

Incidence of severe behaviour in Hutt Valley and Wellington schools

Report prepared for Hutt Valley and Wellington PPTA

Sandie Schagen and Edith Hodgen
New Zealand Council for Educational Research

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The teacher questionnaire	1
1.2 Sample and survey administration	2
1.3 Survey respondents	3
1.4 Analysis of questionnaire responses	4
2. Forms and frequency of severe behaviour	7
2.1 Overall responses	7
2.2 Differences by school factors	9
2.3 Differences by teacher factors	11
2.4 Multivariate analysis	13
Noise and defiance	13
Physical and sexual	13
Key results	14
3. Proportion of students with severe behaviour	15
3.1 Rates of disruption for individual teachers	15
3.2 Overall rates of disruption	17
3.3 Differences by school factors	19
3.4 Differences by teacher factors	20
3.5 Multivariate analysis	20
4. Consequences of severe behaviour	23
4.1 Consequences for students with severe behaviour	23
4.2 Differences by school factors	24
4.3 Differences by teacher factors	25
4.4 The impact on other students	25
5. The impact of severe behaviour on teachers	29
6. Support for teachers	31
6.1 Support received by teachers	31
6.2 In-class support provided	33

6.3	Support that teachers would like	34
7.	Summary and conclusions	35
7.1	Key findings	35
7.2	Differences by school and teacher factors	36
7.3	Conclusions	37

Tables

Table 1.1	Teachers' teaching experience and teaching experience in current school	3
Table 2.1	Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by decile	9
Table 2.2	Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by authority	10
Table 2.3	Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by school gender	10
Table 2.4	Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by school roll	11
Table 3.1	Teachers' disruption rates, by subject	16
Table 3.2	Teachers' disruption rates, by year group	17
Table 3.3	Teachers' disruption rates, by gender	17
Table 3.4	Overall disruption rates, by subject	18
Table 3.5	Overall disruption rates, by year group	18
Table 3.6	Overall disruption rates, by gender	19
Table 4.1	Students leaving classes because of severe behaviour	23
Table 6.1	In-class support received by teachers	33

Figures

Figure 2.1	Forms and frequency of severe behaviour	8
Figure 4.1	Impact of severe behaviour on other students	26
Figure 5.1	Impact of severe behaviour on teachers	29
Figure 6.1	Extent and quality of support received by teachers	32

Appendix

Appendix A: Questionnaire for secondary school teachers

39

1. Introduction

The New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) was commissioned by the Hutt Valley and Wellington regions of the Post-Primary Teachers' Association (PPTA) to research the extent and nature of severe student behaviour in secondary schools in the Hutt Valley/Wellington area, the impact that these students have, and the support that is available for teachers working with them. In this introductory chapter we outline the methods used; the following five chapters cover our findings, looking in turn at the forms and frequency of severe behaviour; the proportion of students with severe behaviour; the impact on classes; the impact on teachers; and support available for teachers.

1.1 The teacher questionnaire

The research instrument was a six-page questionnaire, designed to be completed by all teachers in Hutt Valley and Wellington secondary schools. This was based on an earlier questionnaire used in a survey of severe behaviour in Hawke's Bay primary and intermediate schools, carried out by NZCER on behalf of the Hawke's Bay Primary Principals' Association. However, it was necessary to make substantial changes because the questionnaire was to be used in secondary rather than primary schools. To begin with, there are some forms of severe behaviour which are more likely to occur within a secondary school context (e.g., inappropriate sexual behaviour, being under the influence of alcohol/drugs). In consultation with PPTA representatives, a list of behaviours which could be classified as "severe" was compiled for use in the questionnaire. Severe behaviour was defined as "ongoing behaviour which is severely disruptive, and threatens the viability of teaching and learning".

The other important difference concerns the structure of primary and secondary schools. In general, primary school teachers have a home class which they teach for most if not all of the time. Hawke's Bay teachers were therefore asked to give details of the severe behaviour (if any) of students in their home class. By contrast, secondary school teachers are likely to teach several classes for one or more periods a week, and each student is likely to have several different teachers, possibly one for every subject they take. It was therefore necessary to take steps to address, and if possible prevent, multiple counting of students with severe behaviour problems. A further complication was the need to ascertain the frequency of severe behaviour by subject contexts, as well as by year level.

The final questionnaire is shown in Appendix A. Questions 1 and 2 show how the issues outlined above were addressed. Question 1 asks teachers to rate the frequency of different types of severe

behaviour. It also asks (Q1r) for their assessment of severely disruptive behaviour overall, since it would not always be possible to make this judgement based on the earlier responses. For example, if teachers experienced only one type of severe behaviour rarely (and the others never), it would be reasonable to infer that they only rarely experienced any kind of severe behaviour; but if they experienced several kinds of severe behaviour rarely, their experience of severe behaviour in general could be rare, sometimes or often.

For Question 2, teachers were asked to complete a matrix, filling in one line for each subject they taught. For each year group, they were asked to state the number of boys and girls they taught “this year”, i.e., in 2008, and the number of boys and girls who were disruptive; this enabled us to calculate the proportion of disruptive boys and girls encountered by each teacher in each year group, in each subject they taught. Again, there was a “Total” line (Q2m). This was necessary because it is possible for a teacher to take the same students for more than one subject; in such cases, adding the numbers in the subject lines would result in double counting of the students concerned. In most cases the “Total” line would be the same as the sum of the subject lines, but where teachers taught the same students for more than one subject, the “Total” line figures would be less than the sum of the subject lines.

1.2 Sample and survey administration

The questionnaire was sent (via PPTA representatives) to all teachers in all Wellington and Hutt Valley state and state-integrated secondary schools. Figures provided by PPTA representatives were used to determine how many questionnaires to send to each school. Teachers were asked to complete the questionnaires and return (in sealed envelopes) to their branch chair, although some chose to return them direct to NZCER.

The total number of questionnaires dispatched was 1660, the number returned was 756. The overall response rate was therefore 46 percent, but the response rate from individual schools varied from 4 to 97 percent. This reflects the different methods of distribution within schools: in some cases questionnaires were completed within staff meetings (hence a very high response rate), in other cases they were simply handed to colleagues to respond if and when they wished (hence a much lower response rate).

It is important to note that this was not a national survey, but limited to two areas which are not representative of the whole of New Zealand. For example, the sample was skewed towards high-decile schools (10 of the 28 participating schools, or 36 percent, were decile 9–10, compared with 17 percent of secondary schools nationally). This could mean that the resulting figures **underestimate the incidence of severe behaviour across schools**.

On the other hand, it is probable that teachers with a particular interest in the topic (i.e., those who had experienced severe student behaviour) would be more likely to respond, so the incidence of

severe behaviour **within schools** could be **overestimated**. For both these reasons, care should be taken in generalising from the results of the survey.

Another possible source of bias can be discounted. We hypothesised that schools where severe behaviour was a key issue might be more likely to respond to the questionnaire in a whole-school context (e.g., a staff meeting) and thus generate a higher response rate than schools where severe behaviour was less of a problem. We discovered, however, that there was no correlation between school-level response rates and incidence of severe behaviour, so the hypothesis was disproved.

1.3 Survey respondents

As noted in Section 1.2, responses were received from a total of 756 teachers. Sixty percent of respondents were female, which is representative of the gender composition of teachers. Six percent were senior managers, 31 percent middle managers (e.g., curriculum or faculty leaders), 8 percent deans, and 7 percent specialist classroom teachers.

Teachers were asked to state their number of years' teaching experience, and also the number of years they had spent teaching in their current school. Responses to both questions are summarised in Table 1.1. There was a wide spread of teaching experience: one in 10 had less than two years' (so would have been provisionally registered teachers) while slightly more had over 30 years'. A quarter had joined the school in the past two years, while half had between two and 10 years there.

Table 1.1 **Teachers' teaching experience and teaching experience in current school**

Number of years	Teaching (<i>n</i> = 756) %	Teaching in current school (<i>n</i> = 756) %
Less than 2	10	25
2–5	19	31
6–10	16	20
11–15	11	8
16–20	11	8
21–25	10	4
26–30	10	2
31–40	10	1
More than 40	1	-
No response	2	2

Note: Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

There was also a spread of ages: 16 percent were under 30; 44 percent aged 30–49; and 38 percent over 50 (in this question and others relating to personal information, there was a 2 percent non response rate).

1.4 Analysis of questionnaire responses

For most questions, it was necessary simply to compute the proportion of teachers who had given each of the possible responses. However, calculating the incidence of severe behaviour (based on Question 2) was more complex, and was addressed in two ways.

First, as noted above, we calculated the percentage of severely disruptive students **encountered by each individual teacher, by boys and girls in each subject and each year group**. These percentages were then compared and averaged, which enabled us to explore in depth the experience of individual teachers: to see not only the mean percentage of disruptive students encountered, but also the range: what was the highest proportion of disruptive students encountered by an individual teacher in each subject/year group context, and what was the lowest?

However, mean rates calculated this way are not necessarily a true representation of the sample as a whole (since by this method, each teacher's experience would count the same regardless of the number of students they taught). So to calculate the true mean, the numbers given by teachers in each line of the Q2 matrix were aggregated to provide totals of pupils taught and disruptive pupils at school and sample level. Overall proportions of disruptive pupils could then be more accurately estimated. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that these percentages are based on the students encountered by responding teachers, and not on the total school population. Moreover, it is possible that some students may be classed as disruptive by one or more but not all of their teachers.

Differences between subgroups were investigated by carrying out cross-tabulations or calculating additional means, as appropriate, for Questions 1–3. Key factors explored were:

- at the school level—size (number on roll), decile, authority (state or state-integrated), Wellington or Hutt Valley, girls', boys', or co-educational
- at teacher level—gender, role, and years of experience.

Some of the categories had to be grouped, in order to form meaningful (and not too small) subgroups. Deciles were grouped according to NZCER practice, i.e., low (deciles 1–2), mid (3–8), and high (9–10). It should be noted, however, that because the sample was skewed towards high-decile schools (see Section 1.2 above), there were only 74 teachers in the low-decile category. Size was also divided into three categories: small (under 600 students); medium (600–999 students); and large (1000 or more students).

It should be noted that there are strong overlaps between the school-level factors explored. For example, state-integrated schools are more likely to be high-decile schools, and much more likely to be small schools. On the other hand, the large majority of low-decile schools are small schools. The majority of state-integrated schools (seven out of nine) are single-sex, but only about a quarter of state schools. Multivariate analysis was therefore carried out in order to distinguish, where possible, the relative impact of these factors. Details are provided in the relevant chapters.

Length of teaching experience was classified in four categories: less than 2 years; 2–5 years; 6–20 years; and over 20 years. It was considered important to look at the first group separately, to explore the possibility that provisionally registered teachers might experience more behaviour problems than experienced colleagues. In terms of role, there were two large categories (middle managers and teachers) and three small categories (senior managers, deans, and specialist teachers). A preliminary analysis indicated that it was best to group deans with senior managers, as their responses tended to be similar.

2. Forms and frequency of severe behaviour

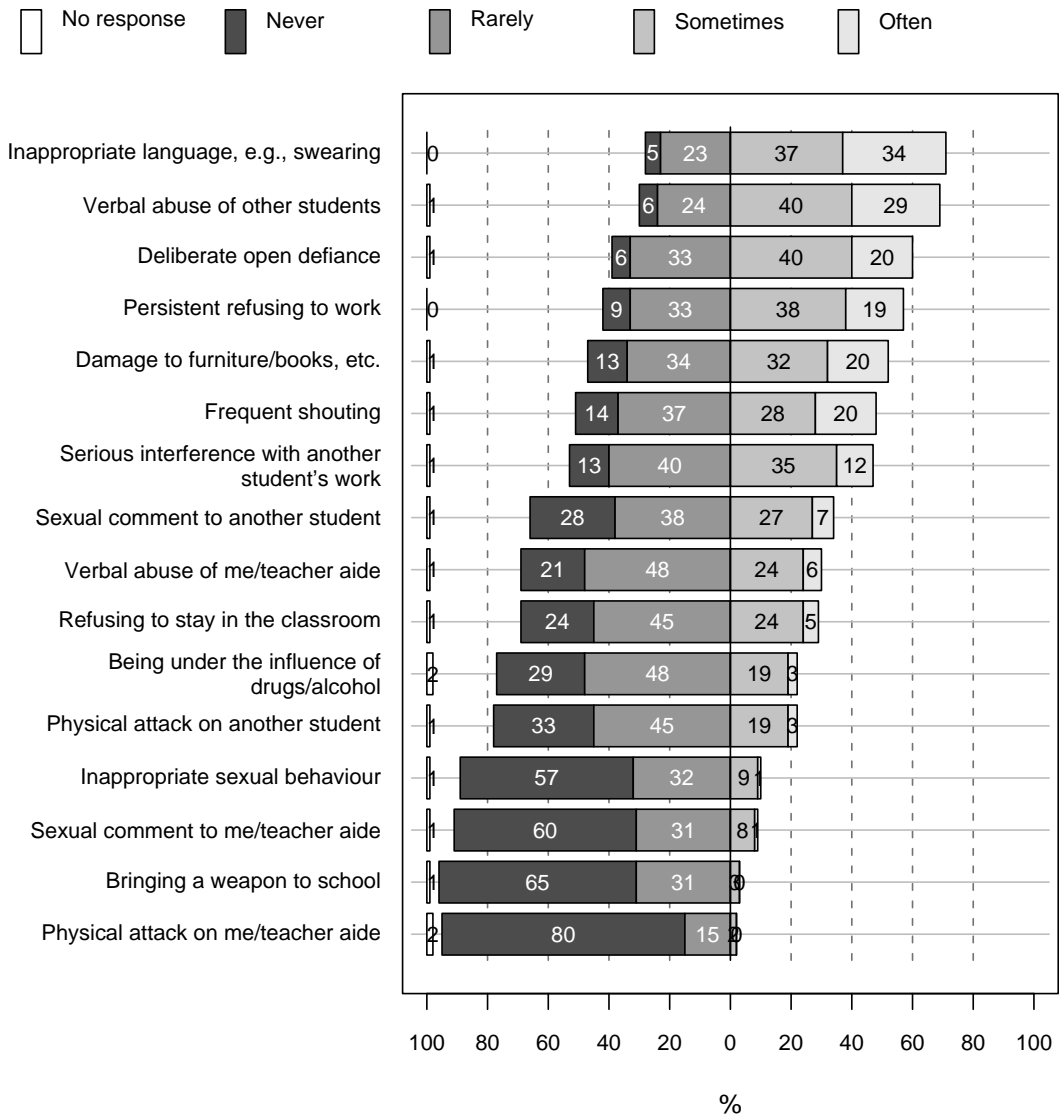
In Question 1, teachers were asked how often they experienced behaviour that caused serious disruption to their teaching, and what form that behaviour took. They were given a list of possible forms of seriously disruptive behaviour, and asked to state whether they encountered each of them often, sometimes, rarely, or never.

2.1 Overall responses

Overall responses are illustrated in Figure 2.1. The most common form of severely disruptive behaviour was inappropriate language, such as swearing; one-third of teachers said that they experienced this frequently. Verbal abuse of other students was nearly as common. More than half of the teachers surveyed reported encountering deliberate open defiance, persistent refusing to work, and damage to property¹ sometimes or often. At the other end of the scale, physical attacks on teaching staff were rare (only two teachers said they happened often and 18 sometimes), but physical attacks on another student much less so (more than one in five said that this happened at least sometimes). Bringing a weapon to schools was also rare, but had been experienced by one teacher often and 24 teachers sometimes.

¹ Reported damage to cars was included in this category.

Figure 2.1 **Forms and frequency of severe behaviour**



Very few teachers took advantage of the opportunity to report “other” forms of severe behaviour, in addition to the list printed in Question 1. Most of the responses related to behaviours which (although non trivial and potentially time-wasting) were not included in the definition of severe behaviour agreed with the PPTA (for example, arriving late, arriving without the correct uniform or equipment, falling asleep in class). Six comments related to the reason for, rather than the nature of, the disruption. Finally, two teachers mentioned disruptive behaviour from parents rather than students—an important issue, but not one that the survey was designed to explore.

In addition to assessing the frequency of specific types of disruptive behaviour, teachers were asked to say how often they encountered severely disruptive behaviour of any kind. Twelve percent said it happened often, and 28 percent sometimes. For nearly half (47 percent) it was a

rare occurrence, while 9 percent said that it never happened to them (4 percent did not respond to the question).

2.2 Differences by school factors

There were significant differences by decile on every one of the items in this question: the higher the decile, the less likely were teachers to have experienced the disruptive behaviour concerned. For example, 41 percent of teachers in low-decile schools had encountered a physical attack on another student at least sometimes, compared with 27 percent in mid-decile and 8 percent in high-decile schools. For verbal abuse of the teacher or teacher aide, the figures were 55 percent, 37 percent, and 12 percent respectively. Most important, perhaps, are the figures for severely disruptive behaviour of any kind, which are shown in Table 2.1. More than three-quarters of teachers in high-decile schools experienced severely disruptive behaviour rarely, if at all, compared with less than half of those in mid-decile schools and less than a third of those in low-decile schools.

Table 2.1 Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by decile

Frequency	Low decile (n = 74) %	Mid decile (n = 422) %	High decile (n = 260) %
Often	24	14	3
Sometimes	39	35	15
Rarely	28	42	60
Never	3	5	18
No response	5	5	4

Note: Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

Likewise, there were differences on every item between state and state-integrated schools. In every case, teachers in state schools experienced severe behaviour more frequently than teachers in state-integrated schools. For example, 32 percent of teachers in state-integrated schools had encountered damage to property at least sometimes, compared with 58 percent of teachers in other state schools. Only 14 percent of teachers in state-integrated schools had experienced verbal abuse of themselves or a teacher aide at least sometimes, compared with 34 percent of those in other state schools. Responses relating to any kind of severely disruptive behaviour are shown in Table 2.2. More than three-quarters of teachers in state-integrated schools experienced severely disruptive behaviour rarely, if at all, compared with less than half of those in other state schools.

Table 2.2 **Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by authority**

Frequency	Integrated (<i>n</i> = 161) %	Not integrated (<i>n</i> = 595) %
Often	2	14
Sometimes	15	32
Rarely	53	45
Never	25	5
No response	4	5

Note: Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

There were also differences on every item between boys' schools, girls' schools, and mixed schools. For example, verbal abuse of a teacher or teacher aide was reported to happen at least sometimes by 39 percent of teachers in mixed schools, 19 percent of teachers in boys' schools, and 9 percent of teachers in girls' schools. Inappropriate language was experienced often by 46 percent of teachers in mixed schools, 24 percent in boys' schools, and 6 percent in girls' schools. Responses relating to any kind of severe behaviour are shown in Table 2.3. Almost 90 percent of teachers in girls' schools said they experienced severe behaviour rarely or never, compared with less than two-thirds of those in boys' schools and less than half of those in mixed schools.

Table 2.3 **Teachers' experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by school gender**

Frequency	Boys' schools (<i>n</i> = 89) %	Co-educational schools (<i>n</i> = 505) %	Girls' schools (<i>n</i> = 162) %
Often	4	16	1
Sometimes	28	36	5
Rarely	53	41	61
Never	11	3	28
No response	3	4	5

Note: Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

It is important to note that, as observed in Section 1.4, these three factors (decile, authority, and school gender) are closely interrelated. For example, if the main factor influencing severe behaviour was decile, the apparent impact of authority could simply reflect the fact that most state-integrated schools are high-decile schools. Further analysis was therefore necessary to explore the impact of the various factors, as described in Section 2.4 below.

The other two school-level variables, number on roll and location (Hutt Valley or Wellington) were significant with reference to most but not all types of severe behaviour. Teachers from Hutt Valley schools were more likely than those from Wellington schools to encounter physical attacks on other students, damage to property, verbal abuse of other students, verbal abuse of themselves

or a teacher aide, deliberate open defiance, serious interference with another student’s work, refusing to stay in the classroom, persistent refusing to work, inappropriate language, frequent shouting, sexual comments to themselves or to a teacher aide, and sexual comments to other students. More than half (52 percent) of Hutt Valley teachers were likely to experience severely disruptive behaviour at least sometimes, compared with 31 percent of Wellington teachers.

The significant differences by school roll followed a less consistent pattern. Some disruptive behaviours, e.g., verbal abuse of other students, deliberate open defiance, inappropriate language, and sexual comments to other students, were less likely to be experienced in small schools. The proportions reporting that serious interference with other students’ work, persistent refusal to work, and inappropriate sexual behaviour happened at least sometimes did not vary greatly by school roll, but the proportions reporting that these behaviours were **never** experienced were highest in small schools.

Refusing to stay in class appeared to be least common in large schools; nevertheless, a higher proportion of those in small schools said that this never happened. Frequent shouting on a regular basis appeared to be most common in medium-sized schools; there was little difference between small and large schools in this respect, but again, teachers from small schools were most likely to say that it never happened. Teachers from small schools were most likely to report that being under the influence of drugs/alcohol happened often, but were also most likely to report that it never happened. Responses for severe behaviour generally (illustrated in Table 2.4) show that teachers from medium-sized schools were the group most likely to report it as a frequent occurrence, while teachers from small schools were the ones most likely to say that it never happened.

Table 2.4 **Teachers’ experiences of severely disruptive behaviour, by school roll**

Frequency	Under 600 (<i>n</i> = 120) %	600–999 (<i>n</i> = 356) %	1000 and over (<i>n</i> = 280) %
Often	8	15	9
Sometimes	29	29	27
Rarely	35	44	55
Never	23	8	5
No response	5	4	5

Note: Some columns do not add to 100 percent because of rounding.

2.3 Differences by teacher factors

There were differences between respondents by gender, role, and length of teaching experience. Teachers with less than two years’ experience were more likely to report encountering various forms of severe behaviour: attacks on themselves or on teacher aides; deliberate open defiance;

refusing to stay in the classroom; persistent refusing to work; inappropriate language; and frequent shouting. Teachers with 2 to 5 years' experience were usually the second highest category, but there was generally little difference between those with 6 to 20 years' experience and those with more than 20 years'. In terms of severe behaviour in general, 57 percent of teachers with less than two years' experience reported encountering severely disruptive behaviour at least sometimes, compared with no more than 40 percent in the other categories, but this difference fell just slightly short of statistical significance.

As might be expected, senior managers (including deans) were the least likely to report encountering various forms of severe behaviour. They were almost invariably the most likely to say that they never did so, except in the case of bringing a weapon to school and being under the influence of drugs or alcohol; it may be that these behaviours are automatically referred to senior managers, who therefore have a greater awareness of incidents. In some cases, classroom teachers were the most likely to report severe behaviours, e.g., verbal abuse of themselves or a teacher aide, and deliberate open defiance. In other cases, it was the specialist classroom teachers, e.g., damage to property, inappropriate sexual behaviour, and being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In yet other cases, the differences between these groups (and middle managers) were not great. However, in terms of severe behaviour in general, the pattern was clear: it was experienced, at least sometimes, by 26 percent of senior managers, 39 percent of middle managers, 41 percent of specialist classroom teachers, and 45 percent of classroom teachers.

Female teachers were significantly more likely than male teachers to report encountering, at least sometimes, damage to property, bringing a weapon to school, and being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, male teachers were more likely to report other forms of severe behaviour: a physical attack on another student; verbal abuse of other students; serious interference with another student's work; inappropriate language; frequent shouting; and sexual comments to another student. Overall, 45 percent of males, compared with 37 percent of females, reported encountering severe behaviour at least sometimes.

The reason for this gender difference is not immediately obvious, so some further analysis was carried out. One possibility is that there might be a relationship with role (if, for example, more female teachers than males were senior managers or deans), but this proved not to be the case; there was no significant gender difference in the proportion of respondents occupying the various roles within the schools.

The alternative explanation was that male teachers taught a higher proportion of boys than female teachers. This was likely, given that 12 of the 28 schools in the sample were single-sex, and single-sex schools tend to have a preponderance of teachers of the same sex as the students. Indeed, the girls' schools in the sample had 85 percent female teachers, and boys' schools 55 percent male teachers (which is also high, given that only 40 percent of teachers in the total sample were male).

Further calculations revealed that male teachers taught 58 percent boys, and 42 percent girls; for female teachers, the proportions were almost exactly reversed (40 percent boys, 60 percent girls).

Given that boys tend to be more disruptive than girls (see following chapter), this is likely to explain why male teachers reported more disruptive behaviour.

2.4 Multivariate analysis

Factor analysis was undertaken to see which of the various types of severe behaviour were linked, according to the response patterns for individual items. Two clear factors emerged: one which we termed “noise and defiance” and one relating to “physical and sexual” behaviour. The former included items such as frequent shouting, verbal abuse, and inappropriate language, as well as deliberate open defiance and refusing to work or to stay in the classroom. The latter included sexual behaviour and comments, physical attacks, bringing a weapon to school, and being under the influence of drugs/alcohol. Teachers’ assessment of the frequency of severe behaviour in general was correlated with the first factor, because the behaviours included in “noise and defiance” are the more common forms of severe behaviour.

Each of the two factors was used as the outcome in a regression analysis designed to determine which school- and teacher-level factors were most closely linked with that type of behaviour.

Noise and defiance

In the “noise and defiance” analysis, it proved impossible to include both decile and authority, as these factors were so closely interrelated. Two models were therefore fitted. The model which included decile proved to be a better “fit” than the one including authority, as it explained a slightly larger proportion (43 percent) of the variability in responses. The factors which emerged as significant were as follows:

- school gender—accounted for 20 percent of the variance
- decile and Hutt Valley/Wellington (these variables are interlinked, because in Hutt Valley, the only high-decile schools are state-integrated, while in Wellington all except one are state schools)—accounted for 21 percent
- teacher role—accounted for 2 percent.

The alternative model, using authority rather than decile, yielded similar results, and accounted for 37 percent of the variability in responses.

Physical and sexual

This model, which accounted for 30 percent of the variance, included both decile and authority. The significant factors were school gender (17 percent of the variance), decile (7 percent), authority (4 percent), and teacher role (1 percent).

Key results

Overall, when controlling for all other factors, the analysis indicated that both types of severe behaviour were more marked:

- in mixed and boys' schools compared with girls' schools
- in low-decile compared with mid-decile, and mid-decile compared with high-decile schools
- in state schools compared with state-integrated schools
- in Hutt Valley low- and mid-decile schools compared with Wellington low- and mid-decile schools (the same difference did not apply with high-decile schools, probably because the only high-decile schools in Hutt Valley are state-integrated schools)
- in classes taught by teachers, specialist classroom teachers, and middle managers, compared with those taught by senior managers or deans.

When these factors were taken into account, other factors (school size, teacher experience, teacher gender) were not significant.

3. Proportion of students with severe behaviour

Teachers responded to Question 2 by completing a matrix (see Appendix A) which showed the **total number of students** (boys and girls) they taught **in the current year**, and the **number of disruptive students** (boys and girls) they taught in each year group for each of their subjects. By dividing the latter by the former, it was possible to calculate a rate: the **percentage of disruptive students** encountered by each teacher in each context.

3.1 Rates of disruption for individual teachers

After disruption rates (i.e., percentage of disruptive students) had been calculated for individual teachers (by year group, subject, and student gender), comparison and further calculations could be performed in order to represent the overall picture. For example, if 20 teachers reported teaching English to Year 9 boys, they would each have a disruption rate, and from these it would be possible to derive the mean and median disruption rates for teaching English to Year 9 boys.

Table 3.1 provides summary information by subject, and overall. Let us take the first line as an example. The first column (*n*) shows the number of teachers who reported teaching that subject: in this case, 173 of the respondents taught English. The second column (Mean) is the mean disruption rate for English (the average of the individual disruption rates for all English teachers). It shows that 10.5 percent of the students in the average English class were disruptive.

Of more interest are the remaining columns, which indicate the wide range of teacher experience. Column 3 (Minimum) shows the lowest disruption rate, which in this case is zero, i.e., some English teachers had no disruptive students in their class. By contrast, the final column (Maximum) shows the highest disruption rate; in this case it was 84.6, indicating that one English teacher had reported that more than five in six of their students were disruptive. Such a high disruption rate was, however, rare, as the other figures show.

The median figure (Column 5) is found by ranking the disruption rates and identifying the middle one. Thus half of the responding English teachers experienced disruption rates below 6.7, and half above. The lower and upper quartiles are the intermediate figures. So, in this case, one-quarter of responding English teachers had a disruption rate between zero and 1.6; a quarter between 1.6 and 6.7; a quarter between 6.7 and 14.9; and the remaining quarter between 14.9 and 84.6. Evidently a small number of English teachers had very high disruption rates, which is why the mean figure is

considerably higher than the median. For three-quarters of English teachers, however, the disruption rate was less than 14.9.

Table 3.1 **Teachers' disruption rates, by subject**

Subject	<i>n</i>	Mean	Minimum	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum
English	173	10.5	0.0	1.6	6.7	14.9	84.6
Mathematics	130	11.7	0.0	2.3	9.2	16.7	84.6
Science	109	9.4	0.0	1.2	5.7	13.9	75.9
Technology	98	9.0	0.0	1.0	6.7	12.5	41.9
Social science	130	7.9	0.0	0.0	3.3	13.4	44.9
Arts	68	7.5	0.0	0.0	3.6	11.6	43.5
Physical education/ health	70	7.9	0.0	1.3	6.8	10.9	29.4
Languages	48	6.8	0.0	0.0	2.0	8.3	40.0
Transition/ vocational	43	10.5	0.0	0.0	5.0	13.6	62.5
Careers/ guidance	12	9.9	0.0	0.5	5.6	11.3	50.0
Special education	13	22.5	0.0	6.7	23.5	34.6	50.0
Other	33	8.3	0.0	0.0	1.4	11.8	54.6
Total	723	9.4	0.0	1.2	6.3	13.4	75.9

Other lines can be similarly interpreted, and Table 3.1 can also be used to compare disruption rates across subjects. Not surprisingly, the highest mean disruption rates by far were in special education: both mean and median were only just below a quarter, although the maximum was only 50 percent, lower than in some other subjects. Apart from special education, the highest disruption rates were encountered in mathematics, and the lowest in languages (perhaps because this is often a voluntary subject, and more likely to be taken by girls than boys). Across all subjects, the mean disruption rate was just under one in 10, and the median 6.3. Half of all responding teachers had disruption rates below 6.3, and three-quarters below 13.4, although some of the remaining teachers had very high rates, ranging up to 75.9 percent.

Table 3.2 provides similar information by year group. The highest mean disruption rate was found in Year 10, closely followed by Year 9. In these year groups, at least one teacher reported that **all** of their students were disruptive, and the same was also true for Year 12. However, these rates were exceptional (based on very small, special classes); three-quarters of teachers reported rates

below 20 percent in each year group. Disruption rates were very low in Year 7 (when students are new to the school) and Year 13 (students who will have chosen to stay on).

Table 3.2 **Teachers' disruption rates, by year group**

Year	<i>n</i>	Mean	Minimum	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum
7	45	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	37.0
8	44	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	60.0
9	486	11.5	0.0	0.0	6.7	17.9	100.0
10	514	12.2	0.0	0.0	7.7	18.5	100.0
11	497	9.7	0.0	0.0	4.4	15.0	66.7
12	515	8.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.2	100.0
13	398	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	53.3

Finally, Table 3.3 presents teachers' disruption rates by student gender. The mean rate for boys was double that for girls, and the median more than three times as big. Half of teachers reported that less than 3.3 percent of girls in their classes were disruptive, although a few had evidently encountered very high rates of disruptive girls.

Table 3.3 **Teachers' disruption rates, by student gender**

Gender	<i>n</i>	Mean	Minimum	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	Maximum
Boys	575	14.1	0.0	3.6	10.8	19.5	77.8
Girls	634	6.7	0.0	0.0	3.3	9.3	80.0

3.2 Overall rates of disruption

The tables in the previous section are useful, because they show the wide range of teacher experience (from those encountering very little disruption, to those with 100 percent disruptive classes) as well as the mean and median figures. However, as explained in Section 1.4, mean rates calculated this way are not necessarily a true representation of the sample as a whole (since each teacher's experience is given equal weighting regardless of the number of students they teach). So to calculate the true mean, the numbers given by teachers in each line of the Q2 matrix were aggregated to provide totals of pupils taught and disruptive pupils at school and sample level. Overall proportions of disruptive pupils could therefore be more accurately estimated.

Table 3.4 shows the resulting figures by subject. To take English as the example again, respondents reported teaching a total of 12,737 students, including 1183 who were disruptive—a disruption rate of 9.3. (This is lower than the mean disruption rate for English given in Table 3.1, but represents a more accurate **overall** estimate, while Table 3.1 is a more detailed look at

individual teachers' experience.) Once again, the highest disruption rate was for special education, followed by mathematics; the lowest rate on this basis was for careers/guidance, closely followed by languages. The disruption rate across all subjects was 8.6.

Table 3.4 **Overall disruption rates, by subject**

Subject	Taught	Disruptive	Rate
English	12,737	1183	9.3
Mathematics	10,575	1179	11.2
Science	8861	826	9.3
Technology	9353	818	8.8
Social science	10,083	735	7.3
Arts	7000	486	6.9
Physical education/health	7711	633	8.2
Languages	3262	188	5.8
Transition/vocational	2029	200	9.9
Careers/guidance	718	39	5.4
Special education	261	58	22.2
Total	74,530	6432	8.6

Overall disruption rates are shown in Table 3.5, by year group, and Table 3.6, by gender. On this basis Year 10 had the highest disruption rate, but there was very little difference between Year 9 and Year 11.

Table 3.5 **Overall disruption rates, by year group**

Year	Taught	Disruptive	Rate
7	2009	69	3.4
8	1780	66	3.7
9	19,647	1925	9.8
10	16,896	1864	11.0
11	13,048	1266	9.7
12	12,007	892	7.4
13	7203	263	3.7

The difference between the true disruption rates for boys and girls was even greater than suggested by the analysis of teacher disruption rates in Table 3.3. Across all subjects and year groups, approximately one in eight boys was classed as disruptive, but only one in 20 girls.

Table 3.6 **Overall disruption rates, by gender**

Gender	Taught	Disruptive	Rate
Boys	34,549	4277	12.4
Girls	38,041	2068	5.4

It should be noted that the total number of students reported in these tables may be higher than the total number of actual students, as students will be taught (and may therefore be reported) by more than one teacher. However, this will not affect the disruption rates.

3.3 Differences by school factors

There were marked differences by decile in overall disruption rates: 13.8 for low-decile; 9.8 for mid-decile; and 5.8 for high-decile schools. There was a similar relationship for boys and girls, and in almost all subjects and year groups.

There was also a strong association between disruption rates and authority. The overall rate for state-integrated schools was 4.3, compared with 10.0 for other state schools. The pattern was the same for both genders, all year groups, and all subjects except careers/guidance and transition/vocational, where there was virtually no difference between state and state-integrated schools.

Disruption rates were higher in mixed schools (10.9 percent) than in boys' schools (7.2 percent), and very low in girls' schools (2.6 percent). Both boys and girls had a much higher disruption rate in mixed schools compared with single-sex schools.

Overall disruption rates were lowest in small schools (7.5), but higher in medium-sized schools (9.1) than in large schools (8.8)—although the difference between these two groups is small and may not be significant.

The overall disruption rate was 10.0 for Hutt Valley, and 7.8 for Wellington. For boys it was Hutt Valley 13.0, Wellington 11.9; for girls Hutt Valley 6.9, Wellington 4.5.

Once again, it should be noted that the school-level factors, especially the first three discussed above, are closely interrelated. Further analysis was therefore carried out in order to identify the key variables impacting on disruption rates—see Section 3.5 below.

Overall disruption rates were calculated for each of the 28 schools included in the survey. The range was extremely wide: the lowest disruption rate was 0.5, and the highest 23.2.

3.4 Differences by teacher factors

As might be expected, especially in the light of teachers' responses to Question 1, disruption rates varied by gender, role, and experience of teaching. Teachers with less than two years' experience reported a much higher rate (12.2) than others. Those with two to five years' experience were next highest (9.7); beyond that, there was no difference (7.9 for six to 20 years, and for over 20 years). Disruption rates for boys and girls, year groups, and subjects generally followed a similar pattern.

In terms of role, disruption rates were lowest for senior managers (6.9) and next lowest for middle managers (7.3). The rate for specialist classroom teachers (10.4) was slightly higher than that for other teachers (9.9).

Male teachers reported a higher overall disruption rate (9.6) than female teachers (8.3). Interestingly, they also reported a higher rate for girls (6.9, compared with 4.8), while female teachers reported a higher rate for boys (13.5, compared with 11.6). This suggests that students are more likely to be disruptive with a teacher of the opposite sex.

3.5 Multivariate analysis

Multilevel modelling² was used to explore the relative impact of the variables associated with disruption rates. The model had five levels (school, teacher, subject, year group, and student). It included the following variables: year group; student gender; teacher role; school gender; school decile; authority (state or state-integrated); and area (Hutt Valley or Wellington). Other variables (school size, teacher experience, and teacher gender) proved not to be significant and were removed from the model.

When considering the findings from the modelling, it is important to bear in mind the fact that the analysis is based on just 28 schools from two particular PPTA regions, whose schooling patterns are not representative of the country as a whole. They should therefore be understood to apply to Hutt Valley/Wellington only; it cannot be assumed that a national survey would yield the same results.

If we take as our "standard school" one which is co-educational, mid-decile, state rather than state-integrated, and in Wellington rather than Hutt Valley, our "standard teacher" as a middle manager, and our "standard student" a boy in Year 7, the estimated overall disruption rate would be 6.9 percent. The impact on this rate of varying each of those factors (while controlling for all of the others) can be summarised as follows.

² Multilevel modelling is a form of linear regression designed to take account of the hierarchical structure of the data: in this case, that there are a number of students for each teacher, and a number of teachers within each school.

School gender. A boys' school will have a lower disruption rate than a mixed school. A girls' school will have a disruption rate which is lower still (only half that of a mixed school).

School decile. A low-decile state school will have a disruption rate more than one and a half times that of a mid-decile state school. A high-decile state school will have a lower (but not much lower) rate than a mid-decile state school.

Authority. The impact of authority varies with decile. A low-decile state-integrated school will have a disruption rate rather lower than that of a low-decile state school; a high-decile state-integrated school will have a disruption rate approximately one-quarter that of a high-decile state school.

Area. A school in Hutt Valley will have a higher disruption rate than one in Wellington (about one and a third times as high).

Teacher role. Disruption rates for senior managers and deans are lower (by about 20 percent) than those of middle managers. Those for classroom teachers are higher than those for middle managers, and those for specialist classroom teachers are higher still (about one and a half times as high as those of senior managers and deans).

Year level. Compared with Year 7, Year 8 and Year 12 students were (approximately) one and a half times as likely to be disruptive; Years 9 and 11 were one and three-quarters as likely and Year 10 twice as likely. Only Year 13 students were less likely to be disruptive.

Student gender. Compared with boys, girls are half as likely to be disruptive. (This is in addition to the factor for girls' schools noted above.)

Because the number of schools in each category was small, the numbers given above should be taken as a broad indication of differences rather than an exact measure. Nevertheless, the general pattern is clear.

A more detailed model was created to include differences by subject, taking English as the standard. Special education has a disruption rate almost twice as high as English, and transition/vocational subjects are not far below. Careers/guidance is also higher than English, mathematics is about the same, and other subjects are lower, particularly languages and PE/health. There are some differences between these findings and those reported earlier in this chapter, due to the fact that the model takes other factors, e.g., year group and student gender, into account.

4. Consequences of severe behaviour

What happens when a student's behaviour causes serious disruption to learning? Teachers were asked about the possible consequences for the student concerned (Question 3), and also for the other students in the class (Question 4).

4.1 Consequences for students with severe behaviour

Teachers were asked whether any students had left their classes "this year", i.e., in 2008, because of their severe behaviour difficulties. (It should be noted that questionnaires were completed in the first part of Term 3, so the responses are based on incidents occurring within just over half of the school year.) Sixty-one percent replied in the affirmative, 35 percent said no, and the remainder were unsure, or did not reply.

Those who said yes were asked to complete a table, showing how many students had experienced each of a number of possible consequences. Table 4.1 summarises the responses. It is important to note that the means are based on the 446 teachers who completed this question (almost all of those who said yes to the previous question). Forty percent of teachers are not included here, because no student had left their class in the current year. But teachers who completed the table did not have students to include in every individual category, hence the minimum number is zero in every case.

Table 4.1 **Students leaving classes because of severe behaviour**

Consequences	Mean	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Removed from class for that period and then returned	4.3	0.0	3.0	99.0
Removed from class for more than one period and then returned	1.6	0.0	1.0	25.0
Internal suspension for several days and then returned	1.4	0.0	1.0	10.0
Returned to another class after being removed for one or more periods	0.6	0.0	0.0	20.0
Appeared before BOT and returned with conditions to the same or different class	0.7	0.0	0.0	10.0
Appeared before BOT and not returned to school	0.3	0.0	0.0	10.0

The most common consequence was for a student to be removed from a class for the period during which the severe behaviour had occurred, and subsequently returned. For responding

teachers, this happened to a mean of 4.3 students, a median of 3.0. The mean is higher because of a few teachers who reported large numbers of students being removed and then returned (in one case, 99, but this was exceptional). It is probably better to take the median (3.0) as a more accurate reflection of the number of students typically removed and returned from classrooms where at least one student had left.

Removal from class for more than one period, and internal suspension, were less common. Looking at the medians, we can say that a teacher typical of those completing the table would have had three students removed for a single period, one student removed for longer, and one given an internal suspension. They would not have had any students suffering the more severe penalties, because these were relatively rare, and no more than a third of responding teachers (those who had had students leave their class) reported that they had occurred. On the other hand, there were a few teachers who said that it had happened to up to 10 students in their classes (and in one case 20, but that again was exceptional).

4.2 Differences by school factors

Two-thirds of teachers from low-decile (66 percent) and mid-decile (70 percent) schools, but only 45 percent of teachers from high-decile schools, had had students leave their classes due to their severe behaviour difficulties so far in 2008. The mean number of students removed for a period and then returned was very similar across deciles, but for all other consequences, the mean was highest in low-decile schools. For removal from class for more than one period, and internal suspension, the means were lowest in high-decile schools, but for the other consequences there was very little difference between mid- and high-decile schools.

Two-thirds (68 percent) of teachers from state schools, but only 36 percent of teachers from state-integrated schools, had had students leave their classes due to their severe behaviour difficulties. The means for every type of consequence were higher in state schools than in state-integrated schools.

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of teachers from mixed schools, compared with 52 percent from boys' schools and 28 percent from girls' schools, had had students leave their classes due to their severe behaviour difficulties. The means for every type of consequence were lowest in girls' schools, but in most cases there was little difference between boys' schools and mixed schools.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of teachers from Hutt Valley schools, compared with 57 percent of teachers from Wellington schools, had had students leave their classes due to their severe behaviour difficulties. The means for every type of consequence were higher in Hutt Valley schools than in Wellington schools.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of teachers from large schools, compared with 62 percent of teachers from medium-sized schools, and only 46 percent of teachers from small schools, had had students leave their classes due to their severe behaviour difficulties. Teachers from large schools had a

slightly higher mean number of students removed for a period and then returned, but for the other consequences there was no clear pattern of difference by school size.

4.3 Differences by teacher factors

There was a correlation between length of teaching experience and having students leave classes because of severe behaviour difficulties. Three-quarters of new teachers (those with less than two years' experience) said that this had happened in 2008, compared with two-thirds of those with two to five years, 58 percent of those with six to 20 years, and 56 percent of those with over 20 years. It was the teachers with two to five years' experience who reported the highest mean number of students suffering each of the consequences (with the new teachers usually second highest), although the differences were in some cases very small.

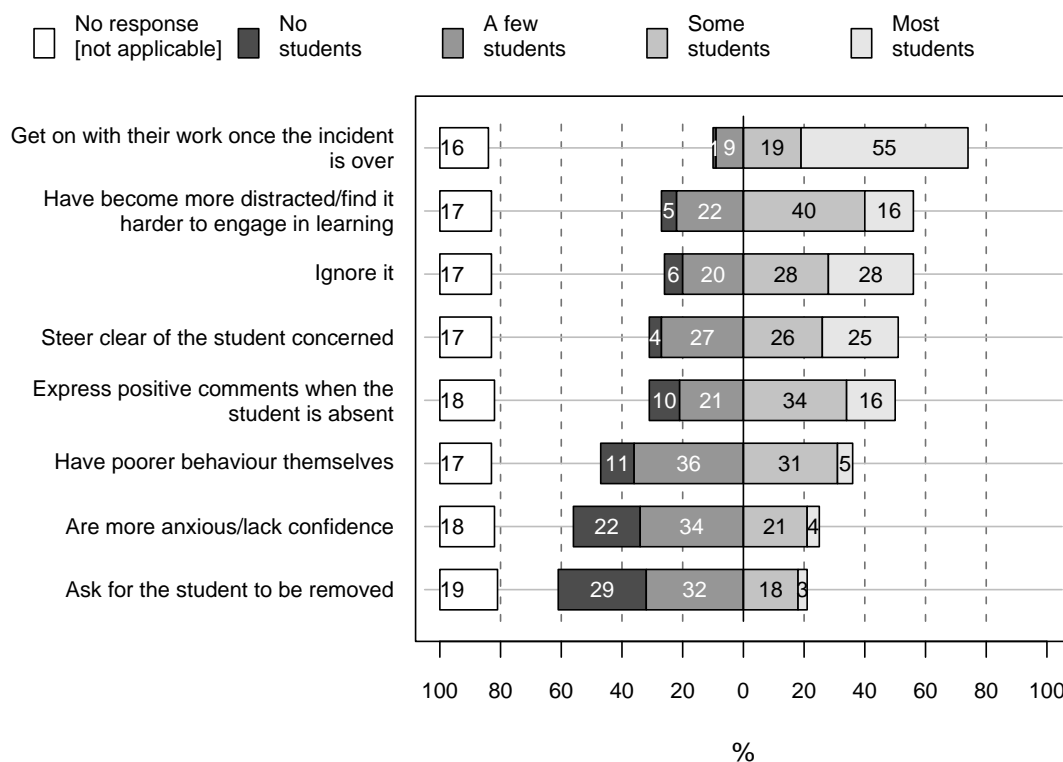
As would be expected, senior managers/deans were the least likely to report students leaving their classes due to severe behaviour difficulties (42 percent, compared with 59 percent of middle managers, 67 percent of specialist classroom teachers, and 68 percent of teachers). There was also a marked difference in the mean number of students reported being removed for one period and then returned (senior managers 2.7, middle managers 3.6, specialist classroom teachers 3.8, teachers 5.2). This doubtless reflects the fact that teachers would be more likely to summon help from a senior colleague. Senior managers also reported the lowest numbers of students for each of the other consequences, but differences between other staff categories were relatively small.

Sixty-four percent of male teachers, and 59 percent of female teachers, had had students leave their classes in 2008 due to severe behaviour difficulties. This is consistent with the fact that males reported more disruptive activities (see Section 2.3) and higher disruption rates (see Section 3.4) than females. Male teachers also reported a higher number of students involved in each of the possible consequences of severe behaviour. They had had an average of 5.4 students removed from one period, and 2.1 for more than one period; the comparison figures for female teachers were 3.7 and 1.2 respectively. As noted in Section 2.3, this could be due to the fact that males teach a higher proportion of boys, who tend to have more disruptive behaviour.

4.4 The impact on other students

Teachers were asked to indicate what impact severe behaviour generally had on other students in their classes. For each of a number of possible reactions, they said whether most students, some students, a few students, or no students would adopt this course. Responses are illustrated in Figure 4.1. The proportion of non responses was high (16 to 19 percent) and reflects the fact that some teachers had no disruptive students, and could not therefore answer the question.

Figure 4.1 **Impact of severe behaviour on other students**



Just over a quarter of teachers surveyed said that most of their students could ignore an incident of severe behaviour; the same number said that some of their students could do so. The most common reaction was to get on with their work when the incident was over, and more than half of the teachers said that most of their students could do this. One in five said that some students could do it, but one in 10 said that only a few students, or none at all, were able to do so.

Evidently there are students who find it impossible to ignore severe behaviour and carry on as if nothing had happened. This was confirmed by responses to another item in this set: more than three-quarters of teachers said that at least a few (in most cases, more) of their students were distracted and found it harder to engage in learning as a result. Only one in 20 said that no students were affected in this way.

Other items illustrate students' responses to the perpetrator(s) of severe behaviour. Half of the teachers said that some or most of their students would steer clear of the student concerned, and express positive comments when the student was absent; one in five said that some or most would ask for the offending student(s) to be removed.

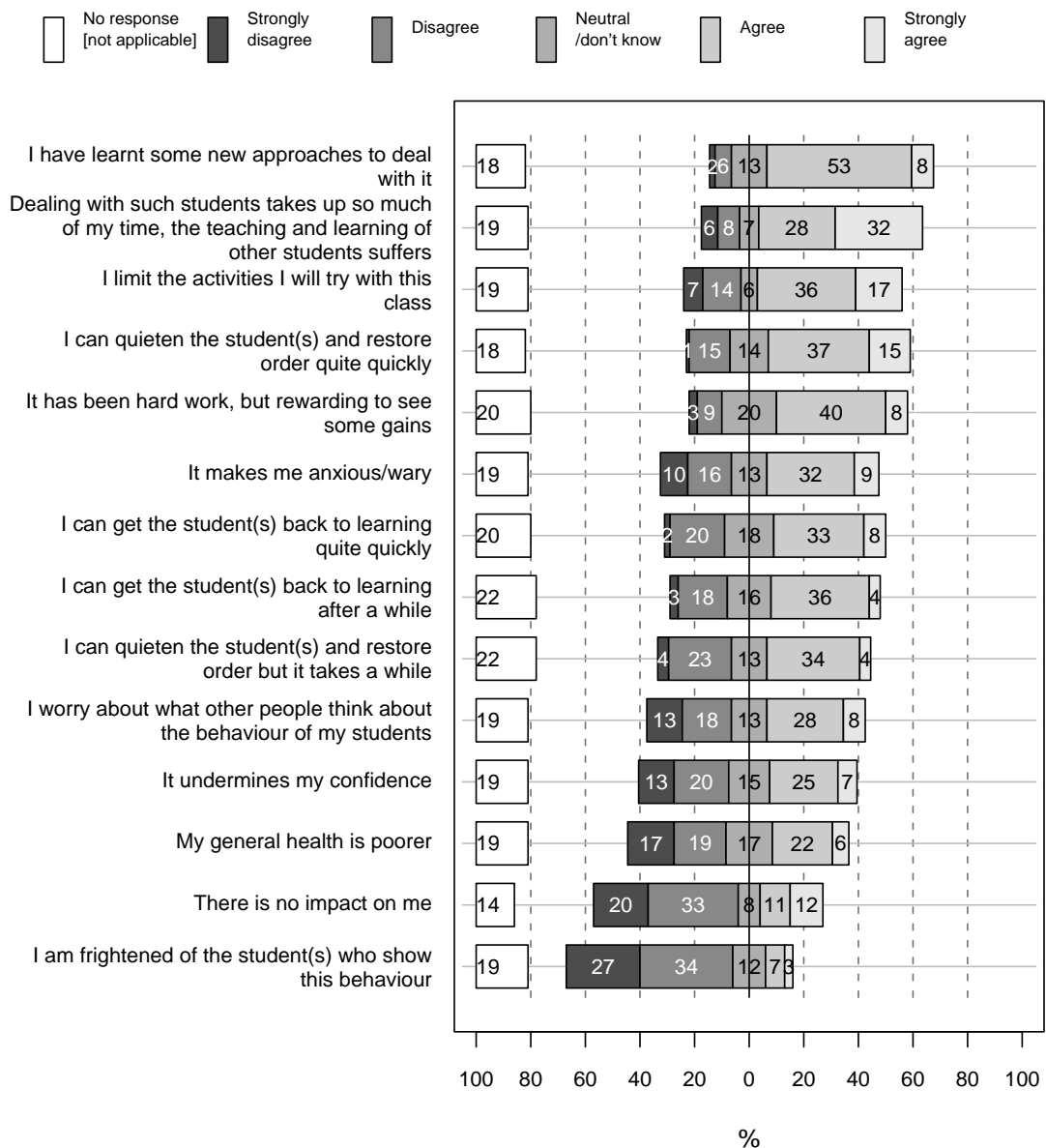
Finally, two items relate to how severe behaviour impacts on classmates' own behaviour and confidence. More than a third of teachers said that some or most of the students would have poorer behaviour themselves as a result, and the same number said that this would apply to a few of the students in their class. In this way, severe behaviour spreads, and could result in further

incidents. Moreover, a quarter of teachers reported that some or most of their students were more anxious or lacked confidence as a result of severe behaviour, and a third said this would be true of a few of their students.

5. The impact of severe behaviour on teachers

Teachers were asked what impact severe behaviour had had on them personally “this year”, i.e., in the first half of 2008. They were asked to respond by indicating the extent of their agreement with a number of statements. Responses are illustrated in Figure 5.1. It should be noted, first, that just under a quarter of teachers said that severe behaviour had no impact on them personally.

Figure 5.1 **Impact of severe behaviour on teachers**



Some of the statements imply that teachers are coping effectively with severe behaviour, and it is encouraging that such statements tended to attract the more positive responses. For example, six teachers in 10 agreed (or strongly agreed) that they had learnt some new approaches to deal with severe behaviour; just over half said that they could quieten the students and restore order quite quickly; just under half said that it had been hard work, but was rewarding to see some gains.

The negative impact of severe behaviour on teachers professionally and personally can be seen in their responses to some of the other statements. Six in 10 agreed that they had to spend so much time dealing with seriously disruptive students that the teaching and learning of other students in their classes would suffer. It should be noted that one-third of teachers **strongly** agreed with this, by far the highest proportion agreeing with any statement in this set. Evidently, teachers felt strongly about the amount of time which had to be used in this way. More than half said that they limited the activities they would try with the class concerned (presumably avoiding those which might give more scope for disruption). These statements demonstrate teachers' concern for their (non disruptive) students, who may suffer in two ways from the severe behaviour of classmates: the teacher has less time to devote to their teaching and learning, and is less willing to try potentially valuable and interesting activities.

Almost a third of teachers said that they worried about what other people would think of their students' behaviour. Other statements underlined how severe behaviour made teachers feel: anxious or wary (41 percent); less confident (32 percent); frightened of severely disruptive students (10 percent). More than a quarter agreed that their general health had suffered as a result of dealing with such students.

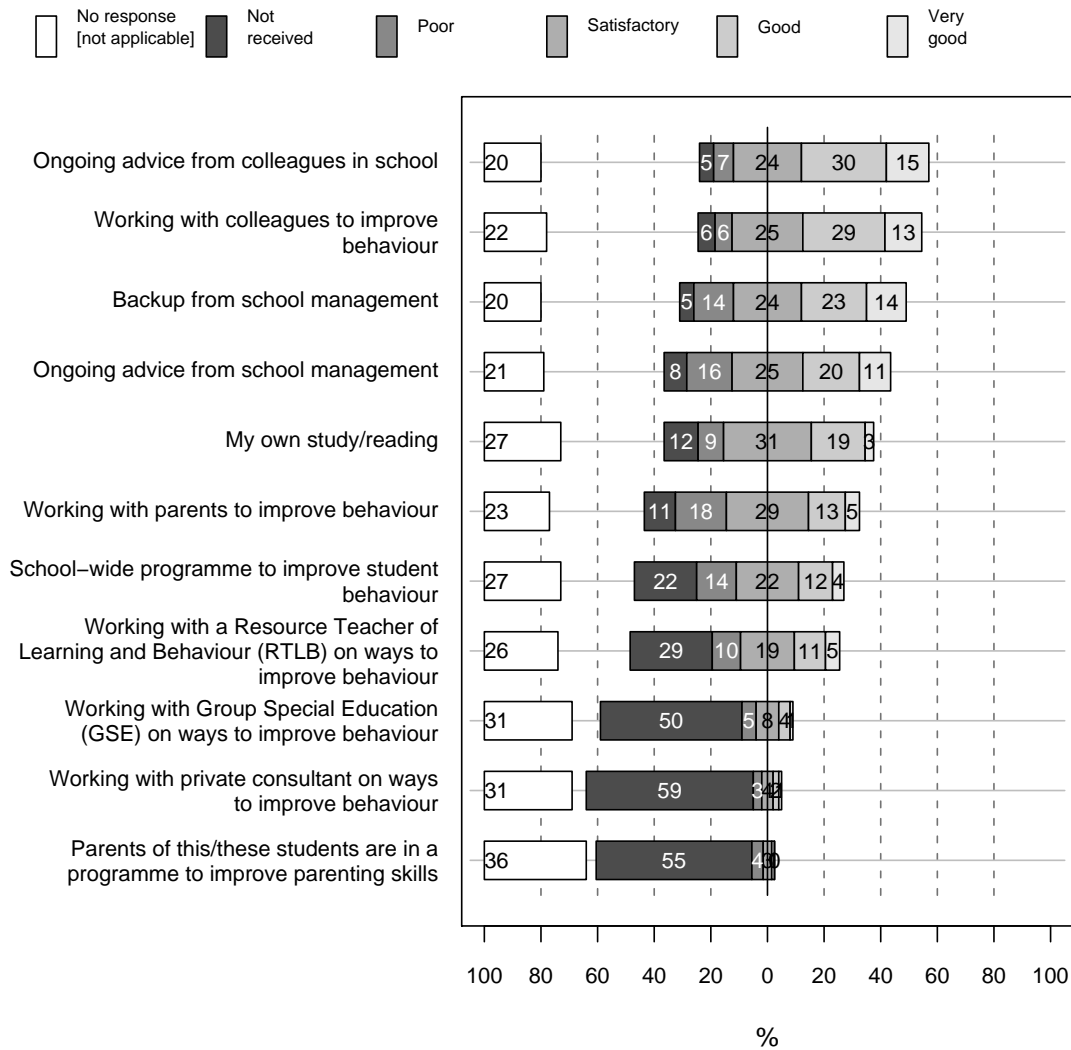
6. Support for teachers

As shown in Chapter 5, students' severe behaviour can have a serious negative impact on teachers, as well as on other students. This chapter explores the support which teachers are currently receiving, and the support they would like to receive, to help them deal with seriously disruptive students.

6.1 Support received by teachers

Question 5 listed 11 forms of support which teachers might receive to help them deal with severely disruptive students (see Appendix A). Teachers were asked to indicate which they had received "this year", i.e. in 2008, and to rate the quality of each. Responses are illustrated in Figure 6.1. It should be noted that there is a high proportion of non responses to each item (ranging from 20 to 36 percent). It may be reasonable to assume that many if not all of these did not receive the support in question, perhaps because they had no disruptive students and therefore did not need support of this kind.

Figure 6.1 **Extent and quality of support received by teachers**



The most common form of support received was ongoing advice from colleagues. Only 5 percent of teachers said they did not receive this (although a further 20 percent did not respond to the item) and just over two-thirds rated it at least satisfactory. Working with colleagues to improve student behaviour gained an almost equally positive response.

Teachers' assessment of support from school management was slightly less positive. Just over a third reported receiving good or very good backup; a quarter said it was satisfactory; but one in five said that it was poor or non-existent. Rather more (almost a quarter) similarly said that ongoing advice from school management was poor or non-existent.

Nearly half of the teachers said that working with parents to improve behaviour was at least satisfactory, but 18 percent rated it poor, and a third said it was non-existent, or did not respond to the item. About half of the teachers reported a school-wide programme to improve student

behaviour, but only one in six classed it as good or very good. There was a similar response to working with a Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB).

Relatively few teachers were involved in the other initiatives mentioned, and those who were did not rate them highly. Five percent said that working with Group Special Education (GSE) was good or very good, but another 5 percent said it was poor (8 percent rated it satisfactory). Those who had experienced working with a private consultant were similarly divided: 3 percent good/very good; 4 percent satisfactory; three percent poor. Programmes to improve parenting skills received an even worse rating: 2 percent good/very good; 3 percent satisfactory; 4 percent poor.

A few teachers wrote comments in the box provided, but very few mentioned forms of support other than those listed. Specifically mentioned were:

- Support from a mentor, teacher aide, or the student’s social worker (five teachers)
- Advice from staff at a different school (three teachers)
- Antisocial behaviour programme (three teachers).

Seven teachers said that they received no support, because they dealt with their own issues.

6.2 In-class support provided

Teachers were asked to say how many hours per week of in-class support they received from a range of sources. In each case, a large majority either said that they received no support, or did not respond to the question. In Table 6.1, the first column shows the percentage of teachers giving a non zero response to the question, the second shows the mean number of hours’ support received by those teachers, and the third the median number.

Table 6.1 **In-class support received by teachers**

Source	Receiving support (<i>n</i> = 756) %	Mean hours	Median hours
Teacher aide	22.9	4.2	3.0
Colleague	11.4	2.0	1.0
School management	6.6	1.6	1.0
Parent	1.9	2.9	1.0
GSE trained and provided behaviour support worker	1.5	3.6	3.0
Other	1.1	2.1	2.0

Nearly a quarter of teachers reported receiving support from a teacher aide, an average of 4.2 hours per week. The median was three hours, but the range was from 0.3 hours (it is hard to see what could be accomplished in that time) to 30 hours (presumably the teacher who reported this

had an aide in the classroom full-time). Eleven percent of teachers reported receiving support (mean 2.0 hours, median 1.0 hour) from a colleague, and 7 percent (mean 1.6, median 1.0 hour) from school management. Less than 2 percent of teachers had support from a parent or a trained behaviour support worker.

Sixteen percent of teachers said that the support they received was specifically aimed at coping with students with severe behaviour difficulties; an almost equal number (17 percent) said it was not. The remaining two-thirds of teachers did not respond to the question, presumably because they did not receive any in-class support.

6.3 Support that teachers would like

Teachers were asked what (other or additional) support and advice they would like that would (in their opinion) make a real difference to the students they taught, including those with severe behaviour difficulties. The question was open-ended, and response rates relatively low.

Some of the responses indicated that teachers would prefer not to have to deal with these students: 18 said they should be removed from the class or school; 15 that there should be specialised alternative learning provision for them; and 14 suggested special behaviour modification programmes off-site. Others mentioned the additional support that they felt would help them to cope: from teacher aides (50 teachers); school management (26); parents (24); and behaviour specialists, counsellors, or social workers (13).

Some teachers felt that disruptive behaviour would be less likely to occur if appropriate school-wide policies and practices were developed or strengthened: consistent or more serious consequences for severe behaviour (25); a consistent school-wide approach (20). Thirty-four teachers also believed that smaller classes (or a better student:teacher ratio) would help to alleviate the problem.

7. Summary and conclusions

In this final chapter we summarise the findings from the analysis of the 756 teacher responses to the survey, looking first at key overall findings, and then at differences by school and teacher factors.

7.1 Key findings

Secondary teachers reported their experience of **a range of “severe” student behaviours**, i.e., those which cause serious disruption to their teaching. Some (e.g., inappropriate language, verbal abuse of other students) were common, others (e.g., bringing a weapon to school, a physical attack on a teacher or teacher aide) were rare. Overall, 40 percent of teachers said that they encountered severe behaviour (of any kind) sometimes or often, 56 percent rarely or never.

Disruption rates for individual teachers (i.e., the percentage of disruptive students in their classes) ranged from zero to 75 percent. Half had a disruption rate below 6.3, the other half above.

Overall disruption rates were derived by summing the total number of students taught, and the number of disruptive students taught, by all of the responding teachers, and representing the disruptive students as a percentage of all students. Across the whole sample, the overall disruption rate was 8.6, i.e., approximately one in 12 students were reported by their teachers to exhibit ongoing severely disruptive behaviour. Year 10 had the highest disruption rate, followed by Year 9 and Year 11. Boys had a much higher disruption rate than girls.

The overall disruption rate for individual schools in the survey ranged from 0.5 to 23.2. In other words, one school had hardly any disruptive students, while in another almost a quarter of the students were disruptive.

Sixty-one percent of teachers reported that one or more students had left their classes during the first half of 2008, because of severe behaviour difficulties. Most commonly, they were removed for the period in which the behaviour occurred, and then returned. The majority of teachers reported that at least some of their students were able to ignore an incident of severe behaviour, and get on with their work when it was over; however, a majority also said that at least some became distracted and found it harder to engage in learning.

A majority of teachers said that they had learnt some new approaches to deal with severe behaviour, and that they could restore order quickly. However, a majority also said they had to spend so much time dealing with disruptive students that their classes would suffer, and that they

limited the activities they would try with the class concerned. About a third said that severe behaviour made them feel anxious or wary, and less confident.

The majority of teachers reported receiving advice and support from colleagues and school management that was at least satisfactory. However, nearly half rated ongoing advice from school management poor or non-existent, or did not respond to the question. Responses regarding support from parents and RTLBs were more negative.

Only a small minority of teachers received support from teacher aides, colleagues, and school management, and in most cases this was not directed specifically at students with severe behaviour problems. Some teachers would welcome further support of this kind, while some felt that special provision should be made for them outside the school context.

7.2 Differences by school and teacher factors

There was a very strong correlation between disruption and a number of school-level factors, principally decile, authority, and school gender. Because these factors are highly interrelated, multivariate analysis was undertaken to ascertain the relative importance of each. Teacher variables were also included, although only one (teacher role) proved to be significant when other factors were taken into account.

Two broad categories of severe behaviour were identified: those relating to noise and defiance (the more common types) and those relating to physical or sexual behaviour (which occur less frequently). Both kinds of severe behaviour were more likely to occur in low- and mid-decile schools (particularly those in Hutt Valley), in mixed and boys' schools compared with girls' schools, in state schools compared with state-integrated schools, and in classes taught by teachers who were not senior managers.

Detailed analysis of overall disruption rates, controlling for all available factors, revealed the following key points:

- The highest rates are in mixed schools, the lowest in girls' schools.
- The higher the decile, the lower the disruption rate.
- State-integrated schools have lower disruption rates than state schools; in the Hutt Valley/Wellington region, the difference is greatest when comparing high-decile state and state-integrated schools.
- Hutt Valley schools have higher disruption rates than Wellington schools.
- Senior managers and deans have the lowest disruption rates, followed by middle managers.
- The lowest disruption rates are in Years 7 and 13, the highest in Year 10.
- Boys are twice as likely to be disruptive as girls.

It is important to note that there were only 28 schools involved in the survey, and they were not representative of all New Zealand secondary schools. These findings should therefore be

understood as a broad indication of differences rather than an exact measure, and should not be generalised to create a national picture.

7.3 Conclusions

Severe behaviour in Hutt Valley and Wellington schools is not uncommon: four in 10 teachers experience it sometimes or often, and one in 12 students exhibit ongoing behaviour which is severely disruptive. Boys are much more likely to be disruptive than girls, and Year 10 students are the year group most likely to be disruptive.

Severe behaviour is more likely to occur in certain types of school: low-decile, state as opposed to state-integrated; boys' schools, or co-educational schools, rather than girls' schools. It is more common in Hutt Valley than Wellington, but it should be noted that all of these factors are interrelated. Further, the extent of disruption varies enormously between individual schools.

Severe behaviour has negative consequences for teaching and learning generally. Some students become distracted and find it harder to engage following incidents; six in 10 teachers spend so much time dealing with disruptive behaviour that the time they have available for other students is limited. While a small majority of teachers feel that they are learning to cope effectively with severe behaviour, it makes some feel anxious, less confident, or even frightened. Support for teachers is available from a range of sources, but was in many cases rated poor or non-existent.

Appendix A: Questionnaire for secondary school teachers

Incidence of Severe Behaviour in Hutt Valley and Greater Wellington Schools

Questionnaire for Secondary School Teachers

Please fill out this questionnaire by ticking the boxes or circling the numbers that apply to you and/or writing in the spaces provided.

You and your students

1. How often do you experience student behaviour that causes serious disruption to your teaching?
What form does this behaviour take? (Please circle one number in each row)

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Physical attack on another student	1	2	3	4
b) Physical attack on me/teacher aide	1	2	3	4
c) Damage to furniture/books etc	1	2	3	4
d) Verbal abuse of other students	1	2	3	4
e) Verbal abuse of me/teacher aide	1	2	3	4
f) Deliberate open defiance	1	2	3	4
g) Serious interference with another student's work	1	2	3	4
h) Refusing to stay in the classroom	1	2	3	4
i) Persistent refusing to work	1	2	3	4
j) Inappropriate language e.g. swearing	1	2	3	4
k) Frequent shouting	1	2	3	4
l) Sexual comment to me/teacher aide	1	2	3	4
m) Sexual comment to another student	1	2	3	4
n) Inappropriate sexual behaviour	1	2	3	4
o) Bringing a weapon to school	1	2	3	4
p) Being under the influence of drugs/alcohol	1	2	3	4
q) Other (please specify)	1	2	3	4
_____	1	2	3	4
_____	1	2	3	4
_____	1	2	3	4
_____	1	2	3	4
r) Overall, how often do you experience severely disruptive behaviour?	1	2	3	4

2. How many students do you teach this year, and how many of these have ongoing behaviour which is severely disruptive, and threatens the viability of teaching and learning? The list in the previous question provides examples. (Please note that we are not asking about mild anti-social behaviour such as occasional calling out, boisterousness or unauthorised moving around class.) Please decide which of the subject categories below best covers what you teach, then indicate how many boys and girls you teach in each year group, and how many are severely disruptive. If you teach more than one subject, complete other rows in the same way. Finally, please complete the total line. (This will represent the sum of the rows above, unless you teach the same students for more than one subject, in which case include each student once in the total.)

Subject	No of disruptive students													
	Y7		Y8		Y9		Y10		Y11		Y12		Y13	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive	No. Taught	No. Disruptive
a) English														
b) Mathematics														
c) Science														
d) Technology														
e) Social science														
f) The arts														
g) Physical education / health														
h) Languages														
i) Transition / vocational														
j) Careers / guidance														
k) Special education														
l) Other (please specify)														
m) Total														

Impact of behaviour difficulties in class

3. i) Have any students left your classes this year because of their severe behaviour difficulties?

- 1) yes 2) no 3) not sure

ii) If yes, please tell us how many, and what happened to them.
Write the number of students in the appropriate space(s)

	No of students
a) Removed from your class for that period and then returned	_____
b) Removed from your class for more than one period and then returned	_____
c) Internal suspension for several days and then returned	_____
d) Returned to another class after being removed from your class for one or more periods	_____
e) Appeared before BOT and returned with conditions to your or a colleague's class	_____
f) Appeared before BOT and not returned to school	_____
g) Other (<i>please describe below</i>)	_____

4. What impact does such severe behaviour generally have on the other students in your classes?

(Please circle one number in each row)

Reaction of other students to severe behaviour	Most students	Some students	A few students	No students
a) Ignore it	1	2	3	4
b) Ask for the student to be removed	1	2	3	4
c) Get on with their work once the incident is over	1	2	3	4
d) Have become more distracted/find it harder to engage in learning	1	2	3	4
e) Are more anxious/lack confidence	1	2	3	4
f) Have poorer behaviour themselves	1	2	3	4
g) Steer clear of the student concerned	1	2	3	4
h) Express positive comments when the student is absent	1	2	3	4
i) Other (<i>please describe below</i>)	1	2	3	4

Support for you

5. Please indicate what advice and support you have received this year for your teaching of the students with ongoing severe behaviour difficulties, and how useful you have found it. *Circle one number in each row.*

	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 a Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour (RTL) on ways to improve behaviour	1	2	3	4	5
f) Working with Group Special Education (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
l) Other (<i>please describe below</i>)	1	2	3	4	5

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

- 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
- g) Other _____ hours a week

7. Is this support specifically aimed at coping with the student(s) with severe behavioural difficulties?

- 1) yes 2) no – provides support for rest of class

8. What (other or additional) support and advice would you like that you think would make a real difference for these students and the others you teach?

9.

Impact on you

10. What impact has severe student behaviour had on you this year?

Please circle one number to indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly agree	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 my students	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) Dealing with such students takes up so much of my time, the teaching and learning of other students suffers	1	2	3	4	5

o) Other (*please describe below*)

A bit more about you

11. How many years have you been teaching? Please tick one box.

- 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

12. How many years have you been teaching in this school? Please tick one box.

- 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

13. What is your role? Please tick one box.

- 1) Senior manager
- 2) Middle manager/faculty leader
- 3) Dean
- 4) Specialist classroom teacher
- 5) Teacher

14. Please indicate your gender:

- 1) Female 2) Male

15. Please indicate your age:

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

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

**MANY THANKS FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH NZCER.
NOW PLEASE PLACE THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED, SEAL IT AND
RETURN TO YOUR PPTA REPRESENTATIVE.**