

# Hawke's Bay Primary and Intermediate Schools' Incidence of Severe Behaviour 2007

**Report prepared for Hawke's Bay Primary Principals Association**

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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary</b>	<b>v</b>
Main findings	v
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Severe behaviour difficulties and their prevalence</b>	<b>3</b>
Prevalence of students with severe behaviour difficulties	3
<i>Beyond the limit</i>	6
Incidence of different kinds of behaviour	7
<i>Differences related to school decile</i>	8
<i>Differences related to year level</i>	9
<b>3. Impact of severe behaviour for other students and teachers</b>	<b>11</b>
Impact for classmates	11
<i>Differences related to the presence of students with severe behaviour</i>	12
Impact for teachers	13
<i>Differences related to the presence of students with severe behaviour</i>	14
<b>4. Support for teachers</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>Differences in support related to the presence of students with severe behaviour</i>	19
<i>Differences in support related to school characteristics</i>	19
<i>Differences in support by teacher characteristics</i>	20
<i>Views on further advice and support</i>	20
<b>5. Linkages</b>	<b>23</b>
Teachers' comments	24

# Tables

Table 1	Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by decile	4
Table 2	Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by gender	4
Table 3	Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by Year level	4
Table 4	Proportions of classes with ongoing severe behaviour	5
Table 5	Number of hours of in-class support for students with severe behaviour difficulties	19
Table 6	Characteristics of the schools of the 525 teachers responding	35
Table 7	Experience as a teacher	35
Table 8	Year levels in home class	36

# Figures

Figure 1	Kinds of ongoing disruptive behaviours experienced by Hawke's Bay teachers	8
Figure 2	Severity of behaviour by year level	10
Figure 3	Impact of students with severe behaviour for their classmates	12
Figure 4	Impact of severe student behaviour for teachers	14
Figure 5	Support for teaching students with ongoing severe behaviour difficulties	18

# Appendices

Appendix 1:	Hawke's Bay Schools' Incidence of Severe Behaviour Questionnaire for Primary and Intermediate School Teachers	27
Appendix 2:	Survey and responses	33
Appendix 3:	Analyses and summary variables	37

# Executive summary

The Hawke's Bay Principals' Association asked NZCER to survey teachers in the Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate schools, to find out how many students there are with severe behaviour difficulties in Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate schools, the impact that these students have, and the support that is available for teachers working with them. The survey took place in September 2007, and was sent to 79 schools. The response from 525 teachers is representative of these schools, and provides the basis for a reasonable indication of the extent of severe behaviour difficulties encountered by Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate teachers.

## Main findings

- One in five of the 12,787 Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate students covered by the survey were reported by their teachers to behave in ways that led to at least one of these outcomes:
  - made the student a danger to others,
  - frequently stopped the student from learning,
  - interrupted the class frequently,
  - stopped other students from accepting the student, or
  - resulted in property damage (or could if they were not stopped).
- Rates of such behaviour were higher in socioeconomic decile 1–2 schools (35 percent), among boys (31 percent), and Year 7–8 students (28 percent).
- Eighty-four percent of the 525 teachers taking part in the survey taught at least one student whose behaviour had one or more negative outcomes in their class. The average number of these students was 5.5 students per class, with a range from none to 29.
- Almost two-thirds of the teachers had one or more students in their class who kept disturbing or annoying other students in the class.
- Just under a third of the teachers had at least one student who physically attacked other students.
- Six percent of teachers reported ongoing physical attacks on themselves or a teacher aide.

- Classmates' learning was disrupted by such behaviour. Some students' own behaviour worsened in around half the classes, and others showed more anxiety or lack of confidence in around 40 percent of the classes.
- Severe student behaviour that disrupted learning had a negative impact on the general health and confidence of around a fifth of the teachers.
- It also made a third of the teachers anxious or wary. They worried about what other people thought about the behaviour of students in the class, and limited the activities they would try with their class.
- The kind of severe behaviour shown by students can have more impact than the total number of students with severe behaviour in a class. Students whose severe behaviour includes verbal abuse, inappropriate language, rushing around the room, refusing to follow instruction, and physical attacks on classmates, teachers, teacher aides or material objects have more negative impacts on teachers and classes.
- Almost all teachers got ongoing advice from their school colleagues and management, back-up from management, and worked with their colleagues to improve student behaviour. Much of this advice, back-up and work was rated as good or very good.
- In-school support from management, other teachers, and consistent whole-school practices had a positive effect on how quickly teachers could settle their classes after an incident of severe behaviour, and the impact for teachers.
- Thirty-nine percent of the teachers were currently working with a Resource Teacher for Learning & Behaviour (RTLB). Twenty-one percent thought this support was good or very good, and 18 percent thought it was satisfactory only, or poor.
- Fourteen percent of the teachers were currently working with Group Special Education on ways to improve student behaviour. Five percent thought this support was good or very good; nine percent thought it satisfactory only, or poor.
- About a third of the teachers received support from a teacher aide, with an average of around 9 hours a week. Nine percent had regular support from school management for an average of 2½ hours a week.

# 1. Introduction

The Hawke's Bay Principals' Association asked NZCER to survey teachers in the Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate schools, to find out how many students there are with severe behaviour difficulties in Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate schools, the impact that these students have, and the support that is available for teachers working with them. The 79 schools in the area were asked to give the survey to all their teachers with home rooms and teachers were asked to return them to NZCER by mid-September 2007, towards the end of term 3. A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 1.

We received responses from 72 of the 79 schools sent surveys, and from 525 teachers. We cannot give an exact response rate, because we did not know the number of teachers with home classes in the 79 schools. So in sending schools surveys, we based the number on student rolls, allowing one teacher for every 25 students, and giving each school another 5 surveys. This gave a generous 1,076 surveys sent out. Our estimate of the response rate is between 60 to 80 percent of the teachers in the Hawke's Bay schools (see Appendix 2 for the calculations behind this estimate).

Teachers were asked to fill in the survey whether or not they had students whose behaviour fitted the descriptors in the survey for severe behaviour difficulties, so that we could get a good picture of the incidence of severe behaviour difficulties. We cannot tell whether those who did not complete surveys were more likely to have students with severe behaviour difficulties, or not, so we cannot tell whether the survey under- or over- reports the incidence of students with these difficulties. However, the responses are generally representative of the characteristics of the 79 Hawke's Bay schools. In addition, many teachers with no students with behavioural difficulties did complete the survey. We received a pretty even spread of year levels for teachers' home classes, although responses for new entrant/Year 0, and Years 7 & 8 were slightly lower than for other year levels.

Overall, the picture that emerges here is likely to provide a reasonable indication of the extent of severe behaviour difficulties encountered by Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate teachers.

Those who did not have any such students in their 2007 classes did not answer questions relating to the impact of these students, or support received in relationship to them. Interestingly, some teachers who did have students with behaviour difficulties also did not answer the questions about the impact on them as teachers, or the support they received. It may be that they were reluctant to comment on these areas, which may bias the picture we have of these aspects of how teachers work with students with behavioural difficulties, making it slightly over- positive, but again, it is hard to know just how this non-response could have affected the general picture.

The characteristics of the schools whose teachers took part in the survey, and some information about the range of teachers' length of experience in teaching are also given in Appendix 2.

In this report, we start by looking at the incidence of severe behaviours reported by Hawke's Bay teachers, and the consequences for the students involved, their classmates, and their teachers. Then we move to the support given teachers. Finally, we look the linkages between patterns of incidence, impact, and support. The main factors that we found that were related to incidence, impact and support were school socioeconomic decile and year level, and their links with different patterns are described throughout the report.



## 2. Severe behaviour difficulties and their prevalence

### Prevalence of students with severe behaviour difficulties

We asked two related questions that had some overlap in the information they gave. The first asked teachers to give the numbers of boys and girls that had one or more of five listed consequences from their ongoing behavioural difficulties. This gave us information about total numbers for all the 525 classes.

The five ongoing behaviours were those that:

- made the student a danger to others,
- frequently stopped the student from learning,
- interrupted the class frequently,
- stopped other students from accepting the student, or
- resulted in property damage (or could if they were not stopped).

Table 1 shows the total number of students who behaved in ways that led to these outcomes, with a breakdown by school decile. Table 2 gives a breakdown by gender, and table 3, by year level.

In all, 21 percent of the students in the teachers' home classes behaved in ways that led to at least one of these outcomes. Most of these students' behaviour led to one or two of these outcomes only (14 percent). Students in socioeconomic decile 1–2 schools had much higher rates of behaviour leading to one or more of these outcomes (35 percent), as did boys (31 percent), and Year 7–8 students (28 percent).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> To keep the survey as short as possible to encourage a good response rate, we did not ask teachers to give numbers of students by each of these outcomes from severe behaviour. The next section does give an indication of ongoing experiences of particular *kinds* of behaviour in teachers' 2007 home classes.

Table 1 **Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by decile**

<b>Total students with ongoing severe behaviour</b>	<b>Total (n = 12787) %</b>	<b>Decile 1–2 (n = 3350) %</b>	<b>Decile 3–8 (n = 6785) %</b>	<b>Decile 9–10 (n = 2652) %</b>
One negative outcome	7	10	7	4
Two negative outcomes	7	12	6	3
Three negative outcomes	4	6	4	2
Four negative outcomes	2	4	1	<1
Five negative outcomes	1	3	1	<1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 2 **Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by gender**

<b>Total students with ongoing severe behaviour</b>	<b>Total (n = 12787) %</b>	<b>Boys (n = 6484) %</b>	<b>Girls (n = 6303) %</b>
One negative outcome	7	9	5
Two negative outcomes	7	10	4
Three negative outcomes	4	6	2
Four negative outcomes	2	3	1
Five negative outcomes	1	2	<1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>12</b>

Table 3 **Student totals for ongoing severe behaviour by Year level**

<b>Total students with ongoing severe behaviour</b>	<b>Total (n = 12787) %</b>	<b>Years 0–1 *(n = 1 598) %</b>	<b>Years 2–6 (n = 8349) %</b>	<b>Years 7–8 (n = 2813) %</b>
One negative outcome	7	5	7	8
Two negative outcomes	7	6	6	9
Three negative outcomes	4	2	4	7
Four negative outcomes	2	1	2	2
Five negative outcomes	1	<1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>

Eleven percent of the teachers also said they had students with severe behaviour problems that were not covered in the list we gave. These problems were experienced with 111 students, and related to violence if the student was angry (4 percent), non-compliance (3 percent), distracting

other children or attention-seeking (2 percent), verbal abuse or swearing (2 percent), short attention span (2 percent), and sexual or inappropriate talk or touching; bullying, lying or stealing, self-harm, being withdrawn, or dyspraxia (1 percent or less each). We have not included these students in the calculations given above, because the numbers given are for *consequences of severe* behaviour, rather than for different kinds of difficult behaviour. We include some of the descriptions given here because they do vividly illustrate the challenges some students provide for classroom management.

Students stealing teacher’s equipment/other students’ equipment/ students’ food. Students hiding teacher’s personal property/other students’ equipment/personal property. Students manipulating silently by dragging the chain.

Spitting on curtains, ‘hoiking’ on windows. Showing ‘bottom’ with his pants down when leaving room; showing penis; writing abusive sexist comments and handing them to recipient; urinating outside room.

Student running on top of desks. Student making animal noises and whistling non-stop.

Child who does not get what they want so just leaves the classroom. Will now only go to the deck, but has taken a long time to get that. Very angry.

Most teachers (84 percent) had at least one student whose behaviour had one or more negative outcomes in their class. The number of these students ranged quite widely. Ten percent had only one student with such behaviour, but six percent had 15 or more students with such behaviour. The mean was 5.5 students per class, with a range from none to 29.

Table 4 shows that while more than half of the teachers surveyed reported less than 20 percent of their class with such behaviour, 11 percent had at least half their class behaving in ways that had a negative impact on their own learning, others’ learning, or their own or others’ safety.

Table 4 **Proportions of classes with ongoing severe behaviour**

Proportion of class	Teachers (n = 525) %
None/no response to this question	17
1–10%	21
11–19%	23
20–29%	14
30–39%	8
40–49%	6
50% +	11

## Beyond the limit

Sixteen percent of the teachers reported that one or more students had left their 2007 home class because of their severe behaviour difficulties. Seven percent reported a single student leaving their class for one of the reasons, two percent reported two students leaving, and one percent reported three students leaving their class, a total of 76 students, or only 1 percent of the students identified as having severe behaviour difficulties. Thus it seems that schools and teachers do work to engage these students in learning, within their existing classes.

The most common action was for the students to be transferred to another class in the school (7 percent). Three percent reported that students with a short stand-down or suspension returned to the same class. Three percent were stood down and did not return to the school, and two percent were expelled.

Four percent commented that students with severe behaviour difficulties had left the school to move to another family member, or to another school before they were suspended, stood down, or expelled. Other consequences were students being put into another class for a few days; students being isolated, sent to another class, or having time out for a couple of hours; students being sent to a centre or health camp for some weeks; and students being given support to change.

Ninety-five percent of the teachers reporting that a student had left their class had student/s with more serious behavioural difficulties. Students from classes where teachers were faced with more minor behaviour difficulties were all moved to another class, as were some of the students with more serious behaviour. The more serious consequences, such as stand-downs, suspensions and expulsions, applied only to those with more serious behaviour.

Having students leave their home class was more commonly experienced by teachers of Year 7 and 8 students (38 percent, cf. 13 percent of Years 2–6 teachers, and 4 percent of Years 0–1 teachers), and by those in low-decile schools (26 percent cf. 5 percent in high-decile schools). Consistent with other information showing higher student mobility for students in low-decile schools, more teachers in low-decile schools reported that students with severe behaviour moved to another town to live with other family members at least in part because of their behaviour, or moved to another school before they were expelled, suspended, or stood down (8 percent cf. no teachers in high-decile schools).

Comments teachers made here gave some examples of how teachers and schools handle some issues with severe behaviour, and also actions that parents may take, to avoid official school action.

3 students spent time in next room when they forgot how to behave appropriately in my class.

One boy left the home class because he was hitting children when not being provoked, tore reading books in anger, swore and talked back to the teacher, wrote an offensive letter to another student, interrupted lessons by calling out, yelling in anger and making noises.

The boy was in trouble regularly in and around school so his mother moved him to another school, before he was suspended.

Mother came into the class and told her daughter to pack her bag because they were leaving and not returning. Her child would have been stood down if her mother hadn't have turned up at that particular time and stormed into the classroom.

6 stand downs and returned to class, 3 suspensions and returned to class.

One child came to this school in the middle of T2. He was disruptive, abusive, violent and had severe learning difficulties. He needed 1:1 constantly but funding for this was not provided. The boy was stood down initially, then later expelled. The final behaviour that resulted in his expulsion was an incident where he threw five chairs across the classroom—injuring five children.

We have a buddy system throughout the school where a child who misbehaves will go to that class for 30 minutes for the first offence of the day. Children in our class seldom get past this stage.

We have a strong school wide-internal system which support teachers, and the pupil to learn ways to regulate their behaviour.

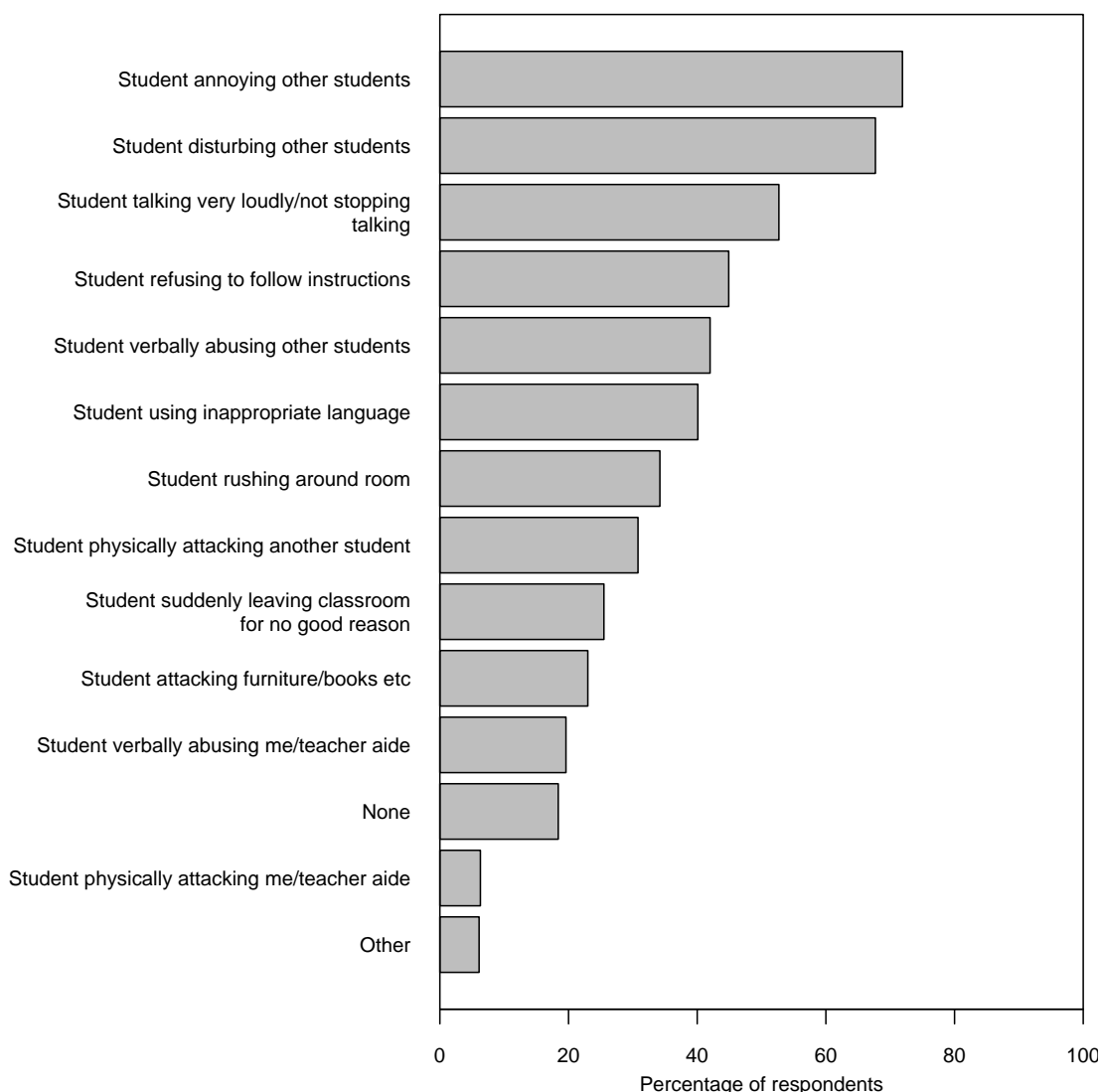
Student stood down & returned back to same class. Students' parents called to take said child home to cool down. Students sent to another school to settle/cool down.

The behaviour of this particular student was so poor and deteriorating that the other teacher involved and I stated it was "him" or "us". We gave the principal an ultimatum.

## **Incidence of different kinds of behaviour**

The second question about student behaviour asked about 13 different *kinds* of ongoing behaviour that had caused serious disruption in the teacher's home class in 2007. Figure 1 below shows the most common type of ongoing behaviour that caused serious disruption was students who kept disturbing or annoying other students in the class, followed by those who kept talking. At least half the teachers experienced these kinds of disruption to their class. Physical attacks on the teacher or a teacher aide on an ongoing base were rarest, but they did occur for 6 percent of the teachers. Just under a third also had at least one student who physically attacked other students.

Figure 1 **Kinds of ongoing disruptive behaviours experienced by Hawke's Bay teachers**



Again, school decile and year level are the main characteristics associated with differences in teacher experiences of students with severe behaviour.

### Differences related to school decile

Only four percent of teachers in low-decile schools reported no students with disruption-causing behaviour, compared with 16 percent in mid-decile schools and 43 percent in high-decile schools. All of the behaviours were reported by a considerably larger proportion of teachers in low-decile schools than high-decile schools. The most common behaviours, students annoying or disturbing other students were reported by 87 and 84 percent of teachers in low-decile schools, respectively, and by 45 and 42 percent of those in high-decile schools. Behaviours where the differences were

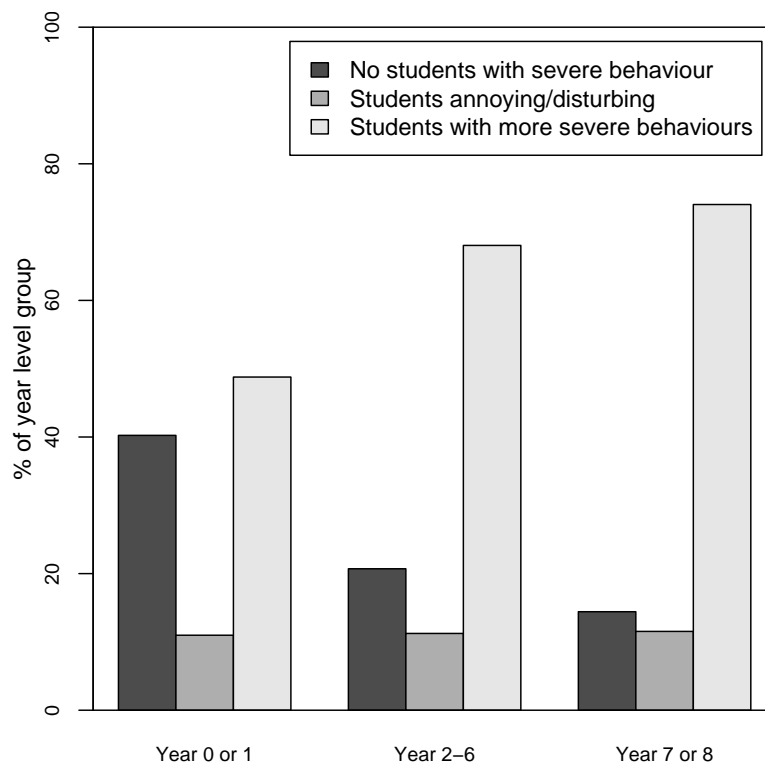
more extreme include use of inappropriate language (64 cf 9 percent), verbal abuse of other students (63 cf 12 percent), students refusing to follow instructions (62 cf 13 percent), students rushing around the room (52 cf 11 percent), students physically attacking another student (50 cf 6 percent), student attacking furniture and books, or leaving the classroom without good reason (both 41 cf 6 percent), students verbally abusing the teacher or teacher aide (36 cf 2 percent), and students physically attacking the teacher or teacher aide (15 cf 0 percent). Thirty-eight percent of teachers in low-decile schools reported 9–13 kinds of severe behaviour occurring in their class, compared with one percent of those in high-decile schools.

### Differences related to year level

Lack of disruptive behaviour was more common in classes without Year 7 or 8 students (32 percent of teachers of Year 0 or 1 students, cf. 18 percent of teachers of Years 2–6 classes, and 11 percent of those of Year 7 or 8). Almost all the severe behaviours were reported by a considerably larger proportion of teachers from classes with Year 7 or 8 students. Examples of the differences are: students verbally abusing other students (59 percent of teachers of Year 7 or 8 students cf 44 percent of Years 2–6 class teachers and 12 percent of Year 0 or 1 teachers); students verbally abusing the teacher or teacher aide (28, 21, and 4 percent, respectively); and students using inappropriate language (59, 39, and 20 percent, respectively). Where there are less marked differences are in the proportion of reports of a student physically attacking a teacher or teacher aide (slightly more likely with younger rather than older students), students physically attacking other students (slightly more likely for older students), students attacking furniture or books (also slightly more common with older students), and students rushing around the room or leaving the room.

Six percent of the teachers with classes of Year 0 or 1 students ticked 9–13 behaviours, compared to 30 percent of those with Year 7 or 8 students, and 20 percent of those teaching Years 2–6. Figure 2 shows that while the incidence of students whose level of severe behaviour is limited to annoying or disturbing other students is much the same at all year levels, the proportion of those with more severe behaviours increases with age.

Figure 2 **Severity of behaviour by year level**





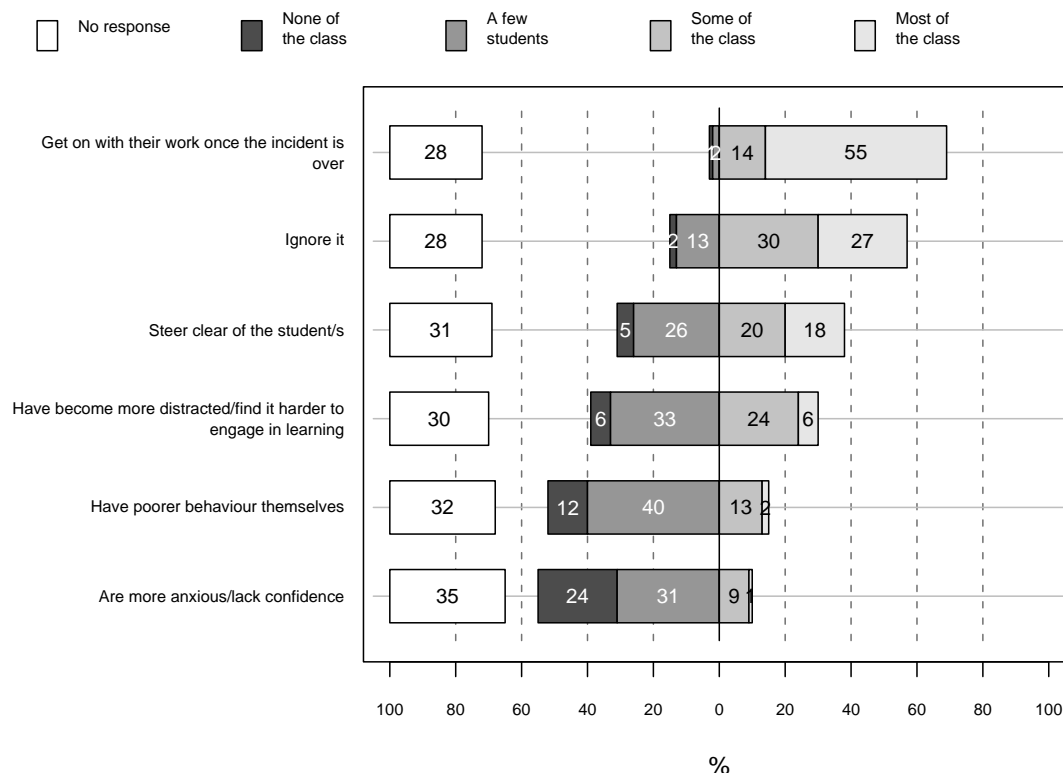
### 3. Impact of severe behaviour for other students and teachers

#### **Impact for classmates**

The teachers were asked how the behaviour of their students with severe behaviour impacted on their classmates. Some teachers with such students did not answer this question, as did those who did not have such students, so we had no responses here from around half the teachers at high-decile schools, and those who taught Years 0 or 1.

Figure 3 shows that in most of the classes, many students do not lose learning time during an incident. Most are able to resume their work after an incident of severe behaviour. But there are also longer-term impacts. Some or most of the students in around a third of the classes of the teachers who took part in this survey became more distracted themselves, and found it harder to engage in learning. There were students in around half the classes who showed poorer behaviour themselves. In around 40 percent of the classes, there were students who showed more anxiety or lack of confidence.

Figure 3 **Impact of students with severe behaviour for their classmates**



### Differences related to the presence of students with severe behaviour

Consequences for the class tended to be less marked when the behaviour was minor (mainly students annoying or disrupting other students), than when the behaviour was more serious. Forty-six percent of the teachers reporting minor behaviours also reported that most of the class could ignore the behaviour, compared with 30 percent of those reporting more serious behaviours. Those with classmates with more minor behaviours were less likely to be more distracted or harder to engage in learning (17 percent of the teachers reported some or most of the class being so) than those whose classmates had more serious behaviours (42 percent); the difference is more marked for students becoming more anxious or lacking confidence (none of 14 percent), and other students having poorer behaviour (2 of 22 percent).

Some of the comments here illustrate how classmates can respond to a student’s poor behaviour, either by supporting it, or reducing it.

Laugh at them, thereby providing an audience and reinforcement of the behaviour.

The class always responds by “egging” the person on, no matter what behaviour management strategies I try.

A few students deliberately stir kids with behavioural difficulties up. They often have the behavioural difficulties themselves (but not always).

One student attempts to fill the void when other disruptive students away by mimicking the disruptive behaviours.

I find many children feel that they should butt in and make comment on the behaviour — or how that child should behave — rather than ignore and get on with what they should be doing — and it can domino!

I often speak to the class about expected behaviours. What is acceptable and to ignore the inappropriateness of the comments.

Commit themselves to relieving the situation by making efforts to control the child concerned by verbally calming them down.

My kids are pretty mature about these students and they try and help keep them on track by working with them or encouraging them.

I have some very focused students in the class, so they report the behaviour students, tell them off themselves or just ignore them depending on the severity of the situation.

Our school has a strong “kotahitanga” belief and the whole school accepts differences easily. We respect ourselves, others and property.

## Impact for teachers

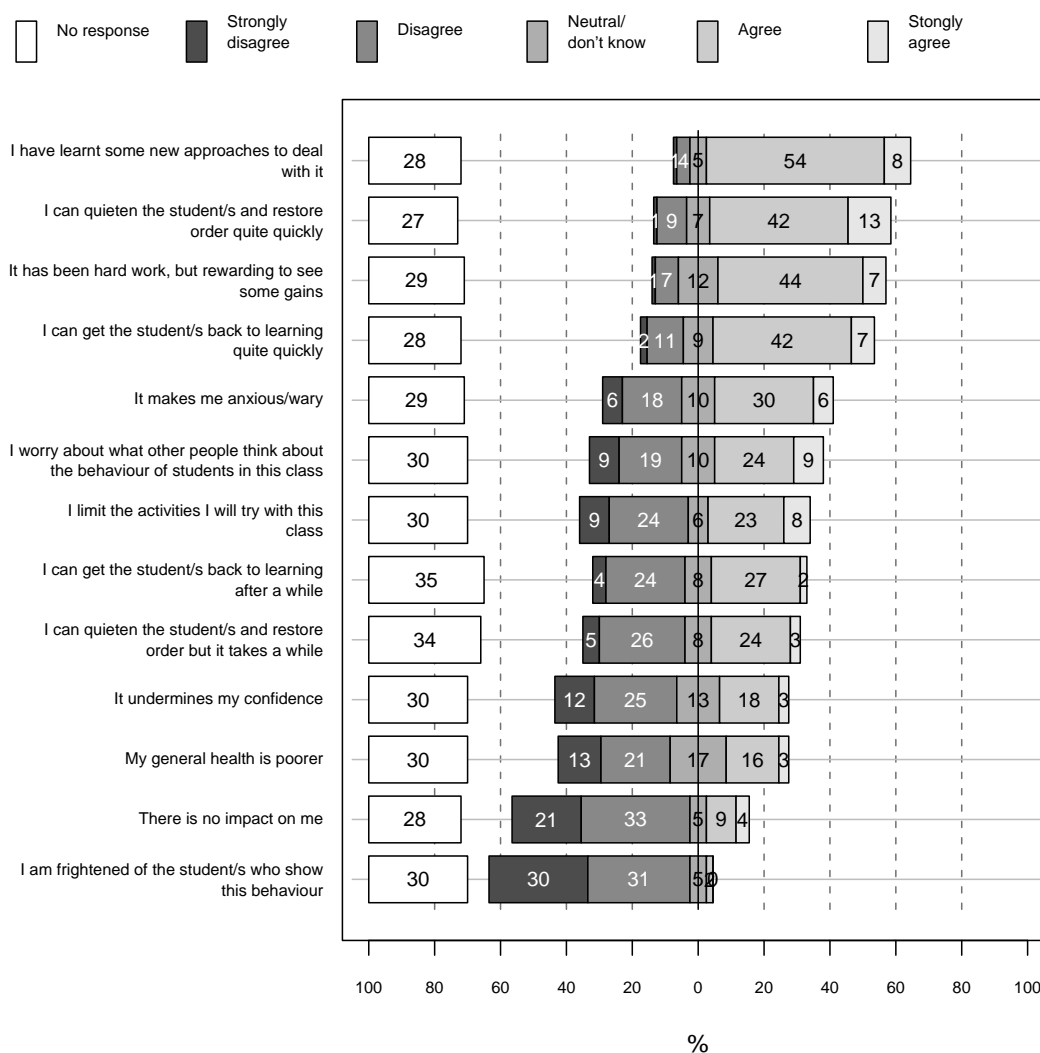
Few teachers said that behaviour that disrupted learning had no impact on them. Most were positive about their ability to restore order quite quickly. However, this behaviour does have a marked negative impact for a substantial minority. Around a third said it made them anxious or wary, that they worried about what other people thought about the behaviour of students in the class, and that it limited the activities they would try with the class. Around a fifth said it undermined their confidence, and that their general health was poorer as a result.

Figure 4 gives the details.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As with the information on impact for classmates, quite a few teachers did not respond to this question. Again, this included those who did not have students with such behaviour, with a higher lack of response from teachers in high decile schools (52 percent cf. 28 percent of those in mid-decile schools, and 11 percent of those in low-decile schools), and from those with Year 0–1 students in their class (45 percent cf. 26 percent of those with Years 2–6 students, and 18 percent of those with Years 7–8 students).

Figure 4 Impact of severe student behaviour for teachers



### Differences related to the presence of students with severe behaviour

Teachers whose class included one or more students with severe behaviours were less likely to say this behaviour had no impact on them (12 percent cf. 22 percent of those whose class had one or more students with minor kinds of poor behaviour). They were more likely to think that they could not quieten students quickly and restore order (15 cf. 2 percent). They were more anxious or wary (50 cf. 22 percent), more worried about what others thought about behaviour in their class (45 cf. 13 percent); more likely to limit the activities they try with their class (44 cf. 12 percent); or to say that their confidence was undermined (29 cf. 10 percent).

Around 15 percent of the teachers also commented on the impact this behaviour had for them. Most of these comments were around the frustrations or challenges they found in working with students who showed such behaviour, including the supports that helped them, or that they wished they had. Around 3 percent mentioned the ultimate rewards they found from persisting in their

work with these students. Below we include comments that illustrate the range of thoughts and experiences given by teachers.

Frustrating, as you get to know your children as little people with many qualities. It's worrying to see them display such random bizarre behaviours sometimes and makes you wonder what is going on in their lives to make them so angry/attention seeking/unhappy.

Child has left, and I was sad to see him go. Progress was rewarding. When this child first arrived I had sleepless nights, more from the dealings with parents. Demands/expectations were huge as were behavioural issues. Like having an extra 10 new entrants. Received great support as this child was already known to GSE from kindergarten.

These responses are based on the fact that I am an experienced teacher who has had the opportunity to help many behavioural difficulties. Younger/less experienced teachers feel very vulnerable in this position. Schools/teachers must have the support of a service that believes they need help — and provide it.

Takes all the time from the others. A respite room helps enormously. A non judgemental staff helps — you know the comments like: “if he was in my room... and my class don't do that...and why don't you get that kid under control...”

I have a fairly settled class this year. The two pupils indicated are not major problems. They can be handled. However I have had other classes in which a number of children have affected the whole function of the class. I felt it undermined my confidence.

It makes me wonder if this career is really worth it...

Because of the complexity of the behaviour, it seems best to remove child from class during an incident (I could not teach without the support of both teacher aides and management). My health, as in frequency of infection or illness, has not increased. But my general fatigue and exhaustion is what affects me most of all.

Very tiring and I lose motivation to “inspire” my class and prefer not to try more interesting activities and learning experiences because it's “not worth the hassle”.

Sometimes I go to school when I am unwell because my class can be too challenging for relievers. My children are respectful towards me at all times.

I am building a trust and rapport with these boys, to direct them to making the right choices in their learned classroom behaviours, and understanding consequences. It's a long “journey” .

The impact of some of this behaviour is I appreciate the school policies for behaviour management and support from colleagues. I feel that GSE or RTLBs in these situations would've made things harder for me. These children need settled routines, to be accepted if they come into a new school after being expelled. Our school is very good at not fitting children into boxes but accepting differences.



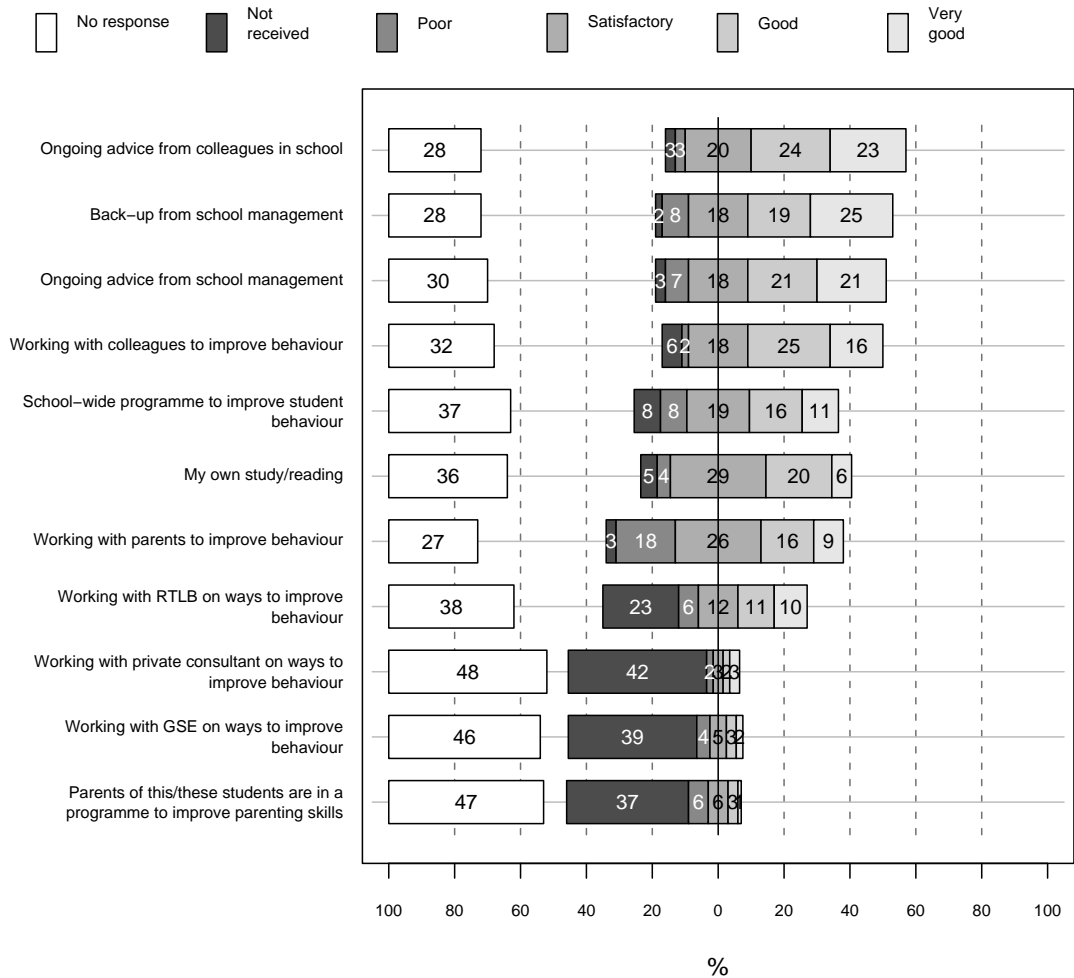
## 4. Support for teachers

We asked teachers to indicate the advice and support they had in 2007 for their teaching of the students in their class with ongoing severe behaviour difficulties, and how useful they had found it.

Almost all those who answered this question got ongoing advice from their school colleagues and management, back-up from management, and worked with their colleagues to improve student behaviour. Much of this advice, back-up and work was rated as good or very good. Teachers were somewhat less likely to be taking part in a school-wide programme to improve student behaviour; in some of the comments relating to support for working with these students there were indications that these programmes were very important, or had made the biggest difference, to some teachers, and others regretted their absence. However, ratings on these programmes were somewhat less positive than the ratings on advice and support from school colleagues and management (around half who had these rated them good or very good cf. around two-thirds for the other sources of support).

Teachers were also working with students' parents to improve their child's behaviour, and with RTLBs, but this work was also somewhat less likely to be seen as of good or very good quality as the advice and support from school colleagues and management (around half of those who did such work said it was good or very good). Figure 5 gives the details.

Figure 5 **Support for teaching students with ongoing severe behaviour difficulties**



We also asked about the *amount* of in-class support the teachers were currently getting for students with severe behaviour difficulties.

The results are given in Table 5. The calculations for each source of help exclude those who received no such help in the form of regular hours. About a third of the teachers received support from a teacher aide, with an average of around 9 hours a week. Less than 10 percent received any one of the other types of support on a regular basis, though 9 percent had regular support from school management for an average of 2½ hours a week. This support was mainly aimed at coping with the student/s with severe behaviour difficulties (57 percent of the 258 teachers who answered this question), rather than providing support for the rest of the class. A few teachers indicated that the support was aimed at doing both.



Table 5 **Number of hours of in-class support for students with severe behaviour difficulties**

Type of support	Number of teachers receiving support (%)	Number of hours			
		Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean (SD)
Teacher aide	176 (34)	0.50	60	6	8.85 (8.31)
School management	49 (9)	0.25	20	1	2.60 (3.92)
Colleague	39 (7)	0.25	20	1	0.84 (3.68)
GSE support worker	29 (6)	0.20	30	1	2.53 (5.42)
Parent	3 (<1)	0.25	3	1	1.42 (1.42)

### Differences in support related to the presence of students with severe behaviour

Teachers reporting they had students with serious behavioural difficulties received only slightly more hours of teacher aide support than those with students with minor or even no behavioural difficulties (all received an average of 8–9 hours of support), but they did receive more hours of support from a GSE support worker (those with students with more serious behavioural difficulties received on average 2.8 hours, those with students with minor difficulties received an average of 1 hour), and from management and/or a colleague (an average of about 3 hours compared with under an hour and a half).

There were no statistically significant differences, but there was a consistent trend for slightly higher percentages of teachers with students with more serious behavioural difficulties to rate the support they received as good or very good than teachers of students with more minor difficulties did.

### Differences in support related to school characteristics

As well as school decile, we found that school size was related to the amount of support teachers got.

Teachers in low-decile schools received an average of 11.4 hours of teacher aide support and 3.25 from a GSE worker, compared with 7.72 and 1.76 in mid-decile schools, and 4.66 and 0 in high-decile schools. Comments about the need for teacher aide support were made by about 10 percent of the teachers in low- and mid-decile schools, but by one percent of those in high-decile schools.

Teachers in low-decile schools were more likely to report that they had *not* worked with an RTLB (27 of 18 percent), although those who *did* were more likely to report good or very good support (28 of 7 percent).

Teachers in small schools on average received more support from a teacher aide or GSE support worker (11.7 and 6.7 hours, respectively) than those in larger schools (8.0 and 0.9 hours, respectively). Teachers in smaller schools were more likely to rate a school-wide programme to improve student behaviour as good or very good (38 cf 20 percent of those in larger schools). A need for such a programme was raised in comments on support by three percent of teachers in smaller schools and eight percent of those in larger schools.

### Differences in support by teacher characteristics

Teachers of younger students were less likely to have difficult students, and so not need ongoing advice from colleagues (45 percent of Year 0 or 1 teachers cf 21 percent of Year 7 or 8 teachers), but when they *did* get the advice they were less likely to rate it good or very good (35 and 51 percent, respectively). Teachers of classes including students up to Year 6 on average received the most support: 9.5 hours from teacher aides and 2.8 hours from a GSE worker, and those with older students the least (6.9 hours from teacher aides and 1.7 hours from a GSE worker).

Teachers with under five years' experience were more likely to report very good ongoing advice from colleagues in the school (43 percent) than those with more experience (18 percent) and the pattern was similar for ongoing advice from school management (32 cf 18 percent), back-up from school management (33 cf 23 percent), and working with colleagues to improve behaviour (28 cf 12 percent). Teachers with under 2 years' experience were more likely to comment in response to an open-ended question on the support they would like (so the numbers are likely to be lower than they would be if we had asked this question specifically) that they would like professional development on different approaches or strategies to teach students with behavioural difficulties (11 percent compared with two percent of those with more than 10 years' experience).

### Views on further advice and support

When asked what other advice and support would make a real difference for students with severe behavioural difficulties and their class, about a third of the respondents wrote about between one and three categories of support. Eight percent would like more individual teacher aide support for students; five percent would like more specialist help, or more consistent and co-ordinated specialist help; and five percent would like more involvement of or support from parents.

Under five percent mentioned each of: the need for a school-wide system or programme; consistent support from management; professional development on different approaches or strategies; training, or support or guidance for parents; respite care, where the students with difficulties would be removed for part of the day, or even have them put into separate classes; and anger or frustration management for students.

Some examples of comments made by teachers here include:

We have a strong, school wide-internal system which supports teachers, and the pupil to learn ways to regulate their behaviour.

Parents to be more involved aware-supportive. School wide behaviour system-management to be fully involved.

Anger management. Pastoral support. Nutritional/dietary input at home and school. Parental guidance systems.

Being able to have a regular break from these students rather than waiting for them to have a sick day.

A specifically dedicated withdrawal room, in school or school cluster based where severe behavioural pupils can be sent—working with a specialist either for whole days/weeks/part.

The child concerned was a danger to himself & others. His behaviour was extreme. RTLB quickly realised that the case was beyond his expertise and we referred him to GSE. GSE refused to help, saying they had no money to provide a teacher aide. Child suspended and changed schools after I refused to teach him.

I don't have severe behaviour problems in my class but as a first year teacher I have found regular meetings with my tutor very helpful. Being paired up with an experienced colleague to talk to and offer advice would no doubt be valuable and help to keep one sane!

I feel confident with my classroom management, but feel under supported from [school] management. Especially with the lack thereof for consequences for these students. I realize that they may need extra support but at what cost to the other students?! When is enough enough?

More access to RTLB help ongoing for severe learning/behaviour problems — not just 2 terms. Extend GSE numbers and staff. Resources are not sufficient to cater for problem kids. Staff need to give relief support not just sit there and make observations and make written suggestions. Last time I worked with GSE I thought Why did I bother the support wasn't worth the effort in applying

Strategies to cope/defuse situations. I pride myself on behaviour management but lately feel ineffective/poor in ability. Only just getting the power back in my room and making sure I'm in control — not those with behaviour issues.

In home advice/support from social worker, RTLB, GSE, family support, health nurse. Stronger parental/caregiver presence/support in school. In home, behaviour management skills, strategies awareness for parents/caregivers. Supporting them to develop an awareness of the effect their child's disruptive behaviour has on those they associate with and themselves.



## 5. Linkages

We undertook some analysis of the linkages between the presence of students with severe behaviour, the impact on teachers, and their level of within-school support. To do this, we grouped the relevant answers in terms of the patterns found. Appendix 3 gives the details of the procedures used to find these groupings. In this chapter, we look at the links found between these measures to explore the interplay between different levels of success with classroom management and different levels of severe behaviour.

The proportion of students in the class with severe behaviour is *not* linked to teachers' reports of how quickly they could settle their class back into learning after an interruption because of student severe behaviour, or their experience of positive effects. However, those with a higher proportion of these students was linked to whether teachers thought they got enough in-school support: 26 percent of teachers of classes in which over a fifth of the students had severe behaviour rated their in-school support as poor, cf. 14 percent of those with a lower proportion of these students.

The *degree* of severe behaviour faced by teachers did show more links with impacts for them. Teachers whose experience of severe behaviour was largely limited to students disturbing or annoying other students were less likely to find it took a while to settle their class (14 percent cf. 34 percent of teachers facing more severe negative behaviours), or to report a negative effect for them personally (7 percent cf. 24 percent). They were more likely to report a positive/neutral effect (27 percent cf. 17 percent). They also tended to have fewer students with severe behaviour in their class: 22 percent had more than a fifth of their class with such behaviour, cf. 53 percent of those facing more severe behaviours. Yet there was no difference in the level of in-school support they reported and that reported by those facing more severe behaviours.

Levels of in-school support were linked to whether teachers reported positive or neutral impacts for them (32 percent of those who did so had good levels of support, cf. 14 percent of those who had low levels of positive or neutral impacts). Conversely, those who reported negative effects were less likely to enjoy good levels of in-school support (13 percent cf. 29 percent of those who reported few negative impacts).

What kind of in-school support made a difference here? Interestingly, the differences in actual hours of regular support were slight for all but support from school management. On average, those reporting positive/neutral effects received an average of 8.8 hours of teacher aide support, those with low levels of positive/neutral effects received 7.9 hours; the order was reversed for support for a GSE worker (1.3 cf 4.7 hours); there was barely a difference for support from a colleague (3.75 cf 4.0 hours); but there was a greater difference in support from school

management (4.0 cf 2.3 hours). When asked what other support they would like only one percent of those reporting positive effects wrote a comment about a school-wide system of management or support from management, but 13 percent of those disagreeing they had positive outcomes did so.

Teachers reporting good levels of within-school support were also more likely to rate as good or very good the support for working with parents to improve behaviour (29 percent) than those reporting poor levels of support (11 percent). A similar picture emerged for working with an RTLB (38 cf 16 percent); with a GSE worker (9 cf 0 percent); with private consultants (9 cf 3 percent); and for their own study or reading (54 cf 13 percent). Those reporting poorer levels of support were more likely to have commented that they would like more teacher aide support, and a school-wide system or programme of behaviour management or more support from management.

Being able to settle students quickly was linked to whether teachers reported positive/neutral effects for their practice, with 45 percent of those who took a while to settle their classes having a low level of positive/neutral effects, cf. 10 percent of those who settled their classes quickly. This may be because those whose classes took a while to settle may face more severe kinds of behaviour. Thirty-eight percent of these said they had experienced 9 or more of the 13 kinds of severe behaviour asked about, cf. 20 percent of those whose class was quick to settle. Twelve percent reported that students attacked them or the teacher aide physically, compared with 5 percent of those whose classes were quick to settle. The corresponding percentages for students attacking furniture or books were 40 and 27; for students verbally abusing the teacher or teacher aide were 36 and 22; for students rushing around were 56 and 40; for students talking loudly or not stopping talking were 79 and 64 and for students refusing to follow instructions were 72 and 51.

These links suggest that looking at the kinds of severe behaviour faced by teachers and the cumulative effect of different kinds, rather than numbers of students alone, and sharing effective practice in ways of settling students with specific kinds of behaviour could be a useful focus for the kinds of in-school advice and support that would particularly help teachers. The comments that follow also indicate the kinds of approaches that teachers have found effective: they usually involve consistency in approach in and out of the teacher's own class, as well as particular attention in the class to engage these children in attractive learning activities.

## **Teachers' comments**

Just under 40 percent of the teachers also gave us some overall comments about their work with students with severe behaviour. Twelve percent of the respondents commented about support being essential, or that having support enabled them to do their job; eight percent commented on the need for school-wide consistency, support from management, and/or the need for clear

boundaries to be defined for the children; seven percent saw the need for some or more parent support; six percent made a positive comment about how in 2007 it was not a problem for them and/or they had learned from difficult students in previous years; four percent saw the class environment, flexibility, involvement of all students, and adequate attention all being key with difficult students; and three percent commented on the need for whole-person intervention, or rejected labelling of students.

Teachers reporting poor levels of within-school support were more likely to comment on the need for support from the school and from parents.

Some examples of the comments are:

Children are complex little beings. Behaviour issues are seldom without background. Therefore the more a teachers know them more likely they will be able to develop an effective hopefully caring relationship with the child. Support for the teacher is vital and healthy for the child also.

Work on self esteem and developing a positive relationship with every child is key. The first 3–5 weeks should be focussed on this and ongoing. Secondly an opened ended flexible environment with plenty of discussion and interactivity. In my opinion 95%-ish of severe behaviour problems are a result of at risk children in traditional classroom.

A whole school behaviour management has been put in place at beginning T3 which has helped a lot this term.

Services such as GSE must be resourced — financially and with personnel to support teachers and difficult children. By the time GSE is contacted, the school has exhausted its resources, been through RTLB and are basically crying out for help — being told there is not enough money, or no person available to help is not good enough.

As a teacher aide for [nearly 10] years prior to gaining my degree I had experience with several students. I found if I taught them through their interests they responded well. This experience has helped immensely in my teaching now as a “real” teacher.

I think that there should be courses for parents to attend to improve their skills in disciplining children. By helping parents to set boundaries at home I have found those children’s behaviour has improved. (They have asked me for advice or how to deal with their child when they won’t obey them.)

Working with their whānau to get the children back on track is very rewarding — observing the children concerned trying to do the correct thing is like a lovely ray of sunshine. When you run out of ideas/strategies to help them that can be very demoralising.

We are a little school in crisis. One boy has rocked us. GSE only provide 3 mornings a week TA and the rest of the time we have to cope. Last week he was like a madman bouncing off windows outside. The children were terrified inside and closed the curtains. I (teaching principal) rang GSE and MOE for help and initially got NONE. so I rang [another agency] and now I have help. My staff’s nerves are shot, the children are scared, learning’s deteriorated and we are sick of the whole thing. Today there was a big meeting to give the

school some help....I still feel dubious. All I can say is this survey came at the right time. In [over 20] years of teaching I have never experienced anything like it before.

I've been relieving in this class for [over 4 months] and had to work with some severe behaviours but working as a team — and support from my boss and seniors, parents I have worked out an excellent system.

My teacher aide is invaluable to me. She allows me time to settle the class by distracting and/or removing the severe behaviour child. However she is not in my room for the full day and situations arise which give me cause to call on other staff members e.g. principal/colleagues which interrupts their day. Often at an inconvenient time. A full-time TA would be great.

We are slowly making gains. We are building trust and the pupils' self esteem. It's all about teacher and pupil relationships. [2533]

Very wearying. Difficult to teach rest of class effectively. Difficult when in management team with time out of classroom and CRT days. Excellent support from GSE/Principal. Difficult when child's home unsupportive and mother denies difficulties and mother exhibits same problems as child. Getting classmates on board and giving them strategies to minimise disruption to themselves and reinforce expectation with child. Use of clear guidelines, consistency, and catching child for positives especially early in the day.

Teachers who are well planned, who plan using student needs and interest (AToL based) with a strong positive behaviour management system with clear boundaries and known consequences rarely have problems. Hooray for Bill Rogers!



# Appendix 1: Hawke's Bay Schools' Incidence of Severe Behaviour Questionnaire for Primary and Intermediate School Teachers



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*This questionnaire asks about your experience in **your home class**. Please fill out this questionnaire by ticking the boxes or circling the numbers that apply to you and/or writing in the spaces provided.*

## Your home class

1. **What level/s are in your home class?** *[Please tick all that apply]*
  - a)  new entrants/year 0
  - b)  year 1
  - c)  year 2
  - d)  year 3
  - e)  year 4
  - f)  year 5
  - g)  year 6
  - h)  year 7
  - i)  year 8
2. **How many boys are in your home class?** \_\_\_\_\_
3. **How many girls are in your home class?** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Think about how many students in your class have ongoing behaviour that means they behave in ways that:**
  - a) make them a danger to others, *or*
  - b) frequently stop them from learning, *or*
  - c) interrupt your class frequently, *or*
  - d) stop other students from accepting them, *or*
  - e) result in property damage (or could if they were not stopped).

- i) Number who behave in 1 of these ways                    \_\_\_ boys                    \_\_\_ girls
- ii) Number who behave in 2 of these ways                    \_\_\_ boys                    \_\_\_ girls
- iii) Number who behave in 3 of these ways                    \_\_\_ boys                    \_\_\_ girls
- iv) Number who behave in 4 of these ways                    \_\_\_ boys                    \_\_\_ girls
- v) Number who behave in 5 of these ways                    \_\_\_ boys                    \_\_\_ girls

**5. Are there any other students in your home class whose ongoing behaviour you regard as showing severe problems that are not covered in the list above?**

- a) 1)  yes                    2)  no                    3)  not sure
- b) If *yes* or *not sure*, please say how many \_\_\_ boys    \_\_\_ girls
- c) *Please* also describe their behaviour:

## Impact of behaviour difficulties in class

**6. Are there any students who have left your home class this year because of their severe behaviour difficulties?**

- a) 1)  yes                    2)  no                    3)  not sure

- b) If *yes*, what happened, and how many?

*(Please tick all that apply and write the number of students on the line provided))*

- a)  \_\_\_ student(s) transferred to another class in the school
- b)  \_\_\_ student(s) stood down and did not return to the school
- c)  \_\_\_ student(s) suspended and did not return to the school
- d)  \_\_\_ student(s) stood down and returned to another class in the school
- e)  \_\_\_ student(s) suspended and returned to another class in the school
- f)  \_\_\_ student(s) expelled
- g)  other *[Please describe]*

7. In 2007, what kind of behaviour have you experienced on an ongoing basis that has caused serious disruption in your home class? [Please tick all that apply]

- a)  none [please go to Q.9]
- b)  student physically attacking another student
- c)  student physically attacking me/teacher aide
- d)  student attacking furniture/books etc
- e)  student verbally abusing other students
- f)  student verbally abusing me/teacher aide
- g)  student disturbing other students
- h)  student annoying other students
- i)  student suddenly leaving classroom for no good reason
- j)  student rushing round room
- k)  student talking very loudly/not stopping talking
- l)  student using inappropriate language
- m)  student refusing to follow instructions
- n)  other [please describe]

8. How does the behaviour of student/s with severe behaviour impact on their classmates in your home class this year?

Classmates:	Most of the class	Some of the class	A few students	None of the class
a) Ignore it	1	2	3	4
b) Get on with their work once the incident is over	1	2	3	4
c) Have become more distracted/find it harder to engage in learning	1	2	3	4
d) Are more anxious/lack confidence	1	2	3	4
e) Have poorer behaviour themselves	1	2	3	4
f) Steer clear of the student/s	1	2	3	4
g) Other [please describe below]	1	2	3	4

## Support for you

**9. Please indicate what advice and support you got this year for your teaching of the students in your class with ongoing severe behaviour difficulties, and how useful you have found it:**

	Not received	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Very good
a) Ongoing advice from colleagues in school	1	2	3	4	5
b) Ongoing advice from school management	1	2	3	4	5
c) Back-up from school management	1	2	3	4	5
d) Working with parents to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
e) Working with RTLB on ways to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
f) Working with GSE on ways to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
g) Working with private consultant on ways to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
h) Working with colleagues to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
i) Parents of this/these students are in a programme to improve parenting skills	1	2	3	4	5
j) School-wide programme to improve student behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
k) My own study/reading	1	2	3	4	5

**10. Please indicate how much in-class support you are getting currently for students with severe behaviour difficulties in your home class:**

- a) from a teacher aide \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week
- b) from a GSE trained and provided behaviour support worker \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week
- d) from a parent \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week
- e) from a colleague \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week
- f) from school management \_\_\_\_\_ hours a week

**11. Is this support specifically aimed at coping with the student/s with severe behavioural difficulties in your home class?**

- a)  yes                      b)  no – provides support for rest of class

**12. What (other or additional) support and advice would you like that you think would make a real difference for these students and your class?**

## Impact on you

### 13. What is the impact for you of the severe behaviour in your class this year?

*[Please give your level of agreement with each statement]*

	Strongly	Agree	Neutral/ don't know	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) There is no impact on me	1	2	3	4	5
b) I have learnt some new approaches to deal with it	1	2	3	4	5
c) It has been hard work, but rewarding to see some gains	1	2	3	4	5
d) I can quieten the student/s and restore order quite quickly	1	2	3	4	5
e) I can quieten the student/s and restore order but it takes a while	1	2	3	4	5
f) I can get the student/s back to learning quite quickly	1	2	3	4	5
g) I can get the student/s back to learning after a while	1	2	3	4	5
h) I worry about what other people think about the behaviour of students in this class	1	2	3	4	5
i) It makes me anxious/wary	1	2	3	4	5
j) I limit the activities I will try with this class	1	2	3	4	5
k) My general health is poorer	1	2	3	4	5
l) It undermines my confidence	1	2	3	4	5
m) I am frightened of the student/s who show this behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
n) Other <i>[please describe]</i>	1	2	3	4	5

## A bit more about you

**14. How many years have you been teaching?**

- 1)  less than 2 years      2)  2–3 years      3)  4–5 years      4)  6–10 years  
5)  11–15 years      6)  16–20 years      7)  21–25 years  
8)  26–30 years      9)  31–40 years      10)  more than 40 years

**15. How many years have you been teaching in this school?**

- 1)  less than 2 years      2)  2–5 years      3)  6–10 years      4)  11–15 years  
5)  16–20 years      6)  21–25 years      7)  26–30 years      8)  31–40 years  
9)  more than 40 years

**16. Please indicate your gender:**

- 1)  Female      2)  Male

**17. Please indicate your age:**

- 1)  under 30      2)  30–39      3)  40–49      4)  50–59  
5)  60+

**18. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experience of the students with severe behaviour difficulties in your home class this year, and the things that might make a positive difference for them and you?**

**MANY THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH NZCER.**

## Appendix 2: Survey and responses

The survey was sent to 79 kura, full primary, contributing, intermediate, and special schools in the Hawke's Bay region (the list of schools was supplied by the HBPPA). We received at least one response from teachers in 72 of the 79 schools. The schools not represented in the responses included two kura, four schools that were decile 1 or 2 (two of each), and three schools that were either decile 3, 7, or 9. All of these schools were relatively small (under 156 students).

Each school was sent about one survey per teacher, plus five extra. The approximate number of teachers was calculated as a twenty-fifth of the number of students on the July 2007 Total Roll, and each school was sent five additional survey questionnaires. A total of 1,076 questionnaires were sent out.

### Response rate approximations

We received completed survey instruments from 525 teachers, and another that was received after the analysis had been completed. It was not possible to calculate an exact response rate, but we can conclude that we probably had an actual response rate of between 60 and 80 percent. This conclusion is based on the following calculations.

In the absence of a definitive list of teachers, it is impossible to know the exact number of teachers who could have responded and so calculating an exact response rate is difficult. We can get an upper and lower limit on the response rate, by using the 1:25 ratio number of teachers (this gives the upper limit) and the number of questionnaires sent out (which gives the lower limit).

The crudest estimate of the response rate is 49 percent (525 out of 1,076 possible responses).

A school-based response rate takes into account the fact that a small school would have more widely differing lower and upper limits (as explained above) than a large school. A school with 50 students and so an estimated 2 teachers, was sent 7 questionnaires ( $2 + 5$ ) and if three were returned this would give an upper limit of  $3/2 = 150$  percent and a lower limit of  $3/7 = 43$  percent. A school with 500 students, on the other hand, would have an estimated 20 teachers, and have been sent 25 questionnaires. If 21 (again, one more than the estimated number) were returned, this would give an upper limit to the response rate of  $21/20 = 105$  percent, and a lower limit of  $21/25 = 84$  percent.

Because small schools had upper limit response rates of up to 400 percent, a mean (or average) response rate across schools is likely to be too high (it will be increased by the very high rates), and the median (or rate such that half of the rates are greater and half are lower) is a better

measure. Across all 79 schools, the lower limit response rates varied between 0 and 96, with a median of 45 percent, and the upper limit rates varied between 0 and 400 percent, with a median of 80 percent. The lower limit rate is as low as it is because the small schools had lower limit median rates of between 18 percent (those of under 26 students), and 38 percent (those with 127–156 students). The corresponding medians for the upper limit rate are 100 and 73 percent, respectively.

There was a marked difference in response rates for different size schools, because of the extent of under-/over-estimation in the small schools. However, the lower limit median response rates were over 50 percent for all schools of 127 students or more, and the upper limit rates were over 74 percent for all but the biggest schools.

### Unanswered questions

Of those who did not answer any of the questions on the impact on the rest of the class, 90 percent were teachers who appeared to have no students with severe behaviour difficulties in their class, and the remaining 10 percent was split evenly between those who had students with minor and more serious behaviours.

A similar picture emerges for non-response to the questions about the support for teaching students with severe behaviour difficulties, with 84 percent of the those not responding being teachers without such students in their class, and the remaining 16 percent split almost equally between those with students with minor and more serious behaviour difficulties. For the questions about the impact on the teacher, 76 percent of those not responding were teachers without students with difficulties, and again the remaining 24 percent were almost evenly divided between those with students with minor and more serious behavioural difficulties.

It appears that the teachers with students with students with severe behavioural difficulties in their class were more prepared to comment on the effect on the class than to comment on the support they received or the impact on them personally. It is possible that the responses we *do* have are then biased (they show a better—or possibly worse—situation than there is) if the teachers who did not complete the questions were those more inclined to give negative responses, but who were for some reason reluctant to do so. However, we do not know whether this would be the case.

## Responding schools & teachers

### Characteristics of the sample of schools

The 72 schools from which we received responses included 28 percent decile 1 or 2 schools, 56 percent decile 3–8 schools and 17 percent decile 9 or 10 schools, so low-decile schools are over-represented in the region.



### Characteristics of the sample of teachers working in those schools

Ninety-two percent of the respondents work in an urban (as defined by the Ministry of Education) locality. Ninety percent of the teachers taught at state schools, nine percent at state-integrated schools, and four responses (< 1 percent) were from teachers at private school/s. The schools had rolls of between under 26 to over 600. Most of the teachers (Table 6) were from schools of between 157 and 400 students. Of course, the larger the school, the more teachers at the school, so an over-representation of teachers from larger schools is to be expected.

Table 6 **Characteristics of the schools of the 525 teachers responding**

School roll	Percentage of teachers (%)	Decile	Percentage of teachers (%)	Type of school	Percentage of teachers (%)
Under 156	17	Low (1–2)	24	Composite	2
157–400	56	Medium (3–8)	53	Contributing	56
401 or more	28	High (9–10)	23	Full Primary	31
				Intermediate	11
					< 1

## The respondents

### Overall characteristics

Eighty-two percent of the respondents were female, and the majority were over 40 (37 percent were under 40, around 56 percent were in their 40s or 50s—evenly split—and four percent were in their 60s). Given their age, it is not surprising that the majority have been teaching for over 10 years. However, just over half of the respondents have been at their current school for no more than five years.

Table 7 **Experience as a teacher**

Number of years teaching	Total experience (n = 525) %	Experience in current school (n = 525) %
Under 2	10	29
2–5	13	23
6–10	19	20
11–15	10	12
16–20	9	9
21–25	14	5
26 or more	22	2

The year levels of the home classes of the respondents are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 **Year levels in home class**

<b>Year level/s of home class</b>	<b>Total (n = 525) %</b>
New entrants/Year 0	14
Year 1	23
Year 2	22
Year 3	21
Year 4	21
Year 5	24
Year 6	21
Year 7	15
Year 8	14

Forty-three percent of the respondents had a single year level in their home class, 45 percent had two, and the rest (11 percent) had between 3 and 8 years in their home class. A single respondent did not indicate the year levels in their home class.

## Appendix 3: Analyses and summary variables

### **Prioritised year levels**

Since 11 percent of respondents had vertical or whānau form classes with more than three year levels in a class, a prioritised version of the year level/s taught was created. This gave a fifth of the respondents teaching either Year 7 and/or 8 (any possibly lower years as well); 64 percent teaching Year 2–6 (and possibly lower years, but not Year 7 or 8); and 16 percent teaching Years 0 and/or 1 (and no older students).

### **Presence of students with severe behavioural difficulties in the classroom**

We used the answers to question 7, of the kinds of severe behavioural difficulties experienced in the class to derive a measure that captured both the presence or absence of such students in the class, as well as to give a rough estimate of the severity of the behaviour. This measure had the values:

- *no severe behaviour* if “none” was ticked, or none of the options were ticked
- *minor behaviours*, if no more than two options were ticked and at least one of the two were that the student either annoys or disturbs other students
- *more serious behaviours* for all other cases, in other words a wider range of behaviours was reported, and these included more severe behaviours, or behaviours more disturbing to all in the classroom.

### **Support for teachers and the Impact for teachers**

We used factor analysis to establish measures about the within-school support teachers reported, and the impact of the student severe behaviour for them. Factor analysis is a multivariate technique that identifies groups of strongly-correlated (or associated) variables. The idea is that the variables in these groups may each be an attempt to measure a single underlying or latent construct that is impossible to measure directly. For example, the items about support are about whether the teachers received support (and how good it was) from colleagues and management within the school, from outside agencies and consultants, and by self-study. Possible latent constructs in this case would be “internal support” and “external support”.

A factor analysis<sup>3</sup> of the support questions (each measured on a Likert-type scale where a value of 1 = “not received”, 2 = “poor”, ..., 5 = “very good”) suggested a factor about *within-school support* (based on the items: ongoing advice from colleagues in school, ongoing advice from school management, back-up from school management, working with colleagues to improve behaviour, and school-wide programme to improve student behaviour). The statistical properties of a possible second factor on external support were not good (for one thing, this type of support was far less common, and there was a higher rate of non-response for some of these items), so only the one factor was used.

A second factor analysis of the items about the impact on teachers (each measured on a Likert-type scale where 1 = “strongly agree”, ..., 5 = “strongly disagree”) suggested three factors:

- *negative effects* (it undermines my confidence; it makes me anxious/wary; my general health is poorer; I worry about what other people think about the behaviour of students in this class; I limit the activities I will try with this class; I am frightened of the student/s who show this behaviour; and, reversed, there is no impact on me)
- *Class is slow to settle* (I can get the student/s back to work after a while; I can quieten the student/s and restore order but it takes a while)
- *Positive/neutral effects* (I can quieten the student/s and restore order quite quickly; I can get the student/s back to learning quite quickly; I have learnt some new approaches to deal with it; it has been hard work, but rewarding to see some gains).

One measure of the reliability of a factor scale is Cronbach’s alpha, a number typically between 0 and 1. An alpha value of over 0.7 indicates that a set of items forms a “good enough” scale (one of adequate reliability); a value of over 0.8 is even better. The alpha values for the three factor scales based on four or more items<sup>4</sup> were 0.83 for *negative effects*, 0.70 for *positive/neutral effects*, and 0.88 for *within-school support*.

Having found these measures, how would they best be used? This was a two-step process. For each teacher, four scale scores were calculated, as the mean (average) of the separate items. These measures were then simplified into four “low/medium/high” scores.

For *within-school support*, the quarter of the teachers with the lowest level of support were given the “low” score (those scoring below the first quartile); the quarter of the teachers with the highest level of support were given the “high” score, and the middle fifty percent of the teachers were given the “medium” score.

For the other three factor scales, the three groupings correspond to the quarter of the respondents who were most strongly in agreement (that there were negative effects, for example), the quarter of the respondents who most strongly disagreed, and the fifty percent in the middle.

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<sup>3</sup> Principal factor analysis with varimax rotation using PROC FACTOR in SAS STAT®.

<sup>4</sup> Cronbach’s alpha is not really appropriate for a 2-item scale like *class slow to settle*.

## Looking for patterns

We cross-tabulated and used the likelihood ratio chi-square test to check for associations between each of the questions asked in the survey and:

- Presence of students with severe behaviour
- School characteristics (see summary below)
  - a) Type (with Year 7 and 8 or not)
  - b) Decile (grouped into low, decile 1 and 2; medium, deciles 3–8; and high, deciles 9 and 10)
  - c) Location (urban or rural)
  - d) School roll (small, under 157 students; medium, 157–400; large, over 400)
    - Percentage of Māori on the roll
- Teacher characteristics (see summary below)
  - e) Total experience teaching
  - f) Within-school support
  - g) Class slow to settle
    - *Positive outcomes*

We report on associations that were significant at the one percent level ( $p < 0.01$ ).