case of 13 staff in one school inflated this average.

1.2 Physical assault reported by teachers and support staff

Teachers and support staff were asked at Q.1 of their questionnaire if any student at their present school had assaulted them physically in 2006, and if so, the form of the assault. All told, 23/150 teachers and 7/47 support staff reported physical assault in some shape or form. Table 7 presents details of the responses from the 30 staff.

Table 7: Numbers of teachers and support staff reporting seven forms of physical assault

	Teachers		Support staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Staff reporting assaults	23	15.3%	7	14.9%
Forms of assault	No.	Percentage assaults	No.	Percentage assaults
1. Punched or struck with open hand	11	25.0%	5	29.4%
2. Hit by object	4	9.1%	1	5.9%
3. Pushed, shoved, shouldered	13	29.5%	5	29.4%
4. Kicked, stomped	10	22.7%	3	17.6%
5. Scratched, bitten	6	13.6%	3	17.6%
	<hr/>		<hr/>	
	44		17	

Table 7 shows that 23 teachers (15.3%) and 7 support staff (14.9%) reported at least one assault in 2006. There were 44 reports of assault from teachers and 17 from support staff. For both groups the three most common forms of assault were “pushed, shoved, shouldered”; “punched or struck with open hand”; and “kicked, stomped.”

In addition to information in Table 7, one respondent noted “spat in face” and one noted “head butted”.

1.2.1 Number of times teachers and support staff reported being assaulted

Most respondents also recorded the number of times they had experienced each form of assault. These data for the three most common forms of assault are recorded at Table 8.

Table 8: *Frequencies of three most common forms of assault reported by teachers and support staff*

Common forms of assault	No. of times assaulted	No. of teachers reporting	No. of support staff reporting
Pushed, shoved shouldered	1	3	-
	2	1	-
	3	3	1
	4	-	1
	5	1	-
	20	1	1
Punched, struck with open hand	1	1	1
	2	3	-
	3	-	1
	4	-	1
	5	2	-
	20	1	1
Kicked or stomped	1	1	-
	2	3	-
	3	1	1
	5	1	-
	20	1	2

(N=23 teachers; 7 support staff)

At Table 8 most teachers reported one or two instances of each common form of assault. Three teachers reported three instances of “pushed, shoved shouldered” and two reported five instances of “punched, struck with open hand”. The reports from support staff at Table 8 all show three or more instances of the common forms of assault, with the exception of one instance of “punched, struck with open hand”.

Teachers and support staff reported 20 instances of each common form of assault. The proportion of 20 instances reported was greater for support staff at 36% than for teachers at 13%.

1.2.2 The most recent physical assaults reported by teachers and support staff

In order to develop a slightly broader picture of the physical assaults reported by teachers and support staff, eight questions Q.2(i) – Q.2(viii) were asked about the most recent assaults reported. Responses from 22 teachers and 7 support staff to Q.2(i), Q.2(iv), Q.2(v) are summarised in Table 9. One teacher did not complete this series of questions.

Table 9: Three aspects of assaults reported by teachers and support staff

Aspects of assaults		Teachers	Support staff
1. Was assault by:	one student?	21	7
	two+ students?	1	0
2. Was/were student(s):	in your class?	12	4
	in other class?	10	3
3. Where did assault happen?*	Classroom?	12	4
	Cloakroom?	4	1
	Grounds?	9	5
	Other building?	4	1
	Hall?	2	3

* Where assaults took place in more than one location, each location is recorded.
(N=22 teachers; 7 support staff)

Assaults were reported most commonly from individual students from the teacher’s class, and within classrooms. Assaults by students from other classes and in school grounds were the next most commonly reported. No assaults were reported in EOTC settings or outside school grounds.

Staff were asked about their immediate responses to physical assaults. Their responses are reported in Table 10.

Table 10: Teachers and support staff responses to assaults

Immediate response	Teachers	Support staff
Restrained student	13	3
Left the vicinity	5	4
Called for help	9	2
Protected other students	4	3
Spoke firmly to student	2	0

(N=22 teachers; 7 support staff)

The most common immediate responses were “to restrain the student”, “call for help”, “leave the vicinity” or “protect other students”.

1.3 First Summary

How many assaults were reported by principals, teachers and support staff for 2006?

Principals report:

- Staff assaults were reported in 21 schools (31.3%);
- 48 teachers were assaulted, accounting for 63.2 per cent of staff assaulted; 16 teacher aides were assaulted, accounting for 21.1 per cent of staff assaulted;
- teacher(s) were assaulted in each of the 21 schools;
- about one-third of schools reporting assaults had one staff member only assaulted;
- of the nine principals reported as assaulted no principal reported more than one assault;
- on average where assaults were reported 3-4 staff were assaulted. This value is inflated by the one school reporting 13 staff assaulted;

Teachers and support staff report:

- 23 teachers (15.3%) and 7 support staff were assaulted (14.9%);
- assaults by single students were most common for teachers and support staff;
- with one exception all support staff report three or more instances of assault;
- 20 instances of assault were greater for support staff (36%) than for teachers (13%);
- all support staff reported being assaulted by a student “formally identified and confirmed as having Special Education Needs.”
- the classroom was the most common scene of an assault;
- “pushed, shoved, shouldered” was the most reported form of assault;
- restraining the student, calling for help, and leaving the scene were the most common responses;

1.4.1 Physical assaults by boys and girls reported by principals

Principals were asked how many physical assaults were by boys or girls. In the 21 schools reporting physical assaults, 15 reported assaults by boys only, 5 reported assaults by boys and girls, and one reported an assault by a single girl. Table 11 presents data on physical assaults by boys and girls.

Table 11: Number of principals reporting assaults on staff by boys and girls

Students	No. of students reported	No. of schools	Total students reported
Boys	1	7	7
	2	3	6
	3	2	6
	4	2	8
	5	1	5
		15	32
Boys and Girls	1	1	1 (1 boy)
	2	3	6 (4 boys; 2 girls)
	7	1	7 (5 boys; 2 girls)
		5	14
Girls	1	1	1
		1	1
Total		21	47

(N=21)

Table 11 shows that 12 schools reported two or more boys as assaulting staff, with two schools reporting five boys. The greatest number of schools (7), reported one boy as assaulting staff. One school reported seven students for assaults. Altogether 47 students were reported as assaulting staff, mostly boys.

The principals' responses indicated that boys and girls reported as assaulting staff came from Years 1-3, Years 4-6 and Years 7-8. Table 12 shows the number of schools reporting assaults by boys and girls at these year levels.

Table 12: Numbers of principals reporting assaults by boys and girls by year groups

Schools reporting	Y1-3	Y4-6	Y7-8	Total
Schools reporting boys	7	6	2	15
Schools reporting boys and girls	1	3	1	5
Schools reporting girls	-	-	1	1
Total schools	8	9	4	21

As to be expected from earlier data, Table 12 shows more schools reporting assaults by boys than by girls. At each year group more boys are reported as assaulting staff. By Year 8 one school only reported an assault by a girl.

1.4.2 Physical assault by boys and girls reported by staff

As regards the most recent physical assault reported at Q.1, teachers and support staff were then asked the gender and year group of the students who had assaulted them. Their responses to Q.2(ii) and Q.2(iii) are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Most recent assaults by gender and year group reported by staff

	Teachers		Support staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Gender				
boys	19	86.4%	7	100%
girls	3	13.6%	-	-
Year Group				
1-3	13	59.1%	4	57.1%
4-6	5	22.7%	2	28.6%
7-8	4	18.2%	1	14.3%

Boys were reported by teachers and support staff as undertaking 90 per cent of assaults. Support staff reported assaults by boys only. The three girls reported as assaulting teachers account for a little less than 15 per cent of assaults on teachers.

Year 3 boys accounted for most reported assaults, with almost 45 per cent of the total. All Year 3 students accounted for almost 60 per cent of the assaults reported. Year 7-8 students accounted for less than 20 per cent of assaults.

The pattern of the assaults reported by teachers and support staff is similar to the pattern reported by principals. In both instances boys are most often reported as assaulting staff and the number of assaults reported decrease from Year 1 to Year 8.

As far as assaults by two or more students were concerned one teacher reported this had happened. There were no reports of this from support staff.

1.5 Second Summary

How many boys and girls from Years 1-3; 4-6; and 7-8 were reported by principals, teachers and support staff for assault?

Principals report

- 15 principals reported assaults by boys only; 5 principals reported assaults by boys and girls; 1 principal reported an assault by one girl.
- boys were reported as assaulting staff in 20 of 21 schools reporting assaults;
- 47 students were identified as assaulting staff in these 21 schools – 41 boys and 6 girls;
- boys accounted for almost 90 per cent of assaults on staff;
- assaults declined from Years 1-3, to Years 7-8.

Teachers and support staff report

- 26 staff reported assaults by boys; 3 reported assaults by girls;
- boys accounted for 90 per cent of assaults;
- most assaults were reported for Years 1-3; least assaults were reported for Year 7-8;
- Years 1-3 boys accounted for 45 per cent of assaults.

The general pattern of assaults reported by principals, teachers and support staff is very similar.

1.6 Why might the assaults have taken place?

Principals were asked what in their views might be the most frequent precursors to the assaults they had reported? There was most support for:

- “child/children contesting staff members directions” (66%);
- “child/children being restrained from assaulting other children” (43%);
- “assault spontaneous/unprovoked” (29%);
- “child being disciplined” (19%);
- “poor practices by staff member” (19%).

Two principals noted that assaults had been by special needs students. There was no support for assaults being related to “other conflict between child’s parent/caregiver and staff member”, or for “gangs within the school”, or “gangs from outside the school”.

As part of their descriptions of the most recent assaults, staff were asked also, what in their views might have prompted the assault. There was most support from teachers and support staff for:

- child contesting directions (33%);
- child restrained from assaulting other children (27%);
- child being discipline (21%).

In addition there were responses from one staff member for each of the following possible prompts: “on time out”, “angry child”, “provoked by other students”, “other conflict with child’s parents”. One teacher and one support staff also noted “uses violence for attention”. These did not refer to the same child.

Respondents were asked if students who had undertaken the assault were “formally identified and confirmed as having Special Education Needs”. Nine teachers (40%) and seven support staff (100%) responded “Yes”. Clearly a greater proportion of support staff reported assaults by special needs students. This is not surprising given that many support staff work closely and intensively with these students. However, it needs to be noted that one respondent only indicated “Special Education Needs” as a possible factor that may have prompted an assault.

1.7 What effects did the assaults have?

As far as medical or first-aid treatments were concerned, no principal reported hospital treatment followed an assault. “No treatment needed” was the most common response, (15/76%), followed by “Treated at school” (4/19%) and “Treated at doctor’s surgery” (2/10%).

Principals were asked also to comment on the impact the physical assaults on staff had on: 1) their effectiveness as a principal, 2) them personally, and 3) on other staff who had not been assaulted. Their responses are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14: Principals’ responses on three effects of physical assault on themselves and on staff

Effects	1. Effectiveness as a principal		2. Effects on principal personally		3. Effects on other staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Little or no effects	12	57%	8	38%	5	24%
Moderate effects	5	24%	5	24%	11	52%
Major effects	1	5%	8	38%	2	10%

(N=21)

“Little or no effects” is the predominant single response in Table 14. Eleven principals (52%) reported that physical assaults on some staff had “moderate” effects on other staff who had not been assaulted. One principal reported that some staff “avoid contact with students” who have physically assaulted other staff. One principal reported that staff required counselling. No staff were reported as resigning because of assaults on other staff.

Teachers and support staff were asked to describe at Q.5 injuries they had sustained from the assault. Q.6 asked what medical or first-aid treatment they had received. “Little or no injury” was the most common response to Q.5, followed by “scratch, bruise, bite.” One support staff reported “minor bleeding” and two reported “injuries needing medical attention.” Clearly, a greater proportion of support staff than teachers reported an injury requiring treatment.

As far as medical or first-aid treatment were concerned, “no treatment needed” was reported by 22 teachers and three support staff. One teacher and two support staff were “treated at school”, two support staff were “treated at doctor’s surgery”, with one support staff noting “did not work for rest of the day”.

In a physical sense, and in terms of the medical treatment received, the injuries reported appear to be relatively minor. However, irrespective of the minor physical hurt, there were impacts on some staff personally and on their self-perception of effectiveness as a staff member. Table 15 summarises responses to these aspects of the survey.

Table 15: Responses by teachers and support staff on three effects of physical assault

Effects	Teachers				Support Staff			
	Effect personally		Effectiveness as teachers		Effect personally		Effectiveness as support staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Little or no effect	10	43.5%	17	74%	4	66.7%	4	57.1%
Moderate effect	13	56.5%	1	4.3%	2	33.3%	-	-
Reduced effectiveness	-	-	5	21.7%	-	-	3	42.9%

(N=Teachers 23; Support Staff 7)

From Table 15 “little or no effect” is the predominant response for both staff groups, followed by “moderate effect” for teachers. Five teachers and three support staff noted that physical assaults “reduced their effectiveness”. This may be a matter of concern if effects of this nature are ongoing, or influence the interactions between staff who have been assaulted and other students.

No staff member reported a “major effect” personally, on their effectiveness. There were no resignations nor was counselling required. Two staff reported “stress”, one reported taking “sick leave” and one felt a need for “self protection” following the assault. Although most assaults may be seen as relatively minor in a physical sense, they clearly took a personal toll on some staff.

1.8 What actions were taken against students following assaults on staff?

Principals were asked what happened to the students who assaulted staff members. Responses to this question are recorded in Table 16.

Table 16: Actions taken against students reported as assaulting staff members

Actions	No. of principals reporting action	Percentages	
		Schools	Actions
Disciplined	7	33%	15%
Counselled	13	62%	28%
Stood down/suspended	15	71%	32%
Referred to outside agency	11	52%	24%
	46		

(N=21)

Table 16 shows that some form of action was reported in every school where staff had been assaulted physically. Children being “stood down/disciplined” was the most common action. This was reported for 15 schools (71%) and accounted for 32 per cent of the actions taken. “Counselling” was the next most common response accounting for 28 per cent of the actions

taken. “Referred to outside agency” was reported by 11 principals (52%). Seven principals (33%) reported that students were “disciplined”. There are no details of what this entailed.

1.9 Which outside agencies were contacted to assist staff after physical assault by students?

If outside agencies were contacted to assist school staff following an assault on staff, principals were asked: 1) which agency they had contacted, 2) whether the agency responded promptly, and 3) whether their services were effective. Table 17 presents principals’ responses to these questions.

Table 17: Agencies contacted to assist school staff following physical assaults, and their effectiveness

Agency contacted	No. and percentage of schools	No. and percentage responded promptly	No. effective	
			“Yes”	“No”
Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour	17	13	12	4
MoE/Group Special Education	17	7	8	7
Children Young Persons and their Families	9	5	3	4
Police	4	4	3	1
Other	4	0	-	-

(N=21)

Table 17 shows that Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) and MoE/Group Special Education were contacted the most, each being cited by 80 per cent of schools. In terms of promptness, RTLBs at 76 per cent and Police at 100 per cent received the most positive ratings.

For effectiveness, both RTLBs and Police were seen as effective in two-thirds of their cases, MoE/Group Special Education were seen as effective in about half their cases (but they also had the lowest per centage of prompt responses) and Children Young Persons and their Families were seen as ineffective more often than they were seen as effective. The “Other” agencies contacted by principals were local support groups, Child Adolescent and Family and a psychologist. No assessments were recorded for these services.

1.10 Third Summary

What do principals and school staff report about the precursors to an assault, the effects of the assault, actions taken against students following an assault and agencies contacted to assist following assaults by students on staff?

Principals report:

- the most frequent precursors to an assault were students contesting staff members' directions, or student being restrained from assaulting other students;
- "little or no effects" is the predominant response to questions about the impacts of assaults on their effectiveness as a principal or on them personally. Principals most often note "moderate effects" when reporting the impact of assaults on other staff;
- students most often stood down or disciplined following an assault;
- RTLB, and Police gave most effective assistance following assaults by students.

Teachers and support staff report:

- student contesting directions, student being restrained from assaulting others and student being disciplined were given as the most frequent precursors of the assault;
- "little or no injury" was the most reported response;
- if there was an injury it was more likely to be to a support staff than a teacher;
- "little or no effects" was the predominant response to questions about the impacts of assault, but about one-quarter of teachers and almost one-half of support staff noted "reduced effectiveness";
- despite the relatively minor physical damage caused by these assaults, they took a more pronounced emotional and personal toll on many staff.

2. VERBAL CONFRONTATIONS

2.1 Verbal confrontations reported by principals

At Q.17, Q.18 and Q.22, principals were asked about the occurrence of:

- single students confronting staff verbally in an aggressive manner;
- groups of two or more students confronting staff verbally in an aggressive manner;
- parents/caregivers confronting staff verbally in an aggressive manner.

Table 18 presents the principals responses.

Table 18: Principals' reports of aggressive verbal confrontations of staff by students and parents/caregivers

Confrontations by	Principals reporting		
	"Yes"	"No"	Percentage "Yes"
Single students	34	33	50.8%
Groups of two or more students	11	56	16.4%
Parents/caregivers	22	45	32.8%

(N=67)

Fifty per cent of principals reported that single students had confronted staff verbally, in an aggressive manner. About one-third of principals reported parents/caregivers as engaging in aggressive verbal confrontation of staff. Groups of two or more students were reported less often as engaging in these behaviours. It may not be surprising that single students are most often reported by principals, but it may be surprising that almost one-half the principals reported this. It may also be surprising that one-third of principals reported these types of incidents from parents/caregivers.

Table 19 shows the frequency of aggressive verbal confrontations reported by principals.

Table 19: Frequency of aggressive verbal confrontations of staff by students as reported by principals

No. of times confronted	Principals Reporting			
	Single Students		Groups of 2+ Students	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	1	3.0%	2	20.0%
2	6	18.2%	4	40.0%
3	4	12.1%	-	-
4-5	7	21.2%	-	-
6-9	8	24.2%	3	30.0%
10-19	5	15.2%	-	-
20+	2	6.1%	1	10.0%
Total	33		10	

(N=67)

Just over half the principals reported five or less incidents with single students. Seven schools or 21 per cent reported 10 or more instances. Two schools reported more than 20 instances of aggressive verbal confrontation with single students.

Six schools or 60 per cent reported two or more students involved in incidents of aggressive verbal confrontation. One school reported more than 20 incidents. This school also reported 20+ incidents involving single students.

2.2 Verbal confrontations reported by staff

At Q.12, Q.13 and Q.15, teachers were asked about the incidence of:

- single students confronting them verbally in an aggressive manner;
- groups of two or more students confronting them verbally in an aggressive manner;
- parents/caregivers confronting them verbally in an aggressive manner.

Table 20 has details of the responses.

Table 20: Teachers and support staff reports of aggressive verbal confrontations by students and parents/caregivers

Confrontations by	Teachers			Support Staff		
	“Yes”	“No”	Percentage “Yes”	“Yes”	“ No.”	Percentage “Yes”
Single students	86	62	58.1%	13	34	27.7%
Groups of two or more students	10	138	6.8%	-	47	-
Parents/caregivers	30	118	20.3%	11	35	23.9%

(N=148 teachers; 47 support staff)

Almost 60 per cent of teachers reported aggressive verbal confrontations with students. Ten teachers reported similar confrontations with groups of two or more students. However no support staff reported confrontations with groups. About 20 per cent of teachers and support staff reported aggressive verbal confrontations with parents/caregivers. Such a high occurrence was not predicted when this survey was being planned.

The frequency of the verbal confrontations reported by the 86 teachers and 13 support staff were calculated also. These data are reported in Table 21.

Table 21: Frequency of aggressive verbal confrontations by single students reported by 86 teachers and 13 support staff

No. of times confronted	Teachers		Support Staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1	11	12.8%	2	15.4%
2	27	31.4%	4	30.8%
3	14	16.3%	2	15.4%
4-5	14	16.3%	2	15.4%
6-9	13	15.1%	-	-
10+	7	8.1%	3	23.1%

The modal value in Table 21 is two confrontations. Over one-half of the respondents reported three or less verbal confrontations. At the extreme, eight per cent of teachers and 23 per cent of support staff reported more than 10 verbal confrontations. It may be regarded as unacceptable that so many staff are subjected to such number of verbal confrontations in the course of their work with students. This survey does not include information on the intensity of the verbal confrontations.

At Table 7 information was reported on seven common forms of physical assault reported in this survey. Table 22 which follows, identifies four common forms of verbal confrontation by single students.

Table 22: Numbers of teachers and support staff reporting forms of aggressive verbal confrontation by single students

	Teachers		Support Staff	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Staff reporting verbal confrontation	86	58.1%	13	27.7%
Forms of verbal confrontation	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
1. Shouted	61	42.4%	6	27.3%
2. Swore	53	36.8%	8	36.4%
3. Threatened	21	14.6%	5	22.7%
4. Defiant and rude	9	6.3%	3	13.6%
Total	144		22	

The most common form of verbal confrontation reported in Table 22 is teachers being “shouted at”. “Shouting” and “swearing” account for almost 80 per cent of reports from teachers and almost 64 per cent of reports from support staff. A greater proportion of support staff than teachers reported being “threatened” or being confronted in a “defiant” or “rude” manner.

In addition to Table 22, one respondent each noted “intimidation”, “tantrum” and “special needs”.

It was noted in Table 18 that 10 teachers reported aggressive verbal confrontations by groups of two or more students. The form of verbal confrontation were similar to those reported for single students, with “shouting”, “refusal to co-operate” and “personal insults” being most predominant.

3. REPORTING ASSAULTS AND BOARD POLICIES

3.1 Principals reporting physical assault to Boards

When principals were asked at Q.9 if physical assaults were reported to Boards, 21 responded as follows:

- 13 principals (62%) reported “yes”
- 5 principals (24%) reported “no”
- 3 principals (14%) reported “sometimes”

For the 16 principals responding “yes” or “sometimes”, the management of the assaults by Boards were described as:

- “Full support given” (10 principals)
- “Referred matter to other agency” (4 principals)
- “Board delegated matter to principal” (4 principals)
- “Professional development offered to staff” (3 principals)

The responses “board interviews family”, “child stood down”, “counselling offered to staff”, and “no evidence of management” had one response. No staff member was reported as “disciplined” by a Board following a physical assault.

Principals were asked to estimate the time they spent informing their Board, writing report(s), supporting staff, discussing the assault(s) with outside agencies.

- 6 principals reported 3 to 9 hours;
- 4 principals reported more than 10 hours;
- 1 principal reported “daily”.

For the 16 responding principals 1-2 hours was the modal value.

Principals were also asked at Q.16 if the school kept statistics on physical assault by students or parent/caregiver. This question could be responded to by all 67 principals, not just the 21 principals who reported assaults by students on staff in 2006.

- 20 principals (30%) responded “yes” or “some” for parents/caregivers;
- 42 principals (63%) responded “yes” or “some” for students;
- 1 principal noted that “records not statistics” were kept;
- 10 principals noted that statistics would be kept “if there were assaults”.

To provide a context for the 20 principals who noted that statistics were kept for assaults by parents/caregivers, it is worth noting that at Q.20 all 67 principals responded that no staff member had been assaulted by a parent/caregiver over a matter relating directly to a student. There is no information on whether there were assaults for other reasons. However this seems unlikely as there was provision for such results to be reported. What seems more likely is that 20 principals were noting the provision to report assaults if they occurred. Conversely, there may have been assaults from parents/caregivers in previous years. But the number of 20 seems unlikely given that no principal reported an assault on a staff member by a parent/caregiver in 2006.

Similarly, the 42 principals who responded “yes” or “some” to records of assault by students may indicate the provision for keeping records of assaults in other years. This interpretation seems likely, as just 21 principals reported assaults in 2006.

3.2 Teachers and support staff reporting to school management

Teachers and support staff were asked at Q.8 if they had reported assaults to school management. At Qs.9-11 they were asked how the assaults were managed subsequently.

For the 19 teachers who responded:

- 18 reported the assault to school management;
- 1 reported the assault to GSE.

For the 7 support staff who responded:

- 6 reported the assault to school management;
- 1 reported the assault to the BOT.

The subsequent management of the assaults as reported by teachers and support staff are presented in Table 23.

Table 23: *The subsequent management of physical assaults reported by teachers and support staff*

Subsequent management	Teachers		Support Staff	
	No.	Percentage Management	No.	Percentage management
Full support given	12	63.2%	4	57.1%
No evidence of management	5	26.3%	1	14.3%
Disciplined	1	5.3%	0	0%
Shown techniques of restraint	1	5.3%	1	14.3%
Union rep involved	0	0%	1	14.3%

(N=19 teachers; 7 support staff)

Table 23 shows that “full support given” and “no evidence of management” were the most common responses. One teacher reported being “disciplined”. Neither “professional development only” nor “counselling only” were nominated as responses.

Respondents were asked also if the incident was reported in an Occupational Safety and Health Incident Report, and what action was taken against students reported to have assaulted staff.

About one-quarter of teachers reporting an assault noted that an Incident Report was filed for the assault. No support staff noted that an Incident Report was filed.

The actions taken against students reported to have assaulted staff, as reported by staff, are presented in Table 24.

Table 24: *Actions taken against students reported to have assaulted teachers and support staff*

Actions taken against students	Teachers		Support Staff	
	No.	Percentage actions	No.	Percentage actions
Disciplined	10	40.0%	2	25.0%
Stood down	4	16.0%	2	25.0%
Referred to other agency	4	16.0%	3	37.5%
Counselled	4	16.0%	0	0.0%
Unknown	3	12.0%	1	12.5%

(N=19 teachers; 7 support staff)

If all reports of “disciplined” and “stood down” (which may be seen as a form of discipline) are added together, they account for nearly 60 per cent of the actions reported. Ten teachers reported students as “disciplined” following an assault. This is the *single* largest action taken. Less than one-fifth of students who assaulted teachers were “stood down”, as were one-third of students who assaulted support staff. “Referred to other agency” is another common response. Four teachers but no support staff reported that students were counselled. There were no details of what “counselling” entailed.

Boards’ policies for handling incidents of physical assault or verbal confrontations on staff, and professional development

Principals were asked at Q.19 and Q.20 if their Boards had written policies on the handling of incidents of physical and verbal assault on staff and if assaults were recorded in Incident Reports.

For written policies by Boards:

- 44 principals (66%) reported policies for handling physical assaults.
- 35 principals (52%) reported policies for handling verbal assault.

For recording assaults via an Incident Report:

- 46 principals (69%) responded “yes or sometimes” for physical assault.
- 45 principals (67%) responded “yes or sometimes” for verbal assault.
- There were 7 responses of “sometimes” for physical assaults and 13 responses of “sometimes” for verbal assaults, which suggests that Incident Reports were more often used for physical assaults.

Ten principals (15%) indicated that physical assault had not happened in their schools.

With regard to whether professional development was in place to assist staff to manage situations that may result in physical or verbal assault:

- 43 principals (64%) said “no”.

- 23 principals (34%) said “yes”.
- 1 principal noted they would be in place “in the future”.

Changes in occurrences of physical and verbal confrontations on staff by students

Principals were asked to describe changes in the incidence of physical and verbal assault on staff, during their time as principal at their school. Their responses to Q.7 and Q.15 are summarised in Table 25.

Table 25: Principals’ reports of changes to the incidence of physical and verbal assaults on staff by students

Principals description	Physical assault		Verbal assault	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Little or no change	9	45.0 %	18	27.7%
Slight increase	8	40.0%	22	33.8%
Medium increase	-	-	1	1.5%
Major increase	-	-	7	10.7%
Slight decrease	1	5.0%	5	7.7%
Major decrease	2	10.0%	8	12.3%
Does not happen	-	-	4	6.2%
	(N=20)		(N=65)	

For both forms of assault, “Little or no change” and “slight increase” are the predominant responses. There is more variation in the reports for verbal assault than for physical assault. A “major decrease” was reported by about the same proportions, with 10 per cent for physical assault and 12 per cent for verbal assault. A greater proportion reported a “slight increase” in physical assaults (40%) than was reported for verbal assaults (34%).

It is worth noting that 11 per cent of principals reported “major increase” in the incidence of verbal assaults on staff but that no principals reported “major increase” for physical assault. Finally, when comparing differences in responses for the two forms of assault the differences in the number of principals responding should be noted. As regards physical assault, 20 principals responded, but for verbal assault 65 principals responded. Four principals noted that verbal assaults did not happen in their schools.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The implications of the data on physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontations will be discussed first. Later in this section other aspects of the findings will be discussed, e.g. the impacts of the assaults and verbal confrontations on staff, how the assaults and confrontations were managed and reported, the effectiveness of agencies called in to help, and the principals' views on changes in the frequency of physical assault and verbal confrontation. Estimates will be made of the likely national incidence of assaults and confrontation and relationships within some school-level and respondent data will be discussed.

4.1 Physical assaults

About one principal in three, and one staff member in seven, reported physical assault by students in 2006. The difference in the proportions reported by principals and school staff arose because principals reported for all staff and from a school-wide perspective, but teachers and support staff reported from their individual perspectives only.

Twenty-one principals reported 76 staff assaulted, with teachers accounting for almost two-thirds. One or two assaults on staff per school were the modal values. On average there were 2.3 assaults on teachers and 1.3 assaults on support staff. About half the teacher-assaults were recorded in five schools. In these five schools the mean was 4.6 assaults per school. There were no reports of physical assault from principals or staff in area schools.

For the 30 staff reporting assaults (23 teachers, 7 support staff) one or two instances of each of the three most common forms of assault were the modal values. These comparatively modest values suggest that physical assaults in some shape or form are relatively isolated events for most school staff. However, there is a need to consider the 20 instances or more of each of the three common forms of assault reported by seven staff. These seven staff account for 20 per cent of staff reporting assaults, and 3.5 per cent of all respondents, but nevertheless, they illustrate on-going and repeated instances of physical assault on some staff by students. As one support staff noted "I was under constant stress trying to protect myself and other children. It was physically demanding too."

Three support staff noted repeated assaults by individual students. They constitute almost half of support staff reporting one or more assaults!

There is one common aspect in the responses of principals and staff. Principals' data show modal values of one or two staff assaulted per school, but there was a minority of schools where many more instances were reported. Staff data show similar modal values to principals,' but again, a minority of staff report considerably more instances of assault. The general conclusions from these data are clear:

- a minority of schools reported a majority of the assaults on staff by students;
- a minority of staff reported the majority of assaults on themselves by students;
- a very small minority of students carried out the majority of assaults on staff.

The three conclusions above cannot be quantified precisely, but generally:

- about half the assaults were reported from about a quarter of the schools;
- about one-third of the staff reported about two-thirds of the assaults;

- about one-quarter of the students who assaulted staff carried out about two-thirds of the assaults.

4.1.1 Gender and year level

Principals and staff reported boys as responsible for about nine of every ten physical assaults. This ratio applied at the three Year levels used for analysis. The assaults were mostly by male students on female staff. This gender pattern seems to be repeated in national crime statistics for adults. But in the context of this survey, the proportions of assaults by gender of staff, reflects the proportions of respondents by gender of staff.

Most assaults were reported from Year 1-3 students, and least from Year 7-9 students, suggesting that physical assaults may reduce as students grow and are socialised into the more normal patterns of behaviour within our primary schools. This is a reassuring outcome of this survey. The single group reported for most assaults were Year 1-3 boys. Year 7-9 girls were reported for least assaults.

4.1.2 Aftermath of physical assaults

In terms of the physical injury of staff, the aftermath of the vast majority of assaults as reported were relatively minor. Few staff sustained injuries beyond scratches, bruises or bites. Almost 90 per cent of assaults required no first aid or medical treatment beyond what was available at the school. There were two reports of treatment at a doctor's surgery, both from support staff. One teacher reported that a lump was evident on her leg for three months after a kick.

When commenting on the effects of the assaults on them personally, "little or no effects" or "moderate effects" were the predominant responses from principals and support staff. "Moderate effects" accounted for just over half the teachers, the group that reported most assaults. When commenting on the effects of physical assaults on other staff, principals most often described these as "moderate" also. In terms of the impact of assaults on staff members effectiveness, the strong indications again were for little or moderate impact. Another dimension may have been added to the responses "little or no effects", or "moderate effects" if there had been an opportunity to explore with respondents the exact dimensions of those responses. But the inclusion of supplementary interviews went beyond the scope of the survey.

Despite what appear to be reasonably minimal effects for a majority of staff, there is a small minority who have experienced greater impacts from assaults by students. Particular cases in point are the seven staff who reported 20 or more assaults during the year, the principal who noted that assaults on staff had "major effects" on her effectiveness as a principal, the five teachers and three support staff who noted "reduced effectiveness" as a legacy of physical assaults. Admittedly, their numbers are comparatively few, but for them the aftermath has particular resonance. As one teacher noted "I found it very difficult to go to school. I was disillusioned and annoyed as his behaviour was affecting all of the children in my class, some of whom cried every morning about coming because of the conflict. His aggression was also directed at them, frequently biting, hitting etc." Clearly, students as well as teachers may be assaulted in some instances.

About 60 per cent of principals reported assaults on staff to their Boards of Trustees. Around 85 per cent of staff reported the assaults they had experienced to school management. More teachers than principals considered they had received “full support” from the BoT, or school management, respectively. No staff member reported being disciplined by a BoT following an assault. One staff member reported being disciplined by school management following an assault.

Most principals contacted outside agencies for assistance following an assault on staff. The principals’ assessments of promptness of response and the effectiveness of assistance suggested that most agencies had room to improve, particularly in terms of their effectiveness. Police handled least requests from schools, but overall they received the most positive assessments. Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLb), and Group Special Education (GSE), received the same number of requests for assistance, with RTLb being seen as more prompt and more effective. The fact that GSE were assessed as prompt and effective less than half the time may be an issue of concern, given that GSE have specific functions within the education service. The Children Young Persons and their Families Service were seen as least effective. Their focus is beyond the education service.

There was an aftermath for students too, following an assault on a staff member. Students were most often stood down or suspended, followed by counselling, referral to another agency, or being disciplined. Every school followed one of these course of action. There were no assessments of the effectiveness of these actions. But one principal did note “The major problems are caused by children who have been stood down from other schools.”

It would have been fruitful to have had the opportunity to discuss with some respondents the details of actions taken against students, why some actions were favoured over others, the co-operation offered by parents/caregivers, the short-term and longer-term effectiveness of these actions. Additional information on the processes of referring students to other agencies may also have been illuminating given the mediocre assessments from principals of the effectiveness of agencies in assisting staff deal with assaults by students.

While on the theme of how the present methodology may have been broadened by incorporating data from interviews, the perceptions and self-insight of the students undertaking the assaults should not be overlooked. Nor should the experiences of other students who are inadvertently involved in assaults on teachers. Well conceived and carefully structured interviews of students would be a fruitful area for research which may provide useful insights into assaults by students on staff.

4.1.3 What may a typical physical assault look like?

A composite picture of the majority of physical assaults on staff from the data reported, would probably look like this:

A single staff member (most often a teacher) was assaulted by a boy from Year 1-3, who was most often in the staff member’s class. The assault happened in a classroom, the student most likely punching, striking with an open hand, pushing, shoving, shouldering, kicking or stomping. The assault was prompted by the student contesting the staff member’s directions, or being restrained from assaulting other children. The staff member restrained the student and/or called for help.

Following the assault the staff member was most likely treated at the school (a minority were treated in a doctor's surgery). The staff member reported that the assault had "a moderate effect" or "no effect". The student was subsequently suspended, stood down or disciplined.

The assault was most likely to have been reported to the principal or other school management, with the assaulted staff member usually receiving "full support". If the principal called in an outside agency to assist with the aftermath of the physical assault, this was most likely to be Group Special Education, or a Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour. This latter group was more likely than the former group to have been seen as responsive and effective. If the police had been called they were seen as being prompt and effective.

Although this composite picture of the typical physical assault is based on modal data reported in this survey, there were instances of more serious assaults reported by respondents. For example: "I separated the fighters then he started punching again so I restrained him. He turned all his anger on me. I sent class away and called for help." And, "Child provoked by another child in class. I restrained him and he lashed out, threw a chair...another teacher held child back, kicked at legs (missed), then upper torso."

4.2 Aggressive verbal confrontations

Almost one-half of the principals, a little more than one-half of the teachers, and about one-quarter of the support staff reported aggressive verbal confrontations with single students. Principals most frequently reported four to nine confrontations in their schools. Teachers and support staff most frequently reported one or two confrontations. Generally, principals reports showed more variability than reports from staff. One principal commented, "Parents are becoming an increasing problem, very verbal over very minor problems. Very poor role modelling for children...Verbal abuse occurs in front of children." Another principal observed, "Parental support for the school and staff is much reduced. They (parents) challenge the school's discipline and they support the child. Threats of legal action frighten staff from disciplining children as they should."

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that principals reported about twice the number of physical assaults reported by staff. Again, principals reported about twice the number of verbal confrontations than teachers. When two or more students were involved there were considerably more reports of verbal confrontation than of physical assault from both principals and staff.

Being shouted at or sworn at were the most frequent forms of aggressive verbal confrontation reported by staff. Teachers were more often shouted at. Support staff were more often sworn at. Both groups reported less occurrence of being threatened. Overall, 86 teachers (58 per cent) and 13 support staff (28 per cent) reported aggressive verbal confrontations with single students. It was noted earlier that teachers experienced most physical assaults. This is the case also for aggressive verbal confrontations, with teachers experiencing about 85 per cent of these incidents. One teacher noted, "Over the last five years children tend to be more verbally aggressive from a much younger age and they don't notice or see anything wrong with it. ...It seems as if more people are not challenging this aggressive behaviour or enforcing any consequences."

The levels of aggressive verbal confrontation by single students and groups of two or more students reported in this survey may come as somewhat of a surprise. It may be deemed as unacceptable that more than half of primary teachers were subject to these incidents. The methodology of this survey is satisfactory for helping to paint a broader picture of these incidents, but does not allow the full circumstances, intensity, or after effects to be explored more fully. As one principal noted, "All assaults have been verbal. In my time, verbal abuse has been constant and at times seems worse than physical in a sense, as it is continuous everyday and wears staff down."

To complete the picture, supplementary interviews of teachers and students would be required. At this point little more can be done in this report apart from raising the issues of the likely stress and hurt engendered by instances of aggressive verbal confrontation. There are too, the impacts of these incidents on the students who perpetrate them and the students who witness them. These dimensions have not been included in this project.

Primary staff experienced aggressive verbal confrontations from parents/caregivers, as well as from students. The levels reported may be viewed as even less predictable than the levels reported for students. One-third of principals, one-fifth of teachers and nearly one-quarter of support staff reporting these behaviours. Two principals and four teachers from Area Schools reported these incidents. It is worth remembering that there were no reports of physical assault from Area Schools. No additional data about the nature of these confrontations, or what may have prompted them, were included in the questionnaires. Respondents were simply asked whether they had occurred.

No physical assaults from parents/caregivers were reported by principals or staff in 2006. In this regard, respondents had been asked whether there had been physical assaults "... over a matter relating directly to the student." This qualification was not included in the question covering aggressive verbal confrontation with parents/caregivers. One teacher stated that, "Last year I was physically and verbally assaulted by a parent. I had to get the police involved (principal did not involve police) and spoke to my union rep for advice."

With the benefits of hindsight, additional information about aggressive verbal confrontation with students, and parents/caregivers would have strengthened the reporting of this project. But to be frank, the levels as reported were not predicted when the project was being planned.

4.3 School-level and respondent data on physical assault and verbal confrontation

(i) Physical assault

As noted at Chapter 2 Methodology, school-level data and some respondent data were cross-tabulated against data on physical assault. There were no consistent associations within the cross-tabulations. Generally, the proportions in these data reflect the proportions in the samples of principals, teachers and support staff as the case may be. The few exceptions with discrepancies of 10 per cent or more are summarised below for principals and teachers. There were no discrepancies in data from support staff.

Principals' data for assaults on teachers

- School grade - less assaults in U1-3 schools, more assaults in U4-7 schools;
- School type - more assaults in intermediates;
- School decile - more assaults in deciles 1-3, less assaults in decile 8-10.

Principals' data for assaults on support staff

- School grade - less assaults in U1-3, more assaults in U4-7;
- School decile - more assaults in deciles 1-3, less assaults in deciles 8-10.

Principals' data for assaults on principals

- School decile - more decile 1-3 principals assaulted, less decile 8-10 principals assaulted;
- Gender - more male principals assaulted.

Teachers' data for assaults on teachers

- School type - more assaults in contributing schools;
- School decile - more assaults in deciles 1-3, less assaults in deciles 4-7.

The variable “school decile”, and the category “more assaults in decile 1-3 schools”, are present in each of the four sets of outcomes noted above. In three of the four sets “more assaults in decile 1-3 schools” is accompanied by “less assaults in decile 8-10 schools”. In one instance the proportions were statistically significant, but this of itself is an insufficient basis for suggesting associations between decile ranking and number of staff reporting assaults. For assaults on principals, the numbers seemed not to differ by the grade or type of school, but more principals than might be predicted were assaulted in decile 1-3 schools and less in decile 8-10 schools. It is not clear whether these data are independent of school size. Further investigation than is possible with the data from this project is needed into possible relationships between decile ranking and assaults.

The cross-tabulated data also indicate that less assaults than predicted were reported from small schools and more assaults than predicted were reported from larger schools. But whether the probability of assaults in smaller or larger schools differ significantly in the statistical sense, cannot be established by the data from this project.

The data discussed in this section are put forward as areas for further research, rather than as established outcomes from the project. The Ns are modest (21 principals, 23 teachers, 7 support staff) and when these numbers are cross-tabulated against three or four school-level variables, some cell sizes become too small for reliable analysis.

(ii) Aggressive verbal confrontations

As noted for data on physical assault, there were no consistent relationships within the cross-tabulated data for aggressive verbal confrontations. There were a few exceptions, as was noted also for the data on physical assault. These exceptions are noted below, using the same criteria as for the cross-tabulated data on physical assault.

Principals' data for single students

- School grade - less instances of 6-9 aggressive verbal confrontation in U1-U3 schools, and more instances of 6-9 confrontations in U4-U7 schools;
- School decile - more instances of aggressive verbal confrontations in deciles 1-3, less instances in deciles 8-10;
more instances of 6-9 aggressive verbal confrontations in deciles 1-3, less instances in deciles 8-10.

Teachers' data for single students

- School decile - more aggressive verbal confrontations in deciles 1-3.

Teachers' data for two or more students

- School decile - more instances of aggressive verbal confrontations in deciles 1-3, less instances in deciles 8-10.

Teachers' data for parents/caregivers

- School decile - more instances of aggressive verbal confrontations in deciles 1-3, less instances in deciles 8-10.

Four instances of more aggressive verbal confrontations than would be predicted by sample proportions were found for decile 1-3 schools. The reverse was found for decile 8-10 schools. Generally, the cell sizes are again too small for a reliable conclusion. Again the exceptions noted above are highlighted as suggestions for further research, rather than as established outcomes for the project.

4.4 The national incidence of physical assault and verbal confrontation

By extrapolating from the proportions of each sample reporting physical assaults or aggressive verbal confrontations, estimates may be made of the likely incidence of these behaviours in the nation's state primary schools.

Data from principals will indicate the number of primary schools where physical assaults and aggressive verbal confrontations of staff by students and parents/caregivers may have occurred in 2006. Data from support staff and teachers will indicate the numbers of these staff who may have experienced these forms of behaviour.

To be able to extrapolate from samples to a population, the number of cases in each population must be known. At the end of 2006 there were 1926 state primary schools with principals who were NZEI members. The number of support staff in primary schools on NZEI membership lists was 7586. The number of teachers on NZEI membership lists was 25,577.

By applying these population numbers to the proportions in each sample, the following estimates may be made:

- Numbers of **state primary schools in 2006** likely to have experienced physical assault or aggressive verbal confrontation of staff, incorporating a sampling error of ± 3 per cent:
 - (i) physical assault by students 584 – 622;
 - (ii) aggressive verbal confrontation by students 916 – 972;
 - (iii) aggressive verbal confrontation by parents/caregivers 620 - 658.
- Numbers of **support staff in 2006** likely to have experienced physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontations, incorporating a sampling error of ± 5 per cent:
 - (i) physical assault by students 1073 – 1187;
 - (ii) aggressive verbal confrontation by students 1996 – 2206;
 - (iii) aggressive verbal confrontation by parents/caregivers 1722 – 1904.
- Numbers of **teachers in 2006** likely to have experienced physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontation, incorporating a sampling error of ± 5 per cent:
 - (i) physical assault by students 3717 – 4109;
 - (ii) aggressive verbal confrontation by students 14,117 – 15,603;
 - (iii) aggressive verbal confrontation by parents/caregivers 5054 – 5586.

Given there are NZEI members in at least 90 per cent of state schools, this high coverage suggests that the above estimates may apply equally to state primary schools in general.

The possible impact of non-responses on the proportions of each sample reporting physical assault or verbal confrontation is to be considered too. If for example, those who did not have either of these events to report have not responded to the questionnaires, their absence will have inflated the proportions of respondents who have reported these events. Accordingly, the number of cases estimated for the full population may be inflated. The usual approach is to assume that the behaviours being measured in a questionnaire are equally distributed for respondents and non-respondents alike. This assumption would reduce to some extent, the possible impact of the non-respondent on the interpretation of these data.

The safest course of action is to regard the range of values above as broad estimates of the likely incidence of physical assaults and aggressive verbal confrontations for the population of state primary schools in 2006, and NZEI staff working in these schools.

4.5 Principals' estimates of trends in physical assault and verbal confrontation

Principals were asked to estimate changes in the frequencies of physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontation of staff by students during their time as principal at the present school. The time spent as principal ranged from less than one year to more than 25 years. Four to nine years was the modal value, accounting for 38 per cent of the principals. Twenty-three per cent of principals had been in the present position for ten or more years. Most principals would have been in their schools long enough to make informed judgements about the trends in assaults in confrontations.

For physical assaults “little or no change” and “slight increase” accounted for 90 per cent of principals’ responses. For verbal confrontations these same descriptions accounted for 62 per cent of responses. The main difference in description of the two behaviours comes in “medium increase” and “major increase”. Eight principals used these descriptions for verbal confrontation. No principal described changes to physical assault in these terms. About 15 per cent of principals noted a decrease in physical assaults and verbal confrontations in their schools. It would be interesting to know whether the 16 principals reporting a decrease had particular programmes in their schools to address these particular behaviours. But we do not have this information.

Some increase in physical assaults was reported in just under half the schools. Some schools reported a decrease. For verbal confrontations, about half the principals also report some increase. Again, some schools reported a decrease. On balance however, “little or no change” predominates, but where a change is reported, there is more often an increase than a decrease.

There is no support from principals for major increases in physical assault or aggressive verbal confrontation of staff by students. But even a slight increase in current levels may be viewed as a matter of concern, particularly in the levels of aggressive verbal confrontations.

4.6 Further research

This study has utilised a methodology suitable for obtaining a broad picture of the present parameters of the physical assault and verbal confrontation of primary school staff in 2006. But as noted earlier in this section, there are other dimensions to the physical and verbal assault of staff and these dimensions are best studied using typical case study and qualitative approaches. Structured interviews of staff would augment data included in this report.

This report has focused on school staff, but as noted earlier, there are other groups involved too. The students or parents/caregivers who perpetrate the conflicts are central players. Their views, opinions and attitudes may provide insights that help illustrate the dynamics of situations that lead to conflict. Other students, school staff and other parents/caregivers may all provide additional insights too. The roles and views of Boards of Trustees are another dimension that may help complete a picture of conflict within a primary school setting.

Some schools reported little or no conflict as defined in this study. Others reported levels that were twentyfold greater. An investigation into the practices and environments within these contrasting schools is another possibility for research. Some schools reported programmes that had been successful in reducing physical assault against school staff. These programmes would be worth a full evaluation. There are suggestions in this report that school decile and school size may be associated with increased probabilities of physical assault and verbal confrontation of staff. These suggestions warrant further research too.

A few schools reported a major increase in aggressive verbal confrontation. A similar number reported a major decrease. An investigation into the conditions which may have prompted these changes may provide a fruitful approach to understanding and better managing these behaviours in our primary schools.

There is the question of where responsibility lies for undertaking more comprehensive research into physical assault and verbal confrontation within schools? NZEI has quite properly focused on concerns as expressed by their members, but a responsibility for additional research may extend beyond NZEI.

4.7 Conclusions

This study has documented the levels of physical assault and aggressive verbal confrontation reported by staff in a representative sample of primary schools. Estimates have been made of the likely incidence of these confrontations nationwide.

A consequence of the questionnaire methodology used is that the outcomes of the study are necessarily broad. Some of the quantitative data have been further illustrated by the observations of participants, but there are many further details and relationships to be uncovered. Suggestions have been made for further research on the topic of physical assault and verbal confrontations of primary school staff. Alternative methodologies that may be used in this research have been suggested.

5. APPENDIX

- 1) Principal Questionnaire
- 2) Teacher/Support Staff Questionnaire

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF VERBAL AND PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARDS
PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE NZEI MEMBERS - 2006**

PRINCIPAL QUESTIONNAIRE

RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

Please complete this section by circling appropriate responses

«SeqNo»

School Grade	U1-U3	U4-U7	U8-10			
School Type	Contributing	Full Primary	Intermediate	Area		
School Decile	1 – 3	4 – 7	8 - 10			
Gender	Female	Male				
Age Group	<25yrs	26-29yrs	30-39yrs	40-49yrs	50-59yrs	60+yrs
Years as a Principal	1-4	5-9	10-20	21-30	31+	
Years in Present School	<1	1-3	4-9	10-15	16-24	25+

Please respond to questions 1-23 by ticking box(es) or writing in the space(s) provided.

1	<i>During 2006, has any student at your present school assaulted any of the following staff members?:</i>				
		YES	NO	If yes, how many staff have been assaulted?	
	(i) Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(ii) Teacher Aide	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(iii) Other Support Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(iv) Caretaker/Cleaner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(v) Principal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(vi) Other (Please describe)				

If all responses to (i) – (vi) are **NO** please go to Question 15.

If any responses to (i) – (vi) are **YES** please go to Question 2.

2	<i>How many students have assaulted staff physically in 2006?</i>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6-9	10-14	15+

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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3 How many physical assaults were by boys or girls?		Boys <input type="checkbox"/>	How Many?	Girls <input type="checkbox"/>	How Many?
4 In what year group were the students who committed the assault?		1-3 <input type="checkbox"/>	How Many?	4-6 <input type="checkbox"/>	How Many?
				7-9 <input type="checkbox"/>	How Many?

5 What in your view may be the most frequent cause(s) of the assault(s) reported in Questions 1-4?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Child/children being disciplined <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Child/children contesting staff members directions <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Child/children being restrained from assaulting other children <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Assault spontaneous/unprovoked <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Other conflict between child's parent/caregiver and staff member <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Poor practices by staff member <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Other (please describe) <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

6 For the physical assaults on staff reported in Questions 1-4, is there any evidence that gangs are implicated?		YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	If 'YES'	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Gangs within the school		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Gangs from outside the school		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Comment if required		
<input type="checkbox"/>			
<input type="checkbox"/>			

7 During your time as principal at this school how would you describe changes to the incidence of physical assault on staff members by students?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Little or no change <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Slight increase <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Major increase <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Slight decrease <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Major decrease <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	• Other (Please describe) <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

8 What medical or first-aid treatment have staff required as a direct result of physical assault(s)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	• No treatment needed <input type="checkbox"/>

	• Treated at school			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Treated at doctor's surgery			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Treated at hospital or clinic			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

9	Were the physical assault(s) reported to your Board?			
		YES	SOMETIMES	NO
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9(i)	If 'YES' or 'SOMETIMES' how were they managed by your Board?			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional development offered to staff 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling offered to staff 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full support given 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff member disciplined 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referred matter to other agency 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of management 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other (Please describe) 			

9(ii)	About how much of your time was spent informing the Board, writing report(s), supporting staff, discussing the assault(s) with outside agencies?			

10	What effect(s) have physical assaults on your staff had on your effectiveness as a principal?			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no effect 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate effects 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced my effectiveness 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major effects 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other (Please describe) 			<input type="checkbox"/>

11	What effect(s) have the physical assault(s) on your staff had on you personally?			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no effect 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate effect 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major effect 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Took sick leave 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resigned from school 			<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other (Please describe) 			<input type="checkbox"/>

12 What effect(s) do physical assaults on your staff have on staff members who have not been assaulted?				
	• Little or no effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Moderate effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Major effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Sick leave			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Counselling			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Request relevant PD			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Resigned from school			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

13 What happened to the child/children who assaulted staff members?				
			Tick as appropriate	
	• Disciplined			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Counselling			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Stood down/suspended/expelled			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Referred to outside agency			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Nothing			<input type="checkbox"/>

14 Which of the following services have been contacted to assist you and school staff following physical assault(s) on staff by students, did they respond promptly and was the service effective?					
		Contacted	Responded promptly	Effective	
				Yes	No
	• Resource Teacher Learning/Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• MoE/Group Special Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Children Young Persons & their Families Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Police	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other				

15 During your time as principal at this school how would you describe changes to the incidence of verbal assault on staff members by students?				
	• Little or no change			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Slight increase			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Major increase			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Slight decrease			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Major decrease			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

16	Does your school keep statistics on the incidence of physical/verbal assault(s) on staff??			
		YES	SOME	NO
	• Physical assault by students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Verbal assault by students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Physical assault by parent/caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Verbal assault by parent/caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

17	To the best of your knowledge, during 2006, has any single student at your present school confronted a staff member verbally in an aggressive manner, without any physical assault?								
						YES			NO
						<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	If 'YES' how many times has this happened in 2006?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6-9	10-14	15-19	20+
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

18	To the best of your knowledge, during 2006, has any group of two or more students at your present school confronted a staff member verbally in an aggressive manner without any physical assault?								
						YES			NO
						<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/>
	If 'YES' how many times has this happened in 2006?								
	1	2	3	4	5	6-9	10-14	15-19	20+
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

19	Does your Board have written policies for handling incidents of physical assault or verbal assault on staff by students?			
		YES		NO
	• Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Verbal assault	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

20	Are physical assaults or verbal assaults reported in a formal Incident Report?			
		YES	SOMETIMES	NO
	• Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Verbal assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

21	To the best of your knowledge, during 2006, has any parent or caregiver of a student at your present school assaulted a member of the staff physically over a matter relating directly to the student?			
		YES		NO
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
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22	<i>To the best of your knowledge, during 2006, has any parent or caregiver of a student at your present school confronted a member of the staff verbally in an aggressive manner without any physical assault?</i>	YES		NO
		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

**NATIONAL SURVEY OF VERBAL AND PHYSICAL AGGRESSION TOWARDS
PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE NZEI MEMBERS - 2006**

TEACHER/SUPPORT STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

Please complete this section by circling appropriate responses

«SeqNo»

School Grade	U1-U3	U4-U7	U8-10			
School Type	Contributing	Full Primary	Intermediate	Area	Yr 7-13	
School Decile	1 – 3	4 – 7	8 - 10			
School Position	Teacher	Senior Teacher	Support Staff	AP	DP	
Gender	Female	Male				
Age Group	<20yrs	20-25yrs	26-29yrs	30-39yrs	40-49yrs	50+yrs
Years Teaching/ Support Experience	1-4	5-9	10-20	21-30	31+	
Years in Present School	<1	1-3	4-9	10-15	16-24	25+
Years Level(s) Taught/Worked with 2006	1-3	4-6	7 and 8			
Your Body Type	Slight	Medium	Large	Decline this information		
Your Height	Short	Medium	Tall	Decline this information		

Please respond to questions 1-15 by ticking boxes or writing in the spaces provided.

1	<i>During 2006, has any student at your present school assaulted you physically in any of the following ways:</i>				
		YES	NO	If yes, how many instances?	
	(i) Punched you or struck you with an open hand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(ii) Pushed, shoved or shouldered you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(iii) Kicked or stomped you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(iv) Scratched or bitten you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
	(v) Physically assaulted you in any other manner. (Please describe)				

If all responses to (i) – (v) are **NO** please go to Question 12.

If any responses to (i) – (v) are **YES** please go to Question 2.

2 For the most recent physical assault noted at Question 1:			
		1	2
			2+
2 (i) How many students assaulted you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If your response to (i) is 2, or 2+ please go to Question 3. If your response to (i) is 1, please continue with Questions 2.			
		Boy	Girl
2 (ii) Was the student a boy or girl?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		1-3	4-6
		7-9	
2 (iii) What year group was the student in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		YES	NO
2 (iv) Was the student in your class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 (v) Where did the assault take place?			
	• Classroom		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Cloakroom/hallway		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• School Hall		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other building		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• In school grounds		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• At EOTC venue		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Outside schools grounds, (except at EOTC venue)		<input type="checkbox"/>
2 (vi) What was your immediate response(s)?		Tick as applicable	
	• Pushed student away		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Restrained student		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Left the vicinity		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Called for help		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Protected other students		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Dismissed class/group		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other response (please describe):		<input type="checkbox"/>
2 (vii) Was the child formally identified and confirmed as having Special Education Needs?		YES	NO
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 (viii) What in your view may have prompted the assault?		Tick as appropriate	
	• Child was being disciplined		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Child was contesting your directions		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Child was being restrained from assaulting other children		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Assault seemed spontaneous/unprovoked		<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other conflict with child's parent/caregiver		<input type="checkbox"/>

	• Other (please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

This question is for those only who responded 2, or 2+ to Question 2(i).

3	<i>Please describe the physical assault by two or more students. Use questions 2(ii)–2(viii) to structure your response.</i>

4	<i>What injuries did you sustain from the assault?</i>			
	• Little or no injury			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Scratching, bruise, bite			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Minor bleeding			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Injuries needing medical or first aid treatment			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please indicate)			<input type="checkbox"/>

5	<i>What medical or first-aid treatment did you require?</i>			
	• No treatment needed			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Treated at school			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Treated at doctor's surgery			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Treated at hospital or clinic			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

6	<i>What effect(s) did the assault have on you personally?</i>			
	• Little or no effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Moderate effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Took sick leave			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Counselling			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Resigned from school			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			<input type="checkbox"/>

7	What effect(s) did the assault have on your effectiveness as a teacher/ support staff?			
	• Little or no effect			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Moderate effects			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Reduced my effectiveness			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Major effects			<input type="checkbox"/>

8	Did you report the assault to school management?			
		YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>If 'YES" please note any other parties the assault was reported to:</i>			

9	If Yes, how was the assault on you managed by your employer?			
	• No evidence of management			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Full support given (Please note details in Other below)			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Professional development only offered			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Counselling only offered			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• I was disciplined			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please describe)			

10	Was the assault reported in a formal Incident Report (OSH)?			
	• Yes			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• No			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Don't know			<input type="checkbox"/>

11	What happened to the child?			
	• Disciplined			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Counselling			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Stood down/suspended/expelled			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Referred to other agency			<input type="checkbox"/>
	• I do not know			<input type="checkbox"/>

12	<i>During 2006, has any single student at your present school confronted you verbally in an aggressive manner, without any physical assault?</i>							
							YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>If 'YES' how many times has this happened in 2006?</i>							
	1	2	3	4	5	6-9	10-14	15+
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	What has been the nature of the verbal aggression?							
	• Shouting							<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Swearing							<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Threatening							<input type="checkbox"/>
	• Other (Please state)							

13	<i>During 2006, has any group of two or more students at your present school confronted you verbally in an aggressive manner without any physical assault?</i>							
							YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	If 'YES' please provide brief details							

14	<i>During 2006, has any parent or caregiver of a student at your present school assaulted you physically over a matter relating directly to the student?</i>							
							YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

15	<i>During 2006, has any parent or caregiver of a student at your present school confronted you verbally in an aggressive manner without any physical assault?</i>							
							YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

