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**The Student Bullying of Teachers in Irish Second
Level Schools: Exploring the Influence of Historical
Low State Intervention in Education on the
Development of Contemporary Policy Responses
in Ireland.**

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Degree of Doctor

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April 2015

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the Degree of Doctor, is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

**And you
loved
me
like I was
and had always
been the answer,
and the question
did not,
and would never matter.**

- Tyler Knott Gregson –

For holding me, our children and our entire universe together so lovingly, selflessly and good-humouredly whilst I toiled on this thesis; I dedicate this work to you Phil, my lovely husband. It is our achievement, in equal measure.

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ABSTRACT

The student bullying of teachers (SBT) is a distinct and complex form of bullying with a multiplicity of diverse, changeable and intersecting causes which is experienced by and affects teachers in a variety of ways. SBT is both a national and an international phenomenon which is under-recognised in academic, societal and political spheres, resulting in limited conceptual understanding and awareness of the issue. This study explores teachers' experiences of SBT behaviours in Irish second level schools as well as teachers' perceptions regarding training, policies and supports in Ireland to address the issue. Specifically, the study seeks to explore the influence of historical low State intervention in education on contemporary policies and supports to deal with SBT in Ireland. A mixed methods approach involving a survey of 531 second level school teachers and 17 semi-structured interviews with teachers, Year Heads and representatives from teacher trade unions and school management bodies was employed to collect and analyse data.

Findings indicate that SBT behaviours are prevalent in many forms in Irish second level schools. The hidden nature of the phenomenon has simultaneously contributed to and is reinforced by limited understanding of the issue as well as teachers' reluctance to disclose their experiences. Findings reveal that teachers perceive the contemporary policies, training and support structures in Ireland to be inadequate in equipping them to effectively deal with SBT. State intervention in addressing SBT behaviours to date, has been limited, therefore many teachers are forced to respond to the issue based on their own initiatives and assumptions rather than from an informed critically reflective approach, supported by national guidelines and sufficient State investment. This has resulted in a piecemeal, un-coordinated and ad-hoc approach to SBT in Irish schools both in terms of teachers' management of SBT behaviours and with respect to the supports extended to staff. The potential negative consequences of SBT behaviours on teachers' well-being and professional performance and thus, on the education system itself, underlines the need for a strategic, evidence-based, resourced and integrated approach which includes, as a pivotal component, consultation with teachers, whose contribution to the process is crucial.

List of Acronyms

ACCS – Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools

ASTI - Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland

BoM - Board of Management

British ATL – British Association of Teachers and Lecturers

BSC - Behaviour Support Classroom

CICA – Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse

CPD – Continuous Professional Development

CSO – Central Statistics Office

DEIS - Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools

DES - Department of Education and Skills

ESRI - Economic and Social Research Institute

HSCL Initiative– Home-School-Community Liaison Initiative

IGC – Institute of Guidance Counsellors

INTO – Irish National Teachers’ Organisation

ITT – Initial Teacher Training

JCSP - Junior Certificate Schools Programme

JCSA – Junior Cycle School Award

JMB – Joint Managerial Board

NAPD – National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

NBSS - National Behaviour Support Service

NCCA – National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

NCSE - National Council for Special Education

NEPS – National Education Psychological Service

NESF - National Economic and Social Forum

NEWB - National Education Welfare Board

NIPT – National Induction Programme for Teachers

NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PDST – Professional Development Service for Teachers

PGDE - Postgraduate Diploma in Education

PoR – Post of Responsibility

RAPID – Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development

SBT – Student Bullying of Teachers

SBTB – Student Bullying of Teachers’ Behaviours

SES – Socio-Economic Status

SESS – Special Education Support Service

TUI – Teachers’ Union of Ireland

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1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the rationale for exploring the student bullying of teachers (SBT) in Irish second level schools and justify the originality of the study which focuses, through a comprehensive review of the literature and both quantitative and qualitative primary research, on the State's policy responses to address the issue in an Irish context. The aims of the study and the research questions which have guided the work will be explained and the structure of the thesis will be outlined.

1.2 Rationale and Originality of the Study

The author of this study is a Youth Project co-ordinator with fifteen years' professional experience of facilitating a variety of programmes and initiatives, within both community and school settings in an area of recognised socio-economic disadvantage in Cork City. Within that time, the author became increasingly aware of a sense of frustration and discontent amongst teachers, regarding challenging and aggressive student behaviours. Teachers spoke frequently of experiencing persistent in-class disruption, verbal abuse, inappropriate sexual comments and other disrespectful and threatening student behaviours. In many of these cases, teachers stated that they had felt targeted and bullied by particular students and expressed feelings of frustration, isolation and exasperation at the lack of discourse, supports, training or guidelines to assist them in dealing with such situations. On exploring this problem further, the author found a dearth of research literature examining these issues. Hence, this study seeks to explore teachers' experiences of bullying and other negative student behaviours and in particular to examine the contemporary policies, supports, and responses in place in Ireland to address this issue.

The student bullying of teachers is a distinct and complex phenomenon (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998) which has become the subject of some academic interest in recent years (De Wet, 2010; Mooij, 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). However, the phenomenon has received significantly less research, media or policy attention than other forms of bullying or more violent student behaviours and so conceptual

understanding and awareness of the phenomenon (Terry, 1998; James et al., 2008; Turkum, 2011) and indeed research regarding effective responses to address the issue are rather limited (Espelage et al., 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012).

Research relating to SBT has focused on areas such as attributions made by teachers for their victimisation (Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), bully and victim characteristics (De Wet, 2010), sexual harassment by pupils (Lahelma et al., 2000; Neill, 2007) and the impact of SBT on teachers (Benefield, 2004; Daniels et al., 2007). There is no national or international study which focuses specifically and exclusively on SBT with regard to the nature, manifestation, causes and effects of this form of bullying from the teachers' perspective. With respect to research conducted from the teachers' perspective (James et al., 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), no study has focused on teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of training, supports and policies or explored teachers' preferred supports for dealing with SBT. Within an Irish context, no study has comprehensively explored the historical and contemporary State responses to student discipline and SBT in Ireland. Most studies (e.g. Munn et al., 2004; TUI, 2006; James et al., 2008; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009) are concerned with the bullying of teachers as part of a wider focus on student behaviour or school violence and at this juncture there is a paucity of research evidence regarding the student bullying of teachers internationally and in Irish schools.

Research exploring the bullying and victimisation of teachers in an Irish context has been led predominantly by teacher trade unions - the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), the Association of Secondary School Teachers in Ireland (ASTI) and the Teachers' Union of Ireland (TUI) and has focused principally on workplace bullying amongst staff members (INTO, 2006; ASTI, 1999, 2004, 2007) and on disruptive student behaviour (INTO, 2004, 2011; ASTI, 2004; 2006; TUI, 2006, 2011). These surveys indicate that the impact of both challenging student behaviour and workplace bullying have serious consequences for teachers' well-being, however the nature and impact of SBT behaviours specifically, have not been examined. Two empirical research studies exist which examine the student bullying of teachers in Irish schools (James et al., 2008; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011), however both explore the

phenomenon only as part of a wider study. For instance, James et al. (2008) examine both the bullying of teachers by students and the bullying of students by teachers when evaluating the roles that teachers play in the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes. Meanwhile, O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) explores the prevalence, forms and effects of bullying and violence from an array of sources including management, colleagues, parents and students, with SBT forming only a minor portion of the study's focus. Consequently, there is no in-depth data specifically regarding SBT in Irish second level schools. Thus, there is an absence of data necessary for an adequate understanding of the ways in which SBT behaviours are experienced by teachers in Irish schools.

According to teacher trade unions and the *School Matters* Task Force report on Student Behaviour (Martin, 2006), challenging student behaviour has become an increasing problem for teachers in second level schools in Ireland over the last number of years. For instance, the Teachers' Union of Ireland Survey on *Discipline in Schools* (2006) reported that 97% of 1,121 teachers surveyed, had experienced some form of challenging student behaviour in the preceding week of the study. Meanwhile, although relatively rare, the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) evidenced threats to teachers, damage to their belongings, remarks of a deeply offensive or overt sexual nature, the use of obscene language and the carrying of dangerous weapons into the school setting. Contemporary Irish State policy responses to challenging student behaviour are based largely on the recommendations of this report (Martin, 2006) which will be discussed in Chapter 4. However, with the exception of this research, no study has previously examined the State's implementation of the *School Matters* (Martin, 2006) recommendations or the impact of these recommendations on subsequent policy responses to address problematic student behaviour. There is also an absence of research exploring teachers' perceptions regarding policies, supports and training to equip teachers to manage disruptive and challenging student behaviour in Ireland.

This study explores teachers' perceptions regarding these elements and also provides a comprehensive analysis of both historical and contemporary policy responses to address school discipline and SBT in Irish second level schools. In exploring historical policy and practice to address school discipline and SBT in Ireland, a pattern of low State

intervention in education by successive Governments is outlined. Although the State's subsidiary approach has begun to give way to greater State intervention in education, weaknesses remain evident in relation to resource allocation, teacher training and education, evidence-based decision making, strategic planning and the development of policies and guidelines to adequately address this complex issue. These factors as well as the societal, ideological, cultural and economic contextual factors which have influenced the State's response, as well as SBT, in an Irish context are explored.

Therefore, taken together, this study is original in that it is the only national or international study which has focused specifically and exclusively on teachers' perceptions and experiences of being bullied by pupils, in examining the nature, causes and effects of SBT behaviours. It is also the only study which has comprehensively examined the Irish policy response to SBT and other negative student behaviours and explored through primary research, teachers' perceptions regarding Irish policy, training and support mechanisms to address the issue. This is also the only study which provides a thorough historical, social, economic and ideological contextual background to the development of SBT behaviours in an Irish context.

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study seeks to examine the contemporary policy responses and supports in Ireland to assist teachers in managing SBT and other negative student behaviours. Specifically, the study aims to explore the influence of the State's historical low interventionist approach to education on the development of the contemporary response to SBT in Ireland. Therefore, the following research questions are posed.

- What is the historical, social and cultural context in which issues of school discipline have been addressed in Ireland?
- How has low State intervention in education influenced the development of the contemporary response to discipline in schools?

- What is the contemporary response to SBT in Ireland, in policy and practice and how is that linked to the historical low interventionism?
- What are teachers' perceptions regarding training, policies and support mechanisms to address SBT behaviours in Ireland?

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis takes the reader from the introduction which outlines the rationale, purpose and aims of the study to the conclusion which presents the contributions and limitations of the study and provides an in-depth discussion around the study's key conclusions. Chapter 2 explores the phenomenon of SBT, focusing in particular on the nature, prevalence, causes, forms and effects of this form of bullying. SBT is described as being on a continuum of behaviours which may sometimes include violence against teachers. The unique set of criteria which distinguish SBT from isolated acts of violence or aggression and from routine incidents of challenging or disruptive student behaviour are explored. Definitional issues relating to repetition, power imbalance, perception and intent are discussed, however, the phenomenon eludes definitive conceptualisation due to its contextually-specific, subjective and complex nature.

Having explored the phenomenon under study in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 turns its focus to the ways in which this issue has been managed within the Irish education system. The chapter provides an overview of the ways in which discipline in schools has historically been addressed in Ireland, from the origins of the secondary school system in the nineteenth century, through to the abolition of corporal punishment in 1982. The influence of subsidiarity and the power and control of the Catholic Church on the education system are explored and their combined impact on the State's subsidiary approach to school discipline is discussed. In tracing key developments in Irish education policy, this chapter illustrates a gradual move towards greater State intervention in education policy-making from the 1960s onwards.

The historical, cultural, societal and economic factors which have influenced these developments are explored, as are some of the key ideological influences on Irish education policy, such as neo-liberalism. Neo-liberalism has been defined as a ‘theory of political economic practice’ which proposes that human well-being is best served by ‘liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms’ within an organised framework which is ‘characterised by strong private property rights, free markets and free trade’ (Lolich, 2009, p. 4). Theorists (e.g. Lynch, 2005; Mooney-Simmie, 2012; Conway and Murphy, 2013) suggest that the influence of neo-liberal principles in Irish education policy may be seen in the growing privatisation of educational services and the recent emphasis on value for money, market competition, high stakes accountability and overall system performance. Ball (2003, p. 219) warns of the combined pressures on teachers within this new ‘culture of competitive performativity’, echoing findings in the literature which have linked such pressures with low teacher morale, increased stress in teachers (Troman et al., 2007) and reduced job satisfaction (Morgan, 2009). In addition, these pressures have been associated with increased use of authoritarian teaching methods, negative classroom climate and impaired teacher-student relationships (Leroy et. al, 2007; Biesta, 2012), factors which it is argued may contribute to the development of classroom conditions conducive to increased levels of SBT behaviours. The influence of neo-liberalist ideology on Irish education policy is discussed in Chapter 3 and at various points throughout the thesis.

Moving on to Chapter 4, which is set in the post abolition period, the key social, economic and ideological contextual factors which have influenced the State’s response to discipline in schools up until the present day, and which have seen the State’s historical subsidiary approach gradually give way to greater State intervention in education are explored. In particular, the report of the State commissioned, Task Force on Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools (*School Matters*, Martin, 2006) and its subsequent influence on contemporary policy responses are explored. Some of these recommendations have resulted in very successful and beneficial advances in the Irish response to address challenging student behaviour, such as the establishment of the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) and the publication of the National Education Welfare Board’s (NEWB) *Guidelines on Developing a Code of Behaviour* (2008). However, for the most part, these recommendations have been implemented in a

piece-meal, poorly coordinated, under-resourced fashion resulting in a limited, contemporary policy response to challenging student behaviour. The Irish policy response is also explored in relation to international policy and good practice.

The methodology, research design and limitations of the study are outlined in Chapter 5. This chapter opens with a general discussion of the research methodology and provides justification for adopting a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. The research design which involves both semi-structured interviews and a survey questionnaire is outlined and explained, as are the reasons for using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The survey instrument was selected to explore the prevalence and nature of SBT behaviours whilst the interviews were conducted to explore in depth, teachers' perceptions regarding their experiences, training, policy and support structures in Ireland. The chapter closes with a consideration of the study's limitations and a discussion regarding ethical matters and issues of validity and reliability.

Chapter 6 presents both the qualitative and quantitative data garnered through 17 interviews with teachers, Year Heads and union and management body representatives in addition to 531 survey respondents. Although the focus of this study is on teachers' views, an exploration of union and management body representatives' perspectives helps to provide the study with a range of educational perspectives and to shed light on important collective issues regarding educational policies and supports. This chapter presents both the quantitative data of the survey which is supported by rich, detailed interview excerpts, as well as the key themes of the study, which have emerged principally from the qualitative data. An analytical discussion of the results accompanies the findings. The final chapter draws the thesis together with an overview of the contributions and limitations of the study and an in-depth discussion regarding the key conclusions of the research.

2

*Exploring the
Phenomenon of
Student Bullying
of Teachers*

2.1 Introduction

The student bullying of teachers is a distinct, complex and multi-faceted problem which is under-recognised in academic, societal and political spheres compared with violence against teachers and other forms of bullying. This chapter is a review of existing national and international literature on the issue. As literature pertaining to SBT specifically is limited; it has been necessary to refer to a number of studies which were carried out for purposes other than SBT, such as those exploring school violence (e.g. Daniels et al., 2007), disruptive student behaviour (TUI, 2006) and workplace bullying (ASTI, 1999). The author therefore, acknowledges that the use of these studies, which do not examine SBT specifically, must be done guardedly. Section 2.2 explores the phenomenon of SBT in some depth. Section 2.2.1 suggests that SBT may be considered along a continuum or spectrum of seriousness with more prevalent low-level behaviours on one end of the scale and less commonly perpetrated acts of school violence on the opposite end. The remainder of this section focuses on exploring the concept of SBT, its definitional components such as repetition, intent and power imbalance and the hidden nature of SBT in comparison with other forms of bullying. As the subjective, elusive and contextual nature of SBT is underlined, a definitive definition of the phenomenon is neither possible, nor pursued.

Section 2.3 looks at the prevalence and manifestation of teacher victimisation both in an international and Irish context and examines the wide range of negative and challenging student behaviours to which teachers are exposed. For the purposes of this study, the use of the term ‘teacher victimisation’ is taken to mean student acts of aggression, violence or bullying towards teachers. Section 2.4 considers some of the student, teacher and school related causes of this phenomenon and explores which teachers are most targeted by bullies.

Finally, Section 2.5 examines the potential impacts of SBT behaviours on teachers’ personal and professional lives and argues that even low level behaviours may impact significantly on teachers’ well-being if these are persistent and repetitive in nature. In summary, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the complexity and potential seriousness of

SBT and other negative student behaviours and to highlight the need for greater openness and recognition of the phenomenon as first steps in addressing the issue. The ways in which SBT and other negative student behaviours have been addressed in Ireland, both historically and in the present situation will be discussed throughout the remainder of the thesis.

2.2 Exploring the Phenomenon of SBT

The phenomenon of SBT was first empirically examined in the late 1990s by researchers in Finland (Kivivuori, 1996) and in the United Kingdom (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998) who suggested that particular patterns and characteristics of student behaviour towards teachers may be identified as bullying, rather than general disruptive behaviour or violence. Terry (1998, p. 265), one of the first researchers to study SBT, asserted that the lack of awareness of bullying of teachers by pupils which he terms ‘cross-peer abuse’, combined with ‘over-simplified ideas about power relationships’ and ‘about the nature of bullying’ has resulted in a need to ‘justify the existence of the behaviour prior to any investigation as to its incidence and effects’.

As stated previously, SBT has received little recognition in academic, societal and political spheres (Terry, 1998; Benefield, 2004; Espelage et al., 2013) in comparison with other forms of bullying. A thorough review of the literature suggests that only fourteen studies have been conducted internationally which specifically explore teacher victimisation by pupils through the lens of bullying. These have been carried out predominantly in Western Europe – in Ireland (James et al., 2008) and the U.K. (Pervin and Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998; Neill, 2007) and in Finland (Kivivuori, 1996; Kivivuori and Tuominen, 1999; Rantala and Keskinen, 2005; Salmi and Kivivuori, 2009; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) and in Romania (Marian, 2008), Australia (Ferfolja, 1998), New Zealand (Benefield, 2004) and South Africa (De Wet and Jacobs, 2006; De Wet, 2010).

The student bullying of teachers has been referred to by various terms such as ‘cross-peer abuse’ (Terry, 1998), ‘teacher targeted bullying’ (Pervin and Turner, 1998);

‘bullying’ (Benefield, 2004; James et al., 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), ‘harassment’ (Kivivuori, 1996; Ferfolja, 1998; Benefield, 2004; Rantala and Keskinen, 2005) and ‘educator targeted bullying’ (Matsui, 2005; De Wet, 2010). As ‘bullying’ is the word most widely used in the literature, and has been used previously in an Irish context (James et al., 2008; O’ Dowd Lernihan, 2011) it has been selected for use within the term the ‘student bullying of teachers’ (SBT), which has been coined for the purposes of this study.

With respect to terminology, and in an attempt to ensure greater accuracy and authenticity of findings, a distinction is recognised in this study, between Student Bullying of Teachers (SBT) and Student Bullying of Teacher Behaviours (SBTB). The former refers to teachers who have explicitly self-identified as having been ‘bullied’ by students whereas the latter refers to teachers who have reported experiencing ‘bullying behaviours’ from students but who have not expressly self-identified as having been ‘bullied’ by a pupil. This distinction is important in strengthening the validity and reliability of findings and is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 5, Section 5.8.

2.2.1 Continuum of Seriousness

In contrast to the limited research attention afforded to the bullying of teachers by pupils, a number of international studies have looked at the issue of student violence against teachers (e.g. Payne et al., 2003; Smith, 2003; Daniels and Bradley, 2007; Smol, 2008; Du Plessis, 2008; Daniels and Bradley, 2011). However, only a small minority of these studies centre on student violence against teachers in depth as their primary focus (e.g. Robinson and Clay, 2000; Fisher and Kettl, 2003; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; Chen and Astor, 2009; McMahon et al., 2012). The authors of the most recent U.S. study on school violence against teachers, Espelage et al. (2013, p. 1-2) highlight that ‘significant media, research, and policy attention’ has focused on school violence in general but ‘limited attention’ has been afforded to violence against teachers, an issue which is ‘rarely defined, empirically studied, or meaningfully discussed within academic circles’.

This explosion in school violence research since the late 1990s has been fuelled by growing political and public concern for safety and social order, amidst widespread media portrayal of an escalating problem of violence in schools against both students and teachers (Munn et al., 2004; Christle et al., 2006; Daniels et al., 2007). However some evidence suggests that it is the ‘low level behaviours’ mostly closely associated with SBTB that teachers most frequently experience ‘rather than the extreme behaviours reported in the media, and that this dominance of low level behaviour features over time’ (Munn et al., 2004, p. 71). Some authors suggest that bullying as a phenomenon may be over-shadowed by school violence, obscured or perceived as a less serious form of violence or an antecedent to violence. However, consistent with previous authors (Huybregts, Vettenburg and D’Aes, 2001; Rigby, 2004; Ruff, 2004; Eckstein 2004 Bradley and Hayes, 2007; James et al., 2008; National Education Welfare Board, 2008; De Wet, 2010; Brown and Winterton, 2010) this study suggests that SBTB may be considered along a continuum or spectrum of seriousness (O’ Moore and Minton, 2004; Benefield, 2004; Meyer-Adams and Connor, 2005; Brown and Winterton, 2010). Considering SBTB in this way may be helpful in distinguishing between student behaviour which we may ‘take for granted’ (Brown and Winterton, 2010, p. 12), behaviour which may be interpreted as bullying, and that which is more closely associated with extreme violence reported in the media.

Terminology in this respect has varied with authors using phrases which include ‘continuum of violence’ (Mayhew, 2000; Herrenkohl et al., 2001; Mayhew et al. 2004, p121; Brown and Winterton, 2010, p. 12), ‘continuum of seriousness’ (Olweus, 1994; Rigby, 2004; James et al., 2008; National Education Welfare Board, 2008, p. 49; De Wet, 2010, p. 198), ‘continuum of aggressive and disruptive behaviour’ (Brown and Winterton, 2010, p. 13), continuum of aggression (Agnich, 2011, p. 7) and continuum of behaviour (Irish Anti-Bullying Working Group, 2013) to describe a range of student behaviours. As the term ‘continuum of seriousness’ has previously been applied by De Wet (2010) to describe the range of behaviours which pupils perpetrate towards their teachers, it is the term used within this study.

De Wet (2010, p. 198) draws on the work of Rigby (2004) in proposing that behaviours experienced by victims of student perpetrated bullying which he terms ‘educator targeted bullying’ may be considered along a continuum of seriousness with more prevalent ‘acts of low severity’, such as teasing and insolence on one end of the scale and less commonly perpetrated ‘acts of extreme severity’, such as physical assault on the opposite end. In the same way, the general trend in the literature has been to associate more extreme and physical behaviours, such as serious assault, with school violence (e.g. Volokh and Snell, 1998; Zeira et al., 2004; Pintado, 2006; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; Daniels et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2011) and more insidious and low-level behaviours, such as verbal abuse, with SBTB (Terry, 1998; Benefield, 2004; James et al., 2008; Salmi and Kivivuori, 2009; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Some authors propose that these behaviours may ‘alter depending on both the context within which the behaviours are enacted, and indeed, with whom they are directed towards’ (Wright and Keetley, 2003, p. 1).

The overlap between bullying and violence was highlighted recently by the National Anti-Bullying working group (2013, p. 28) who urged that bullying should be viewed along a continuum of behaviour rather than in isolation as ‘behaviour may escalate beyond what can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment’. Meanwhile, the National Education Welfare Board (2008, p. 49) assert that locating student behaviours accurately on a continuum of seriousness allows teachers to ‘notice patterns, to observe changes over time or in different contexts and to develop ways of responding based on this detailed knowledge’ (National Education Welfare Board, 2008, p. 49). Such an approach also allows teachers to recognise whether the patterns of behaviour which they are experiencing fall predominantly under the umbrella of SBTB or the field of school violence, therefore allowing teachers to better understand the predicament in which they find themselves and to access the most suitable or available supports.

The remainder of this section will now focus on defining SBT and on exploring why the phenomenon continues to elude significant academic, societal and political awareness and debate in comparison to other forms of bullying and violence. This lack of attention

and awareness of SBT will be further explored within an Irish context in Chapters 3 and 4. The author acknowledges that the high level of subjectivity surrounding SBT means that a precise and specific conceptual definition of SBT is not possible, nor is this the aim of the following discussion. Instead, the following discussion surrounding definitional components of SBT is intended to increase understanding and awareness of the complexity of the phenomenon and to shed light on the unique qualities of SBT in relation to other forms of bullying and school violence.

2.2.2 Defining SBT

Terry (1998) emphasises the need to establish, at the outset, a precise understanding and definition of bullying and how it may be applied to the student-teacher dynamic in order that data pertaining to the extent and true nature of the phenomenon can be effectively amassed. Similarly, Vaillancourt et al. (2008, p. 494) emphasise that ‘a clear definition of the phenomenon under study is critical for establishing validity’. Although SBT may not be precisely defined, there is a general consensus that bullying is an all-encompassing term which embodies several key factors (Farrington, 1993; Keating, 1998; Rigby, 2001; Ireland, 2008). It is an aggressive behaviour, repeated over a period of time, inflicted by an individual or group (Olweus, 1993; Harel-Fisch et al., 2010); characterised by an imbalance of power, (Smith and Sharp, 1994; Einarsen, 2000) and based on the conscious, deliberate and wilful intention of causing harm to the victim (Olweus, 1991, 1993; O’Connell, Pepler and Craig, 1999). These key factors need further consideration within the context of the teacher-student relationship.

Smith and Sharp (1994) and Rigby (2002, p. 2) define bullying as ‘the systematic abuse of power’. This definition encompasses the repetitive nature of bullying, but adds an implied imbalance of power within the bully/ victim dynamic; a disparity of power which Olweus (1991, p. 171) suggests may be attributed to the bully’s superior physical or ‘mental strength’. Einarsen (2000) develops this concept further by arguing that the bully/ victim relationship is typified by a power inequality, in which the victim cannot easily defend him or herself (Batsche, 1997; Craig et al., 2000; Hazler et al., 2001; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007) irrespective of whether there are ‘real or perceived

asymmetrical power relationships between the bully and his or her victims' (Naito and Gielen, 2005, p. 174). Whilst also adhering to Olweus's (1993) criteria of recurrent conflictual behaviour, Einarsen et al. (2003, p. 15) propose that a conflict does not qualify as bullying if it is an isolated incident or if there is equal 'strength' among the conflicting parties. However, some researchers maintain that isolated critical incidents should also be considered as bullying owing to the long-term effects the victim may experience (Olweus, 1994). Although there are correlations between the phenomenon of SBT and other forms of bullying (peer, workplace etc.), the student bullying of teachers involves a distinct and unique power differential in that a child has power over an adult. The criteria of power imbalance, repetition, perception and intent therefore require special consideration when taken in the context of SBT and will be discussed in the following sections.

The student bullying of teachers has been defined by authors in many ways. Terry (1998, p. 261) defines SBT, which he terms 'cross-peer abuse' as occurring in

situations where the victim cannot easily escape. It occurs when an uneven balance of power is exploited and abused by an individual or individuals who in that particular circumstance have the advantage. Bullying is characterised by persistent, repetitive acts of physical or psychological aggression. This definition includes the concept of social confinement, the abuse of an asymmetric power imbalance, and implies that the power is 'usable' in that it has given the individual an advantage.

Terry (1998, p. 278) emphasises that the teacher is under a 'potent social constraint that precludes escape as a means of terminating the abusive interaction'. Victimised teachers cannot simply walk out of the lesson; they must maintain their professionalism and stay until the class period has ended, in effect making them a captive in their own classroom. In this definition, Terry (1998) also makes reference to the issue of power imbalance between the teacher and student. The possibility that students have 'usable power' over their teachers is explored within a conceptual framework of 'cross-peer abuse' which draws on elements of Thibaut and Kelly's (1959) argument that power can be separated into that which is 'relative' and power which is 'usable' (Terry, 1998, p. 256). 'Usable power' is defined as that which is practical and 'convenient' for an individual to use and

does not 'penalise the possessor' whilst 'relative' power refers to an individual's power which is rendered unusable due to the counter-power of another (Terry, 1998, p. 258). Terry explains that an individual draws their usable power from a 'pool of potential power' forming one side of the 'power equation' (Terry, 1998, p. 258). However, this 'potentially usable power' may be negated in part or entirely by the counter power of the other party. The teacher may be perceived to be in a position of greater potential power relative to the student by dint of both their maturity and position as teacher. However, this 'formal or theoretical power' (Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012, p. 1061) may be rendered 'non-usable' by a range of factors including student contempt for authority, ineffective disciplinary procedures, poor management structures and teacher inexperience, such that the 'relative power imbued by the State upon the teacher becomes progressively less usable' (Terry, 1998, p. 258). Thus, the teacher may find themselves victimised by students despite their recognised position of authority in the school.

Similar to De Wet (2010), who defines SBT which he terms 'educator targeted bullying' as 'aggressive behaviour in which there is an imbalance of power between the aggressor and the educator', Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012, p. 1061) also acknowledge the power differential between student and teacher. Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012, p. 1061) suggest that SBT is perpetrated by a 'party of lower status' against the 'party of higher status' in which the latter is unable to easily defend him or herself. The issue of power is very important in understanding the student-teacher dynamic as will be discussed in greater depth in Section 2.2.5 and this issue is explored in some detail with teachers during the qualitative interviews, however the concept of power does not emerge as a major thread in the findings or discussion of the study.

In terms of perception and intent, De Wet's definition (2010, p. 190) states that the 'aggressive acts are deliberate and repeated and aim to harm the victim physically, emotionally, socially and/or professionally', whilst Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012, p. 1061) focus on the teachers' subjective interpretation of bullying by students in their definition of SBT as

a communication process in which a teacher is repeatedly subjected, by one or more students, to interaction that he or she perceives as insulting, upsetting, or intimidating. Bullying can be verbal, non- verbal, or physical in nature.

Kauppi and Pörhölä's (2012) definition of bullying does not take into account whether or not students engage in hurtful behaviour intentionally or deliberately as it is the teachers' experience and perception of SBT which is underlined. The present study also focuses exclusively on teachers' subjective views of SBT, meaning that intention becomes redundant as a consideration as it is the voices of the teachers that are being privileged. As teachers in this study cannot know the intentions of their students, what is provided in this study is these teachers' constructions of their relationships with their pupils. These subjective constructions are explored in the qualitative interviews rather than the questionnaire as the questionnaire instrument does not allow for the complexity of such issues to be meaningfully explored. Instead, the qualitative data provides the study with a flavour of the forms and frequency of student bullying behaviours which teachers reported experiencing having been provided with a definition of SBT.

The author acknowledges that the subjective and complex nature of this phenomenon precludes specific definitions from being regarded as definitive or universally applicable, however, a definition in which to ground the study remains necessary. Therefore, taking into account the key criteria, nature and impact of SBT as outlined, as well as the current theorising and scholarship on this phenomenon, this study offers the following definition of SBT as

repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

2.2.3 SBT and the Criterion of Repetition

The concept of repeated or systematic behaviour is fundamental to most definitions of bullying (Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996; O'Moore, et al., 2000; McEvoy, 2005). Olweus (1993) suggests that bullying occurs when an individual is exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions whilst Smith and Sharp (1994, p. 2) refer to bullying as 'systematic abuse'. Similarly, the impact of repetition is underlined by Benefield's (2004) New Zealand study of teacher victimisation by students, parents, staff and management and referred to by the author, as 'cumulative bullying behaviour'. Benefield (2004) argues that the infrequent occurrence of low-level behaviours such as verbal abuse may impact insignificantly on the teacher and as such, these behaviours are not recognised as bullying. However, she asserts that repetitive and persistent minor incidents of low-level antagonism may have a profoundly negative effect on the teacher if repeated over time and in such cases, because of their repetitive nature, may indeed be regarded as bullying. However, repetition as a fundamental criterion of bullying has been challenged by some researchers (Siann et al. 1993; Slonje and Smith, 2008; Grummell et al., 2009; O' Moore, 2012; Corcoran and Mc Guckin, 2014) who suggest that serious, isolated negative incidents may certainly constitute bullying.

Rigby (2004, p. 17) suggests that bullying although 'typically repeated' may sometimes include 'one-off actions' and asserts that it is the victims' fear and expectation of the harassment continuing which 'gives the bullying its oppressive and frightening quality'. Dr. Mona O' Moore, Founder and Director of the Anti-Bullying Research Centre in Trinity College Dublin, in her recent address at the Department of Education Anti-Bullying Forum (2012, p. 7) on peer bullying, expressed her 'strong opinion that a definition of bullying should encapsulate isolated acts of anti-social aggression that are unjustified'. In particular, O' Moore (2012, p. 7) emphasised the devastating impact of cyber-bullying on the victim wherein a single 'cyber-attack can reach an unlimited audience and can be a source of unlimited viewing thus making the experience of being abused one of repetition'. Coffman (2011) concurs with O' Moore's (2012) assertion, suggesting that when considering the case of cyber bullying the question of whether repetition ought to be a required definitional element merits further debate.

Slonje and Smith (2008, p. 154) explain that an isolated act of cyber bullying may lead to repeated incidents of harm as images or messages may be forwarded to countless individuals or posted online for unlimited public viewing, forcing the victim to relive the abuse repeatedly, therefore falling ‘under the category of repetition’. As cyber-bullying is an increasing reality for teachers (Cook et al., 2010; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) this understanding of repetition is applicable in the case of SBT. The indefinite recording of material and the potential audience that may witness these items suggests that teachers may be forced to relive the abuse on more than one occasion which in turn makes the bullying repetitive in nature. Similarly, the authors of a recent study which explores cyber-bullying in Irish second level schools (Corcoran and Mc Guckin, 2014, p. 49) have urged that ‘bullying behaviour need not necessarily be repeated by the bully for it to be recognised as cyber-bullying’. The authors (Corcoran and Mc Guckin, 2014, p. 61) argue that an awareness and acceptance of such one-off incidents as bullying will

help address the ambiguity regarding the role of repetition in cyber-bullying incidents, and therefore counter the dilution of culpability which can occur when a cyber-bully takes just one action to victimise a peer in cyber- space, but in doing so begins a series of victimising actions to be carried out by others, thus leading to a cumulative negative effect on the victim.

The Anti-Bullying Procedures For Primary And Post-Primary Schools (2013, p. 8) published by the Department of Education and Skills have recognised the repetitive nature of cyber-bullying and state in Section 2.1.3 that

placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

A more in-depth discussion regarding cyber bullying will take place in Section 2.3.4. In sum, this study considers repetition to form an important definitional element of SBT. However, it is also recognised that in certain circumstances, such as serious incidents in which teachers experience high levels of fear of the incident recurring or cyber bullying;

one-off incidents, due to their impact on the victim and the victim's subsequent re-living of events making the incident repetitive in nature, may be considered as bullying.

2.2.4 Perception and Intent Criteria in SBT

The perceptions of victims and perpetrators have been explored in the literature from a plethora of perspectives. For instance, Gordilo et al. (2011) examined the divergence in aggressors' and victims' perceptions of bullying whilst Munn et al. (2004) investigated the perceptions of secondary teachers and head teachers regarding violence in schools. A limited number of studies have also directly compared teachers' and students' perceptions of bullying (Menesini et al., 2002; Naylor et al., 2006). A United States study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (2008) measured the perceptions of 172 teachers regarding the major sources of victimisation and also the intensity of the experience of mistreatment by colleagues, regarding 38 negative behaviours. Their study was critically distinct from previous research (Keashly, 1998) because 'intensity of harm' was recognised as 'a function of a victims' perspective, not the simple occurrence of behaviour' (Blasé and Blasé, 2008, p. 292). Therefore, victims' perceptions were used to define behaviour as bullying. Similarly, one of the original features of the present study is that it uses teachers' perceptions of SBTB as a starting point in understanding this complex phenomenon. As stated in the previous chapter, Section 1.2, few studies have examined teachers' experiences of student bullying behaviour from the teachers' perspective, rather bullying has been explored using student self-reporting.

Studies which did explore teachers' perceptions include those carried out by Mishna et al. (2004) in Canada and Maunder et al. (2010) in the UK. Mishna et al.'s (2004) study of 57 participants, investigating the perceptions and responses to student-student bullying situations by children, parents and educators provides evidence to suggest that constructions of bullying are perceptual with several factors influencing individuals' perceptions and responses to particular bullying incidents. The researchers carried out interviews with 13 teachers with respect to 17 children who had self-reported being the victim of peer bullying and found that there was immense disparity in perception between parents, pupils and educators as to what constituted bullying. This difficulty in

achieving consensus seemed to stem from the unique and subjective manner in which ‘each individual viewed a particular incident’ (Mishna, 2004, p. 237). Meanwhile, in the U.K., Maunder et al. (2010) conducted a quantitative study of 1302 participants in which they explored pupil and staff perceptions regarding behavioural definitions of peer-to-peer bullying. The researchers (2010, p. 265) stressed that differences in definitions between pupils and teachers and indeed amongst staff members, may ‘result in an inconsistent approach and affect the success of intervention work’. The authors revealed that pupils and teachers demonstrated different interpretations of what constitutes bullying, particularly in relation to less overt or direct behaviours. These findings suggest that some teachers may perceive certain pupil behaviours as bullying irrespective of the students’ intentions, underlining the subjective nature of the phenomenon.

As aforementioned, the most widely accepted definitions of SBT use three main criteria to classify a situation as bullying: repetition, intent to hurt, and power imbalance between victim and perpetrator (Olweus, 1993; Smith and Sharp, 1994; Smith et al., 2002). The construct of intent to hurt has evolved over time with initial definitions underlining the ‘attempt ... to torment’ (Brodsky, 1976, p. 2), ‘with the aim of bringing mental ... pain’ (Bjorkqvist et al., 1994). Perpetrators may argue that they did not intend to cause distress and were merely behaving in a manner which they felt was acceptable or with intentions which entirely precluded the victim (Lynch, 2002). For instance, a student may be disruptive or impudent in the classroom with the intention of gaining popularity and acceptance amongst his peer group; behaviours which the teacher may perceive as bullying. Nonetheless, this does not ease the distress or resultant psychological and emotional effects on the recipient. Even if the target of bullying behaviours does not suffer distress (O’Moore, Kirkham and Smith, 1997) one could argue that such behaviours should still be regarded as bullying, as observers of bullying have been shown to be negatively impacted by such behaviours (Hazler et al., 1997; Vartia, 2001; Zeira, 2004). For instance, Cranham and Carroll (2003, p. 114) suggest that some bystanders may ‘become distressed by their inability or failure to take action against the perpetrators of bullying behaviour’. Failure to intervene may lead to bystanders experiencing feelings of helplessness, shame, guilt, powerlessness, anxiety and fear of also becoming a victim (Cranham and Carroll, 2003; Du Plessis, 2008).

Hazler et al. (1997) argue that some bystanders may actually experience a sense of pleasure in witnessing the distress of another.

The way in which a person may perceive or report bullying behaviour is entirely subjective to the recipient and may be influenced by an array of factors including the recipient's prior experience of bullying and internal frames of reference as well as their psychological, social and emotional well-being at the time of the incident (Silverman et al., 2005). Many other factors may also be involved, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and any combination of additional cultural or organisational factors (Twemlow et al., 2004; Vaillancourt et al., 2008; Davies, 2012). It is reasonable to expect that particular forms of behaviour, such as physical assault, are highly unacceptable regardless of individual teacher, student or school related characteristics however, certain forms of behaviour may be regarded as offensive only in specific school or cultural contexts (Borg, 1998, p. 69). In both the Finnish and the United States contexts, for instance, there is a high level of informality between pupils and teachers; for example in Finland, pupils regularly address teachers by their first names and this is not considered offensive (Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). However, countries such as Turkey and Japan emphasise a high level of formality in the teacher – student relationship with students in Japan expected to bow to their teachers should they meet them in public places (Samovar et al., 2012). Therefore, cultural differences suggest that opportunities for bullying and the techniques of bullying may be culturally and socially constructed. Increasingly, researchers (Einarsen et al., 1994; Rayner, 1997; Dawn et al., 2003) are acknowledging that what constitutes bullying is a contextually specific, 'subjective judgement by the recipient based on the impact it has on them' (Grummell, 2009, p. 9). Rayner et al. (2002) suggest that in assessing whether or not a situation is regarded as bullying, it is the perception of the victim and not the intentionality of the aggressor which is paramount, as the recipient may feel bullied irrespective of the aggressor's intentions. This study is concerned exclusively with understanding bullying from the perspective of those teachers who have reported experiencing negative behaviours from their students. Therefore, the criterion of intent is not included in this study's definition of SBT as it is the teachers' subjective understanding which is being explored.

2.2.5 The Criteria of Power Imbalance in SBT

Olweus (1993) states that the bullying relationship involves an ‘asymmetric power imbalance’, however Smith and Thompson (1991) acknowledge that the bully may be stronger, or perceived to be stronger than the victim, irrespective of factors which may not be apparent to the onlooker. Under the conventional definition, it would be difficult to argue that a teacher, who has maturity, size, financial independence and power vested by the State in their favour, could possibly be in a weaker position of power than a student. Chan (2009) proposes that the possibility of a teacher being in a weaker position of power than students is conceivable if the entire class is involved in the bullying, because in this circumstance, the power imbalance is obvious, due to the sheer number of students forming a ‘pack’ against the teacher. However, Smith and Thompson’s (1991) definition recognises that power relations are exceedingly complex and the interplay between innumerable factors must be considered when deciphering the true power exchange within any relationship. The notion of SBT has been met with scepticism as it traverses conventional ideas about power relations between adults and children (Grauerholz, 1989; Terry, 1998). Manke (1997) asserts that within Western culture there is a general consensus that teachers hold the power in the classroom, however Benefield (2004, p. 2) reports that a series of meetings and workshops with teachers on the topic of school violence revealed that many teachers ‘feel bullied by students, even if they might be seen to hold a position of greater authority and status’.

Westwood (2002, p. 45) advocates that the concept of power should not be conceived as ‘some finite commodity that individuals or groups can compete to own’ nor should it be considered as some ‘thing’ to be possessed. Similarly, Foucault (1980) asserts that power is ‘not a commodity, a position, a prize or a plot’ (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1982, p. 185) arguing that power ‘is diffuse rather than concentrated, embodied and enacted rather than possessed, discursive rather than purely coercive, and constitutes agents rather than being deployed by them’ (Gaventa, 2003, p. 1). In this sense, Foucault (1998, p. 63) conceptualises power as being ‘everywhere’, coming from ‘everywhere’ and present as an ‘underlying factor in all types of situations within all types of societies’ (Murphy, 2007, p. 3).

Power is conceptualised as something which cannot be possessed by individuals or institutions by way of ‘episodic’ or ‘sovereign’ acts of domination or coercion (Foucault, 1991), rather power is ‘gained from a set of forces that influence peoples’ discourse and behaviour’ (Murphy, 2007, p. 30). Further advancing his description of power, Foucault (1991) suggests that power is influenced both by internal and external forces to the individual and institution as well as by interactions between and within individuals and institutions. Foucault (1977) asserts that ‘one does not have more or less power than the other but each equally shapes the other’ (Pitsoe and Letseka, 2003, p. 25).

Power is seen as being present in all social aspects of life and is not just a ‘mere entity similar to money that can be considered functional for society as a whole’ (Murphy, 2007, p. 32). Power is therefore conceived as ‘mobile’ and ‘multidirectional, operating from top down and also from bottom up’ (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1982, p. 185). Foucault (1980) argues that although power and institutions are intrinsically linked, they are not interchangeable, as power is dependent upon the ‘micro-practices’ within a given context (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1982, p. 184). He stresses that the true nature of power relations must be ‘traced down to their actual material functioning’ or they elude analysis and ‘continue to operate with unquestioned autonomy, maintaining the illusion that power’ is enforced exclusively by those in positions of authority (Dreyfuss and Rabinow, 1982, p. 185). It can therefore be surmised that those in conventionally accepted positions of power, such as teachers, may not always and in all situations have the power advantage over those who are socially weaker than themselves.

Further understanding and insight regarding the power relations which may be operational within the teacher- student relationship may be gained by applying Tew’s (2002) Matrix of Power Relations to this dynamic. The Matrix of Power Relations is a conceptual framework used to distinguish between different possibilities of power, which operate in social relationships between individuals and on a societal level. Four modes of power relations are identified within the Matrix: *co-operative* and *protective power*, which are seen as forms of productive or enabling power and *oppressive* and *collusive power* which are categorised as limiting or damaging (Tew, 2006). *Protective*

power involves ‘deploying power in order to safeguard vulnerable people and their possibilities for advancement’. Protective power may entail colleagues uniting to protect or support one another, whilst *co-operative power* entails a ‘collective action, sharing mutual support and challenge through commonality and difference’ (Tew, 2006, p. 41). *Oppressive power* involves ‘exploiting differences to enhance one’s own position and resources at the expense of others, whilst *collusive power* includes ‘banding together to exclude or suppress otherness’ (Tew, 2002, p. 166). These modes of power are not mutually exclusive and may interlink, overlap or be used simultaneously as the circumstance necessitates (Tew, 2005).

Using Tew’s Matrix (2002), it may be argued that teachers, who are generally considered to hold a superior position of power, may be rendered relatively powerless by several interrelated power dynamics. The power imbued in teachers through the hierarchical school structure may be challenged if students become aware of issues such as staff discontent with management, inconsequential discipline procedures, weaknesses in collegiality or in the teacher’s ability to deal with student confrontation (Galloway and Roland, 2004; James et al., 2008; Chen and Astor, 2009). When there is an interruption to the normal school power relations, students may gain ‘usable power’ (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Terry, 1998) over their teachers, thereby affecting the entire chain of power and rendering the teacher comparatively powerless to access *productive* forms of power. When students recognise that no disciplinary sanctions are imposed for their behaviour, the teacher may become further disempowered and the *oppressive power* of the student over the teacher may be intensified. Weaknesses in training, policy guidelines or structured support leaves the teacher at a disadvantage in deconstructing the power relations in operation and thus to enlist new strategies to establish a more egalitarian power dynamic. Therefore, support structures and interventions to address SBT must take into consideration this complex power imbalance within the SBT relationship. Teachers’ perceptions regarding access to support is integral to this study and such perceptions have been explored in some depth in the primary research as will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Teachers may be isolated from potential networks of *protective power* due to the lack of public recognition of the phenomenon of SBT and the scarcity of supportive services to

aid them in accessing *co-operative* and *protective power* to address their situation (Tew and Nixon, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011). Teachers may also be disempowered by the widespread public perception that competent and effective teachers, who practice efficient classroom management techniques, do not have a problem maintaining co-operation and control in the classroom (Pervin and Turner, 1998; American Psychological Association, 2004; Allen, 2010). Teachers who admit to being bullied by their students may find themselves ostracised and alienated by colleagues and management who use *collusive* forms of power to disassociate themselves from victimised teachers, casting them as inferior for not being able to control their class (Zeira et al., 2004; Daniels et al., 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; De Wet, 2010). Teachers may feel blamed for being ineffectual at maintaining order in their classrooms, compounding their feelings of powerlessness and isolation. Therefore, in sum, the present study emphasises the complex nature of power and qualitative findings support the concept that teachers may at times deem themselves to be in a weaker position of power in relation to particular students, irrespective of their position of perceived authority.

2.2.6 The Hidden Nature of SBTB

It may be argued that there is a hidden dimension to SBT which may deter teachers from seeking support when faced with bullying by a pupil. A number of contributory factors may be put forward to explain this, such as the following:

- (1) The general lack of awareness, understanding and recognition of SBT in academic, societal or political discourse (Terry, 1998; Ferfolja, 1998; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) may lead to teachers' inability to recognise particular patterns of pupil behaviour as SBTB and to access relevant support (De Wet, 2010).
- (2) SBT may be over-shadowed or considered less serious than school violence against teachers and therefore may not be prioritised for policy response or resource allocation to the same extent as school violence (Munn et al., 2004; O' Moore and Minton, 2004; De Wet, 2010).
- (3) Due to over-simplified and traditional notions regarding power relations there may be societal reluctance to accept that an adult may be bullied by a child leading to further isolation of teachers and on-going failure to recognise or respond to the issue (Pagani et al., 2004; Tew and Nixon, 2010; Coogan, 2011).
- (4) Victimised teachers who seek support may be left feeling further isolated and

ostracised, resulting in negative affect. For instance, research shows that teachers who sought support due to SBT and other negative student behaviours reported experiencing feelings of being trapped, ostracised, weak, humiliated (Du Plessis, 2008); isolated by staff (Daniels et al., 2007; De Wet, 2010); having the seriousness of the situation minimised by colleagues (Daniels et al., 2007); not being given adequate support (Terry, 1998; Zeira, 2004; Daniels et al., 2007) and being seen as incompetent (Terry, 1998). Teachers may therefore find themselves in a paradoxical position in which they are being held responsible for the negative student behaviour, even when it is directed at them (Hunter, 2010; Tew and Nixon, 2010). These teachers may be subsequently more at risk of SBT (Terry, 1998; Galloway and Roland, 2004; James et al., 2008; Chen and Astor, 2009) and less likely to seek further support (Zeira et al., 2004; Tew, 2005; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Du Plessis, 2008). Finally, (5) victims of bullying and violence in general often experience feelings of shame, self-blame, humiliation and embarrassment and are often reluctant to disclose their experiences or to seek help for the problem (Tew, 2006; Aslund et al., 2008; Lynch, 2009; Turkum, 2011), therefore perpetuating the hidden nature of the phenomenon.

Studies conducted in various countries have found bullying to be one of the most under-reported of all abuses and this may be true also for this particular form of bullying. The empirical literature suggests that the majority of victims of bullying do not disclose their abuse because they ‘feel ashamed, fear derision and blame themselves for what is happening’ (Choquet et al., 1997; ASTI, 2004; Hatfield, 2008, p. 14). A number of authors identify shame-related emotions as a fundamental obstacle in establishing an accurate account of international prevalence of SBT (e.g. De Wet., 2010; Turkum et al., 2011). For instance, in his South African study of teachers bullied by students, De Wet (2010, p. 196) revealed that victims of SBT had reported feelings of powerlessness, self-repulsion, embarrassment, a lack of self-esteem (“maybe I’m not a good teacher”) and withdrawal from others (“I don’t go to the staff room”). Similarly, in a Turkish context, shame was identified as the principal factor in victimised teachers’ reluctance to ask for help. This prevents both the ‘real level of violence from being revealed and victims of bullying from receiving professional help’ (Turkum, 2011, p. 645).

Establishing an accurate account of international prevalence of teacher victimisation is complicated by the reluctance of teachers to come forward. The U.K. Teacher Support Network Survey (2007) found that teachers were willing to record incidents of bullying in confidence but unwilling to discuss the issue in public as they felt it would possibly harm their careers to do so. Several researchers highlight the need for greater societal recognition of SBT (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998; Ferfolja, 1998; De Wet, 2010) and teacher victimisation (Munn et al., 2004; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; McMahon et al., 2011; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; Espelage et al., 2013) as a critical first step in effectively addressing the issues facing teachers. Researchers emphasise the need to discuss the problem 'in a way which is solution-focused rather than seeking to apportion blame or to demonise young people, parents or teachers' (Terry, 1998; Munn et al., 2004, p. 75). SBT must be recognised as an emerging global problem rather than the result of individual teachers' inadequate teaching ability or character flaws (Munn et al., 2004). The following section provides an overview of the national and international prevalence of SBT within the constraints identified above.

2.3 The Prevalence and Manifestation of SBTB

2.3.1 Forms of SBTB

There is strong agreement within the research literature that bullying may involve a multitude of direct or indirect behaviours (Bjorkqvist et al., 1992; Aluede, 2006; Marini, 2006) perpetrated both explicitly and covertly in verbal, relational, technological or physical forms. Direct forms of SBTB may be physical (for example hitting, spitting and inappropriate touching) or non-physical such as the use of inappropriate language, offensive gestures and body language, threatening and intimidating behaviour and damage to teachers' property (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Zeira et al., 2004; Aluede, 2006; De Wet, 2010). Indirect SBTB typically takes the form of non-verbal behaviours which may include purposely ignoring or isolating the teacher (Sullivan et al., 2004), spreading malicious rumours and lies (James et al., 2008) or making unfounded, disparaging remarks about the teachers' character (Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Persistent, low grade, disruptive behaviour has also been recognised as a form of indirect SBTB (Debarbieux, 2003), which may include students talking out of turn and

making insolent comments (Parzell and Salin, 2010), undermining the teacher's relationship with other students and humiliating the teacher in front of staff or other students (Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Kivivuori (1997) and Salmi and Kivivuori (2009) also cite the targeting of a teacher's own children by students as a form of indirect harassment directed at themselves.

Whilst most bullying between pupils appears to take place in the schoolyard (Smith and Shu, 2000) and to a lesser extent in classrooms and corridors (Sage, 2004) bullying can, in fact, occur in any location. Almost two thirds (62%) of the 84 respondents in Pervin and Turner's (1998) U.K. study indicated that incidents of bullying had taken place during regular lessons in the classroom whilst 32% of teachers stated that it occurred in the school corridor. A further U.K. study (Terry, 1998) reported that the majority of 101 respondents (42%) identified their own and different classrooms as the locations where bullying had most often taken place. However, the study also revealed that 29% of survey respondents admitted to being bullied outside of the school premises, a finding supported by O' Dowd Lernihans' (2011) finding of 27% of 110 respondents for the same offence.

A Finnish study (Kinney and Pörhölä, 2009) highlighted teachers' reports of being subjected to students' sexually orientated verbal insults in public places outside of their working hours whilst a South African study by De Wet (2010) reported incidents of teachers being attacked in the street, having stones and eggs thrown at their home and having their private property defaced with graffiti. Teachers in another Finnish study (Lahelma et al., 2000) were also the victims of out of school attacks with some reporting that personally offensive graffiti was scrawled in public places whilst others were called 'whore' or 'gay' in social and recreational areas (Lahelma et al., 2000, p. 469). One respondent recounted an incident in which she was cycling past a bus stop close to the school when some pupils shouted 'whore, whore, whore'; the teacher expressed feeling 'paralysed up to my soul' and confided that on returning home she had 'collapsed and could not stop crying' (Lahelma et al., 2000, p. 469). A male teacher in the same study admitted to almost going 'crazy with rage and shock' upon seeing the

walls and benches of his local community filled with graffiti naming him and making reference to his inferred homosexuality.

A systematic review of the literature suggests that the most prevalent forms of SBTB are: persistent in-class disruption, verbal abuse, intimidating and threatening behaviour, cyber bullying, personal property offences, sexually orientated offences and physical assault. These are also the behaviours which have been selected for the focus of prior studies in an Irish context (Task Force on Student Behaviour, 2006; TUI Survey on Discipline, 2006; James et al., 2008; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011). The present study has adopted an open-ended understanding of the forms that SBTB may take, as new forms of bullying may be created in specific contexts. As these aforementioned student behaviours are the most commonly cited in the literature, these behaviours have been listed in the questionnaire. Respondents were provided with a definition of bullying in advance of completing the questionnaire, which allowed participants to put this list of behaviours into context. However, the author acknowledges that these behaviours do not exhaust the potential range of bullying behaviours and further acknowledges that these listed behaviours, whilst all inherently problematic, may not be regarded as 'bullying' in every instance, therefore as stated previously this study distinguishes between SBT and SBTB. In-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and their perceptions of these behaviours as bullying took place within the qualitative interviews. An overview of the nature and prevalence of each of these forms of teacher victimisation will now take place in the following section.

2.3.2 Persistent In-Class Disruption

The Irish *School Matters* Report (Martin, 2006, p. 53) which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter 4, defines disruptive behaviour as 'any event or incident which frustrates' the school's role, which is 'to provide teaching and to promote learning for its student body'. The Report details a list of indicative disruptive behaviours which include the following: non-stop talking, constant challenging of teacher authority, ignoring the presence of the teacher in the classroom, throwing objects, walking aimlessly around the classroom and making noises or humming sounds (Martin, 2006,

p.7). Additional forms of disruptive student behaviour include sabotaging the teachers' attempts to carry out his or her teaching duties, hiding from the teacher or being repeatedly tardy for class (Turkum, 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Although each of these behaviours, taken singly, does not constitute SBTB, De Wet (2010) suggests that it is the relentless and repetitive nature of the acts which leads to teachers' feeling demotivated, disillusioned and weary.

Persistent disruptive behaviour is recognised in the research literature as both a direct and an indirect technique of teacher bullying (James et al., 2008; De Wet, 2010) in which the student attempts to humiliate, threaten or discredit the teacher. Almost all studies relating to SBTB explore the issue of student disruptive behaviour. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a survey of 1,121 teachers, conducted by the TUI (2006, p. 6) showed that 97% of teachers had experienced 'some form of student misbehaviour or disruption in the classroom or in the school during the immediate preceding week'. The British Association of Teachers and Lecturers carried out a survey in 2009 of over 1,000 respondents which focused on student behaviour in the classroom and found that over 40% of teachers believed that student behaviour had worsened in the preceding two years whilst 58% felt it had deteriorated over the past five years. Teachers participating in the TUI study (2006) estimated that addressing persistent disruptive behaviour had generally kept them from their teaching duties for approximately ten minutes each time that it took place. A further TUI (2011) survey of its members ascertained that 81% of teachers agreed that addressing student indiscipline had increased their workload in the previous five years. James et al. (2008) have questioned the impact of such widespread disruption on the educational attainment of students when one considers that this behaviour frequently occurs on a daily basis for a substantial percentage of the teaching population.

2.3.3 Verbal Abuse, Intimidating and Threatening Behaviour

Harmful verbal and non-verbal aggression has been identified by teachers as the most common transgression by students (Matsui, 2005; TUI, 2006; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; West, 2007; De Wet, 2010; Turkum, 2011). Data findings from The Task Force on

Student Behaviour (Martin, 2006) evidenced threats to teachers, the use of obscene language by students and also remarks of a deeply offensive or overt sexual nature directed at teachers by pupils in Irish schools. The TUI (2006) survey supports these findings; with 36% of 1,121 respondents, being subjected to verbal abuse from students in the preceding week whilst O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) reported that 85% of the 110 second-level school teachers surveyed had experienced verbal abuse at some point in their career. The most significant account of verbal aggression directed at teachers however comes from the Welsh Teacher Support Cymru, Violence and Disruption Survey for 2009, which indicates that a remarkable 95% of secondary school teachers surveyed had been subjected to on-going swearing and verbal abuse by pupils at some point in their teaching career (Miloudi, 2009).

International studies (Zeira, 2004; Chen and Astor, 2009; De Wet, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011; McMahon, 2011) show that teachers also experience high levels of intimidation and threatening behaviour from students, with almost half (49%) of the 587 participants in a New Zealand survey (Benefield, 2004) indicating that they had been intimidated by pupils at some point in their career. In 2010, the British Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) surveyed over 1000 teachers, lecturers, support staff and school leaders in schools and colleges throughout the UK regarding student behaviour in the classroom and found that 44% of respondents had experienced intimidation in the form of threats from students. Meanwhile, a United States survey of 4,735 teachers conducted by McMahon et al. (2011) revealed that actual physical violence (34% versus 31%), verbal threats (50% versus 43%) and general harassment (64% versus 54%) were higher for men whilst women experienced more intimidation (41% versus 36%) from students (McMahon, 2011). Figures relating to the prevalence of student intimidation in Ireland are especially interesting; a recent Irish report (O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011) reveals that 68% of 110 respondents had felt intimidated by a student, a figure considerably higher than any other obtained by researchers internationally.

2.3.4 Cyber Bullying

In recent years with the explosion of increasingly more sophisticated electronic communication devices and widespread instant internet access, cyber bullying is becoming one of the most prevalent forms of teacher victimisation by students (ASTI, 2004; Williams and Guerra, 2007; ATL, 2009; Cook et al., 2010; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). The rapid increase in electronic and online communication has meant that the bullying of teachers by students is no longer restricted to the confines of the school grounds (Juvonen, 2008). The most common forms of abuse experienced by teachers include students creating fake Facebook pages in the teacher's name, posting video clips of teachers on YouTube or leaving abusive and hurtful comments about teachers on RateMyTeacher.com, a website which allows students to rate their teachers' performance. In addition, teachers may also be subjected to hacking of their email account, the sending of viruses or the circulation of doctored videos involving the superimposition of the teacher's face on the body of a pornographic actor (Llewellyn, 2008).

In Ireland, the issue of cyber bullying was investigated by the teachers' union, ASTI (2004) revealing that 3% of the 1,200 Irish second level teachers surveyed have been subjected to offensive comments from students via e-mail, text message or on websites such as Facebook and RateMyTeacher. Sugden (2010) highlights the case of a fake Facebook page created by a student which declared the teacher's interests as enjoying under-age sex with both boys and girls. In 2012, 4 students in a Dublin secondary school were expelled for posting vulgar and unfounded allegations of a sexual nature against a male and female teacher, as well as abusive comments regarding the working hours of a third teacher at the school (Irish Independent, 2012). A further 40 students received detention for tagging the offending page as a 'like' on Facebook. Meanwhile, the Norton Online Family Report (2011) which polled 19,636 people including 2,379 teachers from 24 countries found that 20% of teachers have personally experienced or know another teacher who has experienced cyber-baiting. Cyber-baiting is a recent form of bullying which involves students taunting their teachers and subsequently recording and posting or threatening to post their reaction on the internet (Fox, 2011).

2.3.5 Personal Property Offences

In addition to the on-going intimidation, threatening and insolent behaviour experienced by teachers, many also suffer theft or damage to their personal property (Borg, 1998; Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams, 1998; NIOSH, 2008; Wilson et al., 2011; McMahon et al., 2011). Although some teachers perceive the theft or damage of their personal property to be a form of bullying, there are others who do not deem property offences to fall within the realms of SBT (McMahon et al., 2011). Once again the criteria of repetition is used to distinguish between an isolated incident of theft and a range of persistent acts and behaviours which a student may use to bully a teacher, of which theft may indeed be part. A recent Canadian study exploring violence against teachers, conducted by Wilson et al. (2011) showed that 11% of 731 respondents had been the victims of property offences in the previous year with that figure increasing to 34% when considering property offences throughout their teaching career.

In a US context, McMahon et al. (2011) suggest that where educators had experienced property offences, these were the second most prevalent form of SBT identified in their study. They further highlighted that male teachers' property was usually damaged or stolen more often than female teachers. Meanwhile, U.K. findings (ATL, 2009) reveal widespread malicious damage to teachers' property with over 200 personal insurance claims being lodged by teachers in the 2007-2009 period including 69 incidents of deliberate damage to vehicles and 146 cases of serious damage to teachers' personal property by pupils. Irish studies also indicate damage to teachers' property by students with a figure of 11% reported by the ASTI (2004) and 30% reported by the TUI in 2006.

2.3.6 Sexually Orientated Offences

Sexually orientated offences which are regarded as indicative of SBTB include sexual comments or innuendo, sexual gestures and unwanted sexual touching which are perpetrated by pupils in a repetitive or persistent manner (Mooij, 2010, p. 24). Isolated or serious incidents such as sexual abuse and rape are considered acts of violence unless they adhere to the definitional components of SBT outlined previously. In general, the

term harassment is more frequently used in relation to sexually orientated offences and owing to its repetitive quality is considered to indicate bullying and thus is used interchangeably with SBTB during this section of the chapter. Research relating to the sexual harassment of teachers by students has revealed that, although less prevalent than physical violence, such behaviour remains a serious problem for some teachers (Robinson, 2000; Lahelma et al., 2000; James et al., 2008; Mooij, 2011).

An ASTI (2004, p. 2) study on student behaviour in Ireland defined sexual harassment as ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person’s sex, which affects the dignity of men and women at work’. The study of 1,200 respondents revealed that 7% of Irish teachers had experienced some form of sexual harassment or innuendo from students; findings consistent with a TUI survey (2006) which reported a prevalence rate of 8% amongst 1,121 respondents. A more recent ASTI (2007) study of 235 participants, reported that 13% of teachers surveyed said they had been sexually harassed with 37% of that cohort indicating that the attack had been perpetrated by a student. 93% of teachers who had been sexually harassed were female with 52% of the women stating that the sexual harassment had occurred on an occasional basis. Benefield (2004) reports that 26% of 587 students surveyed in New Zealand have admitted to verbal sexual harassment of a teacher with a small minority of students admitting to making unwelcome sexual advances towards a teacher.

Lahelma et al. (2000) in their qualitative analysis of teacher responses regarding sexual harassment by students assert that the sexual harassment of teachers by students is a remarkably complex issue involving a number of factors such as gender, age and sexuality; individual factors which are each interlaced with relations of power. Some students use ‘sexuality as a way of subverting teachers’ power’ (Lahelma et al., 2000, p. 472); sexual labelling of female teachers and homosexual labelling of male teachers appears to be a proficient means of challenging teachers’ authority (Robinson and Clay, 2000). These authors suggest that the most prevalent forms of verbal sexual harassment include inappropriate comments about a teacher’s clothing or personal appearance, being threatened with rape and students’ claims concerning teachers’ sexual orientation (Lahelma et al., 2000; Robinson and Clay, 2000; Kinney and Pörhölä, 2009).

Epstein and Johnson (1998) suggest that for teachers, sexuality is both inescapable and extremely perilous. When female teachers are objectified by their students in terms of their sexuality or physical appearance, feelings of offense, confusion or pleasure may ensue. Some teachers become acutely aware of their sexuality or appearance irrespective of whether the comments were experienced as positive or negative. Male students have been identified as the main perpetrators of sexual harassment of teachers, both in the present study and in the international research (Ferfolja, 1998) and have been found to use sexist comments to test and establish their heterosexual masculinity (Mac an Ghail, 1994). According to Lahelma et al. (2000), male teachers are not immune to challenges of power from both their male and female students however; the ways in which they are confronted seem to differ from that of their female colleagues. Female students may attempt to disempower a male teacher by behaving in an over sexualised manner resulting in possible feelings of discomfort, embarrassment or confusion in the teacher. Male teachers are left most vulnerable when labelled as homosexual by their pupils as such a label both eliminates their superior position of masculinity and questions hegemonic masculinity in general (Ferfolja, 1998; Lahelma et al., 2000). Sexual harassment of teachers by pupils is a particularly poignant form of abuse, which may leave teachers feeling demoralised, anxious and isolated and often blaming themselves for the situation in which they find themselves, a factor which further empowers the student in the bullying relationship (Lahelma et al., 2006).

2.3.7 Physical Assault

Physical violence against teachers has been recognised in the empirical literature as a critical, detrimental and prevalent problem which according to U.S. researchers has ‘profound implications for schooling, teacher retention, and overall student performance’ (Espelage et al., 2013, p. 1). The extent of the problem appears to be more prevalent in the United States than in Europe or other corners of the world (Zeira, 2004; Debarbieux, 2004; Ruff, 2004; Galand, 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; Dinkes et al., 2009; De Wet, 2010; McMahan et al., 2011). Outside of the U.S. (see Benefield, 2004; Chen and Astor, 2009; Mooij, 2011; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; Association of Teachers and Lecturers, 2009; De Wet, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011; Evans, 2013) there is evidence that physical violence by pupils is also a problem to which teachers are exposed, with male

teachers generally at greater risk of physical assault by a pupil than their female colleagues (Terry, 1998; Crick and Bigbee, 1998; Kondrasuk, 2002; NCES, 2003, 2010; Benefield, 2004; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; McMahon et al., 2011). For instance, as recently as April 2014, a female teacher, Ann Maguire was stabbed to death in a school in England, by a fifteen year old male student in her class (Pidd and Meikle, 2014).

Researchers suggest that cultural factors in the United States such as the existence of a highly multi-ethnic student population with varying worldviews and belief systems, a prominent gang and gun culture in schools and the large number of pupils who come from communities characterised by high levels of poverty, violence and delinquency may contribute to the increased incidence of violence against teachers (Martinez, 2003). There is also evidence of high levels of physical violence in South African schools which operate within a society characterised by ‘high levels of community and school violence, continual and rapid change and economic uncertainty’ with widespread disrespect for teachers amongst the student population (Du Plessis, 2008; De Wet, 2010, p. 190). Therefore, the contextual factors – historical, social, cultural, economic, political and ideological – which underpin individual societies and schooling systems and their influence on teacher victimisation by pupils cannot be underestimated.

While incidents of serious physical assault on teachers by their students are not as prevalent in Ireland as in the United States and elsewhere, there is evidence that teachers in Irish schools are experiencing some level of this extreme behaviour (TUI, 2006; O’ Dowd Lernihan, 2011). For instance, in 2006, the Teachers’ Union of Ireland revealed that 77% of the 1,121 teachers surveyed in relation to their perceptions regarding student behaviour, considered the issue of physical violence as a ‘serious’ or ‘very serious’ threat to their health and safety. Meanwhile an ASTI (2007) survey involving 235 respondents revealed that 9% of teachers surveyed had been victims of physical abuse perpetrated by students, parents and school management, with students being the perpetrators in 37.5% of these cases. A further empirical study conducted in 2011 in Ireland by O’ Dowd Lernihan reported that 19% of the 110 teachers surveyed had been physically assaulted in their career by a student. of those who had experienced such behaviour, the types of physical abuse conducted by students varied from pushing

(23%) to slapping (4%). The most recent study carried out in Northern Ireland, a survey commissioned by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (2011) showed that 57% of teachers had been subjected to some form of violence or physical abuse (INTO, 2011). These figures indicate that some teachers in Ireland may be at risk of student behaviours on the higher end of the continuum of seriousness such as aggression and physical violence. A discussion regarding the complex causes of SBTB will now take place in Section 2.4, along with an exploration of which teachers may be most at risk.

2.4 The Causes of SBTB

Challenging and aggressive student behaviour towards teachers has been recognised as a complex and multi-faceted problem with diverse, changeable and intersecting causes as complex as the individual acts and people involved (Christle et al., 2006, Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). Researchers assert that individual and contextual factors do not operate in isolation in shaping students' behaviour; it is the interplay and accumulation of factors which result in such behaviour (Farrington, 1993; Garbarino and deLara, 2002; Fuchs et al., 2003). Increasing research attention has focused on multivariate analyses of multiple factors and advocates a combination of interventions to address these factors, tailored to the individual needs of each context (e.g. X Ma, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013).

Empirical researchers (e.g. Christle and Nelson, 2006; Eisenbraun 2007; Smit, 2010) insist that the development of effective interventions and preventive measures to address phenomena such as challenging student behaviour, require in the first instance a thorough understanding of the topic under study (Mishna and Pepler, 2006) and recognition of the causes of the phenomenon (Munn et al., 2004; Kane, 2008; Santiago et al., 2008). By identifying the causes of SBTB and the conditions that produce victims, schools may be able to positively 'affect teachers' vulnerability to mistreatment' (Steffen and Ewen, 2007, p. 89; Poipoi, 2011) and develop support strategies and preventative responses which accurately and effectively address the issue. Authors suggest that addressing problem behaviour requires an 'understanding of the factors which contribute to the development of such behaviour in the first place'

(Bradley and Hayes, 2007, p. 12) and caution that the combination and interaction between factors may shed most light on the phenomenon (Kiesner et al., 2003; Bradley and Hayes, 2007; Chen and Astor, 2010; Mooij, 2011).

The causes of SBT and student aggression towards teachers have been explored by international researchers (Miller et al., 2003; Payne et al., 2003) predominantly in the context of school violence (e.g. Debarbieux, 2003; Munn et al., 2004; Steffgen and Ewen, 2007) and remain the subject of much debate. Many authors (Astor et al., 2002; Wright and Keetley, 2003; Benbenishty et al., 2005; Chen and Astor, 2009) attribute teacher victimisation to a combination of students' personal traits, family and community factors and school dynamics. Studies have found correlations between the perpetration of aggressive behaviour and student individual characteristics. These may include high stress or anxiety, low self-control (Agnew, 2005), poor empathic skills, low motivation, lack of conflict resolution skills, perceived lack of opportunity to be successful through legitimate means and negative self-image (Dykeman et al., 1996). Researchers also suggest that some students may behave aggressively to gain peer acceptance and popularity (Pervin and Turner, 1998; Emler et al., 2005; Buelga et al., 2006; Chen and Astor, 2009); their aggressive behaviour may provide them with the 'opportunity to construct the social reputation which they desire' (Estefania et al., 2007, p. 447). It must be acknowledged that students' individual characteristics cannot be understood in isolation from family and community factors as these elements are intrinsically linked. Therefore, researchers (e.g. Chen and Astor, 2011) underline the need for schools to focus not only on students' academic performance, but also on their social and emotional needs outside of the school context, in improving levels of student behaviour.

Family factors which may contribute to SBTB include poor parenting practices (Miller et al., 2002), low parental control (Du Plessis, 2008), lack of quality role models and availability of inappropriate role models (IACP, 2010), authoritarian styles of parenting, failure to set limits (Stoolmiller et al., 1997), high levels of family conflict (Cummings et al., 2003), and lack of parental support (Barrera and Li, 1996). Paley et al. (2000) assert that the parent-child relationship involves children's first social relations and

argue that the nature of those relationships and the ‘context in which they are sustained may determine the social skills and social relations the child will develop with others later in life’ (Estefania, 2007, p. 435). Researchers suggest that parent training programmes which ‘improve monitoring skills, communication, and other forms of parental control’ ought to form part of schools’ primary prevention efforts to address challenging and aggressive student behaviour towards teachers (Griffin et al., 2000, p. 182). Parent training initiatives which improve inter-familial communication, coping skills, parenting and discipline practices are shown to prevent the escalation of student behavioural problems (Dishion and Andrews, 1995) and to promote resilience in youth, even in high- risk settings (Griffin et al., 2000, p. 182). In addition to parent-training programmes, research (e.g. Ofsted, 2005; Kane, 2008; Steer, 2009) shows that strengthening links between parents and the school leads to improvements in challenging student behaviour.

Meanwhile community related factors which may cause SBTB include exposure to community violence (Gorman-Smith et al., 2004), peer involvement in anti-social behaviour (Natvig et al., 2001; IACP, 2010) and low socio-economic status (SES) of the community in which the student lives and attends school (Du Plessis, 2008; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009). Research shows (Attar et al., 1994; Guerra et al., 1994; Kupersmidt et al., 1995) that students who live in environments characterised by high levels of poverty, social difficulties and social inequality are at greater ‘risk for socio-emotional and behavioural problems that may result in being more aggressive in school’ (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009, p. 175). In fact, some authors (Bender-Sebring et al., 2006; Berliner et al., 2006; Khoury-Kassabri et al. 2007, 2009) assert that in general, schools with the highest proportion of students from low SES families report the highest levels of student perpetrated bullying. The influence of socio-economic status on the perpetration of student bullying behaviours is explored in the present research and will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 4.

Finally, external and internal school related factors such as ineffectual leadership and teaching, low or inconsistent disciplinary standards, high levels of teacher stress, poor collegiality and inadequate access to resources are predictive of aggressive behaviour

towards teachers (Gottfredson, 2005; Kasen et al., 2004; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008). Such a plethora of wide-reaching causes underlines the complexity of SBT and the potential difficulties associated with implementing effective and comprehensive responses. Although this study does not specifically examine teachers' perceptions regarding the causes of SBTB, the findings do provide insight into teachers' perceptions regarding the influence of parenting practices, the home and community environment as well as school related factors such as management style and collegiality on SBTB and teachers' well-being.

A negative school climate has been identified by a number of international authors (e.g. James et al., 2008; Espelage et al., 2011, 2013) as an internal school related factor associated with a higher incidence of teacher victimisation. A negative educational climate is one in which students and teachers are exposed to high levels of conflict and low morale (Schreck et al., 2003; Kasen et al., 2004). Such an environment carries a greater risk of bullying for both students and teachers (Yoneyama and Naito, 2003; Khoury-Kassabri, 2004). In contrast, a good school climate results in more positive student behaviour and attitudes (Peterson et al., 2001), and is a protective factor against aggression, oppositionality and conduct problems (Payne et al., 2003; Stewart, 2003; Gottfredson et al., 2005). School climate refers to student and staff perceptions regarding the levels at which the school environment is seen to be 'supportive of learning or teaching, is appropriately organised and is safe' (Peterson and Skiba, 2001, p. 1). Much of school climate research is focused on the ways in which schools can improve their environment, through addressing the quality of caring, sense of belonging (Whelage et al., 1989; Sergiovanni, 1994) and teacher-student relationships (Charney, 1998; Chen and Astor, 2009). In order to promote a positive school climate, international research suggests that schools should have effective support systems in place for both students and teachers, such as access to a counsellor and effective policies and procedures which are consistently implemented (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; McMahon et al., 2011; Cohen and Brown, 2013).

Researchers suggest that the absence of adequate school structures and policies to support students and teachers may inadvertently contribute to higher levels of SBTB

(Pervin and Turner, 1998; Miller et al., 2002; Estefania et al., 2007). For instance, research has demonstrated that schools with effective student participation structures by which students may contribute to issues which affect them such as ‘the school’s curriculum, governance, and environment (Warner et al., 1999; Payne et al., 2003; McMahon et al., 2011) increase student-school engagement and are associated with lower levels of aggressive and challenging student behaviour directed towards teachers (Khoury-Kassabri, 2007). In contrast, Smith and Monks (2008, p. 154) suggest that schools which possess a ‘hierarchical, authoritarian and non-democratic culture’ may contribute to the incidence of student aggressive behaviour by alienating students and reinforcing the factors which enable violence and aggression to thrive.

A number of studies have indicated a relationship between low school engagement and aggressive, delinquent and anti-social student behaviour (Fraser, 1996; Natvig et al., 2001; Chen and Astor, 2010). School engagement may be understood as the attitudes held by students in relation to school and their involvement in school-based activities. For instance, researchers Payne et al. (2003) carried out a nationally representative study in 254 U.S. secondary schools in which they examined the relationship between student disorder and communal school organisation. Communal school organisation involves the active promotion of student bonding and sense of school ownership through an emphasis on informal social relations, common norms and experiences, collaboration and participation (Lee et al., 2004). The researchers found that schools which fostered a sense of community and collaboration with their students reported lower levels of SBTB and student violence against teachers. These findings suggest that increasing student-school engagement and student participation through the promotion of a less hierarchical, student-orientated collaborative approach to education may lead to lower levels of SBTB.

The literature also places a strong emphasis on the importance of supportive student-teacher relationships (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007; Benhorin and McMahon, 2008; Chen and Astor, 2009, 2010) in reducing challenging and aggressive student behaviour towards teachers (Gottfredson et al., 2005; Steffgen et al., 2007; Mooij, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011; Gregory et al., 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). Espelage et al. (2013) suggest that

teachers who can effectively manage challenging behaviour and build warm, healthy relationships with their students are less likely to experience SBT and aggressive student behaviour. Teacher-student relationships which are characterised by conflict or where the teacher employs an authoritarian or cold and unresponsive attitude to students are predictive of aggression (Olweus, Limber, and Mihalic, 1999; Dennee, 2001). In a Taiwanese study, Chen and Astor (2011) suggest that effective intervention in reducing school violence should focus exclusively on improving students' within-school experiences and the quality of students' relationships with both their peers and teachers. Discordant relationships may contribute to both an increased risk of students engaging in aggressive behaviour with their peers (Forlin and Chambers, 2003; Brendgen et al., 2007; Pomeroy, 2011) and also with their teachers (Wong, 2004; Yoneyama and Naito, 2003). Grayson et al. (2008) report that teachers who maintain positive relationships with their students are also more likely to feel motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy their workplace. A discussion will now take place which seeks to shed light on the reasons why some teachers appear to be more targeted than others.

2.4.1 The Targets of SBTB

As discussed in previous sections, a number of inter-related factors and teacher characteristics may influence teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding student bullying behaviours. These factors may be demographic, cultural, contextual, relate to identity, personality, past experiences, beliefs and assumptions which may inform the ways in which individual teachers think and behave. However, the literature reveals some possible trends in student bullying behaviours with respect to teachers' age, professional experience and gender, as will now be outlined.

Teachers' age may be considered to be a factor in the likelihood of a teacher experiencing student bullying behaviours (Mooij, 2010). Benefield (2004) in her analysis of cumulative and significant bullying incidents found that although teachers in the youngest age group experience very high levels of SBTB, the group most targeted by students are teachers in the eldest group, aged 60 years and over, followed by the next eldest group, aged 50 to 59 years. Benefield (2004) interviewed respondents to

gain insight into this surprising finding and learned that some teachers are bullied specifically on the grounds of their age, for example in the form of ageist remarks. Other interviewees suggest that older teachers may have unrealistically high expectations of students in terms of respect, obedience and familiarity and may consider that they ought to behave as students did in their earlier years of teaching, perhaps suggesting that these teachers may be more likely to over-report. These findings are in contrast with others such as Terry (1998) and Salmi and Kivivuori (2009) who identify teachers in the youngest and most inexperienced categories as the most bullied teachers. Terry (1998) in exploring the incidence of SBTB in a UK context surveyed 101 teachers and found that younger teachers and those with less experience are more at risk of SBT. He reported that 68% of teachers with less than three years' teaching experience endured student bullying behaviours once or more per term compared with 49% of teachers with more than three years' teaching experience. Similarly, a Finnish study conducted by Salmi and Kivivuori (2009) revealed that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) were more often subjected to violence or the threat of violence than more experienced teachers. Borg (1998) also examined teaching experience as a variable in teacher victimisation but focused on the influence experience has on the seriousness of behaviours. The youngest and most in-experienced teachers perceived pupil misbehaviour to be more serious than that of their experienced colleagues, which Borg and Falzon (1990) suggest may indicate that teachers become progressively more tolerant of student indiscipline with time and experience. Field (1986) on the other hand, suggests that with time teachers develop skills to manage the student misbehaviour which in their younger days they found extremely difficult.

Although student bullying behaviours appear to be quite equally experienced in terms of prevalence amongst male and female teachers (Benefield, 2004; Smith and Monks, 2008; McMahon et al., 2011), the ways in which teachers experience and indeed, interpret the bullying varies between the sexes (Crick and Bigbee, 1998; Munn et al., 2004; Mooij, 2010). Male teachers are subjected to significantly higher levels of verbal abuse, offensive gestures, cyber bullying, theft and damage to personal property and physical attacks (McMahon et al., 2011) whilst women experience more intimidation and sexual assault from their students (Lahelma, 2000; Salmi and Kivivuori, 2009). In terms of physical assault, male teachers are more likely to be threatened with a weapon

and to sustain physical injuries requiring medical attention, and are also more likely to be targeted by multiple perpetrators compared with women (McMahon et al., 2011).

McMahon et al. (2011) used the findings from a study conducted by Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, and Hamby (2005) as a springboard to identify a pattern of behaviour between the ways in which male students and male teachers are targeted by perpetrators. They suggest that the rate of physical offences may be higher for male teachers as males 'tend to put themselves in riskier positions such as intervening in altercations' whilst women may experience more intimidation owing to gender role dynamics (McMahon et al., 2011, p. 13). However, the figures which abound regarding prevalence between male and female teachers may not, in fact, paint a true picture as to the extent of teacher victimisation and SBTB amongst male staff. As Santiago et al. (2008) suggest female teachers are more transparent in their disclosure of problems, whereas males may consider this reporting as a sign of weakness. Conversely, a finding which appears to remain constant across countries and cultures (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), including in an Irish context (Martin 2006; James et al., 2008), is that male students are the greatest perpetrators of bullying and other negative student behaviours directed at teachers (Goldstein, 1997).

2.5 The Effects of SBTB

Bullying and other negative student behaviours have been shown to have serious adverse effects on teachers' psychological, emotional and physical well-being as well as on work performance and social relationships (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; TUI, 2006; Kinney and Pörhölä, 2009). Psychological and emotional effects on the victim may include anxiety, aggression, low self-esteem, insomnia and consequent fatigue, poor concentration and feelings of shame or embarrassment; with more serious effects including depression and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (Yamada, 2000; Blasé and Blasé, 2002). Negative effects on teachers' physical health may include stress related illnesses and reduced immunity to infection, headaches, high blood pressure, backache, irritable bowel syndrome, ulcers and suicidal thoughts (Yamada, 2000; Blasé and Blasé,

2008). Teachers' work performance, sense of job satisfaction and morale are also deleteriously affected with increases in absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, burnout and isolation from both colleagues and students (Blasé and Blasé, 2002, 2008; Fox and Stallworth, 2010).

2.5.1 Physical and Psychological Affects

A great number of negative health related effects have been associated with exposure to bullying (Kadel and Follman, 1993; James et al., 2008) with wide-scale evidence confirming that bullying has severe impacts on victims' health and well-being (Leymann, 1996; Einarsen et al., 1999; Yamada, 2000). For instance, chronic or persistent exposure of teachers to victimisation has been shown to contribute to withdrawal, negative social behaviour and impaired coping mechanisms and social functioning (Steffgen and Ewen, 2007). Australian studies (Mayhew and Chappell, 2004) indicate that victims of long term bullying may experience equal or more severe negative health effects than victims of isolated incidents of physical violence (Mayhew et al., 2004).

Educators who experience serious incidents of aggression may suffer from acute stress disorder (Daniels et al., 2007) and anxiety (Daniels et al., 2007). It is not unusual for victims to re-live the incident through recurrent images, flashbacks or dreams, which may result in the aversion of any situation linked to the distressing event (Daniels et al., 2007). Physical and physiological effects of bullying can vary from relatively mild, e.g. skin disorders, to the gravest of forms such as self-harm and suicide. Additional negative physical effects of teacher bullying may include hair loss, musculoskeletal pain, insomnia and nightmares, stress headaches, reduced immunity to infection, fluctuations in bodyweight, digestive disorders, chronic fatigue, substance abuse and circulatory disorders such as palpitations, chest pain, angina, hypertension, heart arrhythmia, and heart attacks (Yamada, 2000; Blasé and Blasé, 2002, 2008).

The majority of current research studies, which examine the effects of student aggressive and bullying behaviour directed at teachers, document an increase in teachers' stress levels (Laugaa et al., 2008; Kerr et al., 2012; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012; Fox and Stallworth, 2010; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011) and link both acute and chronic teacher stress to an array of personal consequences (Fox and Stallworth, 2010). Student misbehaviour represents one of the foremost sources of stress for teachers (Borg, 1990; Boulton, 1997) and in addition to poor working conditions and inadequate support from management, constitutes one of the major factors linked to teacher burnout (James et al., 2008). For instance, a qualitative study of 15 participants carried out by Kerr et al. (2011) which focused specifically on secondary school teachers' stress in Ireland; their perceptions of their daily stresses and the ways in which teachers cope revealed that in addition to heavy workload and assisting students to deal with personal problems, dealing with disruptive student behaviour constituted a significant source of negative stress for participants.

A study conducted by the ASTI (1999, p. 4), exploring the impact of workplace bullying on teachers revealed that 'teachers can be bullied by those in authority, by colleagues, by students and by parents.' The study reported that of the 751 teachers surveyed, 50% had experienced tearfulness, while others had experienced anger (41%), loss of concentration (37%), disturbed sleep patterns (32%) and deterioration in their work (26%). To a lesser extent, teachers had also been afflicted by low self-esteem (18%), home or family life upset (16%), loss of energy (12%), thoughts of retirement (11%); depression (10%) and low motivation (9%). A more recent survey carried out by the same teacher trade union (ASTI, 2004), exploring the effects of negative student behaviour on teachers' health, reported that 49% of teachers had experienced stress, 49% had suffered from anxiety, 21% from fear, 47% from disturbed sleep and 39% from a loss of concentration. In exploring the impact of student bullying behaviours on teachers, this study used the same comprehensive list of negative impacts as those outlined in the ASTI (1999 and 2004) studies.

A study of 1,121 second level teachers conducted in 2006 by the TUI exploring teachers' perceptions of the impact of negative student behaviours revealed that 43% of

teachers had experienced stress. Meanwhile O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) reported that 54% of teachers admitted to feeling 'a little' or 'quite' stressed as a result of school violence and/ or intimidation. When teacher gender was considered, figures revealed that females (59%) experienced higher levels of stress than their male colleagues (45%). As to age and professional experience, Santiago et al. (2008), consistent with previous research (e.g. Borg and Riding, 1991) reported that younger teachers but particularly the oldest and therefore most experienced teachers reported the lowest stress levels whilst those in the intermediate stage of their careers experienced the highest levels of stress. Statistics from the TUI Income Continuance Plan (2006) for teachers retiring on grounds of ill health show that more teachers are leaving the profession on long term disability through stress than through cancer, an indication of the high stress levels amongst teachers in Ireland. It is unsurprising then that 98% of teachers want school boards of management to take a more proactive approach to teachers' welfare (TUI, 2007).

Teachers who are subjected to bullying and aggression from students may suffer both acute and long-term physical, psychological or behavioural consequences. Some individuals have immense resilience and manage to dismiss the behaviour however, others may 'internalise or externalise the effects which may provoke a maladaptive response' (James et al., 2008, p. 168). Some psychological and emotional effects of teacher victimisation are anger, distrust, aggression, helplessness, shame, isolation and chronic fear.

The issue of fear amongst teachers also appears to be emerging as a very real psychological effect of exposure to acts of aggression and violence by students, particularly amongst female teachers (Wilson et al., 2011). The impact of fear not only affects the teachers' own health and well-being, but their safety concerns may result in teachers experiencing difficulty carrying out their duties and may see them leave the profession entirely (Elliott, Hamburg, and Williams, 1998). In Brazil, over 3,000 teachers admitted to missing school due to a fear of student violence (Abramovay and Das Gracias Rua, 2002) whilst studies conducted in the US (Fisher and Kettl, 2003) and in Belgium (Vettenburg, 2002) reveal significant concerns amongst teachers about their

safety in school. A study carried out by McCarthy et al. (2003) advised that dread of being bullied might be as harmful to an employee's health as actual physical assault (Mayhew et al., 2004). These findings are consistent throughout the literature (Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; Daniels et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2011) whilst some studies (e.g. Wilson et al., 2010) indicate that fear itself, irrespective of actual victimisation 'may be enough to precipitate several adverse outcomes' (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 2354). Once again, these findings seem to suggest that teachers who are subjected to SBTB may experience negative effects comparable with victims of physical violence, without necessarily experiencing the same level or severity of violence as their counterparts. In addition, these findings may support the earlier assertion by De Wet (2010) and by the present author, that certain isolated acts of student aggression ought to be considered as bullying, as the fear elicited in the recipient may lead to constant reliving of the event making it repetitive in nature.

2.5.2 Work Related Effects

Teachers' sense of well-being has major implications for the fostering of a positive school climate and the development of well adjusted, content students (McMahon et al., 2011). Challenging student behaviour has been shown to be a major occupational stressor (Laugaa et al., 2008; Fox and Stallworth, 2010) impacting on teachers' work performance (De Wet, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011) and leading to teacher burnout (Burke et al., 2004; Elliott, Hamburg and Williams, 1998; Galand et al., 2007 and Kokkinos, 2007). Grayson and Alverez (2008) advise that teacher stressors, such as SBT, significantly influence the emotional well-being of the teacher, impacting on both the psychological climate within the school and contributing to the high turnover rates in the teaching profession (Tsouloupas et al., 2010). Challenging student behaviour may affect teachers' professional performance in a number of ways including damage to their relationships with colleagues, management and other pupils and reduced job satisfaction, effort and morale (Blasé and Blasé, 2002). There may also be a reduction in commitment, initiative and concentration (Mayhew et al., 2004; Blasé and Blasé, 2008) and an increase in tardiness, absenteeism, apathy and cynicism (Fox and Stallworth, 2010). Wilson et al. (2011, p. 2366) suggest that reduced teaching ability as a consequence of teacher victimisation or indeed fear of victimisation may lead to

‘classroom instability, a lack of continuity for the students’, and ‘severe negative consequences for the quality of education’ and the educational system in general.

A number of studies have explored the impact of victimisation on teachers’ work performance (Huberman, 1993; Daniels et al., 2007). For instance, a UK survey of 84 teachers in a co-educational, inner-city London school conducted by Pervin and Turner (1998, p. 4) sought to explore teachers’ perceptions regarding the bullying of teachers by pupils, which the authors termed ‘teacher targeted bullying’. The study revealed that as a direct result of SBTB, 15% of teachers admitted to lowering their levels of expectation regarding students’ behaviour and academic performance whilst 32% of staff used restricted lesson plans when teaching offending pupils in order to maintain classroom control. Meanwhile, a survey of over 1000 participants, conducted by the British Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (2009) investigating cyber abuse of teachers, reported that 6% of respondents had been absent from work with a stress related illness whilst 25% of teachers indicated that the standard of their teaching was impaired as a direct result of cyber bullying by students.

The aforementioned study conducted by the ASTI (2004), exploring the effects of negative student behaviour on teachers’ health, reported that 73% of teachers felt that negative student behaviour affects teacher morale with 48% of teachers stating they felt demoralised whilst another 45% admitted to feeling isolated. The survey found that 29% of respondents have considered leaving teaching altogether because of negative student behaviour whilst 28% have considered taking a career break and 21% have contemplated moving school. Teachers who are fearful of their environment, traumatised psychologically or emotionally by aggressive students or merely filled with apathy and disillusionment for the teaching profession may negatively affect the school climate, which in turn has been shown to have a profound effect on the students’ experience of school life and risk factors for increased SBTB.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the phenomenon of student bullying of teachers and attempted to deepen understanding of SBT as a complex and multi-faceted problem which may be considered along a continuum of behaviours ranging from persistent classroom disruption to serious incidents of violence. It is argued that SBT has received limited academic, media, societal and policy attention owing to a number of factors. These include teachers' reluctance to admit to bullying resulting in under-reporting and thus under-prioritising of the issue; over-simplistic societal conceptions regarding both bullying and power relations between adults and children and a general lack of awareness amongst the public and policy makers that the impacts of SBTB may be considered equal or in some cases, more serious, than those experienced by victims of serious assault.

The definitional components relating to student bullying behaviours and SBT have also been discussed in this chapter. There is a general consensus that bullying embodies three main elements – repetition, intent and power imbalance. However, consistent with previous research, this study argues that these criteria must be re-considered and adapted in the case of SBTB. In terms of repetition, it is argued that certain isolated acts of aggression against teachers may qualify as bullying as the victim is forced to repeatedly re-live the act of aggression making it repetitive in nature. Findings of the present study, particularly in relation to cyber-bullying, support this assertion that in certain circumstances, teachers may feel bullied despite behaviours not being repeated.

Intent is not considered to be a definitional component of SBT as it is the teacher's perception of the behaviour which is recognised to be of central importance. This study explores the phenomenon from the teachers' perspective only and therefore, in the absence of the students' voice, it is impossible to know the intentions of the pupils. The author emphasises that perception may be influenced by a number of factors which may include gender, identity, culture and personality, making teachers' perceptions of student behaviours entirely subjective and contextually-specific, and therefore impossible to definitively define or explain. Therefore, this study attempts to explore

teachers' constructions of student bullying behaviours rather than to narrowly define this phenomenon.

With respect to the criteria of power; an imbalance of power between the victim and perpetrator of bullying is recognised to exist. However, because of the complexity of power relations, it is argued, that the student may be in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. In this study, issues of power are explored with interviewees and findings support the assertion that teachers may perceive themselves to be in a position of weaker power in relation to some pupils. The nature of power relations are also explored in Chapter 7, with respect to the culture of performativity and competitiveness which has developed in Irish education and elsewhere in recent years (Ball, 2003; Leroy, 2007). The ways in which SBTB may be manifested and the prevalence of the issue both internationally and in Ireland have also been explored in this chapter, as are the effects of the phenomenon on both teachers' health and professional performance. These issues are explored in more depth in the present study using both qualitative and quantitative data.

Having explored the phenomenon in this chapter, the following two chapters will now examine the policy responses to address SBTB in Irish second level schools.

Researchers (e.g. Leoschut and Burton, 2006; Benbenishty, 2008) argue that policy responses to address social issues may vary considerably between societies based on a wide range of historical, social, cultural, economic, political and ideological factors which intrinsically inform both perception of the phenomenon and consequent responses. That which transpires in the context of schools is typically a reflection of what is taking place in the broader social context in which schools are found and is shaped by the 'social fabric and culture of that society' (Benbenishty, 2008, p. 74). Thus, an awareness and understanding around the cultural processes and influences which have shaped the development of policy in an Irish context is necessary prior to an exploration of the contemporary policy responses in place to address the issue. Chapter 3 will therefore, focus on the historical State responses to discipline and challenging student behaviour in Irish schools and in doing so will explore the factors which have

shaped the development of the Irish education system and its subsequent responses to SBTB. The chapter will illustrate a gradual move away from a subsidiary approach to education policy towards greater State intervention in education by tracing developments from the establishment of the secondary school system up until the abolition of corporal punishment in 1982.

3

*Historical
State Responses
to Student Behaviour
in Ireland*

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that SBT is a distinct and complex phenomenon, experienced by teachers in Ireland and elsewhere; the causes of SBTB are multiple and inter-connected and may impact significantly on teachers' well-being and professional performance. Therefore, due to the nature and extent of the problem and its potential to negatively impact on teachers and education systems, it is evident that SBT is an issue which merits recognition and response. As discussed in the previous chapter, effective responses need to address these causes which are multivariate, complex and inter-related and thus require a combination of equally complex and multi-level responses. In addition to school, family and community level responses, State intervention is an integral component in effectively tackling the issues of SBT and challenging student behaviour. The interconnected and complex nature of SBT requires that contributory social factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, societal violence, minority status and under-recognition of the phenomenon are addressed at State level. However, as mentioned, the social and educational policies adopted by any given society at a period in time are influenced by a wide array of factors (Dukelow and Considine, 2009). Therefore, prior to an exploration of the contemporary policy responses to address SBT and other negative student behaviours, an analysis of the social, political, cultural, economic and historical influences which have helped to shape the development of the Irish education system and which in turn have influenced the education system's approach to discipline in Irish schools is crucial and is thus presented in the current chapter. Evidence of limited State intervention in education and particularly in relation to matters of school discipline and student behaviour is highlighted throughout.

Educational policy and provision in Ireland have undergone considerable change since the nineteenth century (Hislop, 2012; Conway, 2013). Similarly, throughout this time policy responses to challenging student behaviour and discipline have seen much transition. Section 3.2 provides a brief overview of the origins of the secondary school system in Ireland from the mid nineteenth century up until the 1950s in which educational reform began to take place in earnest. The power and influence of the Catholic Church in education matters is illustrated in this section and in more depth in relation to the principle of subsidiarity in Section 3.3. The Catholic Church has exerted

an enormous and lasting influence on Irish social and educational policy and its impact on the historical State approach to student discipline is discussed at length.

Section 3.4 provides a contextual background to the abolition of corporal punishment in schools. As the primary aim of this study is to explore the influence of the State's historical low interventionist approach to education on the development of the contemporary response to SBT in Ireland, an examination of the ways in which the State has historically dealt with matters of school discipline is central to this research. Because corporal punishment was the most widely used means of enforcing discipline in schools from the early 1960s up until its abolition in 1982, it is necessary to trace the developments surrounding its use and its abolition. Exploring the Governments' hands-off approach to the use of corporal punishment in schools provides the study with a clear pattern of low State intervention with regard to matters of school discipline. The impact and influence of this historical low intervention approach on contemporary policies and responses to address the student bullying of teachers in Irish second level schools is explored in Chapter 4.

The discussion on corporal punishment focuses primarily on the period between 1960 and 1982. This was an era of profound social, political, economic and cultural change, strongly linked with Ireland's emerging market orientated approach to education and the 'new economic buoyancy in Irish and international economies' due to increasing industrial development (Mulcahy and O' Sullivan, 1989, p. 61). A number of factors converged such as the modernisation of Catholic Church philosophy, the influence of the EEC and growing pressure from progressive educationalists and anti-corporal punishment groups, finally leading to the abolition of corporal punishment in schools in 1982 and the subsequent criminalisation of corporal punishment in schools in 1997. This section explores the use of corporal punishment in Irish schools throughout the twentieth century and illustrates the State's limited intervention in these matters owing to its compliance with the principle of subsidiarity enshrined in the 1937 Constitution (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005) as is discussed in the previous section. The effectiveness of corporal punishment as a means of maintaining discipline and control over student violence directed at teachers is also discussed.

Section 3.6 traces changing education policy in the post abolition period, examining curricular developments and the post abolition methods used to deal with unruly pupils. It argues that teachers were stripped of their long-established discipline instruments and these were not replaced with effective training or alternative mechanisms for managing student behaviour leading to an over-reliance on and excessive use of exclusionary methods. The combination of school related developments coupled with the profound contextual changes taking place in Ireland led to significant changes within the teacher-student relationship; changes for which teachers were un-prepared and ill equipped (Wickham, 2010), as will be discussed in Chapter 4. In this sense, it may be argued that the education system illustrated a lack of foresight, planning and intervention; delegating responsibility for managing discipline to individual teachers, schools and boards of management without adequate guidance, training, resourcing or support.

3.2 The Origins of the Irish Secondary School System

This section provides a brief outline of the origins of the secondary school system in Ireland. Whilst significant educational reform in second level education did not take place until the 1950s, particular features of the system which were set up in the nineteenth century prevail until the present day and continue to impact on contemporary education policy (O' Sullivan, 2005) and thus, require some discussion.

The history and development of education in Ireland has been significantly influenced by a wide ranging combination of different and often conflicting factors and ideological considerations. Irish education has been fundamentally shaped by the relationship between Ireland and its 'colonial neighbour', Britain (Harford, 2010, p. 350; Mulcahy and O' Sullivan, 1989), by the Catholic Church's prominence in education matters (Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012; O' Donovan, 2013) and more recently by the influences of neo-liberalism, managerialism and the demands of globalisation (Mooney Simmie, 2012; Conway, 2013; Conway and Murphy, 2013). An informal 'Hedge' school system of education emerged in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in response to harsh penal laws (Macveigh, 2012, Hanna, 2006; O' Donovan, 2013) continuing until Catholic Emancipation in 1829 which saw the Catholic

Church assume a central role in Irish education (Coolahan, 1981; Macveigh, 2012; Hanna, 2006). Ironically, colonial attempts to suppress Irish Catholic education may have deepened the sense of pride and value in education amongst members of the putative Irish nation and strengthened the role of the Catholic Church in education matters (Akenson, 1970; Coolahan, 2001; O' Donovan, 2013). This may be evidenced by the Commission of Inquiry into Education in Ireland report in 1824, which showed that 9,300 of the 12,000 schools in operation in Ireland at the time were hedge schools (Macveigh, 2012; Pollak, 2006), voluntarily attended by two in every five children of school-going age (Martin, 2011) and also by the enduring role of the Catholic Church in twenty first century Ireland's education system (INTO, 2007; Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012).

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were characterised by tremendous political, social, economic and demographic changes across Europe related to the effects of the industrial revolution, increasing urbanisation and rising populations (Coolahan, 1981; Macveigh, 2012). New political ideologies, social values and perceptions of childhood inspired by the French Revolution and the Romantic Movement helped to shape modern society and influenced Governments toward the State provision of mass education (Coolahan, 1981; Macveigh, 2012). Whilst certain European societies, such as Denmark, Greece and Spain, considered mass education as a necessary requirement for increasing industrialisation, State intervention in education in Ireland was influenced largely by a need to promote allegiance to the UK. In 1831, mass education commenced in Ireland with the establishment of the national school system under Lord Stanley, the Chief Secretary of Ireland for the period. Although UK Governments operated predominantly within a laissez-faire philosophy which emphasises the benefits of free market capitalism and limited State intervention, even laissez faire Governments began to recognise the importance of developing an education system that provided a basic elementary education to the population which reflected the 'national' interests. Laissez faire philosophy recognises individualism as 'a core value to be protected' and sees the individual as 'the basic source of action, freedom and responsibility' who should be allowed to maintain his or her own well-being without interference by the State (Dukelow and Considine, 2009, p. 122). It considers that the role of the Government is to maintain peace and justice and to protect its subjects from 'violence and fraud and

malice from one another' and from 'foreign foes' and beyond that the Government should leave all subjects 'to pursue that, which they believe to be their own interests in the ways in which they deem advisable' (Taylor, 1972, p. 22). However, UK Governments also saw mass education as a vehicle for fostering 'attitudes of political loyalty' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 4), 'community harmony and local cohesion' (INTO, 2007, p. 10) amongst the Irish population.

Although, *laissez faire* policy acknowledged the necessity for a State supported basic education; secondary education was considered as a 'concern for the middle class, who, if they saw fit, should buy it as a commodity just like any other personal goods' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 52). Therefore, secondary schools in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in Ireland were funded by the Catholic and Protestant religious orders. Catholic funded secondary schools received no financial State assistance whilst many of the Protestant secondary schools benefited from some level of State funding (Coolahan, 1981). Although two reports in 1838 and 1858 urged the State to support secondary education, as an extension of the national education system, the proposed non-denominational structure was met with great resistance and opposition by both Churches and consequently by the Irish population over which the Catholic Church had tremendous influence and power (Inglis, 1998; Charleton, 2012). Prevailing inter-denominational hostility and suspicion of proselytism coupled with the Church's conception of the 'whole schooling process as an extension of pastoral care with religion inter-penetrating all facets of education' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 5; Macveigh, 2012) led to denominational education gradually being considered to be the norm in Ireland (Coolahan, 1981; Hanna, 2006; Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012). The Intermediate Education Act of 1878 signalled a compromise between Church and State with State funding being granted to denominational secondary school managers whose students succeeded in passing State examinations. This financial arrangement continued up until 1922, when the mode of disbursement changed to capitation grants for pupils and incremental salaries for teachers in recognised schools (Coolahan, 1981).

Whilst national school teachers in Ireland had negotiated agreeable terms of employment by 1880, including salary scales, contracts, pensions and training facilities,

secondary school teachers endured less attractive working conditions (Coolahan, 1981). There existed no formal training or qualification regulations, salary scales, pension rights or security of employment, nor was there any State inspection system in operation (Coolahan, 1981). Consequently, teacher morale was low, the quality of teaching and learning was poor in many schools and secondary education was not always held in the highest esteem (Coolahan, 1981, p. 54). It was only in 1918, that secondary school teachers achieved professional status with the establishment of the Registration Council leading to new regulations, which required that all secondary school teachers be graduates with teacher training (Coolahan, 1981). Over the following two decades, secondary school teachers secured incremental salary scales paid by the State, as well as pension rights and employment contracts.

In 1900, the Intermediate Education Ireland Amendment Act was passed, following a commission of Intermediate Education, undertaken by Pallas in 1898, which reported a number of weaknesses in the system. However, the recommendations of the report, which included a thorough and public examination of the principles upon which the education system was based, led to only minor and impracticable changes to the existing system (Coolahan, 1981). A number of additional inquiry commissions (Dale and Stephens Report, 1905; Killanin and Molony Committees, 1918) on the structure and legislative framework of the education system also took place towards the turn of the century to evaluate the secondary education system. These enquiries highlighted major flaws with the education system such as poor resourcing and maintenance of schools, the need for a central authority to co-ordinate education at different levels and weaknesses within the curriculum. A range of recommendations were proposed which called for greater State intervention in education (O' Buachalla, 1988). However, on gaining independence, no commission was established or appraisal conducted in the early years of the Free State to evaluate the structure, condition or assumptions underpinning the system of education which had been acquired (Coolahan, 1981; Hanna, 2006).

Some authors have suggested that the harsh social, political and economic climate of the newly established State following colonisation and a subsequent civil war, may have

‘hindered the adoption of education as a priority area for administrative reform’ allowing inherited laissez faire principles and practices to continue unexplored (Coolahan, 1981, p. 45; O’ Buachalla, 1988; Lynch, 2006). Despite the Irish revolutionary period of 1916-1922 with its ‘potential for the development of a progressive, welfare focused society’ the new Free State Government lacked radicalism and security (Ó’ hAdhmaill and O’ Riordan, 2014, p. 4) and so educational reform was limited largely to the introduction of new educational policy and curricular modifications which focused predominantly on cultural nationalism and Irish language revival (O’ Buachalla, 1988; O’ Donovan, 2013). The secondary school curriculum continued to be orientated around general education with a focus on literary and classical studies (Coolahan, 1981; O’ Sullivan, 2005) despite the Commission of Technical Education’s (1927) assertion that the curriculum did not adequately equip students with the skills needed for employment, particularly with respect to the needs of industry and agriculture (O’ Sullivan, 2005).

The only major structural educational reform which took place following independence, involved the establishment, in June 1924, of a Department of Education with centralising control and tasked with coordinating the primary, secondary and technical education sectors (Coolahan, 2003), as will be discussed in Section 3.3. With the exception of the School Attendance Act (1926) which required every child to attend school from 6 until 14 years of age and the Vocational Education Act (1930), which established Vocational Education Committees to provide vocational and technical education to pupils, no other legislation or significant administrative or financial arrangements took place under the new Irish Government until the late 1950s (Mulcahy and O’ Sullivan, 1989; O’ Sullivan, 2005). Consequently, the denominational education system continued with little change for the next number of decades with the State adhering to a minimally interventionist approach in education and schools maintaining the freedom ‘to conduct their own affairs once they complied with rules for recognised status’ set down by the Department of Education (Coolahan, 1981, p. 54).

3.3 The State's Subsidiarity Approach to Education

Secondary schools operated under a 'Patronage' model, which saw the general running of each school delegated to school patrons, usually bishops, who had coordinated the schools' establishment (Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012). In line with prevailing liberalist laissez faire principles, school patrons and managers had considerable local power and were free to negotiate the terms, conditions and remuneration of teachers in employment and to operate individual schools as they saw fit, provided that they complied with State examination and inspection regulations and produced students who had successfully completed these examinations (O' Buachalla 1988). Once schools met these criteria, 'there was no further investigation of how the schools managed their affairs' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 63). Therefore, the State maintained control of some of the system's most powerful functions while local managers had considerable power over their teachers and over their schools (Coolahan, 1981) creating quite a gulf between the power and control of those in central authority and what happened on the ground, in terms of the day-to-day running of the school. The Department of Education's first annual report (1924-1925, p. 34), provides quite a clear delineation of the roles of both the patrons and the Department of Education in secondary school education.

The State at present inspects these schools regularly and exercises a certain amount of supervision through its powers to make grants to schools as a result of these inspections, but it neither funds secondary schools, nor finances the building of them, nor exercises any power or veto on the appointment or dismissal of such teachers or the management of schools.

The State's limited role in education was reinforced by the Catholic Church who, from the inception of the national school scheme of education, had mounted an 'almost continuous crusade on education' (O' Buachalla, 1988, p. 207) which, by the turn of the century, saw the positions of the established Church of Ireland and the majority Catholic churches entirely reversed, with the Catholic Church now exercising considerable power and influence over education in Ireland. The Catholic Church steadily extended 'its sphere of power and influence' (O' Buachalla, 1988, p. 205) over

a system of education which was ‘acceptable to and controlled by them through the Patronage model but was funded mainly by the State’ (O’ Buachalla, 1988, p. 207).

The Catholic Church’s substantial role in Irish education was further strengthened by a number of significant religious publications which were consolidated by the Irish Constitution of 1937, *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, which explicitly acknowledges in Article 42 that

the primary and natural educator of the child is the family and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of parents to provide, according to their means for the religious and social education of their children (Hyland, 2012, p. 26).

In Article 42.2.4 and 44.2.6 of *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, the State commits to the protection of denominational interests in education by explicitly defining the State’s role in education as ensuring that children receive ‘a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social’ through the provision of State aid for education (Hyland, 2012). Meanwhile, the Papal Encyclical on Education (1929) of Pope Pius XI decreed that the Church’s role in education is derived from ‘a supernatural title conferred by God upon her alone, transcending in authority and validity any title of the natural order’ (O’ Buachalla, 1988, p. 212). The encyclical assigns the role of the State in education to one of protection of parental rights to provide their children with a Christian education and having done so to then respect ‘the rights of the church over such Christian education’ (O’ Buachalla, 1988, p. 212). A further Papal Encyclical (*Quadragesimo Anno*) published in 1931 was very influential in shaping public and political opinion both on the State’s roles in education and the State’s role in society (Daly and Clavero, 2003). The encyclical asserted that it is

an injustice... a grave evil and disturbance of the right order for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies (Powell, 1992, p. 232).

This tenet is known as the principle of subsidiarity (O’ Buachalla, 1988) and asserts that the State should not involve itself in social service provision ‘where needs could be met by smaller entities such as individuals themselves, their families or voluntary

organisations' (Dukelow and Considine, 2009, p. 28). The principle of subsidiarity holds that human affairs are best handled at the lowest, least centralised level, closest to the affected persons (Bosnich, 2013).

This principle of subsidiarity underpinned the new Irish Constitution of 1937 and shaped the relationship between the State and families (Bosnich, 2013). Successive Ministers for Education adopted a 'minimal interference' (O' Buachalla, 1988, p. 61), subsidiarity stance, envisaging their role as 'one of aiding agencies such as the Church in the provision of educational facilities' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 45; Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012). The period from the 1920s to the early 1960s has been described as 'operating within a theocentric paradigm, where the purpose, ownership and control of education are understood within a framework of Christian principles about human nature' (O' Sullivan, 2005; Lynch, 2006, p. 305; Ging et al., 2009). The Church decreed that the 'purpose of education is to lead people to God and facilitate them in reaching their eternal salvation' (Lynch, 2006, p. 305). This purpose then supported its assertion that the religious authorities should 'claim privilege in relation to the ownership, management and general control of schools' (Lynch, 2006, p. 305).

Having witnessed the power of the Catholic Church prior to Independence, the new political leaders were loath to antagonise such a powerful entity (Hanna, 2006; Lynch, 2006). Under the principle of subsidiarity, the Catholic Church, 'legitimated by its own doctrines' (Dukelow and Considine, 2009, p. 323) extended its control over women, families and matters of morality (O' Buachalla, 1988; Dukelow and Considine, 2009). The conservative and traditional perspective of the Church 'was largely mirrored by the mainstream political domain' (Dukelow and Considine, 2009, p. 174) and so the State only intervened 'in ways in which were consistent with the Church's perspective on men, women and families' (Dukelow and Considine, 2009, p. 28). The State's reluctance to intrude in education may be evidenced by the ways in which the State turned 'a blind eye' to the excessive use of corporal punishment in schools as will be discussed in Section 3.5 (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005, p. 636). The following section now explores the contextual backdrop, which preceded the abolition of corporal punishment in Irish schools. This discussion provides the study with a contextual

background in terms of the social, economic, cultural and political developments which were taking place in Ireland during this period; all of which influenced education policy in a significant way.

3.4 Contextual Background to the Abolition of Corporal Punishment

The 20 year period which preceded the abolition of corporal punishment in Irish schools was characterised by dramatic political, social, cultural, economic, demographic and attitudinal change in Ireland (Moody and Martin, 2001; O' Sullivan, 2005). Faced with rising unemployment and emigration, the State began to move away from the Catholic conservatism which had prevailed until the late 1950s, towards a more corporatist ideology (McLaughlin, 1993; Macveigh, 2012). The publication of the Government's *First Programme for Economic Expansion* in 1958 marks a significant shift in political and societal thinking in relation to economic and industrial development and a new awareness of the complex links between education and socio-economic development (Coolahan, 1981; Moody and Martin, 2001). The Investment in Education (IIE) Report of 1962, a major analysis of the education system conducted in co-operation with the Organisation for Economic Development (OECD), saw the Department of Education cast off its earlier self-conception as 'an administrative body with little concern for education research or innovation' and undertake increased initiative in education policy (Coolahan, 1981, p. 165). This report (IIE, 1962) has been described as an 'abrupt' (O' Sullivan, 2005, p. 129) and 'radical ideological departure in Irish educational thinking' (Brown, 1985, p. 250) which normalised the link between education and the economy. Issues brought to the fore included the need for a skilled workforce to meet the commitments of the Government's *Programme for Economic Expansion* (1958; 1963), the principle of equality of educational opportunity and the need for a more 'positivistic approach to educational understanding and planning' (O' Sullivan, 2005, p. 129).

The period following the IIE report (1966) witnessed an education system 'less concerned with nationalist ideals and more with creating conditions for economic growth' (Duignan, 2011, p. 25). Greater student participation in post primary education,

equality of educational opportunity and broadening of the curriculum in line with the market needs became key policy aims throughout the 1960s and 1970s (O' Buachalla, 1988; Mulcahy and O' Sullivan, 1989). This led to a number of policy initiatives including the first State grants for secondary school expansion and the establishment of the State psychological service in 1965, the free education and free transport schemes of 1967 and the provision of education for disadvantaged children and pupils with special needs throughout the 1960s (Coolahan, 1981). These and subsequent policies led to a huge increase in pupil participation rates, re-organisation of rules and regulations of existing schools and the establishment of State funded comprehensive schools in 1964. In fact, the free education scheme exceeded expectation and saw the number of post-primary pupils increase from 143,000 in 1965/1966 to 301,000 in 1980/1981 (O' Sullivan, 2005).

According to a report released by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC) in 1976, public expenditure in education almost doubled as a percentage of the Gross National Product to 6.29% in the decade between 1963 and 1973 whilst the numbers of secondary school teachers doubled in the 7 year period between 1967 and 1974 (Tussing, 1978, p. 67). Membership of the Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) increased significantly from 55% in 1968 to 96% in 1974 of all full time lay registered secondary teachers enhancing considerably the power and influence of teachers in achieving State objectives in education and therefore casting teachers as 'a force to be reckoned with and meriting consultation in the policy making process' (O' Sullivan, 2005, p. 147).

O' Sullivan (2005) suggests that language revival and religion which had previously dominated Irish education policy were replaced with the new objective of preparing citizens for employment. Education policy during the 1960s and 1970s began to move its focus 'from theocentric to mercantile' leading to greater State involvement in education (Coolahan, 1988, p. 84). Although initial State intervention in education was met with much resistance from the Irish public (Coolahan, 1981), new conceptions of 'education as human capital' popular in the 1960s, supported the State's investment in

education which came to be widely regarded as a crucial component in achieving economic growth (O' Sullivan, 2005).

A new emphasis began to emerge in Irish education, which focused on the demands of the labour market (Lynch, 2012, p. 93). Economic growth generated by the educational initiatives of the 1960s enabled the State to further invest in the education system which 'in turn helped provide the more educated workforce for an expanding economy' (Mulcahy and O' Sullivan, 1989, p. 61). Ireland's entry to the European Economic Community in 1973 and the establishment of the National Economic and Social Council (NESCC) in the same year, further influenced educational, and indeed social and economic, policy in Ireland and consolidated the need for the State to have a greater role in education (O' Sullivan, 2005). The Fianna Fáil Government in power from 1957 to 1972, exhibited a 'new dynamism and political dedication' not seen in previous Governments (Coolahan, 1981, p. 70; Moody and Martin, 2001). It was during this political reign that the privileged position of the Catholic Church, prevalent in the early twentieth century, gave way to growing State involvement in education (O' Buachalla, 1988). By 1980, the Irish education system was becoming increasingly more centralised and the State, through the Department of Education, exercised a greater deal of direct and indirect control over many aspects of the system (Coolahan, 1981).

This increased State involvement in education coincided with significant development and modernisation within the Catholic Church and also with great changes within the Irish value system which was becoming increasingly fragmented and influenced by ideas coming in from other countries (O' Sullivan, 2005). The second Vatican Council, which was held in Rome between 1962 and 1965, reviewed the Church's position in the context of a more modern world, leading to a new emphasis on partnership in education (Mulcahy and O' Sullivan, 1989). This new philosophical approach corresponded with a significant drop in vocations and thus the number of religious available to work in schools decreased greatly (Dukelow and Considine, 2009). For instance, in Ireland the percentage of lay teachers to clergy in primary schools rose from 40% in 1942 to 82% in 1980 (O' Buachalla, 1988). This change in clerical man-power, coupled with a new partnership approach to education, which saw the gradual demise of the 'old paternalist

ethos which confined education policy to the authority figures' (Coolahan, 1981, p. 133) paved the way for the negotiation of a new secondary school management structure, similar to that established in national schools in 1975. This new management structure, which saw the introduction of new parent-teacher associations involved in the running of local schools came into being in 1992 (O' Sullivan, 2005) leading to a new chapter in Irish education, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.

From the 1950s onwards, parent groups such as the School Childrens' Protection Organisation and a growing number of Government ministers, such as Minister Noel Browne and Senator Owen Sheehy Skeffington, had been relentlessly lobbying the Government for the abolition of corporal punishment. Maguire and O' Cinneide (2005, p. 647) suggest that corporal punishment in schools persisted for such a lengthy period because the State maintained its subsidiary position in education and was 'reluctant to take decisive action on the matter'. The State endured '30 years of sustained public pressure' as it did not wish to intervene in what it considered to be a matter between school managers, teachers and pupils (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005, p. 650). Amidst long standing fierce debate, widespread public pressure, wildly opposing societal, educationalist and organisational perspectives and a need to reconcile practice with the recommendations of the OECD Report (1966) and principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (1949), corporal punishment was finally abolished in all Irish schools in 1982 (Maguire and Cinneide, 2005; Parker-Jenkins, 2008).

Having endeavoured to contextualise the critical factors surrounding its abolition, the following section will now explore the use of corporal punishment in Irish schools and illustrate the State's prevailing subsidiary approach to school discipline throughout the pre-abolition era. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, an examination of the ways in which the State responded historically to matters of school discipline is central to understanding the influence of historical low State intervention in education on the development of contemporary policy responses to address SBTB in Ireland.

3.5 Corporal Punishment in Irish Schools

The prolific use of corporal punishment by care givers and teachers in Ireland and in other Western societies throughout the twentieth century is well documented (Harber, 2002; Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005; Eisenbraun, 2007; Wickham, 2010) and its use in schools may be found 'in the origins of education and traditional practices' (Parker-Jenkins, 2008, p. 7). Corporal punishment has been defined as 'the use of physical force with the intention of causing a child to experience pain, but not injury, for the purpose of correction or control of the child's behaviour' (Strauss, 1994, p. 4). Corporal punishment was protected as a parental right in the Childrens' Act (1908) and its use was permitted in schools where teachers were viewed as acting in loco parentis (Parker-Jenkins, 2008). The widespread use of physical chastisement of children by Irish parents facilitated both lay teachers and the Religious Orders in their defence that such measures were necessary to instil respect, order and citizenship in children (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005).

Prior to the abolition of corporal punishment, the Irish education system operated a 'strict disciplinary approach' and was based on 'great respect for authority' (Wickham, 2010, p. 12). Discipline was acquired by eliciting fear in pupils and by administering regular physical punishments which were often disproportionate to the transgressions committed by the child (Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (CICA), 2009; Charleton, 2012). Teachers in Irish schools, in the period which spanned from the 1940s through to the early 1980s, relied heavily on corporal punishment as they were otherwise ill-equipped to deal with student behavioural issues. Teachers had 'little or no understanding of behavioural disorders', little consideration for the 'factors impinging on the student's lives outside of school' and no training or access to expertise on how to otherwise influence student behaviour through positive teaching practices or methodologies (O' Buachalla, 1988, Wickham, 2010, p 12). Problems in the classroom were always considered to be the student's fault and 'the teacher's role in this relationship was never questioned' (Miller 1996; Wickham, 2010, p. 13). Although corporal punishment was prevalent in all Irish schools, there is evidence that the most excessive, severe and prolific use of corporal punishment took place in Catholic run industrial schools and reformatories (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005; Commission to

Inquire into Child Abuse, 2000). The Catholic Church defended this practice asserting that teachers ‘could not function without a stringent corporal punishment regime’ and insisted that such procedures were consistent with prevailing practice in homes and schools across Ireland (Maguire and O’ Cinneide, 2005, p. 635).

The Department of Education issued circulars and guidelines regarding the use of corporal punishment in industrial, national and secondary schools (e.g. Circular 1946 11/46 Corporal Punishment in Industrial Schools; Circular 1946 15/46 Corporal Punishment in National Schools; Circular 1954 7/54 Corporal Punishment in National schools; 1956 17/56 Corporal Punishment; Circular 1982 M5/82 Abolition of Corporal Punishment in Schools). For instance, Circular 1946 15/46 issued to all managers and all teachers in regard to corporal punishment in schools, re-iterated the requirement on all teachers, both primary and secondary, to adhere to Regulation 96 which stated that

- (1) Corporal punishment should be administered only for grave transgression. In no circumstances should corporal punishment be administered for mere failure at lessons.
- (2) Only the principal teacher, or such other member of the staff as may be duly authorised by the manager for the purpose, should inflict corporal punishment. An interval of at least ten minutes should elapse between the offence and the punishment.
- (3) Only a light cane or rod may be used for the purpose of corporal punishment which should be inflicted only on the open hand. The boxing of children's ears, the pulling of their hair or similar ill-treatment is absolutely forbidden and will be visited with severe penalties.
- (4) No teacher should carry about a cane or other instrument of punishment.
- (5) Frequent recourse to corporal punishment will be considered by the Minister as indicating bad tone and ineffective discipline (Department of Education, 1946).

However, in practice, corporal punishment was ‘widely used to maintain discipline, and violations of the regulations were common place and for the most

part ignored by the Department' (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005, p. 639). The inclination of the State to overlook violations of corporal punishment regulations is explicitly connected with the previously discussed principle of subsidiarity in which the State endeavoured to remove itself from what was deemed to be matters under the Church's superior control (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005; Wickham, 2010). Due to prevailing subsidiarity, the State 'consistently refused to hold teachers or school managers accountable for even the most blatant violations of the rules' (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005, p. 636), rules which changed only minimally from the 1930s until 1982 when corporal punishment was abolished following decades of opposition and debate.

The use of corporal punishment in schools not only raises problems on ethical and moral grounds but its success as a disciplinary tool has also been widely disputed (Clark, 2004). In fact, a considerable body of evidence suggests that corporal punishment is not an effectual means of managing student behaviour (Asmal, 1999; Eisenbraun, 2007; Hatfield, 2008; Parker-Jenkins, 2008). Its use in schools has been associated with adverse physical, psychological and educational outcomes, including increased aggressive and destructive behaviour (Youssef et al., 1999; Clark, 2004), increased drop-out rates; poor school achievement (Hyman 1995; Hyman and Perone 1998; Arcus 2002; Wickham, 2010); depression and suicide (Poole et al., 1991). Researchers suggest that corporal punishment does not promote a culture of learning and discipline in the classroom and instead may increase the risk factors for school violence (Asmal, 1999; Parker-Jenkins, 2008) as it models societal violence (Eisenbraun, 2007). It does not 'build a culture of tolerance, human rights and respect' (Asmal, 1999, p. 7) and therefore may negatively impact on the school climate (Skiba and Peterson, 2000). The practice may undermine self-esteem and self-confidence (Asmal, 1999; Clark, 2004; Wickham, 2010) and may elicit feelings of intense anger in the pupil (Welsh, 1978) and lead to increased rates of student violence and delinquency (Adams, 1991; Harber, 2002).

In addition to increasing the risk of violence amongst pupils (Romeo, 1996; Bogacki et al., 2005), international research suggests that the use of corporal punishment in schools

may also increase the risk of student perpetrated violence against teachers. For instance, Romeo (1996, p. 7) argues that the use of ‘physical force upon another in an inferior position’ may prompt a desire to ‘get even’ and to take out one’s ‘anger on teachers or other students’ (Poole et al., 1991). Similarly, Asmal (1999) asserts that ‘punishment does not nurture discipline in learners but evokes a feeling of aggression or revenge, and leads to anti-social behaviour’ with some pupils regarding the beating ‘as a badge of bravery or success’ (Asmal, 1999, p. 8; Smit, 2010). Hatfield et al. (2008, p. 76) warn that teachers’ use of physical violence against pupils may ‘encourage students to believe that they too have the right to be violent’. Notwithstanding the potential negative implications associated with the use of corporal punishment, the State’s decision to finally abolish corporal punishment in Irish schools appears to have been based less on an evaluation of its effectiveness as a disciplinary method and more on societal, economic and European influences of the period (Maguire and O’ Cinneide, 2005).

3.6 Managing Student Behaviour in the Post Abolition Era

In the absence of corporal punishment, educationalists now turned to the curriculum for assistance in managing challenging student behaviour. The ideology of the 1971 New Curriculum was influenced by philosophers such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Freire and Steiner who promoted child-centred learning and development (Fallon, 2005). A child-centred approach to education is one in which the child is placed at the core of the learning process rather than the body of knowledge which is to be ingested (McCarthy, 2011). The child is seen as an active agent in his or her own learning and development and teaching methods are adapted to suit the needs and interests of learners (McCarthy, 2011). Minister for Education in 1977, John P. Wilson insisted that the new curriculum ‘with all its inbuilt motivation for discovery in learning’ and its ‘boundless opportunities for creativity and self-expression’ would ensure ‘the voluntary co-operation of the pupils’ (Dáil Éireann, 1977). He further asserted that teachers had sufficient professional training in student psychology and teaching methodologies to allow them to handle the ‘vast majority of teaching situations’ and to establish teacher-student relationships which are ‘based on mutual affection and respect thus rendering corporal punishment unnecessary’ (Dáil Éireann, 1977). Therefore, no additional training, supports or resources were provided to assist teachers in transitioning to a

radically different practice for dealing with student discipline issues. In actuality, the implementation of the New Curriculum of 1971 was hindered by poor co-ordination and planning, insufficient teacher training, large class sizes, lack of parental involvement and inadequate resources and materials, due in part to the harsh economic conditions of the 1980s (Coolahan, 1981; O' Buachalla, 1988; Coolahan, 2005). Consequently, the child-centred approach espoused was not widely practised and 'transmission models of teaching continued to dominate' (Drudy and Lynch, 1993, p.103; McCarthy, 2011). This curriculum was superseded, in 1999, by a more evolved and developed Child Centred/ Learning Focused curriculum which placed education within a lifelong learning paradigm (Coolahan, 2005, Kenny et al., 2013; O' Donovan, 2013).

Following abolition, teachers and particularly senior teachers, who had relied on corporal punishment as their dominant strategy for maintaining discipline were challenged to 're-evaluate their approach to classroom management and alter the manner' by which they dealt with disruptive pupils (Wickham, 2010, p. 12). With physical coercion no longer permitted, limited provision of continuing professional development for teachers, an absence of alternative supports or mechanisms for managing discipline and under-adoption of the State's ambitious ideological and teaching principles, a new over-reliance on alternative punitive sanctions such as detention, suspension and exclusionary measures began to emerge as will be discussed in Chapter 4 (Wickham, 2010; McGrath, 2010). The State's lack of forward-planning, low intervention and delegation of responsibility for student discipline and teachers' well-being are apparent in the lack of strategic policy provision in the period following the abolition of corporal punishment in schools.

3.7 Conclusion

The early sections of this chapter have explored the origins of the secondary school system in Ireland. The power and influence of the Catholic Church on the State, and on education were outlined, and the principle of subsidiarity, engrained in Bunreacht na hÉireann (1937) and its lasting impact on Irish social and education policy were discussed. The use of corporal punishment and the combination of contextual factors

which surrounded both its use and its abolition were explored, as were the curricular developments towards a more student-centred philosophy in the post abolition period.

Throughout the chapter, evidence of low State intervention in education has been highlighted. From the establishment of the education system in the new Free State in which the State adopted a subsidiary position delegating responsibility for the running of schools to Patrons and school managers, through to the use of corporal punishment in schools in which the State failed to intervene despite excessive violation of the Department's rules (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005) and more recently in relation to the lack of training, policies or guidelines to support teachers in the post abolition period.

Chapter 4 now explores the State's gradual increasing involvement in education due to a combination of social, ideological and economic factors including the influences of the EU and children's rights treaties in the early 1990s. An increasing amount of educational legislation, beginning with the White Paper *Changing Our Education Future* (1995), which signalled greater Governmental awareness of issues such as children's rights and equality of educational opportunity, may be discerned. This next chapter seeks to explain the more interventionist approach adopted by Governments in the years following the abolition of corporal punishment and to explore the emergence of such an approach in the light of its formerly accepted subsidiary role in education policy. Contemporary policy responses and supports to address SBT and challenging student behaviour are explored whilst the limitations of the State response are underlined.

4

Contemporary Irish Policy Responses to Student Behaviour

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on contemporary policy responses to challenging student behaviour and SBT in Ireland. The early sections trace a gradual shift in the State's subsidiary approach towards greater State intervention in education and looks at some of the factors which have influenced this development. Meanwhile, the latter part of the chapter concentrates on more recent policy responses to student behaviour which have been strongly influenced by the recommendations of the State commissioned *School Matters* Task Force report (Martin, 2006). The key economic, social, cultural and ideological developments which have influenced the State's increasing intervention in education policy, since the early 1990s, are explored.

Section 4.2 explores the new focus on students' rights in Ireland and looks in particular at the impact of the Education Act (1998) on teachers' management of student behaviour. This Act (1998) reflected a growing international concern with protecting the rights of the child in education and therefore made the use of detention, suspension and exclusion of disruptive students extremely difficult. Section 4.3 focuses on the late 1990s and early 2000s, a period known as the Celtic Tiger era, in which education policy became progressively more influenced by neo-liberal principles and globalisation. During this time an increasing wave of concern amongst teachers prompted the Government to commission an enquiry on student behaviour in second level schools (Martin, 1997) followed by the establishment of a Task Force on student behaviour in 2005. These two reports (Martin, 1997, 2006) represent the sum of Governmental research on the state of student behaviour in Irish second level schools.

Section 4.4 provides a contextual background to the societal changes which took place in Ireland following the publication of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006), followed by an overview of the economic developments which have impacted on the contemporary policy response to SBTB. As mentioned, the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) had been commissioned to inform future policy and practice in relation to challenging and disruptive student behaviour. However, two years after its publication, Ireland entered a harsh global recession and a lengthy period of austerity

impacting significantly on education policy and subsequent responses to challenging student behaviour.

Section 4.5 looks at some of the ideological influences which have shaped the Irish policy response to SBTB. In particular the influences of neo-liberalism and the demands of globalisation on education policy are explored. The knock-on effects of such global education reform on teachers' well-being and on SBTB are also briefly discussed. The contemporary Irish policy responses to challenging student behaviour, based on the recommendations of the *School Matters* (Martin, 2006) report are discussed in Section 4.6. In particular, developments regarding the National Behaviour Support Service, current circulars and legislation, teacher training and education, class size and the time pressures experienced by Year Heads are considered. Finally, Section 4.7 centres on the influence of the on-going austerity measures on teacher well-being and on SBTB in Irish second level schools

4.2 A New Focus on Students' Rights

The 1980s in Ireland were a time of great economic difficulty and 'a time of non-investment and little development in education' (O' Donovan, 2013, p. 30). In contrast, the 1990s and early 2000s, and in particular the decade from 1995 to 2005, known as the Celtic Tiger era, represents a period of unparalleled and rapid economic growth (Fallon, 2005; Hyland, 2012) which transformed Ireland from one of Europe's most impoverished countries into one of its wealthiest (Schafer, 2009; Drudy, 2009). The late 1980s saw a new international adoption of neo liberal principles which began to influence State policies on welfare provision. This neo-liberal influence may be seen in Irish education policy, for instance in the privatisation of school buildings and the new focus on education as a means of promoting economic growth (Drudy, 2009). However, the development of education policy in Ireland has not been linear. Irish education policy has been shaped by a number of simultaneous and contradictory trends and ideological, social and political influences which run parallel to, and are often at odds with, neo-liberal principles. For instance, education policy since the 1990s has been

shaped to a large extent, by an increasing emphasis on the rights of the child (Houtsonen et al., 2010).

Ireland, during the 1990s, was greatly influenced by European social policy and by international human rights treaties (Breen, 2006) leading to integration into Irish law of the principles of the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the most comprehensive document ever written about children's rights (Dukelow and Considine, 2009). The ratification by Ireland in 1992 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child signalled the beginning of a new focus on protecting children's rights and quality of life (Hayes, 2002). During this period, there was also an extensive rise in child protection legislation in Ireland, including the Child Care Act (1991), the Children Act (1997, 2001) and the Children First Guidelines (1999). More recent evidence of State commitment to the protection of children's rights includes the formation of a National Children's Strategy, the revised Children First Guidelines (2011), the established of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in 2011 and the Children's Referendum in 2012. Ireland has in fact been described as the 'vanguard when it comes to children's rights, especially their political rights' (Daly and Clavero, 2003, p. 9). The State's commitment to safe-guarding children's rights has been shaped largely by European and international discourse on the matter. However, the issue has also been prioritised since the 1990s, following widespread revelations of abuse perpetrated by members of the Catholic Church against children in reformatories, industrial schools and other settings throughout much of the twentieth century (Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005; Ryan Report, 2009; Charleton, 2012).

This new Government focus on children's rights in education and on high quality educational reform can be seen in the large amount of educational legislation which began in the late 1990s commencing with the Government's White Paper, *Changing Our Education Future* (1995) in which the Government 'set out five principles to underpin its education policy — quality, equality, partnership, pluralism and accountability' (Coolahan, 2003, p. 3), paving the way for the introduction of the Education Act in 1998 (Burke, 2004). The introduction of the Education Act (1998) witnessed a reform of education in Ireland from a system which had traditionally

operated predominantly on ‘practice and custom’ to one which became progressively defined by a ‘new and rigorous legislative framework’ (Burke et al., 2004; Martin, 2006, p. 8; Hyland, 2012; O’ Donovan, 2013). Together with the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Education Act (1998) provides the main legislative structure for primary and second level education in Ireland and has led to significant positive developments in both the Irish education system and in elevating the status of the student within that system (Burke, 2004; Wickham, 2010; O’ Donovan, 2013).

The Education Act (1998) is fundamentally concerned with the promotion of ‘best practice in teaching methods with regard to the diverse needs of students and the development of the skills and competences of teachers’ (Department of Education, 1998, 6 f). The Act is unequivocal in its expectation of schools to ‘establish and maintain systems whereby the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations [could] be assessed, including the quality and effectiveness of teaching in the school and the attainment levels and academic standards of students’ (Department of Education, 1998, p. 9). The roles and responsibilities of the three key stakeholder groups: (1) the Department of Education and Skills, principally the Inspectorate Division, (2) the boards of management and Patrons of schools and (3) the Teaching Council, are explicitly defined in the Act (National Economic and Social Forum, 2011, p. 54). Conversely, Churches approval of the Act was secured on State assurances that the ‘ethos and characteristic spirit of their schools would be preserved and protected by this law’ (Mooney Simmie, 2012, p. 487).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Section 3.4, boards of management were set up in all secondary schools in 1992 following the publication of the Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (1992). Secondary school boards of management consist of elected teachers and parents of the school and nominees of the Patron or Trustee (owner of the school) all of whom occupy their positions on the board in a voluntary capacity (Hanna, 1998). All board members must be approved by the Chairperson of the board who is appointed by the Patron or Trustee (Hyland, 2012). Although teacher’s salaries are funded by the Department of Education and Skills, the board of management is the legal employer of the school staff and is responsible for the recruitment and promotion

of teachers subject to State regulations in this regard (Hyland, 2012). In general, and again consistent with subsidiarity principles which underpin the education system, the Department of Education assigns the running of all State funded schools to these boards of management (BoM) subject to their compliance with State educational legislation and regulations (Hanna, 2006, p. 6). Conversely, secondary schools operating under this patronage and management system are known as voluntary secondary schools.

The period from the late 1990s to the early 2000s has been described as a 'watershed' in Irish education (Daly and Clavero, 2003, p. 48) as the State progressively began to recognise its responsibility to address prevailing inequality within the system. The Act (1998) formally acknowledges the State's legal obligation to provide an education for every member of society and to be accountable for that education to all stakeholders (Mooney Simmie, 2012; Hyland, 2012). In response to the high levels of student suspensions and expulsions since the abolition of corporal punishment and congruent with the State's new undertaking to safe-guard each student's rights to education, Section 29 was introduced as part of the Education Act (1998). Section 29 afforded parents and children over 18 years of age the right to appeal boards of management decisions regarding suspension, expulsion and enrolment refusal (Department of Education and Science, 1998). This section of the Act (1998) severely impeded teachers' and managers ability to apply punitive sanctions for disciplinary issues, even when such measures were deemed to be warranted (Martin, 2006). A survey of second level school teachers and principals carried out in 2005 by the Marino Institute of Education revealed that 76% of respondents felt that the rights of students had been reinforced by legislation which undermined the schools' ability to 'respond effectively to disruptive behaviour as the individuals' rights have taken precedence over the communal rights of the teaching and learning community' (Donnelly, 2005, p.14).

A number of incidents of serious aggressive student behaviour, in which staff were comparatively powerless to expel the perpetrating student, have been cited in the media. A case in point concerns a 14 year old Munster student with a record of serious violence against fellow pupils and possession of knives on school property, who successfully appealed his expulsion in 2006, after threatening his teacher with a hammer (Irish

Independent, 2010). The principal difficulties with Section 29 identified by teachers included the significant time, expense and school disruption involved in an appeal, the loss of staff morale when an appeal was upheld and the pervasive feeling that ‘the pendulum has swung too far in favour of the misbehaving student and away from the rights of the teacher to teach and the compliant students to learn’ (Martin, 2006, p. 134). Therefore despite the positive impact of the Education Act (1998) on Irish education, Section 29 of the Act further disadvantaged and disempowered teachers who were again robbed of a customary means of managing challenging student behaviour without adequate strategic support, training or additional resources from the State.

4.3 State Enquiry on Challenging Student Behaviour

At an education conference in 1995, entitled *Issues and Strategies in the Implementation of Educational Change* which followed the publication of the Government’s *White Paper on Education* (1995) the ‘burning issue of discipline in schools’ was raised by Dr. Maeve Martin, discussion group rapporteur (Coolahan, 1995, p. 129). In April 1996, Dr. Martin undertook a scoping study into the state of discipline in the school system, commissioned by the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach. The study, *Discipline in Schools*, was tasked with answering the following research questions.

- (1) Is discipline in schools an issue of national concern?
- (2) Are there good practice models in the system from which others may learn?
- (3) What support structures are required to support good discipline?

The study commenced with an exploration of the concept of school discipline and an analysis of the contextual factors, such as socio-economic disadvantage, increasing diversity and social changes in Ireland, which influence matters of discipline in Irish schools. A mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis was used. This included a questionnaire of 100 primary school and 150 post-primary school teachers, which explored the prevalence, nature and causes of indiscipline, the coping mechanisms used and the support structures sought by teachers to deal with the issue. In addition to conducting a series of structured interviews with representatives of the

partners in education to elicit the views of management, unions, parents, inspectors and teacher educators, Martin (1997) also carried out visits to 30 primary and secondary schools to afford school staff the opportunity to raise issues of concern.

The study found that 64% of the 150 post-primary school respondents reported that discipline constituted a serious issue of concern for teachers. However, the majority of respondents indicated that low level behaviours, such as speaking out of turn, engaging in attention-seeking behaviours and being tardy for class, rather than serious persistent disruptive behaviours, were more frequently experienced by teachers. Serious breaches of discipline, which were experienced by 20% of post-primary respondents, included violent behaviour amongst pupils, the use of weaponry amongst pupils, vandalism and damage to school property. Interviewees also revealed that they had experienced ‘open defiance, intimidation and hostility directed at teachers’ and ‘a general attitude of we can do what we like - who is going to stop us?’, ‘various forms of bullying’ and the ‘use of obscene, totally inappropriate, vulgar language’ (Martin, 1997, p. 33).

The highest levels of serious and persistent disruptive behaviour were generally reported by teachers in schools located in areas of disadvantage; in fact 91% of respondents based in schools in designated disadvantaged areas said student disruptive behaviour was a ‘real issue of concern’ (Martin, 1997, p. 30), a finding which is inconsistent with that of the present study as will be discussed in Chapter 6. 67% of teachers in co-educational schools, 60% of teachers in all boys’ schools and 55% of teachers in all girls’ schools reported that they were concerned about school discipline. All respondents reported an increase in disruption. The gender and age of teachers were not seen as factors in determining levels of indiscipline.

Post-primary teachers listed quality teaching, the implementation of a school discipline code, clearly articulated discipline procedures, meaningful parental involvement, good leadership and strong collegiality as factors which promote positive student behaviour. Factors which teachers attributed to unsatisfactory student indiscipline include: the ‘absence of a clearly articulated, consistently implemented Code of Behaviour, resulting

in students being confused about what is and what is not acceptable behaviour' (Martin, 1997, p. 35), inadequate resource provision to cater for student diversity, poor parental engagement, weak school leadership, poor staff morale, heavy workload and a lack of classroom management skills amongst some staff.

The most frequently cited effective strategies for dealing with disruptive behaviour include: focusing on positive pupil behaviour, not allowing the problem to escalate, involving parents, withdrawing privileges and the consistent use of sanctions. Meanwhile, in addition to a call for a reduction in class size and time for Year Heads, the supports which were most frequently sought by all respondents include:

- (1) The clear identification of a set of rules governing conduct in the school, and a consistent whole-school implementation of these rules.
- (2) Increased parental accountability and responsibility concerning their children's behaviour in school.
- (3) Strong, positive leadership within the school.
- (4) The provision of a range of specialist services both within and outside the school to help manage the extreme cases of disruptive behaviour (Martin, 1997, p. 41).

In response to this report (Martin, 1997) the then Department of Education and Science (DES) issued Circular 1998 M12/98: *Violence towards Staff in Schools* to management authorities of second level schools which read

The Minister for Education and Science wishes to bring to the attention of school management authorities his concern at incidents of violence towards staff in second level schools. Violence in schools is an issue of grave concern for employees and employers alike. As in other workplaces staff in second level schools may also be victims of violence. During the course of their work, school staff may be at risk in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other

staff members or visitors. The Minister is anxious that every effort would be made to create and maintain a culture in schools where acts of violence are not tolerated and where incidents, when they do occur, are effectively and speedily dealt with (Department of Education and Science, 1998).

This was followed shortly by Circular 1999 M18/99: *Guidelines on Violence in Schools* (1999 M18/99) which highlighted the Minister of Education's concern regarding incidents of violence towards teachers and outlining the responsibility of management authorities to ensure a safe school environment for all students and staff members. Circular 1999 M18/99 recognises that school staff may be at risk of violence and unacceptable behaviour in the 'form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or visitors' (DES, 1999, p. 1) and emphasises the positive impact that effective school policies concerning a range of issues may have on improving student behaviour and reducing violence. It urges that adequate school discipline policies and codes of discipline should be in place and fully implemented in all schools. The provision of discipline policies and codes of behaviour became a legal requirement of all primary and post-primary schools in 2000 under Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

The low interventionist, subsidiary approach to education policy is clearly evident in the State's response to student behaviour and teachers' well-being in this context. Rather than intervening in a strategic manner and enforcing measures itself to tackle the issue of violence and aggression towards teachers, the Government discharges this responsibility and legal duty to the BoM under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005) and the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Regulations (1993) to provide a safe environment for employees and to ensure their health and welfare at work. The delegation of responsibility for the safety and well-being of teachers to the BoM and limitation of the State to a supporting role is very much characteristic of the Irish welfare State's historical low interventionist approach to education. Although the Department of Education and Skills has become increasingly more legislative and regulatory since the late 1990s, present day responsibility for managing challenging

student behaviour still lies with individual teachers, principals and voluntary boards of management members.

Increasing levels of challenging student behaviour were further highlighted in 2003, when a Discipline Committee was established by the ASTI teacher union to examine the issue of disruptive behaviour in schools and its implications for members. The Committee undertook a survey on *Student Behaviour and Discipline* (2004) involving 1,200 teachers, which revealed that teachers were being subjected to a wide range of undesirable behaviours from their students, the most prevalent of which was verbal abuse. The findings show that 71% of teachers had experienced continuous disruptive behaviour in the preceding year with 54% of respondents being verbally abused. Also in 2003, the first Irish study to explore the bullying of teachers by pupils was undertaken by James et al. (2008). The study which has been previously mentioned was conducted at two time periods; in 2003, 2,300 second year students from 27 secondary schools were surveyed whilst a second study took place in 2005, involving over 900 second year pupils from 14 secondary schools. All schools surveyed were participants in the Cool School Programme (James et al., 2006), a regional anti-bullying initiative for post primary schools. The study examined both bullying of pupils by teachers and bullying of teachers by pupils from the students' perspective at two specified time-points.

The findings show that 28% (2003) and 16% (2008) of pupils admitted to bullying a teacher, whilst 30% at both time points alleged being bullied by teachers. A significantly higher level of bullying was perpetrated by male students (34% in 2003; 22% in 2008) when compared with female students (22% in 2003; 14% in 2008). Verbal abuse and disruptive behaviours were the most frequently reported behaviours, whilst open ended questions in the survey elicited evidence of physical harm to teachers including student admissions that they 'threw things at them', 'touched their breasts and vagina', 'moved chair as she was going to sit down' and 'hid their stuff' (James et al., 2008, p.165). The study explored the teachers' role in dealing with bullying in the school setting and emphasised the necessity for teachers to model appropriate ways of managing bullying effectively. The researchers (James et al., 2008) suggest that teachers who cannot manage SBTB effectively do not inspire confidence in victimised students

in the teacher's ability to help them with a bullying problem, which may in turn contribute to a school climate which breeds bullying. The study also suggests a need for increased training at both pre and in-service levels so that teachers are better equipped to deal with both bullying between students and bullying directed at teachers. Interestingly, as is the case with the questionnaire of the present study, James et al. (2008) provided respondents with a list of bullying behaviours and a definition of bullying prior to completion of the questionnaire. Students were not asked to self-identify as 'bullying a teacher', rather they were asked if they had perpetrated any of the listed bullying behaviours. In addition, the questionnaire did not differentiate between behaviours that occurred on a once-off occasion and those which were perpetrated by the same student on a number of occasions. Therefore, as with the present study's questionnaire, James et al.'s (2008) study is particularly beneficial in gaining an indication of the prevalence of such bullying behaviours but in the absence of a qualitative component, the subjective experience of the perpetrator and the complexities of the phenomenon are not elucidated.

In 2005, amidst increasing teacher accounts of challenging student behaviour and media reports of rising levels and seriousness of student aggression towards teachers, a Task Force on student behaviour was established by the former Minister for Education and Science, Mary Hanafin T.D., to examine the level of student disruption in Irish second level schools. A number of high profile cases had been highlighted in the media including that of a Wexford secondary school teacher who required stitches and suffered from physical injuries and trauma whilst attempting to discipline a student for a breach of school rules. The pupil had punched and head-butted the teacher before being restrained by fellow students (Medcalf, 2002). Another reported case involved a Dublin school teacher who sustained a litany of injuries including a broken nose, chipped teeth and damage to his eyes following an incident in which he tried to confiscate a student's phone after he caught the student taking photographs of him in class (Education Matters, 2007).

On foot of the establishment of the Task Force, and following a Consultative Conference on School Discipline in December 2004, the Teachers Union of Ireland

(TUI) commissioned a survey on student behaviour in Irish post-primary vocational, community and comprehensive schools. A TUI review of the literature on student behaviour in Ireland had revealed an absence of empirical data, necessary for providing a ‘solid basis for policy-decision making’ (TUI, 2006, p. 1). The objective of the study was to establish teachers’ perceptions regarding student disruption in their schools, with the definition of disruption being clarified as unacceptable student behaviour which breaches the explicit rules of the class or the school. The survey was conducted in 58 post primary schools involving 1121 participants and examined the impact of disruptive behaviour on students, teachers and on teaching and explored both prevalence and the effect on student and teachers’ health and safety as part of its focus. A list of behaviours was presented in the survey, including disruption by students talking/shouting out of turn in class, verbal abuse directed at teacher by students, threatening/intimidating behaviour directed at teacher by students, sexual innuendo/harassment directed at teacher by student and impertinence/defiance of teacher by students (TUI, 2006, p.2). Although many of these behaviours may be indicative of SBT, the student bullying of teachers specifically was not explored. As mentioned previously, the findings of the study revealed that 97% of teachers had experienced some form of challenging student behaviour in the preceding week, whilst in excess of 70% reported enduring 5 of the 13 listed behaviours for the same period. 50% of respondents stated that student disruptive behaviour is either a ‘serious’ or ‘very serious’ problem for them (TUI, 2006, p.6).

The twelve member Task Force on *Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools*, comprised of school leadership representatives, co-ordinators from national programmes, a solicitor, teachers and Chairperson, Dr. Martin. The Task Force was assigned the following terms of reference:

- to examine the issue of disruptive student behaviour as it impacts upon teaching and learning;
- to consider the effectiveness of strategies at present employed to address it;
- to advise on existing best practice, both nationally and internationally, in fostering positive student behaviour in schools and classrooms and

- to make recommendations on how best to promote an improved climate for teaching and learning in classrooms and schools (DES, 2006, p. 1)

The Task Force *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) found that although only a minority of students partake in challenging behaviour, the impact of such behaviour on teachers and on the school community is significant and may result in on-going stress, disillusionment and loss of morale in teaching staff. Consistent with previous discussions in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, Martin, the Chairperson and author of the report (2006, p. 52) suggests that it is the recurrent and cumulative nature of the student behaviour which undermines the school climate ‘in ways that are corrosive for the entire school community’. Schools with the lowest levels of challenging student behaviour were identified as those which have ‘good leadership, quality teaching, supportive parental involvement, caring relationships with staff and effective structures in place’ (Martin, 2006, p. 6). The *School Matters* Report suggests that these characteristics, coupled with ‘well developed pastoral care systems, imaginatively implemented curricula and the presence of key staff skilled in diffusing’ and ‘proactively minimising potentially disruptive situations’ are most effective in addressing challenging student behaviour (Martin, 2006, p. 5). The importance of an effective, person-centred leadership style which recognises the value of fostering positive relationships amongst students, teachers and parents is particularly underscored as is the pivotal role played by individual school personnel.

Martin (2006) reported that challenging student behaviour was more often perpetrated by male students, echoing international findings discussed in Chapter 2 (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). More serious behavioural incidents were reported to be increasing in frequency and perpetrated primarily by students with a ‘wide range of needs that mainstream education cannot be expected to fulfil without support from outside agencies’ (Martin, 2006, p. 52). As is argued in the present study, the findings of the report (Martin, 2006) suggest that the origins of challenging student behaviour are wide-ranging and complex and are ‘reflective of a wider societal breakdown of acceptable norms of courtesy and civility’ and influenced by a vast array

of both within school and external factors which may range from teaching approach, leadership style and school support structures to parental, environmental and societal forces (Martin, 2006, p. 112). However, it was emphasised that although many origins lie outside of the school, the school is, nonetheless, expected to respond to the problem, often without external assistance. The Task Force proposed a range of recommendations, informed by good international practice and stressed that ‘schools alone cannot supply all the remedies’ and need the support of all stakeholders including the Department of Education and Skills, management bodies, parents and wider society to ‘stem the corrosive influence of persistent, serious disruption in our schools’ (Martin, 2006, p. 112).

These findings reiterate the argument made earlier in this section that the State needs to provide schools with a more comprehensive, wide-ranging, resourced and evidence-based strategic approach to the issue. The report (Martin, 2006) found that teachers, principals and BoM members were expected to respond effectively to the complexities of challenging student behaviour in the absence of adequate training, policies or support structures. This study argues that it is this limited historical State intervention in many realms of education which has limited the development of a comprehensive approach to SBTB in the present situation, as will be explored further in Section 4.7.

The *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) proposed 21 recommendations based on good international practice and stressed the commitment required from all stakeholders including the State, management bodies, parents and society in general to address problematic student behaviour. Key recommendations include

- ♦ *Behaviour Support Classrooms*, Behaviour Support teams and out of school provisions where necessary.
- ♦ *A Whole-School Approach* – implementation of appropriate discipline policies and codes of behaviour and familiarisation of all staff members with these policies and with procedures for breaches of discipline; fostering of a school culture which promotes peer support, collaboration and the sharing of within-school expertise on maintaining good levels of discipline.

- ♦ *Class Size* – reduction in class size as per the recommendations of the McGuinness Report (2002) which advocated the creation of an additional 1,200 teaching posts in second level schools
- ♦ *Teacher Education* – prioritisation of teaching methodologies for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) which emphasise the benefits of a student centred teaching approach, increased training in anger management and conflict resolution; establishment of a compulsory system of induction and the development of a national framework for continuing professional development.
- ♦ *Time for Year Heads* – a specific number of hours, compensated for by the Department of Education and Science, should be set aside for Year Heads, consistent with the demands of their role and relative to the size of the school in which they work.
- ♦ *Legislation* – Owing to wide-scale dis-satisfaction amongst educators, the DES legal department should review and amend Sections 28 and 29 of the Education Act (1998), legislation which is perceived by the majority of teachers and managers to privilege the rights of persistently disruptive pupils over the ‘compliant majority to learn’. With this in mind, a national charter outlining the rights and responsibilities of teachers and the school community should be developed. In addition current circulars on discipline should be updated to accurately reflect the current legislative framework and clearly outline the rights and the responsibilities of all stakeholders.
- ♦ *Behaviour Support Team* - a Behaviour Support Team, easily accessible to schools experiencing persistent and serious problematic student behaviour, should be established within an overall coherent, co-ordinated, national framework of support for schools. A behaviour support classroom, in which students with persistent disruptive behaviour may be placed temporarily to safeguard the learning needs of other pupils and simultaneously support the needs of individual pupils should be provided to schools with high levels of serious disruptive behaviour whilst out of school provision should be made accessible for the minority of pupils whose holistic needs are not being met within the mainstream school system.
- ♦ *Development of a Discipline Survey Instrument* – national audit to be conducted bi-annually to provide accurate baseline data on school discipline.

In addition, the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) recommended that a transfer programme from primary to second level schools should be put in place to foster a sense of student and parental belonging and attachment to the new school and to provide induction in areas such as timetables, expectations, rules, rewards and sanctions. Interagency co-operation, inter-collegial collaboration and parental involvement should be promoted in all schools and such a collaborative environment should extend to students who should be encouraged through the provision of meaningful student participation structures to engage with and contribute to the running of the school. The report (Martin, 2006) also advocated that the Junior Certificate Schools Programme (JCSP), available only to a limited number of schools, should be rolled out nationally, whilst an extension of this programme to the senior cycle (Senior Certificate School Programme) (SCSP) should be considered.

4.4 Societal and Economic Developments in Irish Education Policy

Both the *Discipline in Schools* report (Martin, 1997) and the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006, p. 6) stress that ‘student behaviour in schools is influenced not just by what transpires within the school, but also by factors operating outside of the school’. In considering the findings and recommendations of the report, it cannot be discounted that the *School Matters* study (Martin, 2006, p. 8) took place when Ireland was ‘poised on the crest of an economic boom’. A raft of social, economic and cultural developments has taken place in Ireland since the publication of the report. Although the present author does not strive to show causality, an overview of the contextual environment in which SBTB has emerged, and in which contemporary educational policy has developed, may be beneficial.

The past ten years has seen enormous social change taking place both in Ireland and on an international stage. Globalisation, rising immigration and explosive advances in communication and technology have led to profound attitudinal, cultural, economic and social change in the lives of adults and young people alike and have transformed the socio-cultural landscape of Ireland to unrecognisable levels.

Adolescence is a time of significant physical, cognitive, emotional and social change and development in the life of a young person, in which they negotiate the transition from dependence on parents and family to autonomy as an adult in society (Smyth, 2004). It is a confusing and challenging time for any young person, as they make important choices about their personal identity, values and beliefs, education and career prospects, whilst also searching for their niche in society (Lalor et al., 2007). However, many young people in contemporary Ireland are faced with the added task of navigating a raft of social issues such as early sexual experimentation, unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and peer pressure to conform to sexual activity. In addition, many contemporary Irish youth must contend with issues such as poor mental health and youth suicide, anti-social behaviour, certain violent crimes and alcohol and drug misuse, including heroin (Nurnberger et al., 2002; Pihl, 2003; CSO, 2012).

The societal pressures outlined above combined with the inherent difficulties of adolescence means that young people in Ireland are often burdened with negotiating adult problems prior to the maturation of their social, emotional or cognitive faculties. Authors (e.g. Shanahan, 2009; Stack, 2011) warn that Irish youth are under a considerable amount of pressure due to these complex social issues (Carone, 2007; Stack, 2011) as evident in the findings reported recently by Unicef (2011). This report revealed that of the 508 young people surveyed, one in two reported experiencing depression, one in four have felt suicidal; one in five have self-harmed and a further 13% have suffered from anorexia or bulimia (Unicef, 2011, p.10). Meanwhile, the latest cross-border report on suicide (Richardson et al., 2013) showed that the rate of suicide among young people on the island of Ireland is amongst the highest in Europe. The correlation between students' well-being and perpetration of SBTB has been underlined in Chapter 2.

These stresses may be played out in the classroom in the form of student aggressive behaviour due to a combination of factors which may include physical or emotional exhaustion; distraction or pre-occupation with own thoughts; frustration or resentment at life events or school structures as well as the chemical and physiological effects of substance misuse which are typically linked with increased aggressive behaviour

(SACE, 2011; Fitzpatrick, 2013; Richardson et al., 2013). These social realities, coupled with monumental advances in global technology, communication and access to information have led to rapidly changing student needs, presenting a crucial challenge to the education system to ensure that ‘the activity that happens inside the institution will be relevant to the learners’ lives outside’ (NCCA, 2010, p. 25). At present, the second level education system has been described as ‘quite hierarchical’ (Lynch and Lodge, 2002; Smyth and McCoy, 2011, p. 18) and in many senses does not recognise the autonomy and responsibility which today’s adolescents experience beyond the school gates. As outlined in Chapter 2, school systems which foster in students, a strong sense of school ownership, community, collaboration and participation report lower levels of mental health issues in young people and lower levels of challenging and aggressive student behaviour (Solomon et al., 1997; Lee et al., 2004). The imminent introduction of the new Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA), a major overhaul of the current examination orientated system, marks an attempt to move towards developing a system which is ‘more adaptable and responsive to the needs of learners’ (NCCA, 2010, p. 25). The JCSA will be discussed further in Section 4.5.

Writing a series of educational articles for the Irish Times in 2006 and 2007, Professor Tom Collins, former President of the National University of Maynooth (NUI), Professor and Head of the Education Department in NUI and Government advisor on both the Green Paper (1998) and the White Paper (2000) on adult education urged that the education system in Ireland must now move away from ‘subject-specific coaching’ to a more holistic and developmental approach which draws upon the ‘multiple intelligences of the child, emphasising the importance of social and emotional well-being, self-motivation and capability for self-directed learning’ (Irish Times, 19/06/2006). Collins (Irish Times, 3/10/2006) argues that education should be concerned with ‘providing opportunities for the child to achieve competence in a diversity of fields and to grow in self-confidence and self-esteem’, an approach which he argues would address ‘issues such as teacher stress and problems of student discipline and morale’, increase student engagement and ‘transform the student-teacher relationship whereby the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning to a programme that is driven by an actively engaged student group’. Such a transformation of the normative school structure in Irish schools towards a more positive, student-centred environment which encourages greater student

participation, student-school bonding, and improved teacher-student relationships would undoubtedly have a positive knock-on effect on teacher and student morale, motivation, self-efficacy, stress levels and emotional well-being; factors which have been associated with lower levels of SBTB in the literature (Sugrue, 2006; Leroy et al., 2007; Troman et al., 2007; Morgan, 2009; Bangs and Frost, 2012; Biesta, 2012).

Specifically, in relation to challenging and disruptive behaviour, Collins (Irish Times, 20/02/2007) urges that such issues need to 'be voiced, explored and responded to', arguing that failure to do so is damaging to the 'morale, motivation and even the health of teachers'. Collins suggests that 'it is precisely because the discipline and organisational culture of these schools is so tight that even minor transgressions can assume major significance'. He states that 'such transgressions are frequently purely symbolic – such as flouting the school uniform conventions', however he argues that teachers are 'prone to see any act of defiance as potentially undermining of an authority which they must be forever vigilant to protect'. He asserts that 'holding this line is extraordinarily demanding on the emotional and psychological well-being of the teacher. It saps the creative energy of the school and dominates the professional discourse of the staffroom' (Irish Times, 20/02/2007). While acknowledging the rationale to the 'tight management of a large group of adolescents in a school setting' he questions the 'pedagogical value of this culture' and counsels that the challenge is to 'shift the basis of order in the school from one of containment to one of engagement: from one of passive compliance to active agency' (Irish Times, 20/02/2007). He suggests that a 'new basis of discipline in schools, predicated on the active engagement of the students in self-directed learning would begin from a starting point of trust in the students' (Irish Times, 20/02/2007). Therefore, the current normative structure in schools may be considered to be at odds with positive student engagement and student-teacher relationships and possibly a contributory factor in the student bullying of teachers and other negative student behaviours in Irish second level schools, a theme which will be explored further in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.2. Echoing the writings of Collins, some of the interviewees in the present study have also suggested that the normative structures which underpin the system may be outdated and in need of review.

Moving on from this discussion to another factor worthy of discussion in an Irish context, is the link between socio-economic disadvantage and challenging student behaviour (INTO, 2004; Gottfredson et al., 2005; Berliner et al., 2006; Aramie et al., 2007) including student perpetration of bullying against teachers (Khoury Kassabri et al. 2007, 2009; Du Plessis, 2008; Benbenishty and Astor, 2008; Chen and Astor, 2010). Spending decisions made by previous and successive governments have led to unequal distribution of the economic benefits of the Celtic Tiger era resulting in persistent income inequalities and pockets of poverty and deprivation throughout Ireland (Frazer et al., 2011; Fahey et al., 2011; EU Survey on Income and Living Conditions, 2011). In February, 2013, the Central Statistics Office reported that a record high of 733,000 people in Ireland including more than 232,000 children are at risk of poverty (McMahon, 2013) whilst the CSO Housing Needs Assessment (2011) shows that almost 100,000 Irish people are currently on social housing waiting lists (CSO, 2011; Simon Community, 2012; McManus, 2013).

Research suggests that children in disadvantaged areas are more likely to lack the social and problem-solving skills necessary for coping with stressful situations and may rely instead on aggressive behaviour which they have seen modelled within their families, community and media to fulfil their needs (Christie et al., 1999; INTO, 2004; Volokh and Snell, 1998; X Ma, 2012). These children are also more at risk of poor parenting practices, negative peer influence and involvement in anti-social behaviour (Stoolmiller et al., 1997; Miller et al., 2002; Cummings et al., 2003; Du Plessis, 2008; IACP, 2010), factors which have been suggested as predictive of challenging student behaviour (Griffin et al., 2000; Miller et al., 2002; Estefania et al., 2007) and SBT (Du Plessis, 2008; Benbenishty and Astor, 2008; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009). The present study examined the prevalence of SBT behaviours in both mainstream and DEIS schools, which are schools located in areas of recognised socio-economic disadvantage. Surprisingly, the present study's findings are inconsistent with the literature hereto presented. A number of reasons are put forward to explain such findings in the final two chapters.

Having highlighted a number of cultural and societal changes which have taken place in Ireland over the past decade, the focus of this discussion now turns to the economic developments which have taken place in Ireland since the publication of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006). In 2006, Ireland had the ‘lowest level of unemployment in the EU; the second lowest national debt; the second highest minimum wage and the highest investment in the EU on infrastructure’ (Hyland, 2012, p.25). However, the rapid economic growth of the Celtic Tiger era unravelled into an extended period of austerity in 2008 following a set of both national and global circumstances. These include the onset of the world financial crisis, a severe slowdown in the Irish construction and property markets, a loss of Ireland's competitiveness and a crisis in the banking industry (Martin, 2011, p. 11; Hyland, 2012; Whelan, 2013). From 1995 to 2007, GDP¹ growth averaged 6%, crashing to a low of -3.5% in 2008 and rising slowly to 0.9% in 2012 (CSO, 2013). Ireland now has the fourth highest debt to GDP ratio and the fifth highest unemployment rate in Europe (Eurostat, 2012).

These economic realities have severely impacted on investment in education and significantly influenced education policy over the past six years (ASTI, 2011; Cahill, 2012; TUI, 2012). A number of cost-saving measures have been implemented across all public sectors including education which accounts for almost 20% of all public expenditure (Lillis and Morgan, 2012). Reducing the levels of staffing costs in education has been achieved through pay-cuts to teachers' salaries and reduced pay levels for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), an incentivised early retirement scheme, reduced teacher allocations including a reduction in the numbers of special needs assistants and a removal of the ex-quota provision for guidance posts (Lillis and Morgan, 2012; JMB, 2014). In addition to a reduction in student capitation grants, there has also been a moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility in place since 2009, although a temporary alleviation was announced in January 2014. This moratorium has been widely blamed for placing ‘exponentially increasing demands on already overburdened school principals’ leaving schools ‘at breaking point’ (ASTI,

¹ Gross domestic product (GDP) is the monetary, market value of all final goods and services produced in a country over a one year period. GDP is commonly used as an indicator of the economic health of a country, relative to that of other countries, as well as to assess a country's standard of living (Van Den Bergh, 2008).

2013; JMB, 2014, p. 2) and leading to teachers reports' of increased levels of discipline and behavioural problems (Reaper and McShane, 2010; Hennessy, 2014) as will be discussed in more depth in Section 4.6.5.

These unyielding austerity measures are taking place during a period when student numbers continue to grow. Rising inward migration coupled with a significantly higher than EU average birth rate has meant that at 4,588,252, the population of Ireland is at its highest in over a century (CSO, 2012). More than 20% of the population are under the age of 15 years and 12% are from non-Irish ethnic backgrounds (CSO, 2011). It is estimated that primary and secondary level enrolments will increase by 70,000 by 2018, with second level student enrolments projected to continue rising until 2024 (Lillis and Morgan, 2012). The Joint Managerial Board (JMB) (2014, p. 6) warns that these developments have the potential to place 'impossible demands' on schools unless forward-planning and resourcing issues are addressed. Increased migration to Ireland has not only impacted on enrolment numbers but has also brought a completely new dimension to the traditionally mono-cultural student population. This in itself presents a significant challenge to the education system both in terms of student behaviour and also in terms of meeting students' diverse educational, social and emotional needs (Martin, 2006; Hyland, 2012).

Previous authors have highlighted the 'increasing propensity of society to look to schools and the teaching profession to address social problems' (Burke et al, 2004, p.32). However, at this time of dramatic societal change and economic uncertainty, unions and management groups have warned that unrelenting cuts to the education sector since 2008 have devastated the Irish education system (ASTI, 2012). The European Commission has cautioned that Ireland's expenditure on education is amongst the lowest in Europe and warns that recent budget cuts across the education system may in fact, undermine the potential economic growth of the country and contribute to greater levels of early school leaving and unemployment (Cahill, 2012; ASTI, 2012). Although a spokesperson for the Teachers' Union of Ireland (2012) contends that student indiscipline has increased in schools as a direct result of the recession in Ireland, economic hardship experienced by families and the interrelated cutbacks in education,

the present discussion does not seek to demonstrate a definitive link between the economic downturn and rising levels of SBT or challenging student behaviour. In the first instance, such an argument is impossible to sustain with the limited empirical data available in relation to SBTB in the Irish context. The purpose of the present discussion is to provide a contextual background to the development of Irish education policy in the period following the publication of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) and in turn provide a deeper understanding of the factors which may have influenced both student behaviour and policy responses to SBTB in the current situation.

4.5 Ideological Developments in Irish Education Policy

Whilst the social, cultural and economic influences on the development of education policy have been discussed in Chapter 3 and in Section 4.4, this section looks at the ideological influences which have shaped education policy in Ireland. In turn, the impact of these developments on teacher well-being, student-teacher relationships and SBTB is briefly explored. This section focuses predominantly on the more recent developments in relation to neo-liberalism and global education reform which have transformed the education system over the past number of years. While the study focuses in particular on the influence of neo liberal ideology on Irish education policy, the author recognises that there exists a range of ideological perspectives which are in tension within education including those of the Church, parents, teachers and pupils themselves, all of which impact on the development of education policy.

Lynch (2006, p. 1) explains that the mass education provision which took place throughout Europe over the past century has produced ‘cultures and societies that have benefited greatly from State investment in education’, the maintenance of which however, ‘requires continual State investment’. Schafer (2009, p. 106) suggests that although nation States accept wholly their obligation to ‘support their society members’ the majority of European countries now share the desire to reduce their social services so that they may be ‘exculpated from the financial stresses and strains caused by the dramatic rise in public and social expenditures during recent years’. Lynch (2006, p. 1) argues that a ‘new-right, neo-liberal agenda’ has emerged in recent years which seeks to

‘offload the cost of education...on to the individual’ coupled with an ‘increasing attempt to privatise public services, including education, so that citizens will have to buy them at market value rather than have them provided by the State’. Mooney-Simmie (2012, p. 489) lists the features of neo-liberalism as ‘individual competitiveness, letting the markets rule unfettered from any type of imposed constraint or regulation, and reducing State support and investment in all public services’. Mooney-Simmie (2012, p. 489) argues that neo-liberalism has led to the ‘gradual privatisation of education’ and increased support for ‘new principles of quality management along the lines of successful business corporations’. Such developments have brought about a new focus on the ‘relentless drive for value-for-money’ and accountability replacing previous emphasis on ‘autonomy’, ‘professionalism’, ‘critical thinking’, ‘care and community’. Responsibility and accountability are relegated ‘downwards to lower layers in the hierarchical chain’ reframing problems as individual responsibility and ‘not a matter for concern by the State or the Ministry of Education’ (Mooney-Simmie, 2012, p. 490). Mooney Simmie (2012, p. 486) argues that this neo-liberal agenda in Ireland regards teachers as

little more than cogs in the machine of a competitive smart economy, part of a new balance sheet that views all public sector workers as a cost to the State rather than a real resource to assist the nation along a recovery pathway in a supposedly knowledge world.

Conway and Murphy (2013, p. 17) argue that these neo-liberal principles are increasingly reflected in Irish education policy in the recent emphasis on ‘overall system performance and value for money’ and in the extension of ‘accountability systems, particularly those emphasising the attainment of results, high-stakes consequences and the related role of market competition’ (2013, p. 11). Such features are closely associated with the global education reform that is ‘spreading across the globe like an unstable, uneven but apparently unstoppable flood of closely inter-related reform ideas’ which are ‘permeating and re-orienting education systems in diverse social and political locations which have very different histories’ (Ball, 2003, p. 215). Ball (2003, p. 216) suggests that the global reform ‘package’ which primarily entails ‘the market, managerialism and performativity’, offers a ‘politically attractive alternative to the

State-centred, public welfare tradition of educational provision'. He argues that these elements play an integral role in assisting States 'in aligning public sector organisations with the methods, culture and ethical system of the private sector'. Conway and Murphy (2013, p. 11) suggest that evidence of a move towards the dominant global education reform movement in Ireland may be seen in the increasing emphasis on 'standardisation, narrow focus on literacy and numeracy and higher stakes accountability'.

Ball (2003, p. 216) maintains that the State presents education reforms as the devolving of authority, a 'strategy of de-regulation' and 'providing flexibility' when in actuality, he argues, such reforms are 'processes of re-regulation', a 'less visible regulation' or 'self-regulating regulation'. Teachers are constantly encouraged to 'improve their productivity, strive for excellence and live an existence of calculation' (Ball, 2003, p. 216). Evidence of global reform such as increased accountability and self-regulation in Irish education includes the introduction of Whole School Evaluations and unannounced inspections in all schools, a move towards standardised testing in the last 3 years and new BoM powers to suspend or dismiss under-performing teachers (Conway and Murphy, 2013).

Ball (2003, p. 216) explains that 'what it means to teach and what it means to be a teacher are subtly but decisively changed in the processes of reform'. Pointing to the paradox of reform, Ball (2003, p. 219) explains that new systems are said to be moving away from 'low-trust, centralised, forms of employee control' and yet 'new forms of very immediate surveillance and self-monitoring are put in place; e.g. appraisal systems, target-setting, output comparisons'. These factors may instil a 'high degree of uncertainty and instability' in the teacher and 'a sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies' (Ball, 2003, p. 219). The imminent reform of the Junior Cycle, in September 2015, which will henceforth be known as the Junior Cycle Student Award (JCSA), may be considered within Ball's (2003) concept of reform. The JCSA marks a radical departure in education policy and the first major change to the Junior Cycle in 25 years (Department of Education and Skills, 2014). The JCSA will see an end to the

traditional, narrowly focused, Junior Certificate State examinations and a move towards a more student-orientated approach, in which schools have greater freedom to design programmes to meet the individual learning needs of students. The JCSA will focus on enhancing students' literacy and numeracy and other key skills and will employ new approaches to assessment and reporting (Department of Education and Skills, 2014). Ball's (2003) concept of reform may be useful in exploring some of the reservations and anxieties which teachers and unions have expressed in relation to the JCSA, including concerns regarding the pace of change, training for teachers, resources for schools and concerns regarding assessment and quality assurance. Interviewees in the present study spoke of their anxiety and apprehension regarding the imminent reform of the Junior Cycle within the context of the mounting pressures under which both teachers and school management are presently operating, and the impact of such pressures on their relationships with students and on teachers' well-being. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The combined pressures of performativity and accountability in teaching have been linked in the literature to low morale (Troman et al., 2007; Morgan, 2009), reduced job satisfaction (Morgan, 2009), increased stress (Troman, 2007), low motivation (Sugrue, 2006) and diminished confidence amongst teachers. Perceived external pressures associated with performativity and accountability have also been linked with reduced self-efficacy in teachers (e.g. Leroy et al., 2007; Bangs and Frost, 2012) and in turn with reduced levels of student motivation (OECD, 2005; Leroy et al., 2007), increased teacher usage of authoritarian modes of teaching, negative classroom climate and diminished teacher support for students' emotional well-being and individual needs (OECD, 2005; Leroy et. al, 2007; Biesta, 2012). Teacher stress, low motivation and low morale have already been linked with SBTB in Chapter 2 and the relationship between students' motivation, negative classroom climate and authoritarian modes of teaching and the perpetration of SBTB have been underlined. Authors (Ball, 2003; OECD, 2005; Leroy et al., 2007) stress the need for supportive working environments for teachers. It is argued that in the absence of such supports, classroom conditions may become conducive to increased levels of SBTB.

Ball (2003, p. 219) also comments on the link between the ‘culture of competitive performativity’ and its potential to instil ‘anxiety and dread’ in staff and lead to ‘physical and emotional damage to teachers’. The author (Ball, 2003, p. 221, 224) cautions that the pressures of performativity may engender feelings of ‘pride, guilt, shame and envy’ in individual teachers affecting both the ‘interactions and relations between colleagues and those between teachers and students’. In relation to the former, individual teachers experiencing difficulty may be unable to seek support from their colleagues or management. The reasons for this are two-fold; self-preservation may require the maintenance of a ‘fabricated’ image of professionalism and competence whilst there is also pressure on individual teachers to make their contribution to the ‘performances of the team’ and to the ‘construction of convincing institutional spectacles and outputs’ (Ball, 2003, p. 224) irrespective of personal difficulties. Ball (2003, p. 224) advises that ‘there is a real possibility that authentic social relations are replaced by judgemental relations wherein persons are valued for their productivity alone’ and the teacher’s ‘value as a person is eradicated’. The importance of teachers ‘working within a favourable and collegial social environment’ has been underscored by previous authors (Sahlberg, 2010; Priestly, Robinson and Biesta, 2011), however, Priestly, Robinson and Biesta (2011, p. 3) argue that the intensified workload associated with performativity may in fact result in ‘de-socialisation’ between teachers (Keddie et al., 2011). Considering then these conceptions in the context of SBTB and the previously outlined importance and influence of collegial and management support on teachers’ well-being and SBTB, it may be argued that such conditions may perpetuate the hidden nature of the phenomenon and lead to teacher reluctance to disclose or to seek support and to a host of personal and professional negative effects such as those outlined in Chapter 2. The important role of collegiality is a theme which arises strongly in both the quantitative and qualitative findings of the present study and will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

In sum then, it is argued that the combined influences of neo-liberalism, performativity, accountability and associated developments in the construction of knowledge, although positive in many areas of education, may negatively impact on teachers’ well-being and on SBTB unless teachers are provided with sufficient training, reinforcement and support from management and colleagues (Sugrue, 2006; Morgan, 2009, INTO, 2012).

The qualitative findings of the present study highlight the pressures under which both teachers and school principals are currently operating, within an education system which emphasises accountability, efficiency and measurability within the constraints of an environment of austerity. Interviewees discuss the impact of working in such an environment on student behaviour, teachers' well-being and on managements' ability to support staff experiencing problematic student behaviour and SBT. These issues will be discussed in Chapter 6. Contemporary policy responses to address challenging student behaviour in light of the recommendations of the Task Force report (Martin, 2006) are now explored.

4.6 Contemporary Policy Responses following the *School Matters* Report

Following publication of the report, the Chairperson of the Task Force, Dr. Maeve Martin cautioned that 'these measures are contingent on each other in such a way that their implementation warrants a total and integrated response' (Martin, 2006, p. 156). Pressure was mounted on the Education Minister from a number of sources including teachers, teacher unions, the Fine Gael education spokesperson, Olwyn Enright and management groups including the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals; all of whom strongly backed the Task Force recommendations. The ASTI General Secretary John White urged the Minister to implement the recommendations comprehensively rather than using a 'piecemeal approach' and allowing the report to 'simply gather dust like so many others' (Murray, 2006, p. 1), highlighting the State's pattern of low intervention in education.

A number of these recommendations have been implemented as will be discussed presently, however many other recommendations have yet to be put into practice. For instance, a national charter on the rights and responsibilities of teachers and the school community has yet to be produced and the Senior Certificate Schools Programme recommended by the report has not been developed. The proposed discipline survey instrument to bi-annually collect reliable base-line data to inform policy has never been created and the suggested review and evaluation of these recommendations, their

progress and effectiveness has never taken place. Data regarding the nature and prevalence of challenging student behaviour is limited to that gained through whole school evaluations undertaken by State inspectors, which allow students, teachers, parents and management to indicate behavioural or discipline issues and through annual statistics regarding student suspensions and expulsions. Therefore, future policies to address challenging student behaviour in an Irish context are disadvantaged as regular surveys, reviews and evaluations of the issue and programmes to address it have not taken place in this country.

As mentioned, another recommendation of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) which has not yet been realised is the creation of a national charter of teachers' rights despite a decade of union calls for greater commitment for the protection of teachers' rights, safety and well-being. At present the only charter of teachers' rights is that published by the ASTI (2004) which sets out teachers' rights and conditions in relation to: professional status, professional working conditions, professional teaching in the classroom, professional development and professional rights in society. In 2004, the ASTI-commissioned *Student Behaviour and Discipline Survey* revealed that 98% of teachers felt that their health, safety and welfare at work were not afforded adequate concern. Meanwhile, a recent INTO supported survey highlights teachers' fears for their safety, health and well-being which they maintain are not afforded due consideration (INTO, 2011). Fortunately, advances in the support services available to teachers have increased with the development of the Occupational Health Strategy for Teachers in 2010 which aims to support both the physical and emotional well-being of teachers. This is as a supportive resource comprised of the Employee Assistance and Occupational Health Services which focuses on preventative measures to promote teachers' health in the workplace (DES, 2013).

The Employee Assistance Service (EAS) was established by the Minister for Education and Science in 2006 to provide free, short-term confidential face to face or telephone counselling to teachers and their immediate family to work through personal and/or work issues (EASP, 2013). The Occupational Health Service seeks to safeguard the health, safety and well-being of teachers from any risks which may arise from their

occupational duties by providing teachers with a professional, co-ordinated medical assessment and health advice system. Teachers may contact the service to receive medical assessments regarding their fitness for work or advice regarding pre-existing medical conditions. In her Irish study of teachers bullied by students, colleagues and parents, O'Dowd Lernihan (2011) stresses the need for increasing teachers' awareness of the support networks available to them, highlighting the finding that 57% of 110 post-primary teachers in her Irish study were unaware of available supports. Teachers who are bullied by students have been shown to be at risk of a vast array of ill effects as discussed in depth in Chapter 2 and require support systems which cater to their multivariate and complex needs.

4.6.1 National Behaviour Support Service

The *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006, p. 142) suggests that disruptive behaviour is dependent upon a number of contingent variables and advocates a 'systematic analysis of the phenomenon and a systematic approach to its management'. To promote such an approach, Task Force members recommended the establishment of a national Behaviour Support Team, easily accessible to all schools experiencing persistent and serious disruptive student behaviour, 'within an overall coherent, clearly articulated, national framework of support' (Martin, 2006, p. 142). In response to this recommendation, the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS) was established in July 2006 with the mission of promoting and supporting 'positive behaviour for learning through the provision of a systematic continuum of support to school communities, grounded in evidence-based practice' (NBSS, 2013, p. 1).

Increasingly, international best practice models to address SBT and challenging student behaviour involve the creation and maintenance of a whole school system of positive behaviour support. The central aim of the whole school approach is to 'nurture the emergence of a school culture that promotes positive or appropriate behaviour and learning, seeks to prevent problems or inappropriate behaviour' and uses 'collaborative data based decision-making to build a positive school climate' (George et al., 2003, p. 171). The whole school approach typically involves a combination of intervention strategies to ensure safe-guarding of the rights and responsibilities of all members of the

school community through the establishment of positive and mutually respectful relationships.

The NBSS utilises a three tier model of support based on international good practice (e.g. Carr et al., 2002), similar to a number of international intervention models including the *Birmingham Framework for Intervention* model in use throughout the United Kingdom and the *Response to Intervention* model popular in the United States and Australia. Each of these programmes aims to develop support systems and strategies to promote positive student behaviours which will ‘create and sustain positive teaching and learning environments’ (NBSS, 2009, p. 2). These programmes acknowledge that a collaborative approach to student behaviour between schools, parents, care-givers and community personnel is necessary to ensure that students are equipped with the ‘social, emotional, academic and behavioural resources and competencies’ needed to navigate difficulties in their lives (NBSS, 2009, p. 2).

The NBSS model involves three levels of support which are tailored to meet the specific requirements of each partner school and the needs of individual students requiring intensive intervention and relies on proactive and preventive rather than aversive and punitive behavioural techniques to improve not only the students’ behaviour but also the students’ quality of life (Shores, 2009). The Positive Behaviour Liaison Teacher, an established teacher on the partner school’s staff is provided with extensive training by the NBSS to enable them to co-ordinate the design, implementation and evaluation of level 1 and level 2 whole school and targeted positive behaviour initiatives in schools experiencing serious challenging student behaviour. The Positive Behaviour Liaison teacher is allocated 11 hours per week for a period of one year to work on this initiative.

Level 1 support is defined as ‘work on school vision, systems, structures, policies and practices’ (NBSS, 2009, p. 8). The schools’ effective work is highlighted and further developed using evidence-based practice, behavioural issues which are negatively affecting learning and teaching are identified and both staff members and management are assisted in addressing these issues. Level 2 support involves working with particular

student groups with increased behavioural needs and possibly their teachers. Pro-active and preventative targeted interventions and approaches are designed, implemented and monitored to address student needs. Programmes may be aimed at developing the student's social, organisational, inter-personal and conflict resolution skills as well as their understanding of rules, expectations and consequences (NEWB, 2009). Teaching staff may be offered additional training in behaviour management and related areas such as conflict resolution and positive reinforcement. If the initiative has been successful, the school's partnership with the NBSS is terminated (NBSS, 2009). However, if the school is still experiencing high levels of challenging student behaviour, the time allocation of the Positive Behaviour Liaison teacher is increased to a total of 22 hours per week for a period of one year, to enable them to introduce a set of level 3 interventions (NBSS, 2012).

Level 3 supports are offered to small groups of students who have not responded sufficiently to interventions at level 1 and level 2. These interventions are usually targeted at students who display a range of challenging behaviours in 'social skills; relationships with adults and peers; absenteeism; consistent concentration and attention difficulties' and are at 'persistent risk of suspension and/or expulsion' (NBSS, 2012, p. 106). Level 3 interventions involve the Positive Behaviour Liaison teacher working intensively with individual students and small groups of pupils to deliver evidence-based programmes such as the *Friends for Life* Programme (Henefer, 2010) which are designed to develop pupils' social, emotional, behavioural and academic skill set.

Tertiary level interventions typically involve a comprehensive or 'wraparound' approach to meeting students' needs (Espelage et al., 2013) and consider external factors which may be contributing to students' behaviour (Grosche and Volpe, 2013). Shores (2009, p. 15) explains that students coping with loss or 'turmoil in their families or communities or other significant stressors will be impacted by these events' which may often be 'triggers for behaviours carried out at school' and require intensive intervention. The wraparound approach involves a comprehensive strategy which acknowledges the multivariate nature of student behaviour and co-ordinates a range of multi-disciplinary services across a number of the student's life domains such as the

home, community, peer group and school (Scott and Eber, 2003; O' Leary, 2011). Espelage et al. (2013) particularly endorse tertiary level interventions, which are highly individualised pro-active programmes which focus on the external factors motivating students' behaviour rather than focusing on merely reducing undesirable school behaviours (Conroy et al., 2005; Lane et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2013).

Schools may also choose to introduce a Behaviour Support Classroom (BSC) which is an 'intensive, short-term individualised intervention for those students who consistently are unable to respond to alternative behavioural supports provided in their school (NBSS, 2010, p. 6). BSCs, as recommended by the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006), aim to support students who are experiencing a number of significant challenges to their learning, and who are impacting negatively on the learning of other pupils in the majority of their classes. The central aim of the BSC is to provide individual pupils with a combination of tailored and comprehensive supports and then to reintegrate these pupils back into the mainstream classroom. BSCs tend only to be present in schools with significant student behavioural difficulties.

In his study which evaluated the effectiveness of BSCs and other positive behaviour interventions in Irish DEIS schools, Wickham (2010) studied 6 DEIS schools who were involved with the NBSS and 6 DEIS schools which did not have this additional resource, both with high levels of challenging student behaviour. He found that schools working in partnership with NBSS reported a 'more integrated approach, with greater collaboration between the professionals, to ensure that the best interests of the students are met in every aspect of their lives' (Wickham, 2010, p. 98). Although overall very positive in his analysis of the NBSS and its programmes, Wickham (2010, p. 98) recommends that NBSS interventions should begin in primary school as his findings suggest that in certain cases, by the time they reach secondary school, some students have already had such 'a negative experience of schooling that their confidence and self-esteem has been eroded, resulting in serious behavioural problems'. He suggests that NBSS intervention in primary school would result in earlier identification of student problems allowing for appropriate supports to be put in place prior to the pupil commencing second level education.

Wickham (2010) also suggests that despite the current unfavourable economic situation, further Governmental resources should be allocated to addressing serious student behavioural problems, particularly in disadvantaged schools. He asserts that BSCs should be offered to all schools in disadvantaged areas so that students with complex needs exhibiting serious behavioural problems may be supported in a holistic, individualised manner rather than being faced with on-going sanctions and exclusionary measures. Wickham (2010, p. 99) maintains that despite the considerable initial cost involved in the establishment of these classrooms, BSCs are potentially cost effective in the longer term 'by keeping students in school for longer and increasing their chances of contributing in a positive way to society'. Wickham (2010) asserts that the Government needs to consider the long term impact of policies relating to challenging student behaviour and resource allocation.

Three-tiered models of support such as the NBSS model, which have their roots in public health (e.g. Simeonson, 1994; Chafouleas et al., 2007), have been associated with improved student behaviour and well-being (e.g. Fairbanks et al., 2007; NBSS, 2012; Grosche and Volpe, 2013) and with positive interactions between teachers and students (e.g. Fox et al., 2009; Shores, 2009). However, researchers advise that if Level 1 interventions are not implemented effectively, schools will be 'overwhelmed with large numbers of students in need of targeted interventions, thus limiting the outcomes for all students' (Kincaid et al., 2007; Shores, 2009, p. 11) and compromising the entire quality and success of the programme (Shore, 2009; Grosche and Volpe, 2013).

At present, the National Behaviour Support Service is working with 103 post-primary schools throughout Ireland supporting schools in the delivery of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 interventions. Level 3 support is currently being provided to students in 28 post-primary schools throughout the country whilst BSCs have been provided in 20 schools in the academic year 2013-2014 (NBSS, 2014). NBSS team members are also working directly on short term interventions with students in 37 other schools whilst an additional 18 schools are receiving Level 1 support (NBSS, 2014). Increasing evidence (e.g. Henefer, 2010; Wickham, 2010; NBSS, 2012) suggests that the NBSS service and its model of intervention significantly assist schools in effectively addressing

challenging student behaviour. However, whilst the NBSS is currently supporting students and school staff in 103 post-primary schools, many of the remaining 600 post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland may also be in need of this expert support.

4.6.2 Class Size

International authors suggest that large class sizes increase teachers' risk of SBTB (Towl and Otago, 2007; Benbenishty and Astor, 2008 and Khoury Kassabri et al., 2009) whilst smaller class sizes have been linked with greater academic achievement and better pupil-teacher relationships (Morgan, 1992; ASTI, 2007). Class size refers to the number of pupils in any given class group, while the term 'pupil-teacher ratio' may be explained as the number of students who attend a school divided by the number of staff in the whole school. Therefore, average class size is calculated by dividing the number of pupils by the number of class teachers, whereas pupil-teacher ratio involves dividing the number of pupils by all of the teachers, non-teaching staff, administrators and principals in the system (Weir et al., 2010).

Weir et al. (2010) reviewed Irish State policy regarding pupil-teacher ratio and class size in primary schools over the past half century, examining Governments' stated aims as expressed in policies, initiatives and programmes for Government. Whilst a number of papers and policy documents such as the Green Paper *Education for a Changing World* (1992) and the Programmes for Government (2002, 2007) explicitly mention lowering the pupil-teacher ratio as a policy objective, in reality pupil-teacher ratios in Ireland still remain extremely high relative to other European countries². However, as explained, there is a big difference between pupil-teacher ratio and class size and a reduction in pupil-teacher ratio does not necessarily translate as a reduction in class size.

² Ireland's pupil-teacher ratio for second level education in 2001 was 14:1, decreasing to 12.7:1 in 2007 following the School Matters report (Martin, 2006) and rising gradually to 14.3:1 in 2013 (CSO, 2013). The overall pupil-teacher ratio for first and second level education for Ireland in 2010/2011 was 15.1:1 making it the sixth highest out of the 26 countries in the EU for which data was available, in comparison with the lowest which was in Lithuania at 8.1:1 (CSO, 2012). These ratios relate to the number of pupils in any school relative to the total number of staff members in that school.

Recent policy initiatives in Ireland have concentrated on changing the pupil-teacher ratio rather than on reducing class size (Weir et al., 2010; INTO, 2013) leading to Ireland having the second highest average class size at primary level in the EU every year for two decades (CSO, 2012). In addition to Ireland having a higher than European average ratio of students to teachers, it also has a below average 'expenditure per student at all levels of the system' (Considine and Dukelow, 2009, p.315).

According to CSO (2013) figures, the average class size at second level in 2013 was 19:1 in mainstream schools and 18.25:1 in DEIS schools, however classes regularly exceed these ratios and represent some of the largest class sizes in Europe (ASTI, 2007; INTI, 2013; Walsh, 2013). The National Parents Council Post-Primary (NCPpp) released a statement in 2009 calling for a reduction in class sizes and citing the ASTI commissioned Drury Research on Class Size Report (2007) which revealed that 35,000 Irish secondary school students are being taught in classes of 30 pupils or more (ASTI, 2007). These large class sizes coupled with cuts to English language support and special needs staff, place teachers under extensive stress, reducing their effectiveness and thus increasing the risk of challenging student behaviour. In large class groups, students who come from different ethnic backgrounds or have special needs, behavioural or emotional difficulties may become increasingly frustrated and resort to aggressive behaviour to have their needs met (Christie et al., 1999; INTO, 2004; Espelage et al., 2011).

In 2002, an independent group of experts, chaired by Dr. Seamus McGuinness, carried out the first external review of teacher allocation practice and policy in Irish second level schools to inform discussion and decisions on future policy in the area (McGuinness, 2002). The report made a number of recommendations, which include the following:

- (1) the creation of 1,200 additional teaching posts
- (2) a reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio for the first 150 pupils to provide greater choice of subjects for smaller second level schools;
- (3) the further reduction of class sizes using posts freed up by the demographic dividend arising from the decline in student numbers;

- (4) improved teaching allocations for career guidance and improved allocations in respect of deputy principals by reducing the threshold from 1,000 to 850 pupils
- (5) a further reduction in the pupil-teacher ratio for all disadvantaged schools and
- (6) a review of learning support teacher allocations to provide a more targeted approach at individual school level.

Dr. Michael Woods, then Minister for Education and Science, welcomed the findings of the McGuinness report, yet none of these recommendations have been implemented and despite stated Government policy commitments to reduce class size, due to on-going public sector cuts, the present Education Minister has not ruled out increasing class sizes in 2014 (INTO, 2013). The INTO (2013) have spearheaded a national campaign to prevent the Education Minister from further increasing class size in the coming budget, citing the increase in the student population outlined in Section 4.2. They highlight recent figures released by the Department of Education and Skills which reveal that there were '4,000 more students attending first through sixth year around the country, but 400 less teachers to supervise their education (Pattison, 2013, p. 1).

The other teacher unions in Ireland have also protested against increasing class sizes. For instance, in 2007, the ASTI carried out a survey which revealed that 82% of the 868 second level teachers surveyed believed that class size had a negative effect on discipline whilst 91% of respondents believed that class size increased the stress placed on teachers in the classroom. Similarly, a report published by the TUI in 2009 stated that challenging student behaviour was exacerbated where class sizes are larger and reported the findings of their 2009 study which showed that 80% of respondents felt that discipline problems had increased and now take up a considerable amount of class time in comparison with five years ago. Weir et al. (2010) acknowledge that budgetary restraints have obviously contributed to large class sizes in Ireland, however the authors also point out that even when the State had ample funds at their discretion reducing class size was not prioritised. Despite growing evidence to support smaller classes and in the face of mounting pressure from all stakeholders, successive Governments have failed to reduce class sizes, opting instead to implement policies which contradict their stated commitments and overall objectives.

4.6.3 Teacher Education and Training

A number of advances have taken place in teacher training and education since the publication of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006). The report recommended a number of steps including an emphasis on student centred teaching methodologies, anger management and conflict resolution skills and the establishment of a compulsory system of induction for newly qualified teachers. Many of the advances in teacher training and education have only taken place in recent years under the leadership of Education Minister, Ruari Quinn. For instance, from September 2012, all prospective second level teachers must complete a Bachelors degree of three years in their chosen area of study followed by the newly titled Professional Master of Education which has been increased from one to two years duration (Hyland, 2012). The concurrent four-year degree programme which combines the study of education with the study of an academic specialist area remains unchanged. This four-year degree programme is undertaken by students wishing to specialise in particular areas of instruction such as physical or religious education.

In line with Task Force recommendations, a compulsory system of induction for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was also implemented in September 2012. Prior to this NQTs participated in induction training in a voluntary capacity. Induction provides both professional and personal support to the NQT through a system of mentoring which is co-ordinated by an experienced teacher in the school and the initial teacher education college (The Teaching Council, 2011). The National Induction Programme for Teachers (NIPT) was established in 2010 to support both primary and post-primary NQTs entering the teaching profession. Beginning as a pilot project in 2002, in both St Patrick's College and University College, Dublin, an evaluation undertaken by the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland (ATECI) indicates that the programme appears to be effective in meeting the learning needs of NQTS but cautions that continued success requires a national commitment to oversee the programme and on-going adequate resource allocation.

The National Induction Programme for teachers (NIPT) comprises 3 strands – a series of 12 workshops co-facilitated by the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland

(ATECI), access to a mentor at school level who has undertaken specific mentor training and access to website support. The workshops which include 'Classroom management and organisation' and 'Behaviour management' are experiential requiring teacher participation in a wide range of activities including role-play, reflection and scenario discussions. Feedback from post primary NQTs in relation to the 'Classroom management and organisation' workshop has indicated some level of teacher dissatisfaction as some of the content is more applicable to primary teachers and much of this content had been covered during initial teacher education. The process of induction has been widely acknowledged as a 'time of complex behavioural and conceptual professional learning and thus a time of intensive professional development' (Kelchtermans and Ballet, 2002, p.106). Authors suggest however that induction needs to be followed with 'well devised in-career training programmes, available periodically throughout a teacher's career' (Harford, 2010, p. 354).

The Task Force had also proposed the development of a national framework for continuing professional development as a central component of the teaching profession. Continuous professional development (CPD) in Ireland is provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) which was established in 2010 to encompass all other previous programmes and support services such as the Second Level Support Service and the School Development Planning Programme (ASTI, 2013). The role of PDST is to provide high quality professional development and support to teachers and to promote collaborative and evidence-based practice (ASTI, 2013). CPD includes in-service training to enhance teacher's vocational development but also focuses on 'supporting the personal, professional and social dimensions of the teacher's role as it changes during the lifetime of a teacher's career' (ASTI, 2013, p. 1). In addition to providing subject specific training, the PDST also provide teacher development training in areas such as positive behaviour management, co-operative learning and inclusion.

However pre-service and CPD education in Ireland has been criticised for not providing sufficient practical training around behavioural issues (Wickham, 2010; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; National Council for Special Education, 2012). For instance, a study commissioned by the Teaching Council (2010) on Job Satisfaction and Occupational

Stress among Primary School Teachers and School Principals in Ireland reported the need for increased behaviour management training for teachers both at initial teacher training (ITT) and continuous professional development (CPD) level. Much of the training and guidance available to teachers in Ireland is provided, largely in the form of advice leaflets and publications, from statutory organisations such as the National Behaviour Support Service (NBSS), the Special Education Support Service (SESS) and the National Council for Special Education (NCSE). The SESS, which was established in 2003 to enhance the quality of learning and teaching in relation to special educational provision co-ordinates, develops and delivers a range of professional development initiatives and support structures for school personnel working with students with special educational needs. The SESS *Behaviour Resource Bank* provides teachers with access to a compilation of easy to download advice leaflets and publications which outline both preventative and management strategies for dealing with challenging student behaviour. These strategies are intended for use with students with special education needs but may be adapted to suit individual circumstances (O' Leary, 2011). Some of the topics addressed include devising individual behaviour support plans and class behaviour agreements; recording and analysing disruptive behaviour; accessing collegial support and avoiding confrontation (SESS, 2013).

In 2012, the National Council for Special Education published a Government commissioned report entitled *Education of Students with Challenging Behaviour arising from Severe Emotional Disturbance/ Behavioural Disorders*. The NCSE caution that disruptive and aggressive student behaviour is a significant issue in Irish schools revealing it had allocated over €200m worth of additional teaching resources as a result of behavioural issues in schools in 2011-2012 (RTE.ie, 2012). The initial NCSE research had focused on students with special educational needs and extreme behavioural difficulties. However, the prevalence of such behaviour in mainstream schools prompted the NCSE to suggest that these recommendations, which are currently being considered by Government, can benefit all school communities. Behaviours observed by the NCSE include 'sustained verbal and physical violence towards teachers (broken fingers, black eyes resulting in staff going on sick leave) and other students' and 'sustained disruption from shouting, bullying and throwing classroom furniture' (NCSE, 2012, p. 2). The report recommends that a mandatory set of competencies for

all teachers in managing challenging behaviour should form part of both initial and CPD teacher education programmes. These behaviour management programmes should be regularly updated and should promote the principle that the 'education of the student with challenging behaviour is the responsibility of the whole school and that all teachers in the school share in this responsibility' (NCSE, 2012, p. 78).

International authors, Espelage et al. (2011) have also advocated the acquisition of a mandatory set of competencies for teachers in managing challenging behaviour. The authors propose that the next generation of teachers ought to demonstrate a standardised level of knowledge, confidence and skill in managing challenging behaviour as a pre-requisite for the issuing of their license for teaching. The authors advise that novice teachers should be made aware of the potential problems of challenging and aggressive student behaviour directed towards them and be provided with behaviour management and conflict de-escalation strategies to minimise the probability of its occurring.

The international literature clearly suggests that teachers who do not possess effective classroom management strategies to proactively minimise behavioural problems may contribute to the escalation of disruption, aggression and SBTB through the establishment of a class culture which is predisposed to bullying problems (McMahon and Watts, 2002; Benefield, 2004; Allen, 2010). Pervin and Turner (1998) propose that victims of SBTB have lowered expectations vis-à-vis the behaviour, co-operation and academic output of the pupils who bully them. This lowered expectation may rub off on other pupils in the class who witness the challenging behaviour which can then develop into SBT if one or two students have the confidence to challenge the teacher. The bully-victim interaction may affect the class climate to turn peer response negatively towards the victim and positively towards the bully (De Rosier et al. 1994; Schafer et al., 2009) Therefore, teachers who are victims of SBTB may unwittingly be contributing to the cultivation of bullying in their school.

The importance of effective behaviour management training for teachers has recently been recognised by policy makers in England. Reforms in initial teacher training (ITT)

and continuous professional development (CPD) behaviour management programmes include a focus on more on the job, school led behaviour management training. In early 2000, a number of authors had highlighted teachers' frustrations at the lack of ITT and CPD on behaviour management (e.g. Ananiadou and Smith 2002; Wright and Keetley 2003; Smith, 2004; Munn et al., 2004). For instance, in 2005, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), an independent non ministerial department of Government produced *Managing Challenging Behaviour* (Ofsted, 2005) a report aimed at raising standards and increasing good practice in relation to student behaviour and discipline. Ofsted (2005) found that newly qualified teachers were receiving inadequate ITT training on understanding and managing challenging pupil behaviour and consistent with previous reports (e.g. Steer, 2005) recommended more emphasis on behaviour management strategies in ITT and CPD programmes (Brown and Winterton, 2010). Following the recent reforms, Ofsted has described teacher training developments as 'outstanding' while NQTs have reported that they 'are more satisfied with their training in relation to behaviour' (House of Commons Education Committee, 2011, p. 35).

A number of research studies in England have also documented a greater sense of satisfaction and self-efficacy amongst teachers in dealing with challenging student behaviour. For instance, the National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) survey (2008) reported that approximately half of the 1,400 teachers surveyed disagreed that appropriate training was available for teachers in their school to enable them to manage pupil behaviour (House of Commons Education Committee, 2011). However, the NFER survey was repeated in 2012 and indicated that over half of the 1,600 teachers surveyed believed that training to manage pupil behaviour was available for teachers in their school whilst only a quarter of respondents disagreed. Meanwhile, the Annual Survey of over 13,000 newly qualified teachers (NQT Survey) who had completed their ITT in England during the 2009- 2010 academic year reported that approximately 71% of over 7,200 secondary NQTs rated their ITT behaviour management training as either 'very good' or 'good. Interestingly, 28% of teachers with more than five years teaching experience rated the behaviour training received during ITT as 'poor', compared with 13% of teachers with less than five years' experience (Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2011). These findings may indicate an improvement in ITT behaviour training and consequently teachers' sense of self-efficacy in recent years.

Teachers' sense of satisfaction with behaviour management training in England may be contrasted with that of Irish teachers reported in a recent study conducted by Kerr et al. (2011, p. 36). The study which explored *Workplace Stress and Coping in Secondary Teachers in Ireland* found that the most common cause of stress in the 15 teachers interviewed was pupil indiscipline including increasing levels of student aggression and 'diminishing support from parents for disciplinary action'. The majority of participants stated that they had not been adequately prepared to deal with discipline by their teacher training courses but learn as they progress through their careers. Out of the 15 teachers interviewed in the study not even one had found the Higher Diploma in Education had prepared them for the reality of the classroom.

Kerr et al. (2011, p. 37) recommended that all ITT should include modules on the 'establishment and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries when dealing with pupils, methods of dealing with serious pupil misbehaviour, and methods of dealing with stress'. Researchers argue that the provision of effective initial teacher education, induction and relevant continuous professional development is arguably more crucial now than ever before (Drudy, 2009; Harford, 2010). Teachers in 21st century Ireland are faced with a host of complex challenges as a consequence of the unprecedented changes in the Irish student population which as mentioned had until recently been largely monolithic in terms of religion, culture and ethnicity (The Teaching Council, 2011). Dealing with the knock-on effects of changing family structures, tremendous technological advances and the emergence of new economic and societal problems, such as those outlined, further adds to these teacher difficulties and underlines the need for a high quality continuum of teacher training in Ireland (Commission of the European Communities, 2007; The Teaching Council, 2011). The present study explored, through qualitative interviews, teachers' perceptions regarding training to support staff in dealing with challenging student behaviour and SBT. The overwhelming majority of teachers interviewed stated that such training is inadequate and where it does exist, it is difficult to access. This theme will be discussed shortly in Chapter 6.

4.6.4 Legislation and Circulars

The *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006, p. 134) recommended that legislation should be amended and circulars updated in ways that are more protective of all the school community. As a result, in 2007, Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) was amended to require an appeals committee to also take into consideration the educational interests of other students, the maintenance of a school climate conducive to effective learning and teaching and the health, safety and welfare of teachers, staff and other students. Teachers and unions have welcomed this amendment but still express a desire for greater legal powers in the classroom. Teachers maintain that the Education Act (1998) places more emphasis on the rights of the disruptive student than on the rights of teachers and the well-behaved majority.

Despite these calls for additional legal powers, a general consensus in the literature suggests that even though punitive disciplinary measures may be effective in the short-term they are seldom effective in the long term (Volkh and Snell, 1998; Toel et al., 2007; Morrison, 2007; Osher et al., 2008) and in fact appear to be associated with increased rates of challenging student behaviour (Skiba et al., 2006). Researchers describe the role of discipline as safeguarding the educational needs of all students (Oosthuizen et al., 2003, p. 2; Smit, 2010, p. 52). Approaches to addressing challenging and aggressive student behaviour may be categorised into those which are pro-active and those which are reactive (Christle et al., 2006; Hatfield et al., 2008). Pro-active strategies focus on identifying potential risk factors and preventing issues from arising and include, for example, preventative educational programmes which develop individual social skills and competencies. On the other hand, reactive responses are concerned with dealing with existing problems after their occurrence and include punitive measures which empower teachers to suspend or expel students for their transgressions (Mooij, 2010). Some authors suggest that policy makers may implement reactionary rather than empirically validated approaches to student aggression and violent behaviour because these are more congruent with society's fixation on immediate gratification and on retribution (Christle et al., 2006; Reychler, 2013). However, knee jerk, reactive approaches to student aggression, such as zero tolerance policies, have been shown to be counter-productive and harmful to the school

environment (Skiba and Peterson, 2000; Espelage et al., 2013) whilst the effectiveness of pro-active approaches is underlined by an increasing number of authors (Krug et al., 2002; Rigby, 2007; Eisenbraun, 2007; Hatfield et al., 2008; McMahon et al., 2011; Negy et al., 2013).

With regard to the updating of Circulars on discipline, the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) published *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* in 2008. NEWB, an independent statutory agency established under the Welfare Act (2000), (which in 2014 was dissolved and its functions subsumed under the new Child and Family Agency) asserts that updated guidelines were necessary to reflect changes in society, culture and school practice and to promote further partnership between parents, students and schools in developing school environments which are conducive to learning and teaching. The guidelines, which reflect both good practice guidance and schools' legal obligations, promote an inclusive, preventative, whole school approach to managing challenging student behaviour. NEWB (2008, p. 2) states that the code of behaviour assists schools in the promotion of the

school ethos, relationships, policies, procedures and practices that encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. The code of behaviour helps teachers, other members of staff, students and parents to work together for a happy, effective and safe school. The code expresses the vision, mission and values of the school and its Patron. It translates the expectations of staff, parents and students into practical arrangements that will help to ensure continuity of instruction to all students. It helps to foster an orderly, harmonious school where high standards of behaviour are expected and supported.

The guidelines are intended to assist schools in developing, auditing and updating existing codes of behaviour and in 'promoting on-going discussion and reflection about behaviour and learning in the school' (National Educational Psychological Service, 2008, p. 15). These Guidelines are based on up-to-date, international good practice and supersede Circular 1991 M33/91: *Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline: A suggested school code of behaviour and discipline for post-*

primary schools which was circulated in 1991 to assist schools in devising a code of behaviour prior to such a code becoming a legal requirement of all schools. However, Circular 1998 M12/98 *Violence towards staff in schools* has not been updated and although the guidelines set out clear procedures for preventing, minimising and addressing disruptive and inappropriate student behaviour, legal and practical guidance regarding the student bullying of teachers is not provided.

The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) document (2008) is comprehensive, informative and based on international best practice however its success in meeting its objectives is wholly dependent on its ability to reach its target audiences. Unless the schools' code of behaviour is adopted as a working document with which all members of the school community are familiar and compliant, its effectiveness as a tool for managing challenging behaviour will be greatly diluted (Ricketts, 2007; Lane et al., 2009; McMahon, 2011). The code of behaviour needs to be a working, consultative document in each school rather than another ticked box on the board of managements' ever increasing to-do list. Whilst school principals have responsibility for 'leading the audit and review of the code of behaviour, and ensuring that it is implemented in the school' (NEWB, 2008, p. 15), NEWB (2008, p. 15) stresses that the BoM has overall responsibility for the code of behaviour and 'overall responsibility for school policies'. However, one may question whether it is realistic or sensible to devolve total responsibility for ensuring implementation of the code of behaviour to BoMs, an already over-stretched voluntary body.

As discussed in Section 4.2, each school's board of management comprises a group of voluntary members - parents, teachers and nominees of the Patron, rather than a set of professional state representatives. At the recent 2008 Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN) national annual conference, Sean Cottrell, director of IPPN, questioned whether the BoM structure designed in 1975 could realistically be expected to deliver the management functions required of a school in the highly legislative education system of the present day which has undergone vast societal, demographic, educational and legislative change over the past four decades. More recently, Cottrell reiterated these sentiments in an interview with the Irish Independent (15th May, 2013) in which he

questioned whether it was ‘fair or even wise to expect volunteers to take employer responsibility for human resources, financial, legal, technological and construction issues that routinely cross their desks’. He criticised the way in which Departments of Education have devolved ‘almost all responsibility to school boards’ and urged that in the current climate of ‘declining volunteerism, dwindling school resources, and managing diversity and special needs, it is clear that the current management model is unsustainable’. Cottrell maintains that the lack of ‘any paid professional services to support governance in schools leaves many principals, already experiencing management overload, filling the governance gaps’. He asserts that the current school governance structure is outdated, impractical and in need of urgent reform. Although speaking in the context of primary schools, these arguments have relevance to the post-primary sector also, due to the close similarities between each school’s management structures.

4.6.5 Time for Year Heads

The current middle management structure in second level schools consists of a principal and deputy principal who are supported by promoted teachers in posts of responsibility. These posts of responsibility are graded with the highest level referred to as Assistant principal and the next level referred to as a Special Duties teacher. Differences between each relate primarily to remuneration as specific duties are agreed locally with the principal and management team. The Year Head position is a post of responsibility which may be assigned to either Assistant Principals or Special Duties teachers. Year Heads generally form part of the schools’ senior management team and are responsible for students’ academic progression, pastoral care and discipline. Monaghan (1998, p. 14) explains that the Year Head ‘has a concern for every aspect of the year group, its spirit, organization, behaviour code, individual student progress, staff needs and parental involvement’. The Year Head may be responsible for a group of anywhere between 30 and 100 pupils in addition to their full-time classroom teaching duties (Callanan, 2009). Speaking at the Post-Primary Education Forum in Dáil Éireann, Declan Glynn (2009), Assistant General Secretary of the TUI, described the post of responsibility system as ‘the spinal cord of a school, its central nervous system’. Glynn asserts that every pupil has a unique set of needs and ‘must have someone taking charge

of and stewarding them, encouraging the reluctant and affirming the positive', a role assumed by Year Heads.

The *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006, p. 130) recognises that Year Heads are 'key players in influencing the behaviour of their students' and thus recommends that time consonant with the demands of their role relative to school size should be allocated to Year Heads to sufficiently fulfil their duties. In addition to the primary research undertaken by Task Force members, recommendations were informed by 153 public submissions including those which came from 'agencies, advocacy groups, subject associations, targeted initiative personnel, school groups comprising teachers, parents and students and also from individuals' (Martin, 2006, p. 12). A large number of these submissions emphasised the critical role played by Year Heads in managing issues of discipline and stressed the need for Year Heads to be allocated adequate time to effectively fulfil their roles. Many of the public submissions suggested that heavily timetabled teaching duties prevent Year Heads from successfully addressing and resolving discipline issues, particularly in large schools in which Year Heads may have responsibility for a considerable number of students with challenging behaviour. This concern with inadequate allocation of time for Year Heads was also reiterated by Patricia MacDonagh, Director of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (2007, p. 3) who asserts that 'schools could not function in this country without a proper Year Head system' and suggests a 'pro-rata reduction in hours, with a maximum of 15/16 teaching hours'.

The problem of lack of time allocation for Year Heads was underlined by Monahan (1998) in his survey of 72 Year Heads which revealed that teachers cited lack of time as the most difficult aspect of their role. Monahan (1998) suggests that an official time allocation of 'three to five periods' per week would be hugely beneficial in enabling Year Heads to properly attend to their duties. A similar finding was reported by Callanan (2009) who found that 7 out of the 8 Year Heads questioned in her study had no official time allocation for completing their duties and 100% of these respondents cited lack of time as the most frustrating aspect of being a Year Head. Callanan (2009) suggests that the demands of full-time teaching, coupled with a lack of allocated time to

Year Head duties forces Year Heads to adopt a reactive rather than a proactive approach to dealing with student behavioural issues which is more akin to fire-fighting than the preventative measures advocated by the NEWB (2008) Code of Behaviour document.

As mentioned, the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) advocates the allocation of additional time to Year Heads to fulfil their duties. The Task Force members emphasise that the success of the proposed recommendations is contingent upon their full and timely implementation in an integrated and comprehensive manner. However, as previously discussed, these recommendations have been implemented only in part, and counsel regarding the necessity to allocate additional hours to Year Heads has gone unheeded by the DES. In fact, teacher trade unions and management bodies maintain that Principals and those in posts of responsibility including Year Heads are now under more pressure than ever before. This is due in part to on-going cuts to the education budget and a moratorium on posts of responsibility in place since 2009, both of which have been discussed in Section 4.4, which have failed to recognise the integral role that these teachers play in ensuring the effective running of the school system (TUI, 2013; Joint Managerial Body, 2014).

The moratorium (DES Circular 0022/2009) has resulted in the loss of over 6,000 middle management positions in schools including Year Heads in the past 5 years (Hennessy, 2012) placing all teaching staff under ‘exponentially increasing demands’ (Kelly, 2014). Therefore, in this particular instance, the State has responded in complete contrast to the Task Force recommendations. John MacGabhann, General Secretary of the TUI highlighted that the loss of teachers due to cutbacks is ‘undoubtedly detrimental to promoting positive behaviour in the classroom’ (Hennessy, 2014) whilst the JMB (2014) has warned that the ‘ever increasing workload’ which has resulted from the moratorium means that schools are now at ‘breaking point’. A temporary alleviation of the moratorium came into effect in January 2014.

In addition to the embargo on posts of responsibility appointments, the Government has, with effect from September 2012, also withdrawn the ex-quota Guidance hours which

provide schools with the resources to provide guidance and counselling for pupils in line with Section 9(c) of the Education Act (1998, p. 13) which requires that students have ‘access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’. Guidance provision must now be managed by schools from within their standard teacher allocation. A survey of 131 principals was conducted in 2012 by the Joint Managerial Body, representing the managers of Ireland’s voluntary second-level schools, exploring the impact of on-going budget cuts to staffing numbers. The survey found that one-to-one personal counselling provision for pupils is the area most damaged by the cuts (Duncan, 2013). The Institute of Guidance Counsellors (ICG) 2013 pre-budget submission to the Education Minister revealed a reduction of 51.4% in time for one to one counselling and an overall reduction in the guidance service of 21.4%, with significant variations among schools and highlighted the potential detrimental impact of such an extensive reduction in the counselling and guidance student support services on student well-being, educational attainment and behaviour. Despite the opposition to and appeals of all stakeholders (e.g. TUI, ASTI, JMB) the Government have maintained the cuts to ex-quota Guidance hours in the present budget.

The *School Matters* report (2006) stressed the complex nature of student behaviour, outlining the challenges and social pressures faced by young people in Ireland; pressures which have been amplified over the past number of years in the wake of the economic downturn and the increasingly globalised and technological society. The need for a holistic, multi-level response to address challenging student behaviour, which supports the social and emotional needs of the young person, has been heavily underlined. The significant reduction in guidance and counselling provision has weakened schools’ ability to effectively support students’ emotional wellbeing, to address student behaviour in Irish second level schools and has led to increases in already above average class sizes (JMB, 2014); all of which may have a negative impact on SBTB.

4.7 Influence of Austerity Measures on SBTB & Teacher Well-Being

An independent nationally representative survey was commissioned by the TUI in 2012 to explore the Impact of Budget Cuts in Education on service provision, staff work-load and conditions. The survey found that the austerity agenda in education and in particular cuts to posts of responsibility were posing major challenges for teachers and for quality service delivery; findings echoed by the Impact of Cutbacks on Second Level Schools Survey (ASTI, 2013). The extent of these challenges is evident in the finding that 33% of 145 teachers surveyed report an increased weekly work-load of seven hours over and above the additional commitments of the Croke Park Agreement as a result of these cuts (TUI, 2012). The survey also found that 62% of teachers felt that discipline and behavioural issues have suffered a medium to high impact due to funding cuts which many attribute to cuts to Year Heads and extra workload on teachers and management (TUI, 2012). 62% of all schools reported an increased workload for teachers as a result of a loss of staff due to cutbacks. General day to day administration (66% of respondents), discipline and behaviour issues (62%) , year head structures (60%) and pastoral care/tutorial support (60%) were identified as having suffered a medium to high impact due to the loss in posts of responsibility (TUI, 2012).

Meanwhile, the TUI commissioned Teachers' Workload Survey (Reaper and McShane, 2010) found that 81% of teachers report that their workload has increased in the past five years through dealing with in-class discipline and in-class conflict, which they say, is a significant drain on teachers' resources. The report (TUI, 2010) also showed 20% of respondents had been subjected to 'threatening or intimidating behaviour over the preceding week. This increased work-load coupled with increased curricular demands and student behavioural issues may contribute to the reported rise in Irish teachers' stress levels (Darmody and Smyth, 2007; Kerr et al., 2011) and to a higher risk of burnout as well as a host of other physical and psychological problems (Finlayson, 2002) such as those outlined in Chapter 2.

Research strongly suggests that stress and burnout reduce teachers' performance and affect their ability to manage problem student behaviour (Towl and Otago, 2007). The

conditions in contemporary Irish schools may therefore impact on the prevalence of SBTB. Teachers who are stressed and over-stretched do not have the time, motivation, training or resources to effectively tend to student's diverse needs and learning styles, to employ creative and well-planned curricular activities and methodologies or to nurture quality relationships with their pupils (Toblin et al., 2005; Du Plessis, 2008; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; Espelage et al., 2013).

Another tremendous source of teacher stress in Ireland relates to job security (ASTI, 2013). Union representatives reveal that the majority of qualified second level teachers in Ireland of less than 30 of age are employed on casual part-time contracts and survive on minimum wage salaries with no job security (The Irish Times, 2013). Recent findings by the ASTI reveal that 30% of its members do not have full time, permanent jobs. Sally Maguire, ASTI president explains that young teachers 'whose employment rights are weak are fearfully doing everything they can and everything suggested in order to get some kind of full-time position' (Irish Examiner, 2013). Considering that young, inexperienced and non-permanent teachers are at a greater risk of SBT as underlined by researchers (e.g. Benefield, 2004; Mooij, 2010) and explored in Chapter 2, it is disconcerting that such a large percentage of teachers in Irish schools have no security in their jobs and therefore may be reluctant to highlight difficulties with challenging student behaviour or seek management support due to fear of jeopardising future employment opportunities.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored key cultural, social, economic and ideological influences, which have helped to shape the development of education policy in Ireland and subsequent policy responses to address challenging student behaviour and SBT. Crucial factors in this regard include the State's increasing concern with safeguarding childrens' rights and equality of educational opportunity, the economic downturn that followed the Celtic Tiger era sending Ireland into a prevailing period of austerity, the technological explosion over the past decade and the increasing influences of EU membership, neo-liberalism and global education reform on Irish education. The influence of each of

these factors on Ireland's contemporary response to challenging student behaviour and SBT has been considered.

This chapter also looked at the recommendations of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) and the subsequent level of implementation of these recommendations. A number of positive developments have taken place since the publication of the report, such as the establishment of the National Behaviour Support Service, an extension of the Junior Certificate Schools Programme and significant reform in teacher education and training, which now includes a process of induction and limited access to behaviour management training. Positive developments since the report also include the publication of the National Education Welfare Board Guidelines (2008) on developing a Code of Behaviour and amendments to Section 29 of the Education Act and to DES circulars. However, as discussed throughout this chapter, the process and implementation of the report's recommendations have not been as comprehensive, timely, integrated or sufficiently resourced as the Task Force members had envisaged or advised. For instance, changes to teacher training and education have only taken place since 2012 under the present Education Minister, Ruari Quinn whilst class sizes have increased since the publication of the report with further increases possibly imminent in the coming budget (ASTI, 2013).

An incongruity is also demonstrated between the State's commitment to develop a comprehensive and integrated response to the Task Force recommendations, including those relating to Year Heads and the subsequent introduction of a moratorium on filling posts of responsibility. The *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) stresses the integral role, which Year Heads play in managing challenging student behaviour, and underlines the need for sufficient allocation of time for Year Heads to effectively fulfil their duties. However, the State's embargo in place since 2009, which has dramatically increased teachers' and principals' workload sits in polarity to these recommendations, placing Year Heads under even greater pressure to meet students' needs in ways consistent with the State's commitments laid out in the Education Act (1998). The present study conducted interviews with 3 Year Heads and also explored these issues with a number of interviewees and will be discussed in the final two chapters.

There is still no national strategic plan in place to address challenging student behaviour in Ireland. The *School Matters* recommendations had been intended to provide the basis for such a strategy however, recommendations have not been implemented in the integrated and coherent manner advocated by the Task Force. Notwithstanding the significant positive measures to improve student behaviour implemented by the State since 2006, relentless funding cuts to the education budget may have undermined the opportunity presented by the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) to substantially improve student behaviour and thus SBT in Irish schools. The remaining chapters of the thesis now look at the primary research and findings of the present study, commencing with an overview of the study's methodology in the coming chapter.

5
Methodology
&
Research Design

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview and justification for the chosen methodological approach, methods and research process. The chapter commences with a discussion of the rationale for the use of a mixed method methodological approach to this study. This approach was selected for a number of reasons such as the necessity to generate a wide range of data which would illuminate both the subjective and objective elements of such a complex and multifaceted phenomenon.

Section 5.3 presents the research approach and design which involves a combination of semi-structured interviews and a survey. Such a mixed methods design combines statistical and descriptive data to illuminate both individual perspectives and large scale attitudinal patterns and thus enhances the potential to sufficiently answer the research questions posed. Section 5.4 details the qualitative strand of the research from selection of interviewees to data collection and thematic data analysis whilst Section 5.5 outlines in depth the quantitative strand from respondent selection through to the process of survey distribution, collection and the procedures of analysis. The combination of purposive, snowballing and proportional sampling techniques which are employed in the research are discussed and explained as are the strategies, instruments and data collection and analysis methods. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical issues relevant to the research study such as consent, confidentiality and protection from harm and outlines the steps taken to improve the reliability and validity of research findings.

5.2 Methodology

Thomas Kuhn (1962), an American historian and philosopher of science, first used the term *paradigm* as a means of encapsulating ‘researchers’ beliefs about their efforts to create knowledge’ (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003, p.32). The term is used to imply ‘a pattern, structure and framework or system of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions’ which underpin the nature of enquiry (Olsen et al., 1992, p. 16). Each paradigm is underpinned by its own theory of knowledge and by a ‘set of beliefs,

values, and assumptions regarding the nature and conduct of research' (Thomas and Hodges, 2010, p. 292). These ontological and epistemological assumptions determine the methods and the methodologies which the researcher will use and influence whether an objective or subjective research position is employed. Traditionally there existed two major social science paradigms, known as the positivist or scientific and the constructivist or naturalistic models (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Since the late 1980s, the pragmatic paradigm, which employs a mixed methods approach to research, has become increasingly popular in social research. Mixed methods research is now generally accepted as a valid approach to research, instead of the traditional emphasis on quantitative and qualitative methodologies as discrete and separate fields.

This study sought to explore both the subjective and objective components relating to the phenomenon of SBT, generating data which examined the actual bullying which was being inflicted and also the subjective experiences and perceptions of teachers; the support mechanisms which are in place to address the issue and also teachers' perceptions regarding such supports. The study sought to throw light on the nature and prevalence of the phenomenon and the responses to SBTB in Ireland and also attempted to understand the ways in which participants explain and construct the world in which they live.

Mixed methodology provides an opportunity for 'multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study' (Creswell, 2003, p. 12). Mixed methods researchers acknowledge that their personal and cultural heritage influences their interpretation of their findings and counsel that all data must be considered within its social, political, cultural and historical contexts. This is relevant to the present study which seeks to understand the emergence of SBTB in an Irish historical, cultural and social context. The selection of a mixed methods approach to this study is based on a number of factors including the belief that a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches would provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the research problem than either approach alone. According to Le Compte and Goetz (1982), more complete and complex data is yielded from research which uses

combinations of data collection strategies than uni-modal designs. Employing a dual methodology allows the researcher to use diverse ‘forms of evidence to build greater understanding and insight of the social world than is possible from one approach alone’ (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003, p. 22).

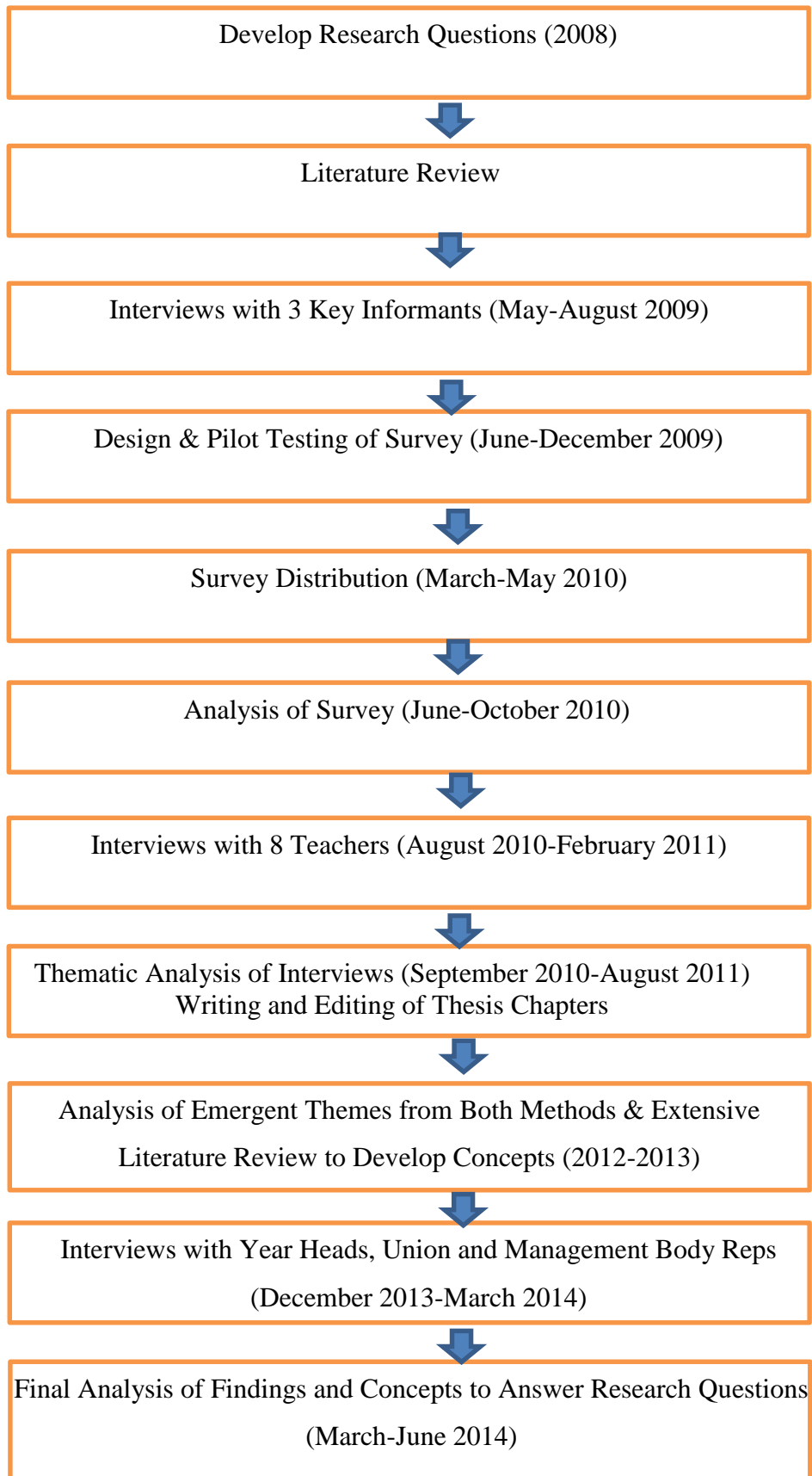
The study used a combination of semi-structured interviews and open ended questions in a survey to generate qualitative data, whilst quantitative data was generated through statistical analysis of the survey. The freedom to mix and match design components enhances the researcher’s potential to answer the research questions more thoroughly and assists in the reliability and validity of findings. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) advocate the use of mixed methods to unearth inconsistencies in the data which may otherwise be overlooked by single methods. They also allude to additional advantages such as the concurrent exploration of phenomena using an array of both unambiguous and illuminating questions, integrating a range of perspectives, providing contextual elucidation and constructing more solid, theoretical assumptions. As empirical data pertaining to this research problem is quite limited, the use of a survey to elicit the central themes in need of greater exploration by qualitative means was extremely beneficial. This quantitative data, in tandem with a thorough review of the literature, assisted the researcher in determining the most significant issues in need of in-depth qualitative exploration and facilitated the clarification and comparison of results yielded from each approach. The research design which was used in the study will now be discussed.

5.3 Research Approach and Design

Research design may be considered as the blue print or logic behind the ways in which the study is to be conducted. It outlines how all of the major parts of the research study, from underlying philosophical assumptions to data collection and analysis will work collectively in an attempt to address the research questions (Thomas and Hodges, 2010). According to Mouton (1996, p. 175) the research design serves to ‘plan, structure and execute’ the research to maximise the ‘validity of the findings’. The research design employed in the present study involved the combination of semi-structured interviews

and a survey. Following a thorough and on-going review of the literature, semi structured interviews took place with 3 purposefully selected teachers. These teachers were known professionally by the researcher and chosen for their knowledge of the subject area. The data from these interviews were used to inform the design and content of a survey and to establish the most central tenets of the problem for exploration. These 3 teachers were also responsible for pilot testing early drafts of the survey leading to modifications prior to wide-scale distribution. Data yielded from the survey which was circulated to 836 teachers in 20 schools in Cork city and county was used to shed light on the nature and prevalence of the phenomenon and to guide the direction of further interviews which took place with an additional 8 teachers. Following extensive data analysis a final round of interviews took place with 3 Year Heads, 2 union representatives and 1 management body representative to test emergent themes and concepts. These interviews were undertaken to provide the study with a range of educational perspectives. An overview of the research design indicating the timeline of the research process is presented in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 *Research Design and Timeline*



5.4 The Qualitative Research Strand

5.4.1 Research Method: Semi Structured Interviews

The researcher chose semi structured in-depth interviews as the research method for generating qualitative data. The semi-structured interview contains features of both the structured and unstructured methods and through the use of both open and closed questions, benefits from the strength of each of the interview styles (Thomas and Hodges, 2010). By conducting individual interviews with a range of teachers, Year Heads and union and management body personnel, the researcher sought to gain an insight into their knowledge and understanding of SBTB in Irish second level schools.

An interview guide was used with each participant, which is a pre-planned set of questions that guides the interview in a logical progression, ensuring that the same areas of interest are covered with all interviewees. Interviews with key informants were guided by a set of questions, which were informed by a review of the literature. All other subsequent interview guides were developed based on the results of the questionnaire and by emergent themes generated from qualitative findings. A copy of each interview guide used with participants is provided in the Appendices (Appendix A-E). As the interview is semi-structured, the participant is also encouraged to elaborate on relevant points as they wish. This elaboration led to a continual modification of the guide throughout the interview process as new issues and potential themes of interest arose in the discussions which were of importance. The qualitative interview provides researchers with the basic data to map and develop an understanding of the relations between interviewees and their situation. The task of the researcher is to then develop interpretive frameworks to understand the interviewees' accounts in more conceptual terms (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003). While individual experiences are valued for their uniqueness, these individual accounts are also seen to be an outcome of social processes. To this extent 'representations of an issue of common concern, or of people in a particular social milieu, are in part shared' (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 43).

Throughout the course of the interviews, common themes began to emerge which led to increased researcher confidence in her understanding of the phenomenon (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). Researchers suggest that in mixed methods research studies which use both qualitative and quantitative components, qualitative interviewing may facilitate a more in-depth understanding of the results of a survey by providing significant, contextual data which helps to explain particular findings. This was certainly true of this study as the interview method allowed the researcher to explore, clarify and explain particular survey findings. In addition, insights gained from the interview process led to an improvement in the quality of the survey design as the researcher was assisted in formulating appropriate questions informed by an appreciation of ‘both the concerns and the language of the target group’ (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 39).

As with all modes of data collection, semi-structured interviews carry both strengths and limitations of which the researcher must remain cognisant. This qualitative method of data collection provides a valuable source of material and allows the interviewee to express their opinions and experiences in their own words and to focus on the issues that they feel to be most significant. However, as with all methods of qualitative research which are subjective in terms of the relationship between the researcher and the research, limitations may apply. These limitations may include the interviewer’s interposition of his or her own values and expectations into the interview process which can negatively affect the response and reliability of the interviewee effects (Frey and Oishi, 1995) and the risk of falsification or exaggeration of data by interviewees who are eager to please and who wish to supply the researcher with the information they believe is sought (Creswell, 1998). Interviewees may also feel compelled to participate and feel under obligation to supply the researcher with information which they are uncomfortable divulging.

The researcher’s professional training as a therapeutic counsellor was of immense benefit throughout the interview process in assisting in the establishment of trust and rapport and in facilitating interviewees to feel comfortable, heard and valued. Assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and the establishment of genuine rapport and trust with the participant is imperative, otherwise ‘it is likely that any information

they provide will be a formal and guarded account, bearing little resemblance to the more realistic version of events' (Arksey and Knight, 1999, p. 68). Therefore it was crucial that the researcher remained impartial, non-judgemental and respectful of the views of all participants (Creswell, 1998).

5.4.2 Sample Selection

A combination of purposeful and snowball sampling was employed in the selection of interviewees for this study to ensure richness and relevance of data. Purposeful sampling is the most common sampling strategy in qualitative research and is used to gain insight and in-depth understanding of the topic under study. It is a non-random method of sampling in which 'information-rich' cases, central to the purpose and aims of the study are explored in great detail (Patton, 2002, p. 243). Significant and relevant data can be obtained from subjects who are closely acquainted with the research topic rather than interviewing many participants whose contributions may not be as valuable or appropriate. Researchers who use purposefully selected samples do not strive for generalisability of their findings but rather they seek to achieve representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, events or actions under study. Common patterns which emerge from unconnected and varied sources are particularly valuable in 'capturing the core experience and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon (Patton, 2002, p. 235).

This study commenced with the recruitment of 3 teachers, referred to as key informants and known to the researcher. The key informants were purposefully selected because of their willingness to participate in the study and their knowledge of the topic being explored. These key informants assisted the researcher in identifying important preliminary themes in need of further attention prior to the design of a survey questionnaire which was also pilot- tested by these participants. Following preliminary data analysis of these interviews and of the survey questionnaire, snowball sampling was employed to recruit further interviewees. This form of sampling involves asking family, friends or colleagues to recommend suitable participants whom they know to have knowledge or experience of the research area (Creswell, 2003). In this respect, 8

additional interviewees with experience of SBTB, additional to the 3 key informants, were recruited based on suggestions by the key informants. These semi-structured interviews provided the study with rich, experiential material and allowed for more accurate and comprehensive explanation and understanding of the quantitative data, therefore enhancing the trustworthiness of the findings.

Purposeful sampling was also used to recruit 3 Year Heads and 2 union and 1 management body representatives to provide the study with a variety of educational perspectives. Interviews with union representatives sought to provide the study with a wider perspective on relevant issues relating to student behaviour and policy development whilst matters such as support structures and the impact of austerity measures were explored with the management body representative. In total, 17 participants were interviewed. The characteristics of the 14 teachers and Year Heads appear in Table 6.2 whilst the characteristics of the union and management body representatives are not provided in order to protect participant anonymity. Initially, the researcher had sought an equal balance of male and female participants of varying demographics from a range of schools in rural, city and suburban areas. However, accessing such a sample was not feasible due to the difficulty in identifying willing participants who were comfortable discussing such a sensitive topic.

5.4.3 Data Collection Process and Procedures

All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder with participants invited to select a pseudonym by which they would be referred, to ensure confidentiality. Participants were assured that any identifiable information would be treated in the strictest confidence. All personal data, such as participant names and contact information, have been stored in electronic form on a secure password protected computer and will be deleted in line with University guidelines, as will be outlined in Section 5.6. A coding system, outlined in Appendix G, has been used to match transcribed interviews with participants. A basic descriptive coding method also known as attribute coding (Saldana, 2009) was used to record specific attributes or characteristics of interviewees. Each interview transcript was assigned a number (1-17) for identification purposes,

designated male (M) or female (F) and the type of school in which interviewees were based (Suburban, Rural, City centre) including the gender of the pupils (Girls, Boys, Mixed) and the category of school (DEIS, non-DEIS, DEIS Rapid) were recorded. Quotes or comments which may be traceable to the contributor, as well as identifying features relating to the schools involved in the study will not be disclosed. An overview of the interview process and procedures is now presented.

5.4.3.1 Key Informants

3 teachers known to the researcher and selected as key informants as outlined in Section 5.1, were contacted by telephone and provided with an overview of the study aims and objectives and asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. Upon agreeing to participate a location was selected by the interviewee. Two of these teachers chose to meet outside of the school premises in a public location stating that they felt more comfortable discussing this topic in an off-site setting, whilst the third interview took place in the teacher's school of employment. Each participant was provided with a written overview of the study objectives, an informed consent form and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity prior to the commencement of the interview. A more in-depth discussion regarding ethical matters such as consent and confidentiality will take place in Section 5.6.

Interviews, of approximately 60 to 80 minutes duration, focused on teachers' knowledge and experience of SBT and their awareness of associated supports and policies to address the issue with the aim of eliciting data to guide in the construction of the fundamental research questions and the development of the survey. Narrative responses were solicited using an interview guide (see Appendix B) which explored teachers' perceptions regarding the prevalence, nature and effects of SBT, the causes of SBT and the supports available to prevent or address the issue. Participants were also asked questions regarding their opinions on the optimum methods of survey distribution and collection. Approximately one month after the initial interview, key informants were asked to pilot test the survey and feedback was sought via telephone, regarding

terminology, content and format with adaptations made to the questionnaire where necessary.

5.4.3.2 Teacher Interviews

In the twelve-month period following the distribution and preliminary analysis of the survey an additional 8 teachers were interviewed. Data generated from these interviews proved sufficient to allow for strong thematic analysis and therefore further interviews were temporarily suspended at this point in the study. As with the key informant interviews, these teachers, who were selected using purposive and snowballing sampling methods outlined previously, were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the interview process. The purpose of these interviews was to gain greater insight and understanding into teachers' feelings and experiences in relation to student bullying behaviours; their interpretations of such behaviours and their perceptions and awareness of policies, supports and training. These interviews differed from those conducted with key informants as the initial interviews with key informants were designed to provide the study with an overview of the key issues surrounding the student bullying of teachers which were to be explored more comprehensively in the questionnaire and subsequent interviews.

Interviewees were recruited based on their willingness to participate in the study, prior experience of either witnessing or experiencing SBTB and/ or because they fell within the high risk categories for bullying illuminated by the survey such as student teacher or teacher close to retirement age. Once again, each teacher was provided with a written definition of SBT, an outline of the study aims, an informed consent form and assurances of confidentiality. A clear discussion outlining the purpose and aims of the study and the expectations of both the interviewee and the researcher took place at the outset of each interview. Interviews of between 30 and 80 minutes duration took place, at the teacher's request in each teacher's school of employment. These interviews sought to provide the study with rich, qualitative data regarding the most significant, complex and challenging particulars of the phenomenon and to assist in the explanation and interpretation of the survey results. Interviewees were assured that there was no

obligation on them to participate in the study or to share data which they were uncomfortable discussing, however most respondents were quite forthcoming in their discussions and following the interview, three of these participants expressed that the interview process had been a cathartic and/ or enjoyable experience.

5.4.3.3 Phase 3 Interviews

The final round of interviews took place between December 2013 and March 2014 following extensive analysis of collated qualitative and quantitative data. The purpose of these interviews was to develop and support the most prominent emergent themes. As one of the strongest emergent themes related to the importance of school management support in dealing with challenging student behaviour, Year Heads who form part of the senior management team and have responsibility for student discipline were selected for interview. Interviews also took place with 2 union and 1 management body representatives to obtain a wider, more detached perspective on the phenomenon which focused more on supports, training and policies in place to deal with the issue rather than on individuals' experiences of student bullying behaviours.

Purposeful sampling was used in the selection of the Year Heads for interview as each of these Year Heads was known professionally to the researcher. Each Year Head was contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the interview process and subsequently provided with a written outline of the study aims, a definition of SBT, an informed consent form and assurances of confidentiality. Interviews of approximately 30 to 40 minutes duration took place, at the teacher's request in each teacher's school of employment. An interview guide consisting of 4 questions relating to managements' ability to effectively support teachers experiencing SBTB and the impact of cuts to funding including the recent moratorium was used with each participant (see Appendix D). Each of the 3 Year Heads spoke quite freely during the interview process, expressing their frustration and exasperation at the pressures imposed upon teaching and management staff due to on-going cuts and the impact of this on managements' ability to effectively carry out their extensive list of duties.

Purposeful sampling was also used to recruit the union and management body representatives, each of whom hold middle management positions within the respective organisations. These interviewees were recruited in order to provide a broader perspective on the phenomenon, particularly in relation to national policy in Ireland. An email outlining the parameters of the study, a definition of SBT, an indication of preliminary findings and a request to conduct a 15-minute telephone interview was sent to each of the second level teacher trade Unions – The Teachers’ Union of Ireland and the Association of Secondary School Teachers Ireland. An email was also sent to each of the school management bodies – The Joint Managerial Body (JMB), The Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) and the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD). The email sent to the Unions included a list of 6 questions relating to the Unions’ level of awareness of SBTB, perceptions regarding current supports and structures and perceptions regarding managements’ ability to support teachers in the current economic climate (see Appendix E). The email sent to the management bodies included a list of 5 questions (see Appendix F) which related primarily to managements’ ability to support teachers affected by SBT and exploring perceptions regarding the impact of education cuts on school principals and management.

Follow up emails were sent to each of these organisations outlining the importance of including the perspectives of union and management body members in the study. Over a six week period a member from both the ASTI and the TUI responded and agreed to participate whilst an official from the Joint Managerial Board also generously consented to be interviewed. The telephone interviews lasted approximately between 15 and 40 minutes in duration and with verbal permission all interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed by the researcher. Each of these interviewees were extremely knowledgeable, helpful, forthcoming and eager to facilitate the research study, recommending and subsequently forwarding on relevant articles and texts. Their combined contribution to the study has been invaluable.

5.4.4 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data yielded through interviews. Thematic analysis requires the researcher to ‘identify a limited number of themes which adequately reflect their textual data’ (Howett and Cramer, 2008, p. 6). A theme is a collection of related categories conveying similar meanings. Auer Bach and Silverstein (2003, p. 38) suggest that a theme’s function is to enable a set of data to be categorised into ‘an implicit topic that organises a group of repeating ideas’. A theme therefore encapsulates and unifies the nature of the experience into a meaningful whole. Familiarisation with the data is vital to achieving analysis which is comprehensive and insightful. To assist sufficient familiarisation with the data, the researcher transcribed each of the digitally recorded interviews in person, coding the data as recurrent patterns began to emerge.

Throughout the entire process of analysis, these codes were adjusted and modified in tandem with developing concepts, further engagement with participants and the literature and in light of a more complete, emergent picture of the data. Attribute coding, outlined in Section 5.3, allowed the researcher to identify any emerging patterns in the data against particular interviewee characteristics such as gender, age, school location etc. Although there did not appear to be significant differences in perception or experience based on the gender of the interviewees, younger teachers’ perceptions and experiences of SBTB seemed to differ somewhat to those of older or more experienced teachers. These findings will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

The process commenced with an initial reading of the transcribed text to gain a sense of the range of topics within the data rather than approach the analysis with pre-defined themes or ‘assuming what things are like in advance and forcing observations to fit these pre-conceptions’ (Gomm, 2008, p. 287). Further readings of the text involved line by line micro analysis, annotation and coding of the data. Particular statements on the printed transcripts were manually highlighted and colour coded and given a broad label in the margin to facilitate comparison and later reduction. Codes, of one or two words to summarise emergent areas of interest, were selected to fit as closely as possible with the

data in order to avoid an excess of idiosyncratic codes which would impede accurate and succinct analysis. The first stage of analysis generated 26 thematic codes which were subsequently compared, combined and reduced to 12. A systematic review of the text led to the integration of these codes and the categorisation of similar topics and provisional themes. Emergent themes were then allocated tentative labels and loose definitions and re-considered through a comprehensive re-examination of the original data for information supporting each theme. Individual themes were subsequently re-evaluated in the light of new qualitative and quantitative data as the study progressed in the form of follow up interviews and statistical analysis of the survey. Thorne et al. (2004, p. 1346) maintain that the process of extraction and reduction is not designed to

produce oversimplification; rather it is one in which differences are retained and complexity enlightened. The goal is to achieve more, not less. The outcome will be something like a common understanding of the nature of a phenomenon, not a consensual worldview.

This description fits well with the aim of the present study which explores teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding SBTB and the supports in place to address the issue both internationally and in Ireland. This study aims to deepen understanding of the phenomenon and to provide insight into teachers' feelings, experiences and perceptions rather than to provide concrete evidence or absolute truths which the researcher feels are unattainable in this context. With these aims in mind, key themes emerged from the data which will be explored in depth in Chapter 6.

Confidence in selected themes was reinforced through the use of the constant comparative method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and with on-going engagement with existing literature, to identify similarities or discrepancies in the data which may require further primary research or verification. The constant comparative method involves a process in which similar data are classified and categories are formed by making continuous comparisons (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). These comparisons are conducted throughout the data collection processes so as to inform more focused collection and analysis of further data. Data collection and analysis take place simultaneously and all items of data are compared with each other to produce a conceptually dense theory which is legitimately applicable. The method of analysis was primarily an inductive

one, with the researcher being directed by themes which emerged from the data. However, the researcher was also attuned to searching for answers to key questions generated by the literature. Although the method of induction led the qualitative analysis, researchers suggest that because research analysts constantly move back and forth between new concepts and the data, all research involves processes of both induction and deduction.

The researcher used on-going self-reflection when interpreting the findings and exploring possible themes for elucidation as mixed methods researchers acknowledge that it is not possible to stand outside of the research process entirely yet they still strive to adhere to scientific and ethical rigour. In the development of themes to reflect the textual data of the study, it must be acknowledged that there is the possibility of data contamination by preconceived ideas or researcher bias. However, pure, untouched data presented without the application of concepts or theory fails to contribute to the knowledge base. The researcher endeavoured to negotiate this dilemma by staying close to the raw data at all times to ensure that emergent themes and concepts were accurately reflective of participants' feelings and experiences.

5.5 The Quantitative Research Strand

5.5.1 Research Method: Survey Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire method of research may be understood as a means of acquiring data regarding the characteristics, activities, attitudes or feelings of a large group of people. Surveys are used to quantitatively describe specific aspects of a given population and to examine the relationships amongst particular variables (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). In devising a survey, novice researchers are advised to use conventional rather than technical language or jargon to maximise respondents' level of understanding and response (Fink, 1995). Questionnaires should be uncluttered and readable with clearly outlined instructions for completion. As mentioned in Section 5.5.2, the use of mixed methods in the present study was of immense benefit in guiding

the researcher, through interviews with key informants, on the most effective use of survey layout, language and content.

A combination of open-ended and closed questions was used to collect the data in the questionnaires. Open ended questions which enable participants to respond freely on their own terms are useful for acquiring unanticipated responses and for describing the world as the respondents really see it rather than how the researcher perceives it to be. However, open ended responses are often difficult to compare and to interpret whilst closed questions generate standardised data that can be more efficiently analysed statistically (Fink, 1995). Therefore, researchers need to carefully plan all stages of the survey and pilot test the questionnaire with potential respondents where possible (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011).

As mentioned previously, a pilot test of the survey was carried out with the three key informants as it had not been previously field tested. The researcher sought viewpoints on the design, layout and content of the survey and also asked for feedback in terms of the survey's clarity, comprehensibility and estimated completion time. Researchers advise that pilot testing a questionnaire permits the researcher to measure the 'impact of word selection, question sequencing and various formatting and layout issues' (Ruane, 2005, p. 141). Response rates are increased when respondents can promptly, easily and confidently respond to the survey questions (Ruane, 2005).

The key informants advised that the initial draft of the questionnaire was too cluttered and needed to be more concise and clearly formatted. The survey was re-formatted using more succinct terminology, a smaller font and a more compact and clearer layout. Key informants also made recommendations regarding age brackets, suggesting that initial age brackets were too broad to capture relevant career stages and their associated characteristics. The researcher had initially set the first age bracket as <30 years which would not have captured student or newly qualified teachers' experiences as a unique and at risk category. This age bracket was therefore subsequently amended to <25 years. The key informants also highlighted that initial ethnic background categories of Irish,

European and non-European were inappropriate as obviously respondents are simultaneously both Irish and European, an oversight of the researcher and an important amendment.

The survey method of research has the advantage of accessing a wider audience than the interview method however it carries the disadvantage of not being customisable to individual needs, situations or contexts which may arise (Thomas and Hodges, 2010). As may occur in qualitative research, a further recognised weakness of the survey method is the potential for skewed data and biases which may occur, either through a poor response rate from intended respondents or in the nature and accurateness of the responses that are received. For instance, respondents may misreport on their behaviours to distort the survey results, to conceal inappropriate behaviour or because they may have difficulty 'assessing their own behaviour or have poor recall of the circumstances surrounding their behaviour' (Glasow, 2005, p. 2). Measures of reliability and validity, such as those discussed in Section 5.7, must be put in place to ensure the trustworthiness of findings from the survey.

Data for this study were collected by means of an anonymous self-report questionnaire assessing levels of exposure to the student bullying of teachers, seeking perspectives on the possible forms and effects of SBT and information regarding beneficial supports for teachers. The survey was predominantly quantitative, with the majority of the questions being forced choice in nature, allowing for more expedient and accurate statistical calculation of data pertaining to both the entire group and the individual subgroups. The survey which contained 27 questions and was 2 pages in length was tested for time of completion and found to take approximately 2.5 minutes to complete. It consisted of 10 multiple choice questions, 14 Likert-scale responses with 2 options to select 'other' and provide further explanation; and 2 open ended, loosely-structured questions relating to teacher recommendations and seeking support (See Appendix S). Open-ended questions are designed to encourage a full, meaningful response using the participant's own knowledge and feelings, therefore these types of questions elicit qualitative responses which contribute to an in-depth, richness of the study. The Likert-scale responses measured the frequency of bullying behaviours and the location of the bullying using a

five point scale of 'daily', 'weekly', 'monthly', 'occasionally' and 'never' time intervals.

A brief demographic section was included in the questionnaire, which focused on two separate elements of enquiry. The school type section dealt with mixed and single sex schools, school location and whether schools were included in the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) Programme - a national action plan on tackling educational disadvantage. The respondent details section was designed to obtain participant background information, such as age, gender, ethnic background, nationality and professional experience. Another section of the questionnaire concerned bullying behaviours which respondents may have been subjected to by pupils. The list of bullying behaviours was developed through consultation with the key informants, a review of the literature regarding pervasive student disruptive behaviour and encompassing the behaviours identified by the Teacher's Union of Ireland survey on Student Indiscipline (2006) and the National *School Matters* Survey (2006). These sources led the researcher to refine the list of behaviours based on those which appeared to be most prevalent and for comparative purposes with the aforementioned studies. Respondents were invited to describe additional bullying behaviours by filling in the space left blank on the questionnaire entitled 'other' which allowed for qualitative elaboration of behaviours experienced. The selection of possible effects of SBTB was also developed through the process of consultation, literature review and familiarisation with the findings of national and international studies pertaining to the issue (Martin, 2006; TUI, 2006). Although respondents were provided with a definition of bullying (see Appendices B-F), teachers were not explicitly asked if they identified themselves as having been bullied or asked how they defined bullying. The questionnaire focused predominantly on teachers' experiences of bullying behaviour whilst the interviews provided the opportunity to interrogate the related self-definitions of teachers.

5.5.2 Sample Selection

Owing to the extremely limited data available regarding SBTB in an Irish context, the quantitative strand of the study aimed to add to empirical knowledge by shedding light

on the nature and prevalence of the research problem. Distribution of the survey to second level schools was deemed to be the most effective and efficient means of reaching a large number of teachers with diverse and varied backgrounds and presumably experiences. Principals and other school personnel were excluded from the data collection process as the study is concerned exclusively with the experiences of teachers in Irish second level schools.

Proportionate stratified random sampling principles were employed in the selection of schools for participation in the survey. Stratified random sampling is a probability sampling procedure which requires the researcher to stratify the target population into different homogeneous groups or strata according to known characteristics. The researcher must then randomly ‘draw the sample in a similar proportion from each stratum of the population according to its proportion’ (Haque, 2011, p. 3). In this way, the size of the sample selected from each stratum is proportional to the relative size of that stratum of the target population. The samples selected from the various strata are then combined into a single sample. This method of sampling is beneficial when the researcher wants to highlight specific strata as it ensures that the sample possesses all of the required characteristics of the population (Haque, 2011).

The overall sample was therefore, designed to be reflective of all second level schools in Cork City and County. The criteria set by the researcher that all schools must offer both the formal Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate programmes effectively eliminates the skewing of data from alternative types of schools such as further education colleges which offer the Leaving Certificate and special education schools, in which the existence of SBT and student misbehaviour may be attributed to different underlying root causes than those apparent in mainstream second level schools. A sampling frame, which is, according to Bauer and Gaskell (2000) ‘a precondition for the application of a sampling strategy’ (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 21) was created consisting of a list of each of the 83 schools in Cork which met the sample criteria. A limit of 20 schools to be surveyed was set due to resource restrictions. The categories of this sampling frame are presented in Table 5.1 as are the number of schools which fall under each category.

Table 5.1 Sampling Frame Showing Composition of Second Level Schools in Cork

Rural Mixed Sex Schools	25
Suburban Mixed Sex Schools	7
City Centre Mixed Sex Schools	4
Rural All Girl Schools	9
Suburban All Girl Schools	1
City Centre All Girl School	6
Rural All Boy Schools	7
Suburban All Boy Schools	2
City Centre All Boy Schools	3
Rural DEIS Mixed Sex Schools	10
Suburban DEIS Mixed Schools	2
City Centre DEIS Mixed Schools	3
Rural DEIS All Girl Schools	0
Suburban DEIS All Girl Schools	1
City Centre DEIS All Girl Schools	2
Rural DEIS All Boy Schools	0
Suburban DEIS All Boy Schools	0
City Centre DEIS All Boy Schools	1

As outlined in Table 5.1, the sample was divided into City Centre, Suburban and Rural Schools to allow for examination of the potential characteristics associated with these variables. For the purposes of categorisation, city centre schools were identified as being within a three mile radius of the city centre, suburban schools in small towns and villages were classified as being within a ten mile city centre radius and rural schools

were identified as being twelve miles or more from the city centre. These distances were selected arbitrarily for the purpose of convenient categorisation.

Also apparent in Table 5.1 is the categorisation of schools by student gender and by their enrolment status in the DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) Programme. Through the inclusion of the DEIS category it was hoped that the potential contextual impacts of socio-economic status (SES) on the prevalence of SBT may be illuminated. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools scheme (DEIS) is a national action plan on tackling educational disadvantage whilst the RAPID³ scheme targets areas of recognised deprivation. As the empirical literature (e.g. Du Plessis, 2008; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009) shows evidence of increased SBT in schools with low socio-economic status, as shown in Chapter 3, it was important to explore this category in the present study. In addition to the presence of a DEIS category, a further category (DEIS RAPID) was later added to the sampling frame to indicate which DEIS schools are located in RAPID areas in an attempt to provide a more accurate marker of socio-economic disadvantage.

³The RAPID (Revitalising Areas through Planning, Investment and Development) Programme was introduced in 2001 and targets 51 of the most disadvantaged areas in Ireland, including five areas in Cork City and County as priority zones for funding and resource allocation under the National Development Plan. There are 200 DEIS post primary schools in Ireland; 19 of these are in the Cork area, 7 of which were included in this study. Of these 7 schools, 3 of these schools were also included in the RAPID scheme.

Table 5.2 Schools Selected Using Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling

Rural Mixed Sex Schools	4
Suburban Mixed Sex Schools	1
City Centre Mixed Sex Schools	1
Rural All Girl Schools	2
Suburban All Girl Schools	1
City Centre All Girl School	1
Rural All Boy Schools	1
Suburban All Boy Schools	1
City Centre All Boy Schools	1
Rural DEIS Mixed Sex Schools	2
Suburban DEIS Mixed Schools	1
City Centre DEIS Mixed Schools	1
Suburban DEIS All Girl Schools	1
City Centre DEIS All Girl Schools	1
City Centre DEIS All Boy Schools	1

As presented in Table 5.2, 20 schools from the 83 schools in the sampling frame were randomly selected using proportionate stratified random sampling principals so that representation from each category would be included. In all, 531 of a possible 836 teachers completed the survey, resulting in a 63% return rate. According to Fincham (2008) a response rate of approximately 60% should be the goal of researchers, therefore the current rate of 63% may be regarded as quite successful. The National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (2005, p. 10) revealed the response rate to most of the union's surveys falls at around 20-30%. This high response rate is particularly pleasing, given the sensitive nature of the research problem and the potential difficulties associated with circulating a survey pertaining to difficulties in the workplace through the workplace itself. However, the method of data collection seems to have sufficiently reassured respondents regarding the confidentiality and anonymity

of their responses as will be discussed in depth in Section 5.5.3 which looks at the data collection process and procedures.

5.5.3 Data Collection Process and Procedures

In the Spring of 2010, the principal of each selected school was contacted by means of a letter explaining the parameters and purpose of the study. This letter was followed by a telephone call, offering further information regarding the study and requesting that staff members agree to participate in the survey. 17 of the 20 selected schools agreed to participate, whilst 3 schools declined due to time constraints on their staff members. These 3 schools were replaced randomly with schools from the same category in the sampling frame. Following on from the telephone conversation with each school's principal or vice-principal, the questionnaires, an information sheet outlining the purpose and aims of the study and a sealed return's box were distributed to each participating school. Where possible, the researcher met with either the principal or vice-principal of each school on arrival and emphasised the paucity of research available regarding SBTB in the Irish context and requested that staff members be encouraged to participate in the study.

A number of principals were very interested in the study's aims and objectives and were eager to participate, expressing recognition of the potential value of research on this topic. In two schools an invitation to meet with the teachers present in the staff room was extended and gratefully accepted by the researcher. Based on the researcher's awareness of literature (e.g. Glasow, 2005; Thomas and Hodges, 2010) which associates increased response rates with the promotion of awareness of the survey, the researcher had expected to achieve higher return rates in these schools. Despite the apparent interest of staff members present, the differences in response rates between these and the remaining schools were negligible. However, schools in which the principal or vice principal was very enthusiastic or supportive did appear to have higher return rates.

The surveys with envelopes, information sheet and sealed returns box were located in the staff room of each school, allowing for the return of completed surveys in confidence. In some of the schools, the principals placed the questionnaires in each individual teacher's 'pigeon hole' and requested that they be returned to the box in the staff room on completion. The returns box was collected from each school after an agreed period of time, on average within two weeks. On two occasions, the researcher extended the completion time as the response rate in those schools was very low and the principals had offered to remind teachers about the study. In both cases, return rates increased greatly during the extended period before collection. As mentioned, 531 of a possible 836 teachers returned the completed questionnaire, resulting in a 63% return rate which is a high response rate for a self-administered questionnaire.

Each school was assured that measures would be taken to guarantee that participants and schools remained entirely anonymous. Quotes or comments which may be traceable to the contributor, as well as identifying features relating to the schools or area involved in the study will not be disclosed. Each participating school was informed that they would receive a copy of the findings of the study and that a copy would also be sent to the Department of Education and Skills and to each of the teacher trade unions. The researcher is committed to sharing the results of the research study and participating in dialogue with relevant professional personnel with the objective of highlighting the prevalence, seriousness and complexities of the phenomenon and striving to affect change which may strengthen the national response for the teachers who are being victimised. A letter of gratitude was posted to each school which participated in the study. The process of survey distribution and data collection was completed with relative ease and yielded a very satisfactory response rate however the financial and time cost involved in circulating letters to schools, administering and collecting questionnaires was quite substantial.

5.5.4 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS Statistics 18, a statistical software package for the Social Sciences designed to assist researchers in the management of data and the

calculation of statistics. Each questionnaire was numbered and each closed-ended question was coded prior to the inputting of data. Closed and open-ended questions were dealt with separately. The diverse range of qualitative data garnered from open-ended questions, predominantly relating to support structures, were written up as raw data, collated and then analysed thematically in a similar way to the qualitative data process outlined in Section 5.4. Quantitative analysis of the data generated from closed questions was largely descriptive. Basic frequency analysis and descriptive statistical analysis were conducted to highlight the frequency of bullying behaviours and negative effects experienced by teachers, to reveal which teachers were most targeted according to demographic features and to shed light on the profile of students most likely to be involved in the bullying behaviour. Cross tabulations using Pearson's Chi Square and Phi and Cramer's V Test (Norris et al., 2012) were conducted to measure statistical significance of the findings. Cross tabulations enable the researcher to examine relationships between two or more variables within the data which may not be readily apparent. The results of these analyses are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6 and a copy of all tables and analyses relating to the forms and effects of SBT, as well as the Chi Square results may be found in Appendices H to W.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

There are boundless definitions and interpretations of the term 'ethics' with regard to research, however most of these assert respect for individual participants as a guiding tenet. Ethical issues have been afforded significant and on-going consideration throughout the research process and the study has been guided by University College Cork's six principles of good research practice found in the University's Code of Research Conduct (2010) standards and procedures. The researcher's endeavours to adhere to these principles are outlined.

1. *Competence.*

The UCC Code of Conduct (2010, p. 2) states that researchers should only participate 'in work which the researcher is competent to perform'. The researcher carried out an extensive review of the literature and spent a significant period of time planning the research design prior to data collection to ensure that the research design and process

were sufficiently considered. The researcher also participated in a number of postgraduate training modules, including 2 workshops on ethics, to increase her academic and personal competence levels and to ensure higher levels of trustworthiness of the survey findings. The researcher's prior professional training as a therapeutic counsellor assisted in the researcher's competency levels regarding the interviewing of participants whilst her professional role as a youth worker with experience of working with students with challenging behaviour assisted in the development of rapport with participants and a clear understanding of the research problem. Therefore, the researcher ensured on-going development of competency levels throughout the research process.

2. *Responsibility.*

In relation to research students, this principle concerns 'compliance with standards and procedures and managing research projects' (UCC, 2010, p. 2). The researcher ensured that she was fully aware of and observed the University's principles of good research practice whilst also becoming familiar with the Economic and Social Research Council's six principles of good practice. The researcher also familiarised herself with University procedures regarding the PhD process and maintained responsibility for her own research study and its progress throughout the PhD process.

3. *Integrity.*

This University principle relates to 'honesty; openness; proactive problem solving; accuracy; objectivity and acknowledgement of contribution' (UCC, 2010, p. 2). The researcher was at all times honest in her academic endeavour and was careful not to engage in any form of plagiarism, distortion or fabrication of results or piracy. There was no attempt to misrepresent or exaggerate the findings of the study and all material was examined to ensure accuracy and correct assignment of authorship. Adhering to this principle ensured trustworthiness of the data collected and accompanying data analysis.

4. *Respect for the Rights and Dignity of Research Participants.*

This principle which involves a commitment to 'general respect; privacy and confidentiality/anonymity; informed consent and avoidance of harm' (UCC, 2010, p. 2) is the most frequently cited and possibly one of the most important ethical criteria for researchers. A first rule of research ethics embedded in all codes of conduct is that of non-maleficence, that above all else, no harm should come to the participant; research

participants must be protected from undue intrusion, distress, physical discomfort, personal embarrassment or psychological or other harm' (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006, p. 294).

All participants were informed in writing that their participation in the research study was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time they wished. Teachers completing the survey were free to skip questions which they did not wish to answer whilst interviewees were assured that there was no pressure on them to discuss any topic which made them feel uncomfortable. As SBT is quite a sensitive issue, teachers were advised that they should contact either their teachers union or the Employee Assistance Service which offers free, confidential counselling to teachers should they feel distressed following the interview. Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic and the difficulty in obtaining informed consent the researcher chose not to involve school children in the research study.

Prior to distributing the survey, the researcher contacted each school principal by letter and by telephone and explained the parameters of the study. The researcher also enclosed an information sheet clearly outlining the study's aims and objectives when distributing the surveys so that each participant was made fully aware of the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation. Similarly, the researcher's ethical obligation to equip interview participants with all of the important details of the study at the outset to allow them to make an informed decision regarding participation was considered. Interviewees were provided with informed consent forms before the interview commenced and asked to sign a further copy which would be retained by the researcher. The aims and objectives of the study were outlined and information regarding the purpose, format and expected duration of the interview was provided.

Informed consent forms are an advantageous method of affording respondents the opportunity to be fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation from the beginning (Bryman, 2006). A further elemental guiding ethical principle is that of rendering acquired data anonymous. This is a basic and

fundamental prerequisite in research. All participants were assured that their confidentiality and anonymity would be protected. The use of a box in the staffroom to collect surveys also allowed teachers the privacy to complete the survey on their own terms and return it confidentially.

5. *Data Management.*

All personal data, such as participant names, contact information and interview transcripts have been stored in electronic form on a secure password protected computer, are backed up and will be erased in line with University guidelines which state that data should be 'securely held for a minimum period of seven years after the completion of a research project, in line with general audit requirements' (UCC, 2010, p. 10). Hard copies of questionnaires are secured in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. A coding system, outlined previously has been developed to match transcribed interviews and interviewees whilst a coding system known only to the researcher has been developed to match questionnaires with participant schools. Sensitive materials which may compromise the anonymity of any contributor or school have not been divulged and the privacy of participants has not been violated.

6. *Dissemination.*

The researcher is committed to dissemination of the research and findings and has participated in a number of UCC postgraduate conferences. In May 2014, an article exploring conceptual issues relating to SBT was published in *Aigne*, the UCC peer reviewed journal. The researcher will also forward a copy of the research findings to all participating schools, the Department of Education and Skills and to the teacher unions on completion of the study. In addition to publishing further articles, the researcher hopes to publish this thesis as a book which may be of assistance to both practitioners and policy makers.

5.7 Reliability and Validity

The term ‘reliability’ refers to the ability to replicate the results obtained through the research when a study is repeated (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003). ‘Validity’ may be understood as the extent to which the measurement tools of the survey provide the researcher with the information required to meet the purpose of the study and the degree to which the research conclusions are sound (Glasow, 2005). Theorists argue that it is essential that issues of reliability and validity are addressed throughout the study in order to ensure ‘trustworthiness’ and ‘credibility’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Silverman, 2005) of the research findings. Whereas wholly quantitative studies endeavour to produce results which are controllable, reproducible, reliable and consistent, the interpretative researcher seeks to achieve dependability and trustworthiness so that the reader may be assured of the accuracy and credibility of the study’s findings. The researcher must therefore strive to ensure that research conclusions are dependable and trustworthy and are drawn from the data.

Issues of reliability and validity are also concerned with the quality of the data acquired and the suitability and relevance of the methods chosen to answer the research questions posed. Researchers must demonstrate that the research study has been carried out in ways which ensure that the research topic has been accurately identified, defined and depicted. The present study used a combination of strategies to enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. This approach increased the validity of the findings by ensuring that the research instruments used were most appropriate for gaining the information required to meet the aims of the study. The use of both methods of data collection allowed for the recording of multiple perspectives and interpretations to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and to allow for more credible and authentic findings, also increasing the validity of the study. The data collection procedures employed by the researcher were comprehensively recorded throughout the study whilst the processes followed in obtaining the results were transparent and described in detail enhancing the reliability of the study and allowing for the research design to be replicated.

Triangulation was employed to maximise the trustworthiness and validity of findings. The concept of triangulation may be understood as the process whereby researchers seek convergence, substantiation and correlation of results through the use of both quantitative and qualitative components to ascertain that incongruities are reflective of the trait and not of the research method. Schostak (2002) describes triangulation as a means of ‘mapping the objective field of study from a variety of viewpoints and methods’ so as to acquire data which allow us to make ‘judgements about truth, validity and the status of the phenomenon in terms of its reality’ (Schostak, 2002, p. 78). He adds that triangulation entails exploring multiple perspectives for congruence and variance ‘within context, across context and over time’ (Schostak, 2002, p. 85).

Using triangulation can lead to a more comprehensive explanation and understanding of complex research questions and an assimilation or integration of theoretical concepts. Sequential triangulation was used in the present study, whereby research methods are implemented sequentially so that the qualitative findings may assist in the interpretation and contextualisation of the quantitative results and vice versa. Interviews were carried out with key informants to inform the design and content of a survey questionnaire, in tandem with analysis of this questionnaire, additional interviews were conducted to explore preliminary and thematic findings and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Such an approach combines numerical and descriptive data to illustrate both individual viewpoints and large scale attitudinal patterns and thus maximises both validity and reliability of findings.

5.8 Limitations of the Methodology

The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods has provided the study with many strengths as previously outlined, however the dual methodology has also presented a number of challenges. For instance, copious amounts of data were generated during the research process leaving the researcher with the dilemma of privileging the most crucial of this data. As a result, a lot of valuable data could not be included in the study, although much of this data is presented in the Appendices and it is hoped, will be published by the researcher at a later stage. There were also some difficulties associated

with merging and integrating two sets of very different data and their results in a meaningful way, particularly when the two methods were used to answer different research questions. However, as both sets of data were concerned with the same general concepts, the researcher was able to integrate the data under thematic headings.

One of the principle limitations of the survey, as outlined in previous chapters, is that it does not provide participants with the opportunity to indicate whether they self-identify as being bullied by their pupils. Participants were furnished with a definition and asked to indicate whether they had experienced any of the outlined 'bullying behaviours'. As respondents did fill in the relevant boxes in the questionnaire and read the preceding preamble regarding the definition of SBT, they do seem to be clear regarding the kinds of behaviour to which they were subjected. However, this may not translate into a perception of themselves as being victims of bullies and so this data is limited to teachers' experiences of bullying behaviour. The questionnaire as a research instrument is not very suitable for exploring the complexity of an issue such as SBT, therefore, in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and subjective constructions of themselves as bullied by pupils took place during the qualitative interviews.

A further limitation of the questionnaire relates to the frequency of the behaviours. Respondents were not provided with the opportunity to disclose whether the behaviours which they experience are perpetrated by the same person on each occasion. For instance, a teacher who states that they experience verbal abuse on a weekly basis cannot indicate whether the same student is responsible for this behaviour each week. Therefore, as bullying is generally regarded to have a repetitive quality, the results from the questionnaire are ambiguous in this regard. Instead, the quantitative findings tell us how frequently teachers experience particular bullying behaviours.

The survey was very valuable in some respects, such as providing information regarding the extent of SBT behaviours and the effect of these behaviours on teachers' personal and professional well-being. In addition, the survey findings revealed some unexpected findings such as the possibility of lower rates of many SBT behaviours in DEIS schools,

which may not have come to light if the study had focused exclusively on gathering qualitative data.

It would have been extremely advantageous to have conducted an ethnographic study so that the researcher could observe the student-teacher dynamic and inter-change. Similarly, it would have been tremendously valuable to have obtained students' perspectives regarding the phenomenon. However, due to limited time and resources, it was beyond the scope of this study to include these elements in to the research design. Therefore, this study can only provide teachers' perspectives regarding SBT and other negative student behaviours rather than a more objective, comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology, research design and methods of data collection and analysis employed in this study. Section 5.2 provides a justification of the researcher's use of a mixed methods approach in the present study. As explained, the research questions required that both subjective and objective aspects of the problem ought to be explored and therefore a mixed methods approach was employed. Section 5.3 outlines the study's research design and lays out the timeline of the research process beginning with the formulation of the research questions through to an extensive review of the literature and a lengthy process of data collection and analysis. Section 5.4 discusses the qualitative strand of the research which involved 17 semi structured interviews with teachers, Year Heads, and union and management body representatives. This section provides a detailed overview of the qualitative research method and of the process of data collection and analysis.

Section 5.5 is concerned with the quantitative strand of the research and looks in depth at the research instrument – a predominantly quantitative survey. This survey provided the researcher with an indication of the prevalence and nature of the phenomenon within the catchment area and also shed light on the categories of teachers and schools which

may be most at risk, therefore directing the researcher to the most potentially valuable interviewees. The data collection and analysis procedures used are examined in detail. The use of a mixed methodology has enhanced the scope of the study and facilitated the accumulation and analysis of the data in a more comprehensive, holistic, socially and culturally contextualised and authentic manner than the use of a mono-method would have allowed.

The chapter closes with a thorough discussion of the ethical considerations which relate to the study. The University College Cork's Code of Research Conduct (2010) was used to guide the researcher through the ethical elements of the research process. In particular, the six principles of good research practice – competency, responsibility, integrity, respect for the rights and dignity of research participants, data management and dissemination were discussed in relation to the researcher's endeavour to conduct the research study to the highest standard both in academic and ethical terms. Finally, issues of reliability and validity and the limitations of the methodology were discussed. Chapter 6 now presents the results of the study and an analysis and discussion of the findings.

6
Research Results
&
Findings

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the qualitative and quantitative data gathered through a survey of 531 teachers in second level schools and interviews with 11 teachers, 3 Year Heads, 2 union representatives and 1 management organisation representative. The first half of the chapter looks more closely at the quantitative data in terms of teachers' experiences and the impact of SBTB, although qualitative data is also used to support these findings. As mentioned previously, the questionnaire asked teachers to indicate their experience of student bullying behaviours rather than to explicitly self-identify as being bullied, therefore a distinction is made in this chapter between SBT in which teachers self-identify as bullied and SBTB in which questionnaire respondents indicate experience of such behaviours. Section 6.2 concerns the demographic background of all participants and looks at teacher and school characteristics of the sample. Section 6.3 uses both statistical and rich, qualitative data to provide an insight into teachers' experiences of SBTB in Irish second level schools whilst also providing an indication of the extent of the phenomenon. Section 6.4 focuses on the impact of student bullying behaviours on teachers' personal and professional well-being, highlighting that anger, loss of energy and stress appear to be the most frequently cited negative effects by survey respondents. Meanwhile, Section 6.4 looks more in depth at variances in teachers' experiences of SBTB, particularly with respect to teachers' gender and teachers' age.

The latter part of the chapter focuses more on the qualitative findings of the study. Section 6.6.1 illuminates teachers' quite negative perceptions regarding policy, training and supports in Ireland. Section 6.6.2 also provides the study with some understanding of teachers' preferred supports such as strong, effectual leadership and clearly outlined disciplinary guidelines and consistently imposed sanctions. Finally, the five key themes and findings which have emerged from the research are presented in Section 6.7. This section opens with a discussion regarding the elusiveness of SBT and highlights the difficulties encumbered in trying to define and conceptualise such a complex and subjective phenomenon. Additional key themes include how opinions and perceptions held by the same teacher sometimes appeared to be 'contradictory'; teachers'

reluctance to disclose their experiences and to seek support and the impact of successive funding cuts to the education budget on managements' ability to support teachers.

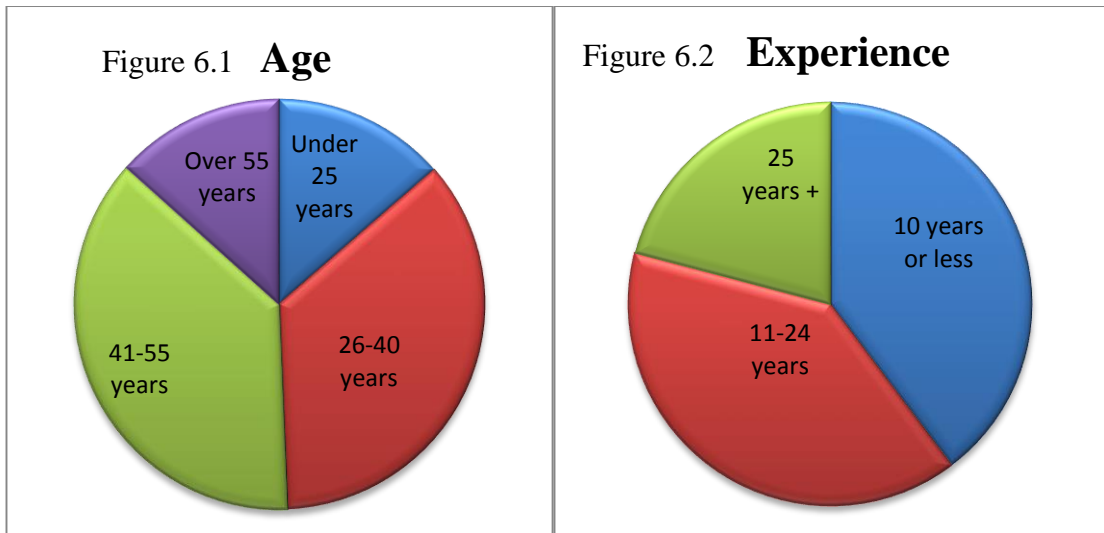
6.2 Demographic Background of Participants

6.2.1 Survey Questionnaire

The study focused on two separate elements of enquiry within the demographics section; respondent details such as gender, age and duration of professional experience and school type in terms of student gender, location and inclusion in the DEIS programme. The sample of 531 respondents is composed of 358 female and 173 male teachers. The fact that females comprise 67% of the sample may reflect the gender imbalance within the teaching profession in Ireland (DES, 2014). 73% of respondents were aged between 26 and 55 years whilst those under 25 and over 55 years represented 14% and 13% of the sample respectively. Teachers' professional experience was divided into 3 categories: less than ten years, 11 to 24 years and more than 25 years' experience. 79% of teachers had less than 24 years' experience whilst 12% were Higher Diploma students. Higher Diploma students undertaking the Higher Diploma in Education teacher training course must complete teaching experience placements in second level schools and are widely referred to as H. Dips or student teachers.

Figure 6.1 Age Profile of Survey Respondents

Figure 6.2 Survey Respondents' Years of Teaching Experience



Almost half of the respondents worked in mixed sex schools whilst 21% were based in boys and 31% were located in girls' schools. Respondents from rural schools accounted for the largest portion of the sample at 46% whilst the remaining teachers were based in city centre (32%) and suburban (22%) areas. Staff from non-DEIS schools comprised 73% of the overall sample, whilst teachers located in DEIS and DEIS Rapid schools comprised 14% and 13% respectively. The proportions of schools in each category reflect the composition of schools in the Cork city and county area but do not necessarily mirror national averages (DES, 2014). Table 6.1 provides an overview of the demographic information regarding survey respondents.

Table 6.1 Summary of Demographic Background of Questionnaire Respondents

Questionnaire Respondents (n=531)			
	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	173	33%
	Female	358	67%
Age	Under 26 years	72	14%
	26 – 40 years	190	36%
	41 – 55 years	198	37%
	Over 55 years	71	13%
Nationality	Irish	520	98%
	Non Irish	11	2%
Teaching Experience	10 years or less (H. Dip Student)	213 (50)	40% (12%)
	11 – 24 years	207	39%
	More than 25 years	111	21%
School Gender Composition	Male	112	21%
	Female	163	31%
	Mixed	256	48%
School Location	Suburban	118	22%
	Rural	244	46%
	City Centre	169	32%
DEIS Designation	DEIS	75	14%
	Non DEIS	387	73%
	DEIS Rapid	69	13%

6.2.2 Interviews

Interviews took place with 5 male and 9 female teachers with teaching experience which ranged from less than one year's teaching to careers which spanned more than a quarter of a century. Of those teachers interviewed, 5 were based in boys' schools, 4 in girls' schools and 5 in co-educational schools. A detailed summary of interviewees' demographic information is provided in Table 6.2 whilst a more comprehensive break-

down of individual teachers' details is available in Appendix G. As discussed, telephone interviews also took place with representatives from the Teachers' Union of Ireland, the Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland and the Joint Managerial Board (JMB). Both union representatives are former teachers who now hold formal positions with the union. The JMB is the main decision-making and negotiating body for the management authorities of over 400 voluntary secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland. Interviewee details of union and management body representatives have not been disclosed to protect participant anonymity. Figures 6.3 and 6.4 provide a summary of the biographical data of interviewees.

Figure 6.3 Interviewee's Years' of Teaching Experience

Figure 6.4 Pupil Gender of School in which Interviewees are based

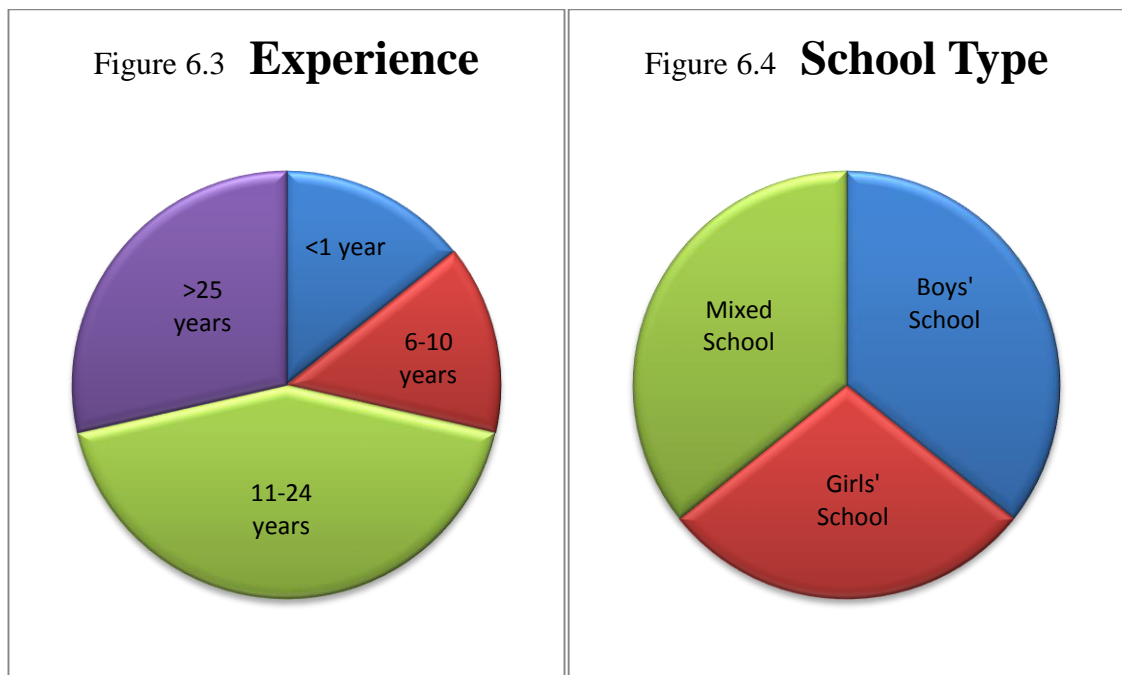
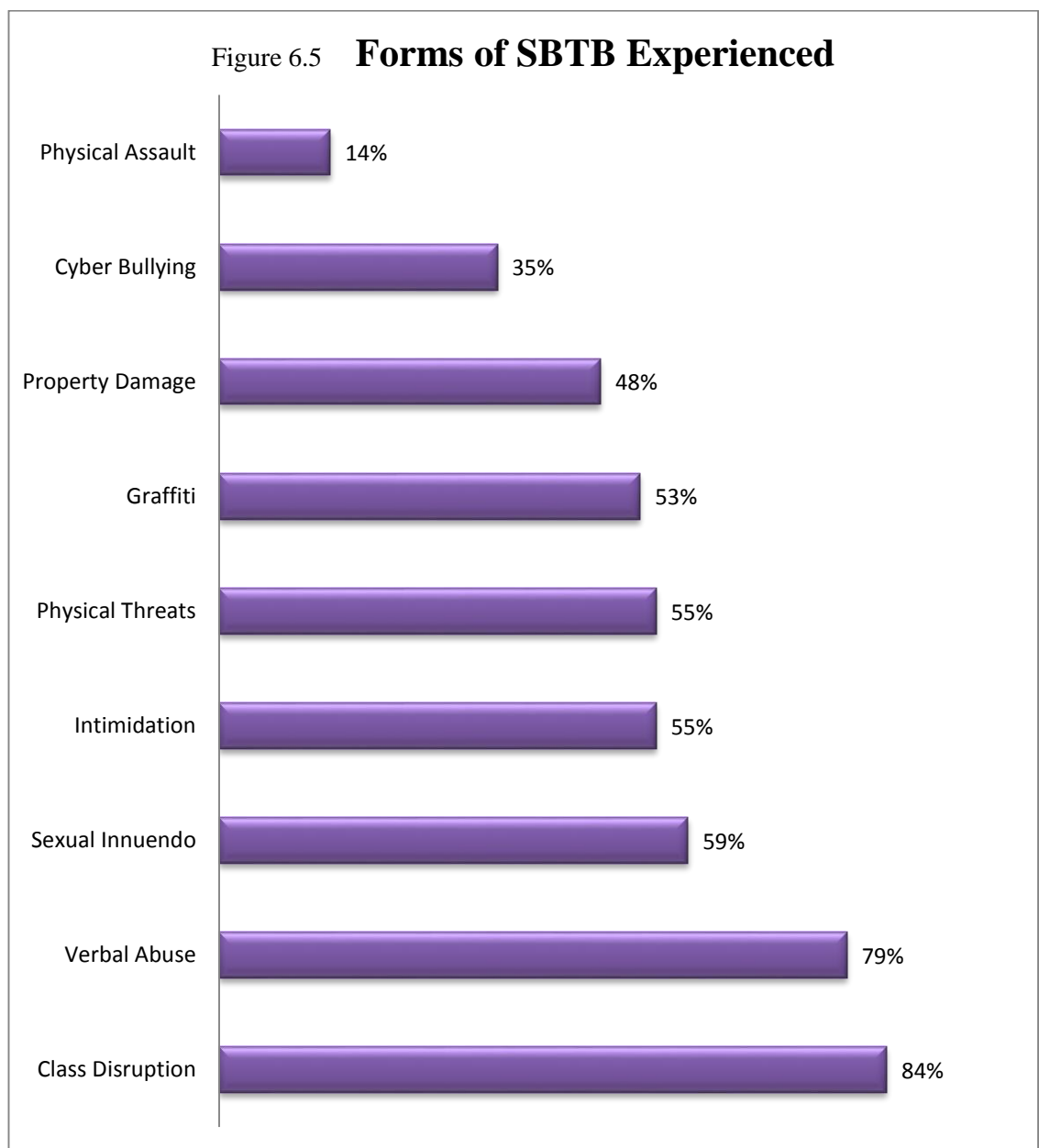


Table 6.2 Summary of Demographic Background of Interview Participants

Interview Participants (n=14)			
	Frequency	Percentage	
Gender	Male	5	36%
	Female	9	64%
Age	Under 25	1	7%
	26-35 years	3	21.5%
	36-45 years	5	36%
	46-55 years	3	21.5%
	56-65 years	2	14%
Teaching Experience	Less than 1 year	2	14%
	1-5 years	0	0%
	6-10 years	2	14%
	11 – 25 years	6	43%
	More than 25 years	4	29%
School Gender Composition	Boys	5	36%
	Girls	4	28%
	Mixed	5	36%
School Location	Suburban	4	28.5%
	Rural	4	28.5%
	City Centre	6	43%
DEIS Designation	Ordinary	6	43%
	DEIS	3	21%
	DEIS Rapid	5	36%

6.3 Teachers' Experiences of SBTB

The survey invited respondents to indicate which, if any, of the nine specified bullying behaviours by students they had experienced. As mentioned, both interviewees and previous authors have cited these particular behaviours as pervasive in schools (TUI, 2006; Martin, 2006). The results of the survey show that 94% of teachers surveyed have experienced at least one form of SBT behaviour at some point in their career. Figure 6.5 provides an overview of the most prevalent bullying behaviours reported by respondents. A detailed overview of respondents' experiences of bullying according to teacher characteristics and demographics etc. is provided in Appendix H - P.



24% of respondents reported experiencing at least one form of student bullying behaviour on a daily basis whilst SBTB has been experienced on a weekly (29%), monthly (15%) and occasional (26%) basis by the remaining respondents. As mentioned previously, statistics which explore frequency of SBTB must be considered guardedly as there was no scope within the questionnaire for respondents to indicate whether the same pupil was responsible for multiple incidences of SBTB. As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.1, SBTB behaviours may be considered along a continuum of seriousness with low level behaviours such as persistent in-class disruption on one end of the spectrum and physical violence with a weapon on the opposite end of the scale. Consistent with findings reported by Martin (1997) in relation to the State commissioned, scoping study carried out to explore discipline in second level schools in 1997, SBTB behaviours on the lower end of the spectrum were found to be more prevalent than serious or violent student behaviours. These findings are also consistent with international studies (Terry, 1998; Munn et al., 2004; Benefield, 2004; Rigby, 2004; Ruff, 2004; Zeira, 2004; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; James et al., 2008; Salmi and Kivivouri, 2009; De Wet, 2010; Brown and Winterton, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011 and Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). The continuum of seriousness has been valuable in assisting the researcher in distinguishing between low level behaviours more indicative of SBT and those more closely related to school violence. It is also a useful tool in enabling teachers to observe changes in patterns of student behaviour and to develop appropriate responses and access supports and training more accurately.

Again, it is stressed that these findings reflect the subjective views of teachers rather than an objective assessment of bullying taking place. Persistent in-class disruption, which was described as a 'bullying behaviour' on the questionnaire, emerged as the behaviour which most teachers (84%) had experienced, with one fifth of these indicating that they experienced this on a daily basis. This is comparable with the figure of 87% reported by the British ATL (2007) and also comparable with the TUI Discipline Survey (2006) which showed that 77% of teachers had encountered student in-class disruption in the past week. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the survey question relating to SBT behaviours allowed respondents to describe additional bullying behaviours or to elaborate on their experiences in the space left blank on the questionnaire entitled 'other'. Using this option, survey respondents described persistent

in-class disruption as ‘messing’, ‘shouting’, ‘being late’, ‘not doing homework’ and ‘showing a lack of respect’. One respondent wrote ‘it definitely affects my performance in the classroom and my motivation in helping and teaching those students’. Persistent in-class disruption was described by interviewees as ‘insidious’, ‘hard to prove’ and ‘exhausting’.

Interviewee 7 - a 30 year old, female higher diploma student, in a city centre, mixed DEIS Rapid school described her experience of persistent in-class disruption as students ‘throwing things across the classroom and you are conscious of other kids getting hurt’; ‘pushing each other off the chairs and things like that; just generally not behaving’. As discussed in Chapter 2, persistent in-class disruption has been recognised as a common technique of bullying in the literature (e.g. James et al., 2008; De Wet, 2010) as many teachers perceive it as such despite the lack of clarity regarding students’ intentions. Once again, the author draws awareness to the fact that this questionnaire did not measure whether the same student was responsible for multiple instances of on-going in-class disruption and other SBT behaviours, therefore, it is not suggested that on-going in-class disruption is experienced by all teachers in all circumstances as a form of bullying by pupils. However, this study does support earlier findings (e.g. De Wet, 2010) that some teachers perceive persistent in-class disruption as a form of bullying with many teachers saying they had felt ‘bullied’, ‘harassed’ and ‘targeted’ by pupils. For instance, interviewee 5 - a female teacher, close to retirement age, in a suburban, mixed school confided

I think they deliberately just disrupt the class, that’s bullying as well. They deliberately do it to provoke you. They disrupt the class, by maybe even asking silly questions and getting the other kids to laugh. That’s all bullying.

Interviewee 4 - a male teacher, close to retirement age in a suburban mixed, DEIS school also agreed that on-going in-class disruption may be considered as bullying.

I think within the normal classroom situation where people continually back answer you; I would consider that bullying, where they refuse to carry out your instructions.

A male teacher from a non-DEIS, rural school left a comment on the survey which read

Lack of co-operation in class leads to stress to the teacher because of a lack of control over the environment and an inability to perform one's job satisfactorily and is, in my opinion, probably the most prevalent form of bullying in the classroom.

Interviewee 6 - a female teacher in her thirties working in a city centre, girls' DEIS school spoke of feeling harassed by students' relentless lack of co-operation and aggression.

I taught in a mixed school a couple of years ago and I felt that I was being completely harassed by one particular group and whatever I did was wrong and I was getting attitude from them, if you asked them to do one tiny thing, you'd get a really aggressive answer back and the whole class was doing it so, it was nearly an impossible situation really, it was very difficult really.

These interviewee extracts raise a number of important issues such as the subjective nature of what actually constitutes bullying and the way in which this varies widely depending on individual perceptions, contexts and instances of behaviour as well as the potential negative impact of SBTB and of students' lack of 'co-operation' on teachers' professional performance; issues which will be explored further in Section 6.7.

Interviewee 1 - a middle aged, female teacher in a city centre, girls' DEIS Rapid school echoes De Wet's (2010) assertion that persistent minor incidents of low level antagonism may have serious negative effects on teachers. She explains that it is the recurrent and cumulative nature of on-going in-class disruption which leads to teachers feeling targeted and physically and emotionally drained.

a one off incident you can cope with but the problem is that a lot of this teacher targeted bullying, it's small, it's insidious, but it's happening on a regular basis. If you're going into a class three, four times a week and if in an awful lot of those classes you find yourself on the defence the whole time and you find yourself nervous in there, wondering can you control the kids and if that's going on for a couple of weeks, couple of months, for an entire year, physically, emotionally, mentally that takes its toll on you.

In keeping with national (TUI, 2006; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011) and international research (Matsui, 2005; Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; West, 2007; Turkum, 2011), respondents in this study also reported high levels of verbal abuse (79%) from pupils. This figure is slightly lower than the 85% reported by O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) and also lower than the rate of 95% reported in a Welsh context by Miloudi (2009). Interviewee 1 confided that she had witnessed students verbally abusing teachers.

I have seen staff members reduced to tears because of comments made to them, I have seen women who are in their forties and fifties and they are shouted at that they are menopausal and they are ugly and they are fat and these words are said directly to staff member's faces by students and them being very upset by that.

DEIS interviewee 4 reported

I have seen students stand in front of staff members and they have shouted abuse at them, they have just shouted over them, they have continually done this while the staff member is standing in front of them, so yeah I've witnessed plenty.

Interviewee 3 - a middle aged, male teacher in a suburban, DEIS girls' school recounted how he had endured 'derogatory sexual comments' from a female student, been called 'weirdo' and other disrespectful names in front of the entire class. He described the situation as 'soul destroying' and said that he would 'avoid town at the weekend' for fear of meeting students and being subjected to verbal abuse. Although the findings of the present study, consistent with prior research (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998; Sage, 2004), suggest that challenging student behaviour and SBTB take place most often in the classroom, targeting of teachers by students outside of school grounds also appears to be quite common. This study found that 49% of teachers have been targeted by pupils on their way to and from school whilst 38% have received unwanted, aggressive student attention at the weekend and outside of school hours. These findings support those of Kinney and Pörhölä (2009), Salmi and Kivivuori (2009), De Wet (2010) and Lahelma et al. (2006).

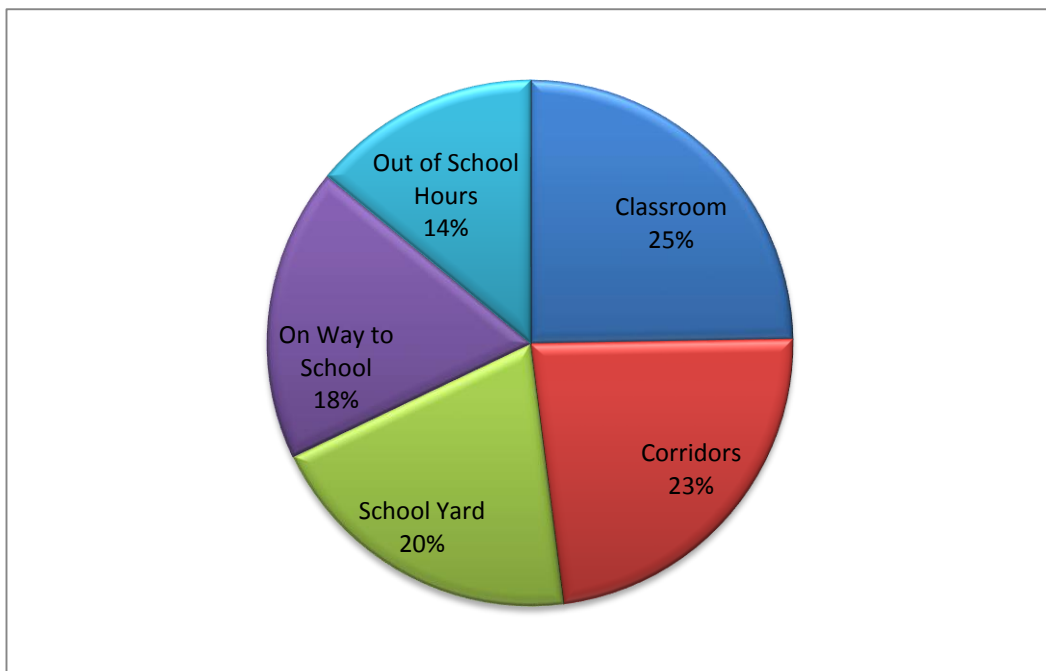
Younger teachers under 26 years of age appeared to attract pupil attention outside of the school setting more than their colleagues with over 30% of teachers in this age bracket experiencing SBTB outside of the school grounds. However, this may be due in part to

younger teachers socialising in venues frequented by older students because of their relative closeness in age. One survey respondent disclosed that she was spat at in a shopping centre, another was verbally abused in front of her children, whilst others report that they have been called names, been shouted at and had things thrown at them in public places such as local parks and sports fields by pupils from their own and neighbouring schools. City centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 7, recounted her experience of student bullying outside of school, highlighting her fear that the behaviour may recur.

I really just felt so intimidated because I didn't know what could actually happen. It was quite an odd feeling because I've never felt that before and I've worked with so many young people, I was thinking what if people really think I am a tramp because these young kids are shouting it down at me and I look quite young, so I probably don't look like a teacher or an adult, so I was thinking do they think I know these young boys, I was quite upset by it. I was thinking is this going to keep happening to me now all the time.

Figure 6.6 provides an overview of the places in which SBTB was reported, by the present study's survey respondents, to most frequently take place.

Figure 6.6 Where SBTB Takes Place



International findings (e.g. Zeira et al., 2004; Chen and Astor, 2009; De Wet, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011) regarding intimidation of teachers by pupils were supported by this study. 55% of respondents reported feeling intimidated by a student, consistent with findings by the ASTI (2004), TUI (2006) and O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) that teachers in Irish second level schools may experience intimidating behaviours by their pupils. This figure is slightly higher than the 49% reported by Benefield (2004), 44% reported by the British ATL (2010) and the figure of 41% obtained by McMahon et al. (2011). 55% of teachers also reported being physically threatened by a pupil. Survey respondents revealed their experiences of being threatened including 'threats to commit suicide if I continued being at her', 'threats to bring parents in to deal with me', 'threats to damage my car'. Interviewee 1 disclosed that she had been threatened with litigation if she did not allow an academically unsuitable student to pursue higher level in the Leaving Certificate examination.

Personally offensive graffiti was reported by 53% of respondents with one female survey respondent disclosing her distress and repulsion at being sketched as a naked figure being subjected to physical and sexual violence. This sketch was displayed for all students to see before the female teacher was aware of its existence. She was so traumatised by the experience that she had to undergo therapeutic counselling and take time off from work. Consistent with international authors (Borg, 1998; Elliott et al., 1998; NIOSH, 2008; ATL, 2009; Wilson et al., 2011; McMahon et al., 2011) who suggest that pupils may steal or destroy teachers' personal belongings; this study found that 48% of teachers had experienced damage to personal property. One male survey respondent reported that he had paint thrown over his car by a student, whilst other respondents had their personal property defaced or stolen. International authors also evidenced theft and damage to teachers' property. Wilson et al. (2011) had reported a figure of 34% for the same offence whilst the TUI (2006) survey found that 30% of teachers had encountered student property damage in the preceding week either to fellow students', schools' or teachers' property.

Cyber bullying was experienced by 35% of the survey respondents whilst interviewees also revealed that they had felt victimised by students leaving derogatory comments

about their personal and professional performance on sites such as RateMyTeacher.com and Facebook. Cyber-bullying of teachers by pupils had also been confirmed in studies conducted by the ASTI (2004), Williams and Guerra (2007), British ATL (2009), Cook et al. (2010) and Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012). The ASTI (2004) had reported that 3% of 1,200 second level teachers surveyed were cyber-bullied, some of which also took place through the RateMyTeacher.com website. Interviewee 2 – a middle aged female teacher from a rural, boys’ school spoke of the ordeal endured by her female colleague following a relentless campaign against her on RateMyTeacher.com in which ‘very personal comments about her teaching methods’ and ‘very personal comments about her competence’ were left on the site by both students and their parents. She indicated that this case of cyber bullying had been ‘very damaging to the confidence of that teacher’ and ‘that teacher had to take time off as a result of stress’.

Union representative 2 spoke of a recent incident involving an ambiguous comment that was made online about a teacher by two students which was open to interpretation as being negative or positive. The comment was interpreted by the teacher and by the principal as being inappropriate, offensive and potentially damaging to the teachers’ career and both students were subsequently suspended. Although the union representative regarded this response as ‘irrationally-actioned’ and ‘extreme’, it was acknowledged that there is a lot of ‘sensitivity around the web being used because it is more public’ and may have a potential negative impact on both the ‘public perception of the school’ and on the teacher. Although the students in question may not have intended to cause such distress to the teacher, their actions did elicit such a response, echoing the disparity which may exist between students’ and teachers’ perceptions of what constitutes bullying, underlined in Chapter 2 by Mishna et al. (2004) and Maunder et al. (2010).

This interviewee explained the seriousness of posting negative comments online, highlighting the ways in which an isolated instance of cyber-bullying may have long-term impacts on the recipient, therefore making the behaviour repetitive in nature; an argument raised in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.3 and supported by a number of researchers

(Siann et al., 1993; Slonje and Smith, 2008; Benefield, 2004; Grummell et al., 2009; O' Moore, 2012).

There is this almost a naivety about people that they don't realise that when they put something up on a website, 101 other people see it and make their own interpretations and you don't have access to those people and you don't have access to who else, down the road will see it. From that teachers' point of view, it is, who else will see that comment, and would she be applying for a job somewhere else and a rumour was out that she wasn't a good teacher. Students need to realise that it is one thing having a difficulty with a teacher; it's another thing posting the stuff online.

With regard to sexual innuendo, interviewee 3 described how a female student had offered him a sexual act in front of the entire class warranting her suspension whilst other male interviewees spoke of witnessing young female teachers being subjected to on-going sexual harassment and offensive comments of a sexual nature from male pupils. Teachers' experiences of inappropriate sexual language, innuendo and sexual harassment by pupils have been reported in the literature, internationally (Ferfolja, 1998; Robinson, 2000; Lahelma, 2000; James et al., 2008; Mooij, 2011) and in Ireland (ASTI, 2004; TUI, 2006). This study found that 59% of teachers had experienced sexual innuendo by a pupil, supporting TUI (2006) and ASTI (2004) findings that teachers in Irish schools may experience some form of sexual harassment or innuendo from pupils. In keeping with findings by Ferfolja (1998) and Lahelma (2000) male pupils were more frequently responsible for inappropriate sexual comments and conduct. Also, the interesting and complex nature of pupil perpetrated sexual harassment of teachers raised by Lahelma (2000) was discussed by some interviewees. One male interviewee in particular, spoke of his discomfort when a senior-cycle, female student made obscene and inappropriate sexual comments to him in front of the entire class, leading to feelings of extreme uneasiness and threatening his sense of authority and control in the classroom, as is discussed shortly in Section 6.5.1.

The final form of SBTB included in the survey was physical assault. Physical assault of teachers by pupils has been reported by international (Zeira et al., 2004; Debarbieux, 2004; Ruff et al., 2004; Galand, 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; Dinkes et al., 2009; De Wet, 2010; McMahon et al., 2011) and Irish authors (Martin, 1997, 2006; ASTI, 2004, 2007; TUI, 2006; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; INTO, 2011) and was reported by 14% of teachers in this study. This figure is similar to the rate of 13% obtained by the ASTI (2004), the 16% reported by NASUWT (2007) and the 19% reported by O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) but significantly lower than the figure of 25% reported by the British ATL (2009). In 2007, the ASTI (2007) survey of 235 second level teachers found that 9% of teachers had experienced physical assault; of these, students were responsible for 37.5% of assaults on teachers.

Respondents indicate that male students are the most frequent perpetrators of challenging and aggressive behaviours, a finding reported widely in the literature both internationally (e.g. Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) and in Ireland (Martin, 1997, 2006; TUI, 2006; James et al., 2008; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011). Findings show that groups of 2 to 3 male students, usually from second or fifth year class groups are the principal perpetrators of SBTB in line with findings by other studies (e.g. Munn et al., 2004; ASTI, 2004; Martin, 2006; Du Plessis, 2008; McMahon, 2011). Interviewees report that SBTB is more frequently perpetrated by second year pupils, as first year pupils are 'finding their feet' whereas 'once they go into fourth year, they get calmer and more mature and they don't bother you as much'. Pupils in the senior classes 'usually get more apathetic and they don't bother with the teachers as they have other things in their lives'. Therefore, these findings may indicate that teachers working with second and fifth year groups may need additional supports. In addition, preventative programmes may be targeted at these year groups and particularly at male students. Data in this regard and also with respect to SBTB in relation to school size, pupil gender, socio-economic status (SES) of school and school location may be found in Appendix H-P.

With respect to male students as the most frequent perpetrators of aggressive student behaviour, as is evidenced in the findings of the present study, Tom Collins, former President of the National University of Maynooth and renowned Irish educationalist, argues (Irish Times, 15/12/2007) that for many male adolescents, second-level schooling 'can be a form of involuntary incarceration'. Speaking to an Irish context, Collins asserts that many male adolescents 'have difficulty relating to or engaging with' the curriculum and therefore, he says 'it is hardly surprising that they will reject it'. Collins considers challenging student behaviour by males to be 'a much more complex problem than merely one of classroom discipline' (Irish Times, 15/12/2007). He explains that male students are 'more likely to fail and underachieve in second-level, less likely to go on to third-level, more likely to be involved in disruptive, anti-social or criminal behaviour' and 'to commit suicide'. Collins suggests that educationalists need to explore 'whether these trends are merely peripheral problems - or whether they point to something much more serious'. Issues of gender will be further discussed in Section 6.5.1, whilst the present discussion will now focus on the impact of SBTB on teachers.

6.4 Impact of SBTB on Teachers

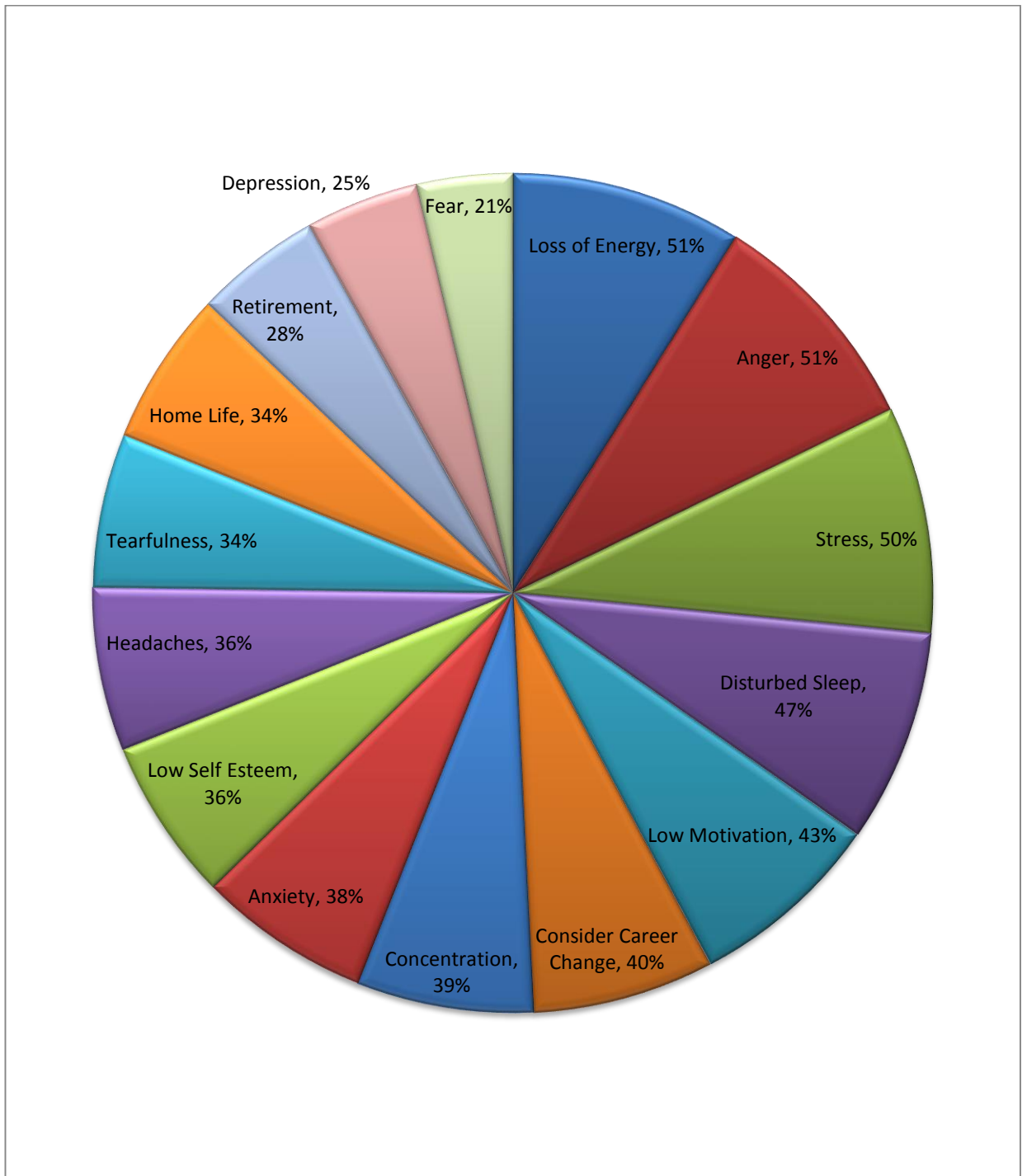
Findings from the survey suggest that teachers experience a wide range of physical, psychological and work related effects as a direct result of student bullying behaviours, consistent with findings by Steffgen et al. (2007), Kinney and Pörhölä (2009), De Wet (2010) and Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012). Over half of all teachers surveyed admitted to feeling a loss of energy, anger and stress as a direct result of SBTB. 40% of respondents considered a career change whilst 28% contemplated retirement. Pertaining to job performance, 43% of teachers have experienced low motivation and 39% admitted to loss of concentration. Health related affects included disturbed sleep (47%), anxiety (38%), headaches (36%) and depression (25%). SBTB also affects the emotional well-being of the sufferer and statistics show that 36% of teachers experienced low self-esteem, 34% felt tearful and had subsequent home and family life upset whilst 21% disclosed they felt fearful as a result of the bullying. The ASTI (2004) also reported that 47% of teachers experienced disturbed sleep whilst anxiety was reported by 49% of teachers, and fear by 21% of respondents. An earlier study by the ASTI (1999) had reported that 50% of 751 respondents experienced tearfulness, 41% anger, 32%

disturbed sleep and 12% experienced a loss of energy. The present study's findings therefore supported those of earlier authors, which suggest that teachers in Irish second level schools may be negatively affected, in a range of ways, by the behaviour of pupils. The following table provides an overview of the most frequently experienced personal and work related effects of SBTB experienced by teachers.

Table 6.3 Overview of the Effects of SBTB on Teachers

(n=531)	Frequency	Percentage
Anger	270	51%
Loss of Energy	270	51%
Stress	265	50%
Disturbed Sleep	250	47%
Low Motivation	228	43%
Thoughts of Career Change	212	40%
Loss of Concentration	207	39%
Anxiety	202	38%
Low Self Esteem	191	36%
Headaches	191	36%
Tearfulness	181	34%
Home/ Family Life Upset	181	34%
Thoughts of Retirement	149	28%
Depression	133	25%
Fear	112	21%

Figure 6.7 Overview of the Physical, Psychological & Work Related Impacts of SBTB



Many researchers (Laugaa et al., 2008; Kerr et al., 2012; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2009; Kerr et al., 2011) have cited teacher stress as a consequence of challenging student behaviour. The present study supports this assertion with over 50% of teachers admitting to stress; consistent with the figure of 56% reported by O' Dowd Lernihan (2011) the ASTI (2004) figure of 49% and the TUI (2006) figure of 42%. Qualitative data supports these findings. A number of interviewees spoke of being upset and feeling stressed as a result of SBTB.

It was very upsetting, I was genuinely stressed by it and physically that level of stress in a school takes its toll on you, throughout the rest of that year I felt very tense going back into that class. For me the stress would show in that my stomach would upset me a bit, I'd have some sort of irritable bowel thing when I'd be very, very stressed like that (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

That takes its toll on you, where you're going into a classroom and you're taking a deep breath as you go in the door saying I hope they'll listen to me, that they'll sit down, they'll behave and not start harassing me (DEIS Rapid interviewee 13).

I would be certain that in the last two to three years there have been at least two teachers have taken sick time off as a result of stress, as a result of harassment from students and parents and I would also say it has been a contributory factor to at least two early retirements in the past couple of years (Interviewee 1).

The detrimental impact of stress on teachers' personal and professional well-being has been underlined by a number of international (e.g. Daniels et al, 2007; Laugaa et al., 2008; Benefield, 2004; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2009; Fox and Stallworth, 2010) and Irish authors (ASTI, 1999, 2004; TUI, 2006; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; Kerr et al., 2011). For instance, in 2011, Kerr et al. reported that 11 out of 15 teachers surveyed had listed disruptive student behaviour as one of their principal sources of negative stress. Stress has been shown to be a potential contributory factor in eliciting bullying behaviour in students as teachers who are highly stressed may create classroom climates and use classroom practices more conducive to SBTB (Fraser, 1996; Natvig et al, 2001; Chen and Astor, 2010). Stressed teachers may also display personality characteristics such as

nervousness or anxiety, which may leave them more vulnerable to victimisation (Ball, 2003; Agnew, 2005).

In addition to stress, teachers also spoke of not being able to ‘switch off’ from their experiences of SBTB. Teachers said they carried the problem around with them, unable to prevent it from affecting their mood and their well-being. Interviewee 14 – a male Year Head in his forties working in a city centre, mixed DEIS Rapid school confided

It is on-going, it affects you and even the thought of it affects you, it is just like feeling exhausted before you even start the class. I have them on a Tuesday, first class and driving into work I feel exhausted and in a bad mood and nervous because I know what I’m facing.

City centre, DEIS interviewee 6 also shared her experience.

I used to be thinking about it too much. I’d think about it maybe Sunday evening, oh no I have to go in Monday now to this and then just not wanting to go into work was the main thing because I knew I was going to be greeted with this, and it was a small enough school, and I’d meet them a lot around the school during the day as well, and you’d have comments passed to you and all.

Other interviewees spoke of their inability to prevent the problem from impacting on their personal and family lives with 34% of respondents reporting home/ family life upset. This may be compared with the findings of an ASTI (1999) study, which explored the impact of bullying by colleagues, parents and pupils on 751 second level teachers and found that 16% had experienced home/ family life upset. Suburban, Boys’ school interviewee 11 explained

I’m married with kids and I’d go home to my husband and I’d be very silent for a time and my husband would be saying to me, you have to stop this silence when you come in the door. You’ve got to talk to me, what is it? Is it work? And it would all kind of come out then. Obviously the silent treatment was a stress it was all stress at the time.

Interviewee 10 - a female teacher in her late twenties in a city centre, boys’ DEIS Rapid school disclosed

You would want to be able to go home from teaching and forget about it, I suppose it is not a career that you can go home and totally forget about it but you don't want to be going home and worrying about it and dreading getting up the next day and I think a lot of teachers do dread getting up in the morning and just can't wait for the holidays and really don't like their job. I'd say there is a large percentage do dread coming in and are constantly in fear of what's going to happen next and I think it affects not only their teaching but their whole life really and what they think of themselves.

DEIS Rapid Year Head, interviewee 14 spoke of the multi-level impact that a serious incident of SBT had on his home life and his own well-being.

I have my own kids and there are days I am stressed off my head, like on a Tuesday morning before that class and I'm in a bad mood and I'm snappy and I have no patience and it's not my kids' fault but I might be cranky and giving out to them. I feel guilty about that, I really feel that is stress. It all gets on top of you and you take it out on your own family. I do feel awful about that.

Low self-esteem was reported by 36% of respondents in this study, while low self-esteem was reported by 18% of teachers in the ASTI study (1999). Some interviewees spoke of the impact of SBTB on their confidence in their own teaching ability and in their ability to control their class.

It is so frustrating, your self-esteem, your teaching ability, you are questioning your ability to teach, is it the job for you? (DEIS Rapid interviewee 10).

I felt a bit of a failure; you feel that you can't control your class and that you're getting nowhere (Suburban, DEIS interviewee 3).

Oh, terrible, really awful and you see what happens is the confidence starts going a bit and then the face might start reddening up and what I've often noticed about students is that they know more about you than you know about yourself. The weak points are just picked up on immediately. I've seen them see through me so fast it has been frightening (Suburban, Boys' school interviewee 11).

The impact of SBTB on teachers' professional performance was explored both in the survey and in the course of interviews with teachers. Work-related impacts of SBTB reported by respondents include low motivation (43%), thoughts of career change (40%), thoughts of retirement (28%) and loss of concentration (39%). The ASTI (1999) survey examining the impact of bullying on teachers from colleagues, parents and pupils obtained significantly lower figures for thoughts of retirement (11%) and low motivation (9%) but a similar figure was reported in both the 1999 (37%) and 2004 (39%) studies for teachers' loss of concentration. Low morale was reported by 73% of teachers in the ASTI (2004) survey whilst 48% reported feeling demoralised and 45% stated that they had felt isolated as a result of negative pupil behaviour. Many researchers (e.g. Mayhew et al., 2004; Blasé and Blasé, 2002, 2008; Kinney and Pörhölä, 2009; Fox and Stallworth, 2010) have underlined the correlation between negative pupil behaviour and diminished work-related performance. For instance, Blasé and Blasé (2008) suggest that such behaviour may lead to reduced job satisfaction, effort and morale, impaired relationships with colleagues and pupils, reduced commitment, initiative and concentration whilst Fox and Stallworth (2010) warn of an increase in absenteeism, apathy and cynicism. Interviewees in this study talked of the impact of SBT on their professional performance and on their own emotional well-being. For instance, rural, boys' school interviewee 2 said

I think it's going to affect your performance greatly as a teacher. I think it could leave a teacher feeling very isolated, have a huge impact on their confidence, on their belief in their own abilities. I think it has a detrimental effect on teachers to be honest if they are targeted by these kids that would maybe verbally or physically harass them.

A number of research studies (Payne et al., 2003; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; McMahon et al., 2011; Cohen and Brown, 2013) suggest a correlation between positive teacher well-being and enhanced student-school engagement. Strong student-school engagement is seen in schools which foster social relations, common norms and expectations based on collaboration and participation (Gottfredson et al., 2005; Steffgen et al., 2007; Mooij, 2010; Chen and Astor, 2010; Wilson et al., 2011; Gregory et al., 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). In contrast, poor

teacher well-being has been linked with low student-school engagement, negative classroom climate and impaired teacher-pupil relationships; factors which have been associated in the literature with higher levels of SBT and other negative pupil behaviours (Fraser, 1996; Pervin and Turner, 1998; ASTI, 1999; Natvig et al, 2001; Khoury-Kassabri et al, 2007; Benhorin and McMahon, 2008; Chen and Astor, 2010). International authors (Pervin and Turner, 1998; Warner et al., 1999; Miller, 2002; Payne et al., 2003; Estefania, 2007) warn that poor teacher well-being due to SBTB, may also lead to lowered teacher expectations vis-à-vis students' behaviour and academic performance, more restrictive lesson plans to maintain classroom control and impaired standards of teaching, factors which may in turn negatively influence SBTB.

Interviewees also spoke about the anger, fear, isolation and dread that SBTB may stir up in the teacher. Researchers (Dzuka and Dalbert, 2007; Daniels et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2011) suggest that even an isolated incident of SBTB may be considered as bullying for some teachers, as the fear and dread of SBTB recurring may elicit adverse effects and bring about constant re-living of the event, therefore making it repetitive in nature. Fear and dread may also be considered as potentially as harmful as actual assault, as the impact on teachers' psychological and emotional well-being may be considerable (Mayhew, 2004). Mixed School, DEIS Rapid interviewee 7 described her experience.

You're going into the classroom and you don't even want to go in, it's like a nightmare. I was counting down the weeks to being finished with them because it was really a nightmare. That's all I would think about, having that class

City centre, Mixed school, DEIS Rapid interviewee 14 confided his experience of dealing with one particular pupil. He explains that this pupil

made my life a living hell. I could really have used someone to talk to and someone to work it out with. I carried it myself for a long time because I was shocked myself at the power he had over me and shocked at the anger that I had towards him.

The same teacher added

I was going home to my own wife and kids every night and I was stressed off my head.

The stress, anger, frustration and desperation experienced by this interviewee are evident in the above excerpt. He speaks of the anger which this experience has stirred up within him as well as the difficulty of not having anybody with whom to share his frustration or to access support. As mentioned, anger (51%) and stress (50%) have been widely experienced by respondents, with anger being particularly high for younger teachers (49%). This finding underlines the need for sufficient training and supports to be put in place which helps teachers to not only address SBTB more effectively but also to support teachers in understanding and managing their own feelings and behaviours. Conversely, the issue of power is also introduced in this extract, when the interviewee speaks of his shock that a pupil could actually have power over him; supporting arguments by Terry (1998), Naito and Gielen (2005), De Wet (2010) and Kauppi and Pörhölä (2012) in Chapter 2, that teachers may feel in a weaker position of power to students irrespective of their position of perceived authority.

Also evident in these interviewee excerpts are teachers' feelings of frustration, isolation, uncertainty and ambiguity in relation to how best to respond to incidents of SBTB. Interviewees spoke of the stress, anxiety, shame and self-doubt, which they felt in relation to the ways in which they had dealt with these students' behaviours. Many spoke of their regret at the way in which they had handled the situation, stating that they 'know better now', 'would handle it better if it happened again', 'know now what to pick them up on and what to let go'.

Interviewee 3 explained

I was kind of new in the job and I didn't handle it great maybe. I think you have to take a step back sometimes from it and just take no notice or pretend to take no notice and then they don't bother with you, whereas if you're constantly fighting back and saying 'How dare you do that and how dare you say that?' , that's what they want. They want a reaction and I think sometimes if you give them less reaction, they'll just walk away. I think I've learned from that, that

you have to be very calm or pretend to be very calm in the situation. So I think I didn't handle it well at the start but that's learning; that's experience.

This extract underlines the ways in which teachers are responding to SBTB, based on their own experience or intuition and therefore, some teachers may in fact be contributing to the escalation of the very behaviours which they are trying to avoid. Teachers spoke of the negative implications of some of the choices they had made in responding to SBTB, reporting that the problem had 'escalated' and that 'the whole class turned against me as a result'. Teachers' perceptions regarding the policies, training and supports in place to guide them in the most effective ways to respond to SBTB are explored in Section 6.6; the following discussion now looks at teachers' experiences of SBTB and the impact of SBTB, in relation to teachers' gender and years of teaching experience.

6.5 Exploring Possibilities in Relation to Teachers' Gender, Age and SBTB

The literature underscores that SBTB may be caused by a wide range of diverse and changeable student (Agnew, 2005; Chen and Astor, 2010), teacher (Pervin and Turner, 1998), family (Du Plessis, 2008; Steer, 2009), community (Khoury-Kassabri, 2007, 2009) and school related factors (Kasen et al., 2004; Smith and Monks, 2008; Espelage et al., 2011, 2013). Researchers (Farrington, 1993; Fuchs et al., 2003; Christle et al., 2006; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012; X Ma, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013) stress that it is the combination and interplay between these factors which shed most light on the phenomenon. Although empirical research underlines the subjective and context-specific nature of SBT, preliminary findings had indicated that certain trends relating to teachers' age and gender may be discernible in the data and may therefore be valuable in identifying risk factors for teachers' vulnerability to mistreatment and in tailoring a combination of interventions to each context (X Ma, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). Consequently, the relationships between teachers' age, gender and SBTB were explored further using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

6.5.1 Exploring the Relationship Between Teachers' Gender and SBTB

In relation to teachers' gender, both descriptive and frequency analysis were carried out on the survey data. Cross tabulation, using Pearson's Chi Square test of proportions showed no statistically significant differences in teachers' experiences of SBTB based on gender, therefore these findings must be considered guardedly as further research is necessary to investigate the relationship between gender and experience of SBTB. The results of the cross-tabulations are located in Appendix W.

Frequency analysis of the data indicates that male and female teachers report quite equal levels of SBTB, consistent with findings by Martin (1997), Terry (1998), Kivivuori and Tuominen (1999), Benefield (2004) and Kinney and Pörhölä (2009). However, when considered in tandem with qualitative findings, data seems to suggest that the ways in which the bullying is experienced and perceived may differ between the sexes, supporting earlier findings by Crick and Bigbee (1998), Munn et al. (2004) and Mooij (2010). Male teachers reported higher rates of physical threats (59% v 53%), personally offensive graffiti (56% v 51%) and physical assault (18% v 12%) than their female colleagues. The finding that males may experience more physical threats and physical assault is consistent with the international literature (Terry, 1998; Crick and Bigbee, 1998; Kondrasuk, 2002; NCES, 2003, 2010; Benefield, 2004; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; Salmi and Kivivuori, 2009; McMahon et al., 2011). For instance, McMahon had reported higher levels of physical violence (34% v 31%), threats (50% v 43%), and harassment (64% v 54%) for male teachers.

Based on both qualitative and quantitative data, it appears that female teachers may experience slightly higher rates of sexual innuendo and intimidation than their male colleagues with an 8% and 9% increase on male figures respectively, consistent with findings by Kivivuori (1997), Lahelma (2000), Salmi and Kivivuori, (2009) and McMahon (2011). McMahon (2011) reported that 41% of female teachers experience intimidation from a student compared with 36% of male teachers, showing a variance between sexes of 5%, similar to findings obtained in this study. A small number of female survey respondents also reported inappropriate touching, staring and inappropriate comments from their male students. The survey finding that sexual

innuendo and intimidation may be experienced more frequently by female teachers and may be perpetrated predominantly by male pupils is supported with evidence from interviews with participants and consistent with international literature (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Interviewees 8 and 9 both reported that they had witnessed female teachers, particularly young female teachers, being targeted with inappropriate and often-times intimidating sexual comments and behaviour from male students. Interviewee 9 – a male teacher, close to retirement age working in a rural, boys' school remarked that he had regularly witnessed 'inappropriate comments of a sexual nature, particularly in the women's classes'.

A number of interviewees commented that young female teachers are frequently faced with sexual innuendo and inappropriate sexual comments from students because of their proximity in age to the older pupils. For example, DEIS interviewee 6 said

I've also been in all boys schools and the comments you'd face from them, they could be a lot of sexual comments and particularly again if you're younger. The older teacher is seen as a mother figure but if you're younger, you're kind of nearly on par with them and they see that you can be wound up easily and they see it as appropriate, like they might leave a page three girl on your desk or they could write some kind of comment on the blackboard.

Meanwhile city centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 1 argued that sexual innuendo by pupils is also experienced by male teachers, recounting her experience of working in a previous school where young male teachers 'got a certain amount of hassle, purely by dint of their age' from female pupils which she said 'might have left them a little bit vulnerable and more targeted'. However this interviewee suggested that in general 'males get on better in an all-female school; girls tend to behave better for the men than they do for the women'. She said that male teachers in her present school are 'generally cherished and adored and not all the females would be given the same respect'. Citing differences in the ways in which pupils interact with male and female teachers, interviewee 1 stated that male teachers 'can poke fun at them and have a little bit of

craic’ whereas ‘if a female teacher said the same thing to them, their parents would be down the following day complaining’ .

Suburban, DEIS interviewee 3 agreed that male teachers can get on better with female students.

I think the fact that they do see you a little bit as a joke figure can work in your favour that you can joke with them. You can say things to them, mess around and they don’t take you seriously. Whereas, I think if a female teacher said something to a girl and if I say the same thing; she’d take no notice of me whereas she could call up the parents complaining about the female teacher.

DEIS Rapid interviewee 1 suggested that the same dynamic may be true of female teachers working in boys’ schools, suggesting that teachers’ gender may be an advantage when working with pupils of the opposite sex.

Maybe if you had a female teacher in an all-male school they might be able to, not use their sexuality but sometimes you can have a better relationship with them. Sometimes you can use being a female to your advantage when dealing with young boys you can appeal to their better nature.

However, this interviewee also suggested that student-teacher relationships are more complex than teacher-student gender, and argued that the ways in which a student learns to treat members of the opposite sex impacts on the ways in which he or she will treat their teachers, echoing findings by a number of authors (e.g. Miller et al., 2002; Du Plessis, 2008; IACP, 2010) that student behaviour is influenced by a wide range of factors including parental influences and role modelling.

If they come from an environment where females aren’t respected then they don’t respect female teachers either because they see in their world that it’s the males tend to have all the rights. If their mothers and sisters aren’t respected in the home, they don’t automatically give respect to the female teachers and it’s the male teachers in that environment who get respect just by dint of their size and the fact that they’re men.

Interviewee 1 also acknowledged the influence that attitudes learned at home have on the ways in which female students treat their male teachers. Speaking in relation to a particular class group, interviewee 1 stated

I don't think they take males seriously. A lot of them probably don't have very positive male influences at home, and maybe don't have a father, maybe the father is absent. They're used to their Mams and their Nans and I think that's where they get their discipline from. They don't see males as a discipline force.

These findings support contemporary research which suggests that the ways in which male and female teachers experience SBT may differ based on of their gender (Kivivuori, 1997; Benefield, 2004; McMahon, 2011). It appears that not only may the forms of SBT experienced by male and female teachers vary, but the qualitative data seems to suggest that the teacher student dynamic may also be highly influenced by both the teachers' awareness and use of their own gender, as asserted by Lahelma et al (1996). Additionally, it appears that teachers perceive student behaviour towards teachers of the same or opposite sex to be highly influenced by gender role modelling in the family environment, a proposition supported in studies by Johnson et al. (1999), Rolland and Galloway, (2004) and James et al. (2008). Table 6.4 provides an overview of the forms of SBTB most frequently reported by male and female teachers.

Table 6.4 Forms of SBTB by Gender

(n=531)	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
On-going In-Class Disruption	86%	83%
Verbal Abuse	79%	79%
Physical Threats	59%	53%
Personally Offensive Graffiti	56%	51%
Sexual Innuendo	54%	62%
Intimidation	49%	58%
Damage to Property	47%	48%
Cyber Bullying	33%	36%
Physical Assault	18%	12%

6.5.2 Exploring the Relationship Between Teachers' Age and SBTB

Both quantitative and qualitative data appears to suggest that teachers who are under 26 years of age experience more bullying behaviours by students than teachers in any other age group, supporting findings by Field (1986), Terry (1998), Borg (1998) and Salmi and Kivivuori (2009). Terry (1998) reported that 68% of teachers with less than 3 years teaching experience had been bullied one or more times per term compared with 49% of teachers with more than 3 years' experience whilst Salmi and Kivivuori (2009) found that newly qualified teachers (NQTs) experienced the highest rates of SBT behaviours. These researchers suggest that teachers may develop skills to manage difficult student behaviours which they may have found very challenging in their earlier careers. Although, descriptive and frequency analysis appears to support a correlation between teachers' age and teachers' experiences of SBTB, once again cross-tabulation indicates that the results from the statistics are not significant and therefore require further investigation. These results may be found in Appendix W. Therefore, this discussion is limited to an exploration of the possibilities of a relationship between teachers' age and experience of SBTB, supported by both basic frequency and descriptive statistical

analysis and qualitative data. The following tables provide an overview of the forms of SBTB most frequently reported by teachers according to their age range.

Table 6.5 Forms of SBTB by Teachers' Age

(n=531)	>25 years	26-40 years	41-55 years	Over 55 years
In-Class Disruption	85%	85%	84%	82%
Sexual Innuendo	72%	60%	56%	65%
Verbal Abuse	72%	83%	80%	51%
Physical Threats	64%	53%	54%	55%
Offensive Graffiti	62%	46%	54%	58%
Intimidation	60%	58%	51%	55%
Damage to Property	54%	46%	46%	65%
Cyber Bullying	46%	34%	33%	34%
Physical Assault	12%	15%	11%	20%

Table 6.6 Most Frequently Reported Forms of SBTB by Teachers' Age

(n=531)	Frequency	Age Group
On-going Class Disruption	85%	26 - 40 years
Verbal Abuse	83%	26 – 40 years
Sexual Innuendo	72%	Under 26 years
Damage to Property	65%	Over 55 years
Physical Threats	64%	Under 26 years
Offensive Graffiti	62%	Under 26 years
Intimidation	60%	Under 26 years
Cyber Bullying	46%	Under 26 years
Physical Assault	20%	Over 55 years

The qualitative data appears to support this assertion that younger teachers and in particular student teachers are most susceptible to bullying behaviours and harassment by pupils. Interviewees suggest that ‘younger teachers’ closeness in age to pupils’, ‘teachers’ inexperience’ and ‘perceived lack of authority’ and under-developed ‘behavioural management skills’ may contribute to increased incidence of SBTB as evidenced in some of the following interview excerpts.

The H. Dips can be certainly targeted and harassed because pupils would know that they’re student teachers and wouldn’t automatically give them the same respect, or treat them with the same kindness that they would more permanent members of staff. They are not given the same authority that other teachers are; students are quick to pick up on that and can go for the jugular there on that one (City Centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

Our diploma students are prime targets, especially for the lads. A young female teacher coming in on teacher training, they know within a couple of weeks that she’s only a dip., she’ll only be there for the year and they will give her a rough, rough time and to be honest there is very little done about it (Rural, boys’ school interviewee 2).

Dips obviously because they’re totally green and the kids can pick up on that as well. I think they can be targeted very much; they can be really taken advantage of. Students have less respect for a Dip (Suburban DEIS interviewee 3).

Someone who is just out of college is in a more vulnerable position, they don’t have the experience and they take things a lot more personally. When I first started teaching I was 21 and like you’re not much older than the people you’re teaching and you’ve the same mentality probably as a lot of the people you’re teaching and it can be very hard to suddenly be on the other side of the desk so I do think age is a big factor (City centre, DEIS interviewee 6).

Higher diploma students themselves expressed feeling most targeted by students.

Young teachers are definitely more targeted. You are only learning the curriculum at that stage so you are still very raw (Interviewee 7).

City centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 7 described her experience of bullying by students.

It would break you. You go in so enthusiastic, thinking that everything is going to be great and you want to learn, that's why you went off to college for 4 years and then you go in and there are young people that don't want to learn and are just out to drive you insane. I have heard of other teachers going home crying because of them. I often went home crying because of them.

Speaking of the intimidation she experienced, interviewee 7 continued

It's quite intimidating because you know you're a real teacher but then you're saying, they are all watching me now, there are 32 in the class, if I am intimidated by these 2, I'm never going to carry on. You have to be firm and show that it's not bothering you but still deal with the situation so it's really quite difficult to find a boundary and a balance while everyone else is doing the work and they won't and you're trying to convince them to do it as well.

The idea of not being a real teacher was echoed by interviewee 8, a male, student teacher in a rural boys' school.

They don't think you are actually a real teacher so they are like we're not doing it, you're not a real teacher, you're going to be gone next week, what's the point.

Interviewee 7 also highlighted that dealing with on-going challenging student behaviour and SBT may impact negatively on teacher retention, a finding which may be supported by the statistical data which showed that 40% of teachers had considered a career change, including 40% of newly qualified teachers (NQTs). She revealed that a fellow student had endured such high levels of challenging student behaviour whilst on teaching practice that she had opted to change career entirely.

It knocked her so much, she finished the course but she hasn't done any teaching since, she hasn't even applied for a job. I think that experience just knocked her so much. Even speaking to her now, I don't think she will actually ever teach.

Quantitative data appears to suggest that teachers under 26 years of age may also experience the highest rate of cyber bullying. This may possibly be due to younger teachers increased proficiency and awareness of particular social networking sites. Statistical findings also indicate that the 41 to 55 years' age group reported the lowest overall rates of all behaviours. Survey findings showed that teachers aged over 55 years reported the highest rates of physical assault and damage to personal property and the second highest rates of physical threats, personally offensive graffiti and sexual innuendo. These findings support those by Benefield (2004) and Santiago (2008) who found that more mature teachers experienced the highest levels of SBTB. The present survey findings were also corroborated by interview data which suggests that teachers approaching retirement age experience high levels of challenging student behaviour.

Older teachers can be very much targeted as well, teachers who would be near retirement would be victimised or picked on and I can think of one or two, over the years who were almost driven out of teaching by the level of abuse ultimately that they got in the latter years of their career (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

The older male teachers; the teachers close to retirement are being targeted. It's a really unusual departure that they would tackle a more established teacher, but whether it's an age thing, or whatever, or they know that they're tired or maybe that they have difficulty with how they approach the kids with the behavioural problems, I don't know but definitely the higher diploma students and the older male teachers close to retirement (Interviewee 2).

Interviewee 3 disclosed that older male teachers can be sometimes targeted by pupils, citing the case of 'two much older, very established male teachers who were being challenged on a daily basis' resulting in 'one instance where the teacher had to be sent home'. However, in contrast, he explained that senior female teachers receive high levels of respect from pupils, asserting that older women are 'seen as a matriarch, kind of a mother figure and you don't mess with your mother or your nan'. This statement echoes earlier comments in the previous section regarding the ways in which students respond to teachers of the opposite sex based on values and behaviours learned at home. These comments underline the influence of students' home environment on their in-school behaviour and suggest that effective responses to address SBT require a multi-

level approach which includes a strand which focuses on the students' home environment, as has been emphasised throughout the thesis and by a number of authors (Stoolmiller et al., 1997; Cummings et al., 2003; Chen and Astor, 2010; Mooij, 2011). This strand may include for instance parent training programmes and information evenings and a greater emphasis on developing positive rapport with parents and stronger links between the school and the community (Natvig et al., 2001; IACP, 2010); interventions which have been shown to positively influence student behaviour (Dishion and Andrews, 1995; Griffin et al., 2000; Ofsted, 2005; Kane, 2008; Steer, 2009).

Quantitative findings did not show any significant differences in the levels of SBTB experienced by male and female teachers according to their ages. Benefield (2004) suggests that senior teachers may experience high levels of challenging student behaviour because of their 'outdated expectations' regarding the ways in which students should behave, expectations which may be based on the respect and deference which students were expected to show at an earlier stage in these teachers' careers. She also suggests that some more senior teachers may have difficulty relating to younger students due to cultural divides which impact on teachers' ability to successfully form relationships with pupils. Hofstede (1986) and Sandford et al. (2006) also emphasise the generational and cultural divides which may exist between students and older teachers. The technological advances and the vast societal developments, outlined in Chapter 4, Section 4.4, which have taken place over the past decade in Ireland, may certainly have contributed to such cultural divides between students and older teachers making it more difficult for students and older teachers to relate to one another.

With respect to exploring teachers' experiences of SBTB in relation to teachers' gender, age and years' teaching experience, the findings of this study seem to suggest that female teachers experience greater effects of SBTB than male teachers with female teachers reporting higher rates in 80% of the effects highlighted. However, once again, statistical significance has not been shown in cross-tabulation of the statistical data and so this study offers only an exploration of these possibilities. The descriptive and frequency analysis findings appear to support those of O' Dowd Lernihan's (2011) study which suggests that females experience greater effects of SBTB than males. The

present study findings may also corroborate those of Wilson et al. (2011) who assert that women experience more physical symptoms than men (64% v 52%), more emotional symptoms than men (85% v 80%) and also more work related symptoms than male teachers (87% v 85%). An unexpected finding was that 12% of male teachers admitted to being tearful as a result of SBTB, perhaps highlighting the serious impact of the problem and the desperation and frustration which it may elicit in all teachers. Data relating to the ways in which male and female teachers are affected by SBTB are provided in Appendices T, whilst cross-tabulation results are provided in Appendix W. The findings of the survey also seem to suggest that the ways in which teachers are impacted by SBTB changes throughout a teacher's career. Based on earlier findings which suggest that teachers under 26 years of age endure the highest percentage of SBTB, one might assume this group would suffer with the greatest ill effects of the behaviour. However, the survey statistics appear to indicate that teachers with 11 – 24 years' experience may be most likely to be affected by SBTB, with this group accounting for the highest rate of affects in 12 out of the 15 categories. These findings are consistent with those reported by Santiago et al. (2008) who found that teachers in the middle years of their teaching careers experienced the highest negative effects from challenging and aggressive student behaviour. The present study's respondents in this category reported experiencing more emotional affects such as anxiety (41%), fear (24%), low self-esteem (37%) and tearfulness (42%). This group also reported more thoughts of career change (49%), loss of energy (58%) and low motivation (48%). Health related affects were also highest for this set, with 43% of teachers suffering from headaches, 30% experiencing depression and 54% of respondents coping with stress and sleeplessness.

Santiago et al. (2008, p. 47) in attempting to explain these findings suggest that newly qualified teachers may be able to draw on their 'youth', 'enthusiasm' and 'motivation' to protect them from stress whilst 'tiredness, routine and difficulties in modifying the behaviour of some students may become a risk factor' for teachers who have been in the role for longer. The researchers (Santiago et al., 2008, p. 47) suggest that this tendency may be 'reverted with the passing of time' as older teachers, with ample experience learn to manage these difficulties more efficiently. The present study suggests an additional explanation. One may estimate that teachers who fall within the 11-24 years'

experience category may be aged approximately in their thirties or forties, depending on whether they entered the profession directly after their studies. This age bracket may possibly correspond with the popular time-span in many teachers' lives for marriage, setting up home and child rearing; busy times of potential stress and financial strain. It may be the case, at least in part, that teachers in this bracket are already under a certain level of personal duress with lower resilience levels and therefore find the added strain of SBTB has a more significant impact on their well-being than at other times throughout their career. However, it may also be argued that having a family may provide teachers with support rather than increase stress levels, yet another paradoxical position surrounding the complexity of this phenomenon.

The most elevated statistics for the group with less than 10 years' experience were anger (53%) and loss of concentration (45%). Student teachers, as part of this group, rated anger as their highest consequential effect of bullying at 56%. Thoughts of career change, reduced concentration, low motivation and loss of energy were rated between 40% and 50% respectively by higher diploma students, whilst approximately one third of student teachers reported that they suffered from headaches, depression, tearfulness and anxiety with 22% admitting to being fearful as a result of SBT. Additional data relating to the impact of SBT on student teachers is provided in Appendix V.

The over 25 years' experience group of teachers had the lowest reported effects of SBTB amongst all groups, scoring highest for thoughts of retirement, a predictable and expected finding. Figures relating to low self-esteem and anxiety were only 1% lower than the highest reported rates in both cases. The possibility that teachers are affected in differing ways by SBTB throughout their career seems to suggest that training and support mechanisms ought to be designed to meet teachers' distinctive needs at particular points throughout their teaching career. At present, as discussed in Chapter 4, support and training provision in this regard is quite limited. Data relating to the effects of SBTB which teachers reported experiencing according to their number of years' teaching experience is provided in Appendix U. The following discussion will now focus on teachers' perceptions regarding the supports, training and policies which are in

place to support teachers experiencing SBTB in second level schools; teachers' preferred supports are also highlighted.

6.6 Supports for Teachers

The educational policies, training provision and supports in place to assist teachers in managing challenging student behaviour have been explored at some length in Chapter 4. As explained, many of these contemporary State responses have evolved as a result of the *School Matter's* report recommendations (Martin, 2006). Chapter 4 illustrated that a number of positive supports and initiatives are in place in Ireland. These include the National Behaviour Support Service and its work in relation to Behaviour Support Classrooms (BSCs), Level 1 school wide supports which are largely preventative programmes designed to promote positive behaviour across the student body and Level 2 and Level 3 initiatives which provide more comprehensive, targeted supports and interventions for schools experiencing serious, disruptive behaviour with specific students. Improvements in legislation include the publication of the National Education Welfare Board's *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* (2008), a comprehensive, informative document based on international best practice, which outlines schools' legal obligations and provides guidelines to assist schools in promoting an inclusive, preventative, whole school approach to managing challenging student behaviour. Legislative developments also include amendments to Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) in 2007, to require an appeals committee to not only focus on the rights of the student at the centre of the appeal, but to also take into consideration the educational interests of other students, the maintenance of a school climate conducive to effective learning and teaching and the health, safety and welfare of teachers, staff and other students. A number of welcome and significant developments in teacher training and education were also outlined in Chapter 4, including the introduction of a compulsory system of induction for newly qualified teachers in 2012, changes to, and an increase in the duration of preparatory teacher training courses and the establishment of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) in 2010, to co-ordinate all continuous professional development for teachers.

However, Chapter 4 also illustrated the limitations and weaknesses of contemporary policy responses and supports to address challenging student behaviour in second level schools. For instance, the programmes and initiatives offered by the National Behaviour Support Service are not extended to all schools as this service is targeted principally at supporting schools experiencing high levels of persistent and serious challenging student behaviour rather than supporting schools generally in dealing with problematic student behaviour. With respect to the provision of teacher training to equip teachers to deal with challenging student behaviour and SBT, Chapter 4 highlighted teachers' criticisms in relation to the quality and availability of, and access to, sufficient practical training around behavioural issues across all levels of teacher education from initial teacher training and induction to continuous professional development. The pressures on Year Heads and management, responsible for student behavioural issues were highlighted as were difficulties associated with large class sizes and the significant cuts to guidance and counselling hours for students, all of which impact on teachers' ability to effectively manage the needs of students and the behaviour of students in school. The following sub-section will now explore interviewees' perceptions regarding supports, policies and training in Ireland. As is evident from the title of this sub-section, the qualitative findings reveal wide-scale dis-satisfaction amongst participants regarding the structures in place to equip teachers to deal with these issues.

6.6.1 Inadequate Supports and Training

Although 3 teachers in this study were very positive about the counselling service available through the Employee Assistance Service with one teacher referring to it as 'brilliant', the vast majority of teachers felt that supports, policies and training to deal with challenging student behaviour and SBT were inadequate. Almost all of the interviewees said that training was not sufficient. Consistent with findings reported by Kerr et al. (2011) which showed that none of the study's 15 participants considered the Higher Diploma in Education to have prepared them for the reality of the classroom; the majority of interviewees in this study stated that the Higher Diploma did not adequately equip them for dealing effectively with challenging student behaviour or SBT.

We had lectures on classroom management but nothing really hands on. You're really thrown into the deep end. You've got the theoretical side of it and you are

expected to put that into practice but it's never the same (DEIS Rapid interviewee 7).

No training on how to deal with it or how to cope with it, no absolutely not (Rural, boys' school interviewee 2).

The current system of the higher diploma is certainly not adequate. As of September it's going to be a 2 year programme so hopefully there may be more on challenging behaviour (Year Head in a non-DEIS, rural, boys' school interviewee 12).

In the dip, we did a little bit of theory about psychology which was really irrelevant. I mean I never referred to any of the notes that I did in my dip. It's just all through experience, but there is no formal training on how to deal with indiscipline. A lot of it is trial and error and just working things out for your-self and just seeing what works (City centre, DEIS interviewee 6).

I think very much all teacher-training is currently based on academics and based on covering the course and the curriculum, there is absolutely little or no information on challenging student behaviour (Interviewee 12).

I don't think teacher preparation programmes actually prepare teachers for the reality of the classroom. I think teacher training is very much subject orientated and teachers require more practical skills and methodologies for responding to aggressive and disruptive behaviour. Oftentimes teachers simply are out of their depth and can rely only on their own gut instinct and life experience to know how to react (DEIS Rapid interviewee 13).

Teachers acknowledged that training on classroom and behavioural management is available to some extent through continuing professional development programmes. However many highlighted that substitution cover is not provided by the Department of Education and Skills, as these courses are not compulsory, and many of these modules must be completed in the teachers' own time.

If there's a mandatory syllabus change, then they will provide substitution cover for you to go but any optional in-service, like behavioural management, there's

no cover given so my classes are unsupervised and we can't be left out of school if our classes are unsupervised because it will result in more problems (DEIS Rapid girls' school interviewee 1).

It's not easy, you can't do it individually, there would be different courses but these would be in the teachers' own time, evenings, or if management felt that challenging behaviour was a particular problem they could maybe organise a 2 hour or 3 hour session, it may only come once every 3 or 4 years and even at that the strategies and the supports aren't there (Rural, boys' school interviewee 12).

In relation to the training provided for teachers to deal with SBT and challenging student behaviour, union representative 2 said

There is not much training, there are small bits of training available but it doesn't tend to really open up to include teachers being bullied by students. We haven't really opened up that space yet where students bullying teachers is widely accepted, it is treated as a discipline issue. It is partly a discipline issue, absolutely but it is a bigger phenomenon and I don't think there is enough training at all on bullying overall.

Union representative 1 agreed that supports and training for teachers are inadequate, stating

There are not enough structures in place to support teachers, full-stop about anything. I think this is where we have signally failed to invest in aspects of our teaching workforce, we have signally failed to invest in CPD where teachers can up-skill and keep abreast of developments in pedagogy, psychology, whatever.

In addition to negative perceptions regarding training, many teachers feel that there are inadequate school policies and procedures in place both locally and nationally for dealing with SBT and aggressive student behaviour. 7 of the interviewees said that there are no guidelines in place for a teacher who feels they are being bullied by pupils.

There is no policy on bullying by a pupil and I'm a Year Head, so I take it that if we had one, I would know. All the Year Heads would know, because ultimately

if there are problems they're supposed to land on our desk first so the fact that I've never heard of one, I don't think we do have, no (Interviewee 12).

Three interviewees said that they were unaware of such a policy though admitted that it may exist.

Well there probably are policies but I don't really know the policy to be honest (DEIS Mixed school interviewee 4).

I'm not aware of any policy on bullying by a pupil, I'm not aware of what the procedures are. I'm sure we're not the worst when it comes to certain teachers being targeted and being bullied but doesn't it say a lot for us that we don't have a policy on it or that I'm not aware of any policy if we do have one. I would presume the vast majority of my colleagues wouldn't be aware either (DEIS girls' school interviewee 3).

I know there's a policy for everything now because its law but we don't even read the policies because we're just so busy doing everything else. I think the policy is probably pointless anyway. I think it's just a load of red tape that won't be used or won't be implemented (Suburban, Mixed school interviewee 5).

Teachers' assertions that there are no school policies, that they are unaware of policies, and that they are just too busy to read the policies indicates a major flaw in the present system. The lack of familiarisation of teachers with the school policies which are supposed to inform both the school ethos and their practice is concerning and echoes concerns raised by the INTO (2002, p. 35) that many school policies are just 'papers gathering dust in filing cabinets or booklets cluttering the bottom drawers of their pupils' parents' homes rather than 'living things'. Interviewees suggest that the immense pressure which teachers and management are currently experiencing coupled with an increasing burden on principals to continually develop new policies in line with mounting legislative requirements is leading to a dilution of the effectiveness of policies in general. Union representative 2 stated that a policy to deal with student bullying of teachers is necessary, however it was made clear

I wouldn't want another suite of policies to have to be developed. It would be more like the development of current policy measures because principals are just bogged down writing separate policies on separate things and yet when something happens they are not quite sure that the policy works.

Five teachers said that an effective policy and set of procedures detailing the ways in which teachers should respond to SBT would be beneficial, with interviewee 1 stating that 'if there was a policy, then at least it becomes more open'. Interviewee 6 asserted that a 'clear structure outlining what management has to do and what they don't have to do' would be of particular assistance to teachers.

Union representative 2 recognised that 'in fairness to the Department they have done a lot', citing the recent guidelines for bullying between pupils and the 'good bit of work done in terms of if bullying emerges between staff'. However, this interviewee suggested that

What is unspoken about a lot is that sense of where a student might be bullying a teacher or where a teacher may be feeling aggrieved around that. That is still pretty much unspoken about but I think what we need is maybe a broad policy context that acknowledges all of the different dimensions that might be in human relationships.

This 'unspoken' nature of SBT feeds into another discussion which will take place in Section 6.7.3 concerning a theme which has emerged from the data which reveals teachers' reluctance to disclose their experiences of SBT, largely due to fear of being judged, fear of damaging career prospects and feelings of shame. Policy development to address an issue as complex and multi-faceted as SBT will signal a challenge to both policy makers, who need to comprehend the complexity of the issue, and teachers, who will need to feel safe enough, and supported enough to engage in consultation on the issue. Conversely, another issue is raised here, one which will be addressed in Section 6.7.2. The findings of this study have highlighted that teachers may simultaneously hold

a range of incongruous and paradoxical opinions and feelings in relation to student behaviour and also with respect to the responses which should be put in place to address the issue. For instance, teachers may hold retributory feelings towards bullying students in parallel recognition of young peoples' needs. Therefore, a holistic approach to future policy development is needed which recognises the anger and contradictory feelings which teachers may have towards their bullies, as well as the rights and needs of pupils.

In relation to interviewees' perceptions regarding supports which are available to teachers in schools; the issue of school management was raised by almost all interviewees. Six of the teachers interviewed stated that assistance for teachers who felt bullied by a pupil were either limited to collegial support or non-existent.

I think colleagues, outside of that there doesn't seem to be anything really (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

If a student is not behaving in your class you are expected to be able to manage it in your own way and for some students there's no deterrent. It's practically impossible to expel a child no matter what the level of behaviour is so what you have then is you have these really badly behaved students in some people's classes they know there's no serious sanctions, the behaviour continues and the learning of the other students then really suffers as a result (Interviewee 12).

It would be all collegial, I'd say God, that was rough yesterday and whatever, but it would be nothing official, no (Rural boys' school interviewee 2).

Supports for staff dealing with being bullied? No, there's not; absolutely not (Suburban mixed school interviewee 5).

I don't think there is any support really; just other teaching colleagues are the only ones who can support you (City centre, girls' DEIS school interviewee 6).

There is no system in place; it should have been as clear as saying right I have a student who is breaking these rules in this way, what is the procedure, let's just follow the procedures. But there is no procedures only count down the days until the week is over, the midterm, the end of the school year (DEIS interviewee 14).

The majority of both survey respondents and interviewees identified collegiality as the most common and crucial source of support. The importance of good collegiality between teachers has been underlined in the literature (Sahlberg, 2010; Priestly, Robinson and Biesta, 2011) as has the positive impact of supportive staff relations on student behaviour (Martin, 1997; 2006; Kerr et al., 2011). Kerr et al. (2011) studied teachers' sources of support in an Irish context and also reported that the vast majority of their participants had identified teaching colleagues as their greatest support. Collegiality was also seen as fundamental in deterring pupils from targeting individual teachers. Interviewees shared their thoughts on collegiality.

I think as a staff, colleagues need to support each other. A kid won't take on the whole staff at once, they might take on one or two but they won't take on the whole staff (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

A big thing for any staff has to be collegiality and if students see that some teachers are disrespected or teachers are not treated in a fair and equitable manner, they're very quick to pick up on that. As a staff we have to be so strong, in that, one for all and all for one. We have to stick together and respect one another so that they see that if you attack one member of staff then others will come to their defence and that we as a school will not tolerate any staff member being abused or any staff member being targeted (DEIS interviewee 3).

I think if the staff are all together, the kids know that, that we're a force to be reckoned with and we'll all stand up for each other but I think we work on our own and it's almost as if we don't care that another teacher is being bullied, that's her problem. We're not as together as we should be (DEIS interviewee 4).

Union representative 2 also stressed the importance of collegial support.

Teachers should be more equipped to support each other. I just think there is so much about dealing with things together and that is not to be against the student, it is to be pro the student, as we are actually educating the student to be more respectful.

Teachers need to be encouraged to loosen up with each other if they are having difficulty. If the staff are seen to be together on things I think students may pick

up that the teacher is on my side most of the time, but if I overstep the boundary, that the group of teachers support each other.

I think there is something about teachers and communication that just because I get on okay with the students and I don't have a problem with being bullied or whatever, it doesn't mean that the person next door to you, who might be new, who might be older, who might have difficulties going on at the moment, that I can ignore those.

of those teachers who sought support from their principal and senior management, some reported having very positive experiences.

Management was very supportive of me. For me, that was actually the only positive thing that you could draw out of that whole experience, that management were supportive of me (City centre, girls' school interviewee 1).

This school is brilliant in the sense that it has so many support structures in place, you're not on your own so even an inexperienced teacher like myself, I might not know how to deal with a situation but I know that I can go through these procedures and it will help (Rural mixed school interviewee 8).

There is a very strong team of teachers here and I think they're very helpful. If I ever had an issue regarding behaviour or just even school work or whatever aspect of the school life, there was no problem asking them (Interviewee 9).

I would definitely go straight to the vice principal because I know he definitely would follow it up, I know for a fact that it would be followed up but whether it would make a difference afterwards, would they still do it again, that's another situation (City centre, mixed school interviewee 7).

However, the vast majority of both survey respondents and interviewees reported that they had not felt supported by management following an incident of bullying by a pupil.

Management are usually completely ineffective. I'm a substitute teacher and have taught in different schools. It is common to get a lot of abuse as a substitute and there is limited support available (Suburban boys' school interviewee 11).

It depends on the top person in the school, management play a very important role. If the principal is firmly in control and knows what they are doing absolutely everyone and everything works. But if the eye is off the ball I think a lot of things happen and that is one of them. I have felt unsupported at times and if I was experiencing a problem, I'd say why would I go to that principal because I'm not going to feel supported (Suburban mixed school interviewee 4).

It's very hard if Year Heads don't give a damn and it makes you feel more helpless because most of the time nothing will be done, which is wrong. The confidence goes so low when the Year Head isn't interested and the principal isn't interested because he has four or five others outside the door anyway, incident sheets galore but what are you supposed to do (Interviewee 11).

It is very condescending and I know they are very busy, but I could be raging about it and send them down and saying they will deal with you now and I can't do anymore, then it's nothing, it's just don't do it again, off you go back to class (City centre, DEIS Rapid boys' school interviewee 10).

In response to Question 26 on the questionnaire - *have you ever sought support due to bullying by a pupil, please explain*; a male survey respondent disclosed that although he had been supported by colleagues 'showing care and concern, management are not always supportive'. He insisted that teachers need a 'supportive management who will listen and empathise'. A young female respondent sought informal support following an assault in school but said 'It was not forthcoming, even though the incident was witnessed'. Teachers stated that poor management support left them feeling demoralised, apathetic, isolated and de-motivated, negative impacts which have been discussed previously in Section 6.4.

If management aren't interested, you have no come-back; you've no kind of recourse for getting an apology or for stopping it (DEIS Rapid interviewee 10).

In that case and it was during the previous management crew, the teacher to be honest was targeted by management also and ...she felt extremely, extremely isolated (Rural boys' school interviewee 2).

It's demoralising isn't it? That you don't have that support, you don't get back up. Because if you don't have a happy teacher, you don't have a happy pupil so I think you should really take care of your staff first (DEIS interviewee 3).

We all knew about it and she felt horrible about it obviously and maybe enough wasn't done about it too, maybe. I feel that more should have been done about it by the teachers higher up on the chain (Mixed school interviewee 5).

I suppose principals are powerless in ways to do a lot of things but it's just soul-destroying and demoralising that nothing is being done. It just goes on and on (Suburban, DEIS, girls' school interviewee 3).

The over-whelming perception of teachers in this study, both in terms of survey respondents and interviewees, across a broad range of spectrums, including union and management body representatives, was that training and support structures to equip and support teachers dealing with challenging student behaviour and SBT are inadequate. Practical training to prepare teachers for the realities of the classroom in terms of student behaviour was reported to be insufficient and difficult to access. Policies and guidelines to guide and support teachers in managing challenging and aggressive behaviour directed towards them were perceived to be either non-existent, or to exist merely in the form of a policy document, with which teachers are unfamiliar.

Collegial and management support were shown to vary considerably based on individual situations, personalities, relationships and levels of experiences. Findings underline teachers' feelings of insecurity, ambiguity, frustration and uncertainty and teachers' perceptions that they are forced to manage issues of SBTB, based primarily on their own judgements and experiences rather than on informed practice, guidelines and training. Therefore, the contemporary response to SBTB in Irish schools in practical terms, is perceived by the present study participants as 'hit-or-miss', unsystematic,

inconsistent and dependant largely on the strengths and weakness of individual principals, BoM members, colleagues, instructors etc. rather than on evidence-based, effective, strategic procedures. Although a number of teachers have expressed disillusionment with management support, a recurrent theme which has emerged from the study, which will be considered in Section 6.7.4, is that school principals and senior management are under severe pressure owing to increased State devolution of responsibilities, increasing legislation and on-going cuts to the education budget. This in turn, is seen to negatively affect managements' ability to adequately support teachers dealing with SBT and challenging student behaviour. The next section will now explore teachers' preferred supports for dealing with SBTB.

6.6.2 Teachers' Preferred Supports

The final question of the survey asked teachers – *what supports do you feel would be beneficial for teachers being bullied by students?* The responses from this question were analysed and grouped thematically, as can be seen in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Overview of Teachers' Recommendations for Addressing SBTB

Overview of Teachers' Recommendations for Addressing SBTB
Strong, effectual, non-tolerant, consistent discipline system (Severe, immediate response to SBT; withdrawal of pupils from class, longer suspensions, expulsion where warranted; rights and needs of teachers to be recognised not just the rights of students)
Effective policy and guidelines to be implemented and adhered to by all staff members
Principal and management support (Regular staff meetings, practical, non-judgemental guidance, recognition, empathy and affirmation)
Colleague Support
Counselling
Teacher Unions, Department of Education, Employee Assistance Service and Teaching Council intervention and support where necessary
Whole school and home approach to addressing student indiscipline
Induction for students and regular dialogue regarding unacceptable behaviour and consequences
Mentoring system
Crisis Phone Line and Support Service for teachers who are experiencing SBT
Easily accessible in- service training on strategies for effective behaviour management and for coping with stress
Internet bullying prevention system to be devised to protect teachers
Transformation of the current educational system to facilitate smaller class sizes
Societal and media support for the teacher rather than automatically for the pupil
Opportunity for teachers to de-brief and de-stress following serious student indiscipline before entering next class

As outlined in Table 6.7, respondents suggested a wide range of supports which they stated would be helpful in dealing with SBTB. These range from strict disciplinary procedures and consistently imposed sanctions for bullying pupils, to induction for pupils on expectations and consequences of negative behaviour, the reduction of class sizes, teacher training and the development of a mentoring system. The most frequently cited preferred support for dealing with SBTB by survey respondents was ‘clear procedures and guidelines’ which ‘should be adhered to by all staff members’, with ‘firm and consistent sanctions in place for rule infraction’. Respondents wrote that there needs to be ‘firm, swift action’ by management to deal with SBTB. One female respondent stated

Students, teachers and parents need to have a clear idea of what is unacceptable behaviour. There are too many ‘grey’ areas. Discipline structures needs to be fully supportive of staff. On-going class disruption needs to be treated as serious misbehaviour instead of waiting for big offences.

Another female respondent requested clarity on ‘the exact behaviours which cannot be accepted in a classroom’ and ‘clear sanctions for all behaviours which negate the learning environment’. Other respondents recommended that schools should have ‘a fixed, set discipline in the school, some procedure that everyone must adhere to’; a ‘zero tolerance’, ‘no nonsense’ approach to school discipline with ‘effective disciplinary procedures and consistency in these procedures’. Teachers want ‘swift, severe sanctions for pupils’ and ‘greater, consistent sanctions for pupils who bully’. A number of respondents asserted that teachers should have the power to remove un-cooperative pupils from their classes and expel students for serious offences and proposed ‘more action directed at students such as longer suspension’.

Students who threaten or harm teachers should be expelled but this is not necessarily practised. It would be a great comfort for teachers who are being regularly bullied that these students would be strictly disciplined (Male respondent in a rural school).

We must be very strict, if they see us faltering then the whole thing collapses really. You have to know that there are certain boundaries that you’re never going to let them cross, because if you do you’re finished. It’s only getting worse and worse with the kinds of students that we’re meeting (Interviewee 5).

Interviewee 3 also proposed greater sanctions such as suspension for unacceptable student behaviour saying ‘they get away with it and that’s why they do it’ whilst another male survey respondent agreed that ‘students posing specific threats should be removed from the classroom’ but underlined the previously stressed influence of the home environment in his assertion that

more parental awareness that the type of verbal aggression/ difficult attitude that might be acceptable at home does not work in school. A tougher line from management needs to be taken with privileges such as playing on the school sports team, trips abroad etc. being withdrawn for the disruptive pupils as other teachers and school management cannot guarantee the behaviour of the pupil.

These teacher responses reveal quite negative, hard-line and punitive attitudes towards students, which are, as will be discussed in Section 6.7.2, at variance with more student-centred teacher suggestions that schools should strive to meet students’ individual and complex needs rather than impose structures and sanctions uniformly on all pupils. Such punitive responses are also at odds with best practice for addressing challenging student behaviour and SBT outlined in Chapter 3, which highlighted the benefits of a developmental, pro-active rather than punitive, reactive approach to problematic student behaviour. Punitive methods of student discipline have been shown to be less effective than proactive methods (Volkh and Snell, 1998; Krug et al., 2002; Rigby, 2007; Eisenbraun, 2007; Toel et al., 2007; Morrison, 2007; Osher et al., 2008) and may in actuality be counter-productive (Skiba and Peterson, 2000; Espelage et al., 2013) and lead to increased challenging and aggressive student behaviour (Skiba et al., 2006; Hatfield et al., 2008; McMahon et al., 2011).

Coupled with this perspective that schools need to be more rigid and penalising of negative student behaviour, is a view amongst some teachers that the law is unfairly weighted in favour of the disruptive student. Referring indirectly to Section 29 of the Education Act (1998) which has been widely criticised by teachers as seen in Chapter 4, Section 4.2, interviewee 12 asserted that ‘it’s practically impossible to expel a child, no matter what the level of behaviour’. In addition to teachers’ stated dissatisfaction with

regard to limited powers to discipline pupils, teachers also expressed discontent that students ‘seem to have more rights than teachers’. A female survey respondent recommended the introduction of a ‘charter of teachers’ rights’ which she said ‘is required to enable a teacher to carry out her work in an environment conducive to learning, where there’s respect for all, including the teacher’. Such a charter was proposed by the Task Force (Martin, 2006) but similar to other Task Force recommendations, has yet to be realised. Survey respondents argue that the ‘rights of the teacher and other pupils should be more important than those of the bully’ and ‘there should be stronger laws protecting teachers and not just students’. Respondents assert that we ‘pander too much to the rights of the student’ whilst DEIS school interviewee 3 suggested ‘if teachers behaved the way some of the students behave, we would be suspended from our positions’. This dialogue seems to imply an ‘us against them’ construction of the teacher-student relationship. This is an important finding, which may suggest that some teachers have a particular way of viewing the issue, and of viewing teaching in general, which in itself, may be problematic.

This authoritarian view of teaching appears to infer that students should be acquiescent, obedient and deferential towards teachers, therefore, creating a hierarchical relationship which privileges the rights and authority of the teacher over his or her students. This hierarchical teacher-student relationship may be considered to reflect to some extent, elements of the teacher-student relationship prior to the abolition of corporal punishment in which matters of discipline were always considered to be the fault of the pupil and which failed to take into account the complex nature of student behaviour (Wickham, 2010). The links between punitive and authoritarian modes of discipline and increased problematic student behaviour have been underlined in the literature (Olweus, Limber and Mihalic, 1999; OECD, 2005; Leroy et. al, 2007; Biesta, 2012) and previously in Chapters 3 and 4; as has the correlation between pro-active and developmental, student-centred approaches and positive student behaviour (Krug et al., 2002; Rigby, 2007; Eisenbraun, 2007; Hatfield et al., 2008; McMahan et al., 2011; Negy, 2013). Wide-scale teacher calls for more authoritarian modes of discipline point to the necessity for more comprehensive teacher training and information dissemination regarding the effectiveness of punitive and developmental measures in addressing challenging student behaviour and SBT. Conversely, information dissemination needs

to target the general public as well as teachers in order to develop greater understanding of the complexity of the issue.

Many respondents also wrote of their need to ‘unburden’ themselves and to seek advice and reassurance on how to best deal with the pupil or the situation. A number of teachers wrote of their desire to ‘be able to talk to someone impartial’; have ‘practical, non-judgmental guidance’; ‘just have someone to talk to, have a give out to, generally just a sympathetic ear to offload to’; ‘someone to talk to in confidence’; and ‘a confidential contact to discuss the issues with’. These comments may suggest that although teachers in general, do not openly disclose their experiences of bullying by a pupil, as discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.6 and explored shortly in the present chapter in Section 6.7.3; nevertheless, teachers may have a strong desire to discuss these issues in a non-judgemental, safe and confidential setting.

Part of the reason why teachers may not feel comfortable openly discussing their experiences of SBTB may be related to their perception of the media and the general public as lacking understanding and empathy on the issue. Some respondents expressed frustration regarding the ways in which they are portrayed in the media asserting that they are not afforded the respect and fairness which they feel they deserve. One middle aged male respondent proposed that ‘there needs to be a change in attitudes in society that the teacher is wrong and responsible for everything always’. Interviewee 6 expressed a similar sentiment ‘if a teacher is having a problem, they get no support from the media, ever. I mean the media seems to be completely against teachers’. A male survey respondent suggested that the teaching council needs to liaise with media groups regarding ‘the ethics of persistent and consistent teacher bashing and the effects this has on a small minority of students who are influenced by this negativity and take it upon themselves to disrupt the teaching/ learning process’. These teachers’ perspectives echo the extant international literature (e.g. Terry, 1998; Brown and Munn, 2008; Espelage et al., 2012) which suggests that the media needs to play a role in preventing the development of challenging and aggressive student behaviour.

Union representative 2 also suggested that the media needs to assist schools in getting the message out there into the public domain that this phenomenon is taking place.

It's a bit like the mental health issue for young people being more and more exposed. It's good because it gives people the permission to talk about it and it gives also a sense of neutral understanding out there in the public domain that this actually does happen and that it is not just about a parent suddenly hearing that their child has been disrespectful or is being completely out of line with a teacher; that parents or guardians are allowed embrace that the issue is there without it being about their own child and their behaviour.

There needs to be an awful lot more talk about inappropriate behaviour and it is not only the schools' responsibility. I think public messages about authority are very important. There are not enough messages out there that when there is a very disrespectful attitude among students towards teachers it can be very disruptive to the teacher, personally and professionally.

The need to highlight the phenomenon of SBTB in media, social, academic and political circles and the necessity for all partners in education and members of society to assume a role in addressing the problem has been underlined by international researchers (Terry, 1998; Benefield, 2004; Espelage et al., 2013) and throughout this study. The following section will now focus on the key themes which have emerged from the research; the first of which questions the utility of attempting to label, define and conceptualise a phenomenon as subjective, contextually-specific, complex, multifaceted and elusive as the bullying of teachers by pupils.

6.7 Emergent Themes

6.7.1 Theme 1: Is this Bullying?

The subjective and contextual nature of SBT has been stressed throughout this thesis and therefore it is unsurprising that participants differed greatly in their interpretations of student behaviour as 'bullying'. Some teachers were quite insistent that the behaviour which they had experienced constituted bullying. For instance, a female survey

respondent insisted ‘just because we are adults doesn’t mean we are safe from bullying’. Evidence of this is also found in the following phrases ‘that’s all bullying’; ‘certain teachers are being targeted and being bullied’ and ‘you could definitely call that bullying’. DEIS Rapid interviewee 14 insisted

The majority of the time we are in control, we as a staff are happy, well, competent, in control, and it all goes well and it’s enjoyable, but yeah, there are times when I regularly feel that I am bullied to varying extents now by a pupil.

City centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 1 confided

it was the only time probably that I’ve ever felt in any way threatened by a student or targeted by a student or maybe intimidated and bullied by a student.

In contrast, some interviewees questioned the accuracy of the term ‘bullying’ to describe their experiences.

Most of the time, you couldn’t say it’s bullying, like they misbehave and they act out and they shout and roar and ignore you but like is that bullying? That definition you called out like that’s really wide, that means that anything that I think, anything that I feel is done to upset me on purpose, or anything that I feel threatened by, is bullying. I don’t know (DEIS interviewee 4).

We all get a fair doing from the kids. Is it bullying? I don’t know is it bullying? Well, I suppose some of it you could call bullying (Interviewee 5).

In particular, the issue of power imbalance was raised. International authors (Benefield, 2004; De Wet, 2010; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) maintain that teachers may perceive themselves to be in an inferior position of power to pupils regardless of the superior power provided by the State. Similarly, Foucault argues that power may be mobile, multi-directional, operating from the bottom up as well as the top down, despite the illusion that power is enforced exclusively by those in positions of authority. For instance union representative 1 questioned whether a child may have power over an adult.

I've never liked that word 'bullying'. I am always very ambivalent around the word because yes there is bullying, there are bullies, childhood bullying is a dreadful phenomenon but when we hear adults being bullied by others, particularly by juniors, children, I get worried because I'm not sure that is the terminology we should be using (Union Representative 1).

I don't know any colleague here in my industrial relations team who is dealing with a straight case of bullying according to your definition where there is an imbalance of power etc. (Union Representative 1).

This union representative continued

I think there is a problem of very poor student behaviour and I think some pupils can be aggressive and even at times engage in threatening and violent behaviour, I don't know that a pupil would actually have the power to bully a teacher, I would have my doubts. Certainly yes, teachers may be treated very poorly by pupils and teachers certainly have to contend with a significant amount of challenging behaviour by students but they don't use the term they're 'being bullied'.

In contrast to union representative 1, both union representative 2 and the management body representative stated that they believe that teachers are being bullied by students in Irish second level schools. Union representative 2 described SBTB as 'very subtle' and said that although calling it 'a problem might be overstating, it's certainly an issue that needs to be exposed a bit more' whilst the management body representative stated that 'student bullying of teachers is really something that needs urgent and immediate attention in my book'.

Despite union representative 1's doubts that a child may have power over a teacher, a number of interviewees firmly stated that they had felt in an inferior position of power to the bullying pupil.

You praise them and give them a bit of responsibility y'know or try hard with them but those ones, they seem to enjoy this power they have over you, like they make it their business to make you squirm and to make you feel uncomfortable. I

guess in a way that is like bullying, because it is on-going, it affects you and even the thought of it affects you (DEIS Rapid Interviewee 13).

How can you tell your friends or your wife or your family, I'm being bullied by a 16 year old? A man of 43 being bullied by a 16 year old, even now I feel like a total fool. Nobody was making him do that, he was just enjoying being able to have power over me and to get under my skin (DEIS Rapid, city centre, interviewee 14)

This excerpt underlines the feelings of shame, embarrassment and anger which may be associated with SBTB and the reluctance to disclose which some teachers may experience; a theme which will be discussed presently in Section 6.7.3. It also illuminates interviewee 14's explicit description of his experiences as 'bullying'.

Perception is a fundamental consideration in exploring the phenomenon of SBT and in trying to understand teachers' widely divergent and subjective viewpoints. Silverman et al. (2005) argue that the way in which bullying is perceived may be influenced by an array of factors including recipients' prior experience of bullying and internal frames of reference as well as their psychological, social and emotional well-being at the time of the incident. Other researchers (Twemlow et al., 2004; Vaillancourt et al., 2008; Davies, 2008) stress the influence of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity and cultural and organisational factors on perception. Interviewee 2 explains 'perception is a huge thing, I think it goes through phases rather than it being the actual reality of the situation'. The contextual and subjective nature of SBTB is accentuated in the following interviewee extracts in which teachers describe almost intangible or insidious behaviours rather than definitive or concrete examples, which they perceive as bullying.

It is so insidious, they won't do anything that I can pin on them, they will just sit there with that sneer on their faces that makes me feel inept, makes me feel like a phony like they can see right through me, yeah, maybe that is bullying (DEIS Rapid interviewee 14).

There are kids who have an evil streak, they watch you and taunt you and just want a reaction. You could dread going in to those classes because you know that it will be the same every single time, no matter what you do (Interviewee 5).

Sometimes it can be sighing, even shrugging shoulders, all of that type of thing is very disrespectful. I would consider that bullying (DEIS interviewee 4).

These extracts really illustrate the potential for misunderstanding and disparity between students' intentions and teachers' perceptions as reported by Mishna et al. (2006) and Maunder et al. (2010). Such wide ranging perceptual disparity may raise concerns regarding the potential for unfair treatment of pupils whose behaviours teachers perceive to be 'insidious', 'evil' and 'disrespectful' whilst simultaneously illuminating the breadth and depth of emotions which teachers may experience in the course of their work on a daily basis – such as dread, suspicion, animosity, ineptitude and torment. The complexity of this issue is once again brought to the fore, as are the almost overwhelming challenges in effectively and equitably meeting the needs of pupils and teachers alike.

There are teachers who acknowledge that aggressive or challenging student behaviour has a negative impact on them, but who suggest that perhaps pupils do not intend to cause such hurt or distress to the teacher, again illustrating that bullying is understood in different ways by different teachers. Interviewee 12 said 'it hurts but you become immune to it, the student is just trying to divert attention away from themselves' whilst interviewee 6 said 'students try to disrupt the class but they don't realise maybe how personal it can get and how upsetting it can get'.

Union representative 2 re-iterated these sentiments in citing a case in which a group of students was suspended for discussing with their class teacher information they had heard regarding another teacher's personal health issues. The class teacher who had a familial connection with the teacher in question deemed the students' comments to be inappropriate and offensive and the students were subsequently sanctioned. Union representative 2 highlighted that the pupils 'probably in fairness did not mean any harm' but the 'interpretation that was taken about it was that it was an inappropriate comment by the students about a teacher'. This interviewee stressed that although these comments were 'inappropriate' and a 'very upsetting experience for the teacher'; teachers need to

be 'able to separate out that inappropriate comments sometimes are not intended as offensive'. Teachers need to learn 'the difference between when students genuinely mean to offend and mean to be disrespectful and when they don't'. These comments raise the integral and unavoidable issues of perception and intent in SBTB.

Union representative 1 agreed that perception is key in trying to understand the student-teacher dynamic, acknowledging that some teachers may have a 'perception of an imbalance of power' and that these 'individuals would complain of an imbalance of their power with students'. However, this union representative stressed the contextual nature of SBTB and suggested that teachers who perceive students' behaviour as bullying may also have a range of other difficulties in their professional lives which impact on their perception of the behaviour as bullying.

When teachers ask us for advice, it is usually quite a complex sequence, over several years perhaps, of events, of things that have happened in their professional lives, in the classroom etc. that has led to what they would perceive as an imbalance of power.

Union representative 1 explained that in the union's experience 'individuals who would have difficult relationships with pupils, would quite frequently have a syndrome of other issues associated with their professional practice and relationships'. The term syndrome was used to describe 'the amalgam of issues that they have in their professional lives including negative relations with pupils'. This interviewee was very clear 'I'm not blaming the victim, if a teacher says they are being bullied it is our job as a trade union to act immediately'. However it was stressed that teachers' perceptions, practice, relationships with pupils and colleagues, emotional well-being, classroom climate, quality of teaching etc. are highly influenced by a number of factors and each of these impacts on the ways in which teachers perceive students' actions, echoing assertions by Twemlow et al. (2004), Silverman et al. (2005), Vaillancourt et al. (2008) and Davies (2008). It may be surmised therefore, that factors in the teachers' own personal and professional lives may influence whether or not particular forms, or instances, of students' behaviour are regarded as 'bullying' at different points in time,

underscoring the contextual dimension to SBT and supporting union representative 1's insistence that 'it's never as simple and as black and white as you would think it is'. Also some of these comments may suggest that teachers need a range of supports during their professional lives, not just after the event but to prepare them for dealing with such events. The following comments from suburban boys' school interviewee 11, illustrate the way in which teachers' personal context and their perceptions of student behaviour may be inter-linked.

[Experiences of SBTB] would have been tied in with very vulnerable situations in my own life, very vulnerable situations. When I met that class I was in a terrible situation and funny, things can draw to each other, do you know what I mean, I believe I was drawn to them, they were drawn to me because of the way I was in myself.

This study has raised many questions such as: What is bullying? Is this bullying? Can a teacher really be bullied by a pupil? Is this negative student behaviour or bullying? Is this teacher incorrectly perceiving this pupil behaviour as bullying? At what point is negative pupil behaviour considered bullying and at what point is such behaviour considered as violence? There are many points of commonality and intersection between SBTB and what may be termed challenging or disruptive student behaviour and also between SBTB and violence against teachers. There are also many ways in which each of these respective phenomena are divergent and distinct. Conversely, the use of a continuum of behaviour has been helpful in grading the seriousness of student behaviours and in some way categorising these behaviours into the field of study to which they most aptly fit.

This phenomenon is exceedingly subjective and contextual at its core, and the utility of attempting to conceptualise, label and define the parameters of such an elusive phenomenon may in itself merit questioning. However, it remains, that in order to engage, to any extent, with this phenomenon requires in the first instance, that the phenomenon be named and therefore, as bullying is the word most widely used in the literature to describe this particular form of negative student behaviour directed towards

teachers (Terry, 1998; De Wet, 2010; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), it would seem apt to adopt this terminology. Confidence in this term has also been increased by the convictions of many interviewees who insist that the term ‘bullying’ most closely describes their experiences. Secondly, although definitive conceptualisation of this phenomenon is not possible, nevertheless, attempts to define SBT provide the study with something tangible, which can then be used as a starting point for further exploration of the topic and as a point of reference from which common patterns of teachers’ experiences or perceptions may be discerned.

6.7.2 Theme 2: Teachers’ Paradoxical Positions

Focusing on teachers’ perceptions regarding the ways in which contemporary policy responses ought to support teachers in dealing with SBTB; a similar pattern of incongruity and contradiction amongst teachers begins to emerge. A paradox is observable between teachers’ very punitive views on their own bullies and their more holistic focus when talking about policy. This suggests that teachers may hold retributory feelings in parallel recognition of young peoples’ needs.

Such feelings of contempt and retribution were expressed by interviewee 14, in his disclosure of his experience of being bullied by a male pupil. The interviewee confided that the perpetrating pupil ‘made my life a living hell’ and spoke of his powerlessness to access sufficient supports or effective disciplinary sanctions to deal with the situation. He states that he should have insisted that the pupil be removed permanently from his class, saying that he should have ‘refused to let him back in’. However, this interviewee is simultaneously cognisant of students’ needs and in discussing the impact of austerity measures on student behaviour; he suggests that pupils might engage in negative behaviour due to a range of factors, which in some instances may include school contextual factors. He explains ‘sometimes we are going around so stressed you can’t blame the students for reacting to that’. He also suggests that teachers’ inability to adequately explain classwork to struggling students may lead to SBTB but states that in such a case, his inability to cater to that students’ academic needs means ‘when that kid starts giving me abuse, that’s my fault, that’s on me and I know it’.

Rural, boys' school interviewee 12 also reveals inconsistencies in her position on the ways in which challenging student behaviour should be addressed. On the one hand, this interviewee demonstrates an authoritarian approach to discipline, commending her school's 'no tolerance' approach to disruptive students and stating that she would perceive any student 'stepping out of line' as 'totally inappropriate and out of order'. Yet, when discussing policy, the same interviewee suggests that schools 'need to be less prescriptive and controlling' and that teachers need to consider the multi-dimensional nature of student behaviour rather than just focus on the negative act. She states

As teachers, we came into this profession to educate students, to help mould them emotionally, socially and intellectually. If I stop to ask [a disruptive pupil] if there is something I can do to help, or if I smile and speak to her in a gentle tone when instead I feel like giving her a discipline card, these are things that actually can have a lasting effect on her life.

Considering the data then, in a more general sense; it is clear that there are respondents and interviewees who strongly advocate a punitive response to SBTB. There are also participants who argue that teachers' rights should be considered over and above the rights of pupils; teachers who feel that schools need to be more rigid and authoritarian and those who feel the education system needs to be less hierarchical and more student-centred. Interestingly, as stated, these views need not necessarily be held as mutually exclusive amongst all teachers but rather, it appears that teachers may hold a number of contradictory perspectives on this issue simultaneously, which may alter depending upon specific contexts and experiences.

For instance, as explored in Section 6.6.2, a number of teachers have called for 'firm and consistent sanctions for rule infraction', 'firm, swift action', 'zero tolerance', 'swift, severe sanctions for pupils', 'longer suspensions' and a 'tougher line from management'. Interviewees state that students engage in SBTB because 'they get away with it' and urge that teachers must be 'very strict' and maintain 'certain boundaries that you're never going to let them cross'. In both the literature and findings, there is evidence that teachers feel that students have too many rights.

In contrast with this perspective, union representative 1 suggests that schools need to recognise the societal changes that have taken place over the past two decades in Ireland and re-evaluate the structures and practices which underpin the system to adequately reflect these societal changes. The needs of young people have changed and developed exponentially in the last number of decades as explored in Chapter 4, Section 4.4. Many contemporary young people are faced with navigating a raft of social issues such as poor mental health and suicide, anti-social behaviour, peer pressure to conform to sexual activity, sexually transmitted infections and alcohol and drug misuse (Nurnberger et al., 2002; Pihl, 2003); stresses which may spill over into the classroom in the form of student aggressive behaviour, due to a combination of factors. Interviewees argue that modes of discipline must adapt to reflect these changes. Union representative 1 said

Society has changed so much; I don't think anyone has really caught up with it. I mean you are dealing with kids now who have a digital world in their back pocket, this has only happened in less than 10 years and yet the normative structure that we have in schools - is it actually out of date, I would ask and are teachers trying to support a normative structure, which frankly is no longer functional? I do think, as an institution, I think it is dysfunctional.

This union representative suggested that the normative structures in schools are based on out-dated rules, which may in turn contribute to students rebelling against what they perceive to be unfair rules, echoing assertions by Lynch and Lodge (2002) and Smyth and McCoy (2011, p. 18) that the Irish education system is 'quite hierarchical' and may benefit from structural changes in the system. Union representative 1 argues

Students have changed, cultures have changed and yet we are still trying to create norms of behaviour and traditions in schools, which perhaps are no longer appropriate for the kinds of young people we are dealing with. When you see 18-year-old boys having to obey the same rules as a 12-year-old boy, it is very hard for those kids to always be well behaved. They do rebel against unfair

practice. Schools have to keep order yes but do we have to keep order at the cost of where complete contempt for the rules is one of the results.

Interviewees 6, 10 and 13 express similar sentiments in advocating a more holistic approach to discipline, which recognises the multi-dimensional and contextual nature of student behaviour. These teachers, respectively, suggest that schools need to be more ‘cognisant of students’ own needs and baggage’, ‘need to consider the student holistically’ and need to take into account the ‘circumstances of the students outside of the school’.

In sum, not only are conceptions and definitions of SBTB fraught with contradictions, inconsistencies and irreconcilabilities but teachers’ perceptions of the best ways forward in dealing with these issues are also exceedingly complicated and even paradoxical. This speaks to the complexity of the phenomenon and indicates the need for a holistic approach and process which recognises the anger and contradictory feelings which teachers may have, in parallel with a more holistic view on policy development to meet students’ needs. Policy development therefore, needs to be strategic, evidence-based, multi-level and adequately resourced with due recognition that teachers’ participation in the process is pivotal to its success. However, such consultation with teachers raises yet another potential obstacle, as both the literature and the primary research show that teachers are very reluctant to speak honestly and candidly of their experiences of SBTB, as will now be explored in Section 6.7.3.

6.7.3 Theme 3: Teachers’ Reluctance to Disclose

Consistent with international findings (Terry, 1998; Tew, 2006; Du Plessis, 2008; Aslund, 2008; Lynch, 2009; Turkum, 2011), qualitative data very strongly indicates that teachers are reluctant to admit to being bullied by a pupil or to disclose that they feel unable to manage challenging and aggressive student behaviour. 9 out of the 14 teachers interviewed, including Year Heads, specifically referred to teachers’ reluctance to disclose or to seek support for challenging behaviour. Teacher comments included ‘often the teacher who is being bullied will never admit they are being bullied, it’s terrible’; ‘you wouldn’t disclose everything, only if it’s something that you’re at

breaking point with' and 'in a lot of staff rooms, teachers don't want to admit perhaps that the students are behaving in an aggressive fashion towards them'. Even amongst the interviewees, there appeared to be an initial reluctance to speak about their own experience of SBT despite being quite comfortable discussing events they had witnessed concerning their colleagues. It was only as the interviews progressed that teachers revealed that they themselves had experienced some form of SBTB. Union representative 2 spoke of teachers' reluctance to talk about their experiences of being bullied.

People won't openly say that they are being bullied by students. I mean, I, myself years ago, when I was first a teacher, the kinds of stuff that went on the first couple of years of teaching, so it is not a completely new phenomenon but people are very reluctant to deal with it.

Teachers are very much reluctant, they might mention it to me or an official in here, but it is in a confidential manner and it's in a by the way, they don't even want anything done about it, they don't want to be cited with it and I can understand that.

The interview findings seem to suggest 3 main reasons for this reluctance: feelings of shame, self-blame and fear of being judged; fear that such disclosure may reflect negatively on professional performance and concern for teachers' future career prospects. Shame, self-blame and humiliation have been cited previously in the literature as factors which inhibit teachers in disclosing their experiences of SBTB (Choquet et al., 1997; ASTI, 2004; Hatfield et al., 2008; De Wet, 2010; Turkum, 2011). Teachers referred to SBTB as a 'taboo' and spoke of their feelings of shame and fear of losing control in their classroom.

It is like it's a taboo. You don't come out and admit that you're HIV positive or that you're gay or something. There are certain taboos that we still haven't broken. And for men to admit that they're victims of domestic violence. I'm not equating one with the other, but doesn't it seem that it's almost like a taboo subject, that staff wouldn't stand up easily in a staff room and say by the way the

2Cs or the 5As are making my life hell and they are targeting me and I can't cope with them (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

There probably is a shame because you know you can't control your class, that's what you feel, y'know that you can't control your class and why would you admit to that (DEIS interviewee 3).

You see them in their classrooms receiving abuse upon abuse every day. Our vice principal had actually gone in and asked them would they accept help....I don't have a problem was the response (Suburban, boys' school interviewee 11).

Survey respondents stated that they wished only for 'credibility'; 'to be believed' and 'not be greeted with a chorus of amazed that never happens to me'. Teachers also spoke of their fear of being considered incompetent by their colleagues and management and their fear of being seen as a failure. The empirical literature reveals that teachers who sought support for challenging and aggressive pupil behaviour reported feeling further isolated and ostracised, weak and humiliated (Daniels et al., 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; De Wet, 2010), incompetent, blamed and unsupported (Terry, 1998; Zeira, 2004; Daniels et al., 2007; De Wet, 2010). These teachers reported that they were less likely to seek further support (Zeira, 2004; Du Plessis, 2008). Teachers described their experiences.

You know that you're kind of, as I keep saying, a sense of failure or just, you're not good enough or you're not a good teacher (DEIS interviewee 3).

It is very difficult for teachers to admit they are experiencing difficulties, particularly if the students are not causing other teachers problems. Sometimes it is even more difficult for experienced teachers to seek support (Female survey respondent).

You don't want to be seen as the teacher who's being targeted or bullied by students, a kind of an ethos exists in a staff room that man mind thyself and that you look after yourself and a lot of teachers are very slow to come looking for help when it's they themselves that are under attack (Interviewee 1).

I was afraid to talk about it. It was like if you talk about it then it is more real, then he has won because I look weak and hopeless and a fool in front of my colleagues. I feel like a fool, I'm embarrassed even saying it (Interviewee 14).

Teachers' reluctance to disclose their experiences of SBTB or to seek support from colleagues and management because they do not feel 'safe' or because they are afraid such disclosure may negatively impact on their career is reported in the literature (UK Teacher Support Network, 2008; Turkum, 2011) and is evident in the words of DEIS Rapid interviewee 1 who said

Sometimes people won't discuss something because they don't feel safe enough to do so, if they feel they're going to be judged on what they say, or if they feel that maybe something they say might actually have an impact on their job.

This fear of damaging ones' future job prospects was particularly highlighted for student teachers and non-permanent staff members. This is especially disconcerting given the current shortage of permanent teaching positions in Ireland as outlined in Chapter 4, Section 4.7 which showed that 30% of ASTI members do not have full time, permanent jobs whilst the majority of qualified second level teachers in Ireland of less than 30 of age are employed on causal part-time contracts (ASTI, 2013). The findings presented in Section 6.5 showed that young, inexperienced teachers may experience both the highest levels of SBTB and also quite high levels of negative affect with approximately one third of student teachers suffering from headaches, depression, tearfulness and anxiety. These findings underline the necessity for policy makers to recognise the difficult position in which student teachers and non-permanent teaching staff may find themselves and to develop adequate supports to encourage teachers to talk about their difficulties without fear of employment repercussions. As a number of interviewees have stated that they would not feel comfortable approaching management with these issues, other avenues of support may need to be considered. These may include those suggested by teachers in Section 6.6.2 such as collegial support and a mentoring system. In addition, greater promotion and awareness of existing valuable supports such as the Employee Assistance Service and the Occupational Health Services may be beneficial.

This theme of teachers' reluctance to disclose due to fear of damaging their careers was raised by a number of interviewees.

I think teachers are very slow to report any form of bullying by students, particularly teachers who might not be so secure in their job, they don't want to flag these kinds of issues but like it does go on (DEIS interviewee 6).

I was thinking if I went to look for a job in that school afterwards, would that principal now feel that I am not capable of dealing with a difficult class because I went looking for help (DEIS Rapid interviewee 7).

Somebody who is non-permanent would be slower to report an incident because they want to be seen as having no discipline problems, having the perfect class, the perfect record and less trouble for management (Interviewee 11).

A lot of young teachers would be afraid to speak to the principal because they would be afraid of being seen as not able to manage and that's very unfair, because you are under probation so at any stage if they think it's not working out you could be left go and nobody wants that (DEIS Rapid interviewee 7).

A lot of those teachers needn't necessarily be permanent and they're afraid to come and ask for help because they feel that it will reflect badly on them and that ultimately maybe that their jobs are at risk (DEIS Rapid interviewee 1).

I know when I was doing my dip, I was nearly afraid to speak to people about problems and I was trying to deal with it myself which is the wrong thing to do. I think it's really important that you would speak to someone but again a lot of that comes back to the security of the job and wanting to say I don't have any problems and I'm not being harassed by anyone, my discipline is fine (DEIS interviewee 6).

The finding that teachers feel ashamed and fear judgement by others and therefore do not seek support for SBTB are consistent with those reported by Zeira et al. (2004), Daniels et al. (2007), Du Plessis (2008) and De Wet (2010). The findings also suggest that the true extent of teachers being bullied by students may not be apparent owing to teachers' reluctance to disclose and to seek assistance, echoing findings from the U.K. Teacher Support Network Survey (2007) discussed in Chapter 2.

The penultimate question of the survey asked respondents ‘have you ever sought support due to bullying by a pupil?’ The survey results showed that although 94% of respondents admitted to experiencing at least one form of SBT behaviour in their career, only 22% of respondents had sought support; 33% of these were males and 67% were female teachers. Only 10% of teachers under 26 years of age sought support for SBT compared with 46% of 41 - 55 year olds, 30% of 26 - 40 year olds and 14% of over 55 year old teachers. These quantitative figures reinforce the qualitative data presented in the present section, particularly in relation to young teachers. The qualitative data in this regard has helped to provide insight into these findings, highlighting the benefits of using the multi-method approach to data collection.

The need for teachers to talk about their difficulties and to seek adequate and necessary supports was stressed by union representative 1 who said

I do not understand this about our teachers. Would they ever speak up for themselves? Will they ever say I am in charge here, I’m not putting up with this, I’m going to get something done about this... so many teachers do not. There is a kind of a cultural almost schizophrenia amongst teachers at times, they are in charge, they are organising the cyclical life of the school year and yet all too often they don’t feel empowered at all and they certainly don’t feel empowered to speak out.... It’s shocking; there is no shame in having a problem there is a shame in not dealing with it.

This union representatives’ frustration that teachers do not speak out for themselves and do not take control of their situation underlines one of the potential difficulties with developing policies and supports to address this complex issue. Drawing on earlier discussions in relation to power in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.5, it may be difficult, as an outsider looking in, to conceive that a teacher could feel in an inferior position of power to a pupil and that a teacher may not feel in control of his or her classroom. Section 6.4 has highlighted the potential impact which SBTB may have on a teacher and those who are situated outside of the ‘abusive interaction’ (Terry, 1998, p. 278) may not be able to appreciate the feelings of shame, guilt, powerlessness and fear which some teachers

may feel. Such a dynamic may be true of many forms of abuse, where those outside of the abusive interaction may struggle to understand the inaction and complicated feelings of those at the centre of the event. Terry (1998) and Munn et al. (2004) stress that attempts to address SBTB need to be sensitive to teachers' feelings and therefore ought to be solution-focused rather than apportion blame to teachers and cast teachers as ineffective.

The complexity of this issue has been underscored in the previous two sections and the imperative for policy makers, partners in education and the general public to recognise the complicated, subjective and contextual nature of this phenomenon must be stressed. A crucial component in developing successful policies and supports needs to be consultation with teachers, yet for this to transpire, teachers must, in the first instance, be encouraged and supported to speak out. The following section now looks at teachers' experiences of seeking within-school support from members of school management and highlights the impact of continuing budget cuts on managements' ability to provide such support to teachers.

6.7.4 Theme 4: Education Cutbacks & Supports for Teachers

This section explores the impact of on-going cuts to the education budget, on teachers' within-school experiences of accessing support. As outlined in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.5, the present management structure in second level schools consists of a principal and a deputy principal who are supported by a small number of promoted teachers in posts of responsibility, including Year Heads, and governed by a voluntary board of management. Section 6.6.1 revealed that the majority of teachers in this study did not feel supported by school management. However, a large number of these teachers criticised the middle management school structure, rather than individual management teams; acknowledging that such a small team with just one principal could not reasonably be expected to adequately support the needs of teachers, in addition to managing such a large 'organisation'. For instance, union representative 1 stated

We have signally failed to invest in school leadership and where you have poor leadership it's not because you have a bad principal, quite often their roles are

overwhelming. They cannot attend to the needs of their staff; they are too busy running large institutions on very little funds, with huge pressures for transparency, accountability and results. They don't have the time to engage to a very large degree with the needs of their staff.

Union representative 2 echoed these sentiments, arguing that managing a school is now akin to 'running a big business' in which the principal is 'buried in paperwork' which negatively impacts on the principal's ability to 'support collaborative work between teachers, to support teachers in how they might actually build their relationships and just generally to promote a positive culture amongst students'. This interviewee listed the persistent cutbacks since 2008, the lack of administrative support and technological resourcing and the lowered 'availability of hours for principals to delegate certain things to teachers' as factors that are 'all forcing the principal to be quite unavailable to be the leader and the supporter'. Similar sentiments may be found in the TUI (2012) and ASTI (2013) studies exploring the impact of budget cuts in education, with the ASTI (2012) cautioning that successive budget cuts have devastated the Irish education system.

The management body representative stressed that a 'principal-ship is just an impossible proposition now in terms of getting everything done'. He suggested that the Department

has been systematically dismantling the middle management structures in schools, and that is not sustainable. Yet, at the same time, we need to live in the real world, where we know that there isn't an endless budget to return to what was there in the first place preceding the successive budgets from 2008. However, we need some model that is going to be fit for purpose and that demands a whole new kind of thinking.

Revealing that the school management bodies are currently in the process of developing proposals for a new 'fit-for-purpose' middle management structure, he argued that 'allowing the current situation just to continue is not sustainable' and spoke of the organisation's aspirations to develop an improved middle management structure which it is hoped will 'help ultimately with getting prioritised jobs done', therefore allowing

the principal to focus on the ‘non-admin, more pressing needs of the school, including student misbehaviour’.

Although principals are supported by deputy principals, and teachers in posts of responsibility, the recent moratorium on posts of responsibility, as discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.7, has dramatically reduced the number of teachers in these promoted positions; therefore placing teachers, Year Heads and other members of staff under increasing pressures and significantly increasing the workloads of all members. A number of interviewees discussed these developments and argued that the current situation has impacted negatively on student behaviour, staff morale and supports for teachers dealing with SBTB.

Several interviewees indicated that due to previous retirement incentives, many senior staff have taken early retirement and have not been replaced under the conditions of the moratorium, leading to a significant increase in workload for remaining staff members.

Because of tax reasons and stuff you’ve had a huge amount of retirements in the last 5 or 6 years and because of the moratorium, post holders retiring haven’t been replaced which has put a huge extra workload on principals, deputy principals and the existing Year Heads to try to do the jobs of their colleagues who have retired (City centre, DEIS Rapid girls’ school interviewee 13).

It’s gone mad, it’s actually gone insane, and I think this year more than any other year, we’re really seeing it, because in our school, we have had a lot of retirements so we haven’t had posts replaced, so we have less people and more work (Suburban, DEIS mixed school interviewee 4).

Interviewees stressed that many teachers have taken on additional roles and responsibilities in a voluntary capacity, without any financial recompense, despite their already burgeoning workload, just to keep schools ‘ticking over’.

A lot of very capable staff are now taking on completely unofficial roles and they are getting zero allowance for it and zero time allowance for it (Rural boys' school interviewee 12).

We are doing all of this voluntarily, you just take over this extra job and you add it to your own and it just gets done (Rural boys' school interviewee 2).

All those extra jobs just have to get done and so the remaining teachers just have to say ok, so and so is gone, let's just divide it out between us (City centre, DEIS Rapid boys' school interviewee 10).

Don't talk to me about that moratorium, it's crucifying us. We're all doing way more and we're getting paid less. For what? I tell you for what, because we are friends, we look out for each other and we're in this together and every-time another teacher retired we said ok, let's look at his jobs he was doing and let's see how we can manage (City centre, DEIS Rapid interviewee 14).

This increased workload has, according to Year Heads, significantly affected their ability to carry out their Year Head duties as effectively as required. The Year Head interviewees concurred with teachers' reports that principals and management are too busy to provide them with the time and support they need when dealing with SBTB. Interviewee 14, a male Year Head, described the difficulties of offering support to staff dealing with SBT and challenging student behaviour following the moratorium.

Of course the cuts have affected our ability to support teachers. Teachers come to me wanting to talk and looking for me to sort it out and really, it is the last thing I want to see coming. I will take the kid in and give them a bollocking but when another kid is brought in and then another, that is eating into my time and I can't be expected to deal with every kid who decides to act up, it isn't possible.

Either I am expected to be a Year Head or I can be a teacher. But how we are expected to be all of that and to teach to a full timetable, it is insane. I used to have a couple of periods free to get on top of stuff but now with the cuts, it is all hands on deck. If there was a work to rule in the morning the place would

crumble to the ground. Look as it is we're all to the pin of our collars, we are all taking work home or staying late to get stuff done.

In relation to supporting teachers, he said

So am I the best in the world at making that teacher feel heard and feel like I am going to take care of it, no. I can't. I can't take on that responsibility because then the teachers would depend on me too much and would use it as an easy option. No, I couldn't draw that on myself. I would be swamped. Some of the Year Heads make themselves more available, I don't know where they find the time, but I have kids, I can't be doing the martyr and going home with hours of work every night, I need to be able to switch off too.

DEIS Rapid interviewee 13 agreed that management are over-stretched which impacts on their ability to offer teachers the support they need and suggested

There should be a discipline co-ordinator or a student liaison person who would be responsible for looking after students' well-being and behaviour problems and help them work through it and staff could go to that person with a problem and they could work out a behaviour plan and be supported by them rather than coming to me or the other Year Heads and us just feeling would they ever go away and just sort it out themselves because that is wrong too.

The findings therefore suggest that Year Heads are under extreme pressure, intensified by the moratorium on posts of responsibility, consistent with previous studies (TUI, 2012; ASTI, 2013, Hennessy, 2014 and Kelly, 2014) as outlined in Chapter 4, Section 4.6.5, whilst also pointing to the sustainability of running an education system on voluntarism. These increased pressures may have negatively affected Year Head's ability to sufficiently support teachers experiencing SBTB. Year Heads may be reluctant to offer such support to teachers because they fear that their already heavy workload will be increased further, therefore teachers are left, to a large extent, alone to manage these difficulties without adequate management support. The management body representative suggested that Year Heads are 'beginning to disappear from the schools' and warned of the 'absolutely huge impact of recent cuts on student misbehaviour' emphasising that 'the key person there is the Year Head'.

Mooney Simmie (2012, p. 2) argues that the on-going cuts to the education budget are intended to reduce the education sector to a 'lean, robotic machine working with public accountability and splendid corporate efficiency'. However, this discussion illustrates that rather than creating corporate efficiency, education policy within the prevailing austerity conditions of the past six years has in fact negatively affected school efficiency. Schools are over-stretched, under resourced and principals and teachers are under significant pressure just trying to keep the entire engine 'ticking over'. As previous sections have emphasised the contrasts and contradictions associated with SBT, the final theme involves yet another contrast to the present discussion – the positive impact of increased State investment and policy development on teachers' experiences of SBTB and on the prevalence of SBTB in DEIS schools in areas of recognised socio-economic disadvantage.

6.7.5 Theme 5: Exploring the Possibility of Lower SBTB Rates in DEIS Schools

A general trend exists in the literature (e.g. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Aramie et al., 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; Benbenishty and Astor, 2008; Khoury Kassabri et al. 2009; Chen and Astor, 2010) which suggests that schools in areas of recognised socio-economic disadvantage experience higher levels of challenging student behaviour and violence against teachers. For instance, Bender-Sebring et al. (2006), Berliner et al. (2006) and Khoury-Kassabri et al. (2007, 2009) found evidence that student perpetrated bullying was highest in schools located in areas of low socio-economic disadvantage. In contrast, the present study's findings appear to be inconsistent with this trend. Frequency and descriptive statistical analysis seem to indicate that SBTB may be lower in DEIS schools. However cross-tabulation using Pearson's Chi-Square test of proportions shows that statistical significance is obtained for only five of the nine listed behaviours, indicating that variables other than designation of disadvantage may explain these findings. Therefore, the following discussion explores the possibility that teachers may experience lower levels of SBTB in DEIS schools whilst concurrently acknowledging that further research is necessary to support these findings.

The Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools scheme (DEIS) is a national action plan on tackling educational disadvantage whilst the RAPID scheme targets areas of recognised deprivation. As outlined in Section 6.2.1, 73% of survey respondents indicated that they were based in non-DEIS schools whilst 14% worked in DEIS schools and a further 13% were based in DEIS schools located in Rapid areas. Table 6.8 provides an overview of the prevalence of SBTB reported in these schools. The highlighted figures in this table indicate the schools with the highest reported prevalence of SBTB.

Table 6.8: Prevalence of SBTB in Non-DEIS, DEIS and DEIS Rapid Schools

(n=531)	Non DEIS	DEIS	DEIS Rapid
On-going In-Class Disruption	81.9%	89.5%	92.8%
Verbal Abuse	76.4%	86.8%	84.1%
Intimidation	56%	59.7%	59.2%
Physical Threats	57.3%	48.6%	44.9%
Sexual Innuendo	63.5%	64%	30.4%
Damage to Property	49.6%	43.7%	40.6%
Personally Offensive Graffiti	58.9%	36.8%	20.3%
Cyber Bullying	41%	19.4%	10.1%
Physical Assault	14.2%	12.5%	10.1%

It may be seen from this table, with the exception of on-going in-class disruption, that the greatest reported prevalence of SBTB is located in non-DEIS schools whilst the lowest incidence of SBTB is found in DEIS schools in Rapid areas; areas of recognised socio-economic deprivation. In this respect, the findings of this study are at odds with the prevailing international evidence (e.g. Gottfredson et al., 2005; Berliner et al., 2006; Aramie et al., 2007). These inconsistencies between the data and the literature were subsequently explored qualitatively, underscoring the benefits of using a multi-method research design to accurately interpret statistical data. In this respect, interviewee 12, a

Year Head from a non-DEIS school, interviewee 6, a teacher from a DEIS school and interviewee 13, a Year Head from a DEIS Rapid school were each asked to consider possible reasons to explain the unexpected findings. The qualitative data proposes five reasons to explain these findings; additional funding, a focus on the non-academic strengths of pupils in DEIS schools, increased interagency collaboration in DEIS schools, differences in teachers' perceptions and expectations and access to technological devices in the case of bullying.

Firstly, each of the 3 interviewees suggested that the lower rates of SBTB across all student behaviours excluding persistent in-class disruption in DEIS Rapid schools may possibly be attributed to the success of the DEIS programme and the additional resources and supports invested in schools and community initiatives in Rapid areas. DEIS schools have access to a range of in-school supports including the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Initiative, the Early Start scheme, Giving Children an Even Break and the School Completion Programme (SCP) (Coolahan, 2003; Weir et al., 2005). These combined programmes, resources and initiatives may be providing more vulnerable students with higher levels of support and perhaps fostering greater levels of student engagement, student-school bonding and in turn contributing to lower levels of frustration and aggression directed towards teachers. Findings indicate that despite shortcomings relating to teacher allocation and adequate resourcing, outlined in Chapter 4, policy efforts to support schools with the most disadvantaged student groups may have a positive impact on student behaviour.

DEIS Rapid interviewee 13 said 'the additional funding we have, that has to be a factor' whilst interviewee 6 suggested that 'the fact that we have extra resources in DEIS schools probably helps. Our classes are smaller; we can give the kids a little bit extra'. Interviewee 6 proposed that the additional resources and initiatives in DEIS schools provide students with a range of non-academic outlets within the school environment which she says may assist them to 'get some of their frustration out' and 'have a laugh with their friends'.

The School Completions Programme holds breakfast clubs and lunchtime clubs and so much of the bad behaviour happens at those times whereas the kids here, especially the most troublesome ones are encouraged to go there and that helps them, that is good for them (DEIS interviewee 6).

These findings may support Wickham's (2010) recommendation that further Government resources should be allocated to schools in disadvantaged areas experiencing serious student behavioural problems. Wickham (2010) argues that providing Behaviour Support Classrooms in all disadvantaged schools would enable schools to meet students' holistic needs, and despite the initial start-up costs, the long term positive implications would be potentially very cost effective.

DEIS interviewee 6 spoke of the DEIS schools' ability, due to extra resource availability, to focus on meeting the non-academic needs of students which she suggests may lead to lower levels of challenging student behaviour compared with non-DEIS schools which are portrayed as being more hierarchical.

I think maybe DEIS schools in some ways are a little less focused on academic output and are perhaps more cognisant of students' own needs and baggage. Maybe then pupils are not as unhappy in themselves and don't need to take it out on the teacher. Maybe it is more common in well-off areas because it is all work-work-work and maybe the student needs a distraction from that pressure, and upsetting the teacher becomes the hobby horse. Kids need outlets. You would wonder whether students in the better-off schools are rebelling a bit against having to keep the head down whereas at least DEIS schools can be a bit more creative and recognise the need to celebrate and promote students' other talents.

Interviewee 13 agrees that DEIS schools may consider students' non-academic needs more than non-DEIS schools.

Things are probably not as academic in some of the more disadvantaged schools. We take into account the circumstances of the students outside of the school and I think we make a lot of allowances for that.

This recognition of students' non-academic strengths may lead to a more positive school climate associated with lower levels of SBTB.

We have the regular academic awards ceremony but then we also have an awards night celebrating other important talents like students who have been caring, helpful, made a big effort etc. It adds a lovely atmosphere to the school (Interviewee 6).

These findings resonate with those reported by the INTO in 2002. Although conducted in relation to primary rather than secondary schools in Ireland, the INTO (2002) study on Discipline in Primary Schools may be beneficial in understanding these findings. One objective of the INTO (2002) study, which was conducted prior to the establishment of the more coordinated DEIS initiative, was the evaluation of the impact of Special Supports for schools on teachers' ability to deal with student indiscipline. The report (INTO, 2002, p. 42) found that teachers from schools which are designated disadvantaged and schools with Home- School-Community-Liaison (HSCL) officers reported 'a high level of improvement in discipline in their schools' and reported that they were 'coping well with discipline'. The report (INTO, 2002) attributed many of these positive effects to the impact of additional school supports such as the HSCL initiative which fostered greater relationship development and contact between schools and parents, greater understanding of the student's background, more positive parental attitudes towards the school and greater parental 'awareness of the classroom situation and of the problems of teachers'. The influence of parental and family factors on student behaviour and SBTB have been previously outlined in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.

The INTO report (2002) also recognised that designated disadvantaged schools had higher levels of contact with voluntary, health and social agencies and local and community groups and initiatives. Therefore the students and teachers in these schools may have benefited from the sharing of resources and access to a range of specialised

personnel. DEIS interviewee 6 also spoke of the benefits of interagency collaboration in reducing student behavioural difficulties.

We would have a lot of outside workers coming in doing various sessions with the kids around their mental health, like the Mind Your Head group or the Breaking the Silence group, we have Gaisce, health and beauty, Zumba and personal development modules, the children love it.

The higher rates of inter-agency collaboration, more typical of schools in disadvantaged areas, may be a possible factor in explaining the markedly lower levels of sexual innuendo and personally offensive graffiti between non-DEIS and DEIS Rapid schools. Community, voluntary and statutory agencies offer a multitude of programmes to schools, many of which are aimed at improving students' personal, social, inter-personal and communication skills, all of which may impact positively on student behaviour. For instance, Foroige, Ireland's leading national Youth Development Organisation provides a range of in-school and out-of-school programmes and services which in addition to the promotion of the skills outlined, aim to foster greater pro-social behaviour, self-esteem, empathy, personal responsibility, assertiveness and resilience in students, as well as reduced levels of impulsivity, intolerance and aggression (Redmond, 2012). Foroige youth workers, who are predominantly employed to work in disadvantaged areas, deliver a wide array of programmes and interventions tailored to meet the needs of individual schools and students, some of which focus on drug and alcohol misuse, relationships, crime diversion, personal development and diversity. These interventions may include assistance with the transition from primary to secondary school and the use of evidenced-based programmes such as the Life of Choices, Real U, Copping On and Putting the Pieces Together programmes. Information regarding Foroige's services and programmes is available on their website www.foroige.ie. Therefore, interventions facilitated by outside agencies, many of them State-funded, may positively impact on some of the student, family, community and school related factors which have been shown in Chapter 2 to contribute to the student bullying of teachers.

With respect to the figures reported in relation to cyber bullying; non-DEIS interviewee 12 suggested it 'could be simply that they just don't have internet ready phones in the

less well-off schools. Nearly all of our pupils have better phones than I do but maybe those kids' parents just can't afford them and so if they don't have them they can't use them'. A number of authors have reported that the perpetrators of student to student cyber-bullying more frequently tend to come from families with a higher socio-economic status (e.g. Wang et al., 2011; Pillay, 2012; Li and Lambert, 2012). For instance, a US study conducted by Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) revealed that young people from 'households that average an annual income of \$75,000 or greater were 45% more likely to report bullying others online than those from households with a lower annual income' (Li and Lambert, 2012, p. 11). Meanwhile, a more recent US study which explored cyber-bullying among adolescents reported that 'higher SES increased the risk of involvement in both bullying and victimisation electronically' (Wang et al., 2011, p. 8). The authors attributed this finding to 'greater access to electronic devices for adolescents from wealthier families' (Wang et al., 2011, p. 8).

Although there is an absence of literature exploring the variances in cyber bullying of teachers by pupils according to the socio-economic status of the pupil or school, Chris Keates, the general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) speaking in 2007 at the union's annual conference in Belfast, asserted that the problem of cyber bullying of teachers 'cuts across the social spectrum with middle class pupils just as likely to make teachers' lives a misery as those in deprived areas'. Keates said there was no evidence to suggest the teachers in 'schools in the leafy suburbs' were any less targeted than teachers in schools 'in rural areas or the inner cities' (Moore and Lightfoot, 2007). A number of researchers (e.g. Li, 2005; Ybarra and Mitchell, 2004; Li and Lambert, 2012) have reported higher rates of student perpetrated cyber bullying among students who come from wealthier families than less affluent teenagers and attribute this finding to greater student access to computers and technological devices. Therefore, the lower rates of cyber bullying of teachers by students reported in DEIS Rapid schools may also be understood in this way. Perhaps some students living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage in Ireland do not have the same financial means to purchase technological devices which may in turn reduce students' opportunities to bully their teachers online.

A final point which may help to explain the seemingly lower levels of reported SBTB in DEIS schools in Rapid areas put forward by interviewees relates back to the earlier argument in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.4 regarding teachers' perceptions. Analysis of these 3 interviewee accounts suggests that teachers working in schools located in disadvantaged areas may attribute aggressive or challenging student behaviour more frequently to issues in the students' personal lives rather than perceive it as bullying towards themselves. Therefore although levels of challenging student behaviour may indeed be as high or higher in DEIS schools as the literature suggests, teachers in these schools may take into account the complexities of these students' lives and view these behaviours as being an expression of these complexities rather than an attempt to bully the teacher.

DEIS interviewee 13 provided some insight into teachers' perceptions of student behaviour in DEIS Rapid schools as seen in the following statements.

I suppose we have certain expectations, working in areas like this, of the types of behaviour we are going to have to face, and many teachers understand that y'know these kids, they are seeing all kinds of things, y'know a lot of them are hungry and traumatised and really just have it tough. We know that and we are human first before teachers. You can't come down on some of these kids like a tonne of bricks when you don't know what they have witnessed or experienced.

I think a lot of teachers probably in schools in deprived areas; they drop their standards a little bit. Yes of course we want these kids to do well but they need to be able to come to school too without fear or us shouting at them or killing them over unfinished homework. We probably let them get away with a little bit more because all things are not equal. All childhoods are not equal.

The following statement illustrates not only the complicated and multi-dimensional nature of student behaviour but also clearly exemplifies the way in which aggressive student behaviour may be perceived by some teachers as attributed to external factors.

We have kids here who we have given anger passes to. If they feel they are going to freak out and blow and roar at the teacher or someone else in the class, they can show their pass and they'll be allowed out to speak to their Year Head. Some of them have huge anger issues and these might be triggered in class by a number of factors that I am not even aware of. So if that girl shouts at me one day, or throws something or threatens me, yes I'm annoyed and I am upset and maybe a bit shaken, but in all conscience, I can't call that bullying. These kids are complicated and are dealing with complicated things in their lives. They can be tough going, but few of them are motivated by bullying, it is more usually that they are just going through a tough time and don't have the resources to handle it the way school or society expects them to (Interviewee 13).

DEIS Rapid interviewee 13 summarises her explanation of the findings as follows

In a nutshell, I think teachers in these schools realise that students have a lot of their own difficulties related to their home environment and we don't automatically assume that poor behaviour, even if it is continuous or over the top is necessarily an attempt to bully us. We think it is just the pupil's frustration or anger or whatever probably related to home life. But that is not to say that this excuses all student's behaviour because some of them are just very cute or brazen and do literally bully teachers for kicks or to show off or because they have a nasty streak or whatever but that is less common in my experience.

This DEIS Rapid school teacher's perspective may be placed in comparison with that of non-DEIS teacher, interviewee 12. The unavoidable subjective, contextual and paradoxical nature of SBTB is raised yet again in these teachers' accounts, as are the hugely divergent perceptions regarding the ways in which SBTB ought to be considered and addressed; issues which have been discussed at length in Sections 6.7.1 and 6.7.2. In attempting to explain the lower levels of SBT in DEIS Rapid schools, this interviewee suggests that these schools may have lowered standards in comparison with non-DEIS schools. She says students in DEIS schools may

have foul mouths and the teachers take no notice. Here we show no tolerance for stepping out of line. They might dare do it one time but after that yes I would see it as totally inappropriate and out of order and I would feel they were picking on me particularly in making sexual remarks, so maybe the standards are lower in some schools with more difficult pupils.

Maybe our standards are higher here. If I saw my name scrawled somewhere with some nasty remark next to it and a student did it a second time, yes I would feel victimised and bullied by that. Maybe it's a combination of things, us demanding better from them and them knowing it and if they do something to consistently upset us we feel bullied and other schools in harder areas maybe just allowing a bit more leeway and not taking as much notice.

Teachers' references to the dropping of 'standards' in schools that do not concentrate exclusively on students' academic output may reflect a view amongst teachers and amongst schools in general, that the overall purpose of schooling is the academic achievement of pupils, rather than supporting the young person to reach their full potential. Interviewee 12 outlined his frustration with the dominant view of education as preparing the young person for the world of work.

We all need to feel worthwhile, valued, heard, listened to...loved. Sometimes, it seems the school structure seems to just be focused on ticking boxes, churning out statistics and providing students with a standard level of education that will get them in a job so they can take care of themselves and their future family so that the Government won't have to.

The changing influences on Irish education policy have been explored in Chapters 3 and 4 and the move from a theocentric to a more market-orientated focus in education has been outlined (O' Sullivan, 2005). An education system which holds exam success and the needs of the economy at its core, rather than the holistic development of individual students, may indirectly contribute to SBTB by inhibiting students' self-confidence, sense of in-school belonging and rapport with teachers. Therefore, perhaps the major and hugely onerous challenge which the Irish State now faces is a re-conceptualisation of education itself.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented both the qualitative and quantitative findings of the survey and the data garnered from semi structured interviews with teachers, union and management body representatives and Year Heads. The earlier sections reported on the demographic details of respondents and interviewees before then exploring the prevalence of SBTB and the experiences and impacts of SBTB on teachers. Findings in relation to teachers' gender and age are also discussed as are teachers' perceptions regarding factors which may influence SBTB. Data generated suggests that a number of teachers in Irish second level schools experience bullying behaviours by a pupil or group of pupils and these teachers may be negatively impacted by this behaviour in a range of ways. Once again, the researcher acknowledges that cross-tabulation of statistical data did not yield statistical significance across all findings and therefore further research in relation to the correlation between variables such as teachers' age, professional experience, gender and type of school is required for a more accurate understanding of this phenomenon.

The latter part of the chapter focused more on qualitative findings, although statistical data is used to support such findings. Section 6.6 explored teachers' perceptions regarding support structures as well as providing insight into teachers' preferred supports. The findings suggest that the vast majority of participants perceive contemporary policies, guidelines, training and supports to be insufficient in supporting them to deal with SBT behaviours. A discussion of emergent themes took place in Section 6.7. Five themes have emerged from the data; the first of which questions the utility of attempting to conceptualise and define a phenomenon as elusive and subjective as SBT given that teachers' perceptions are so divergent, contextual and contradictory. The second theme looks at the ways in which teachers may simultaneously hold divergent and contradictory perspectives and opinions on the ways in which SBTB should be addressed. Theme 3, Section 6.7.3 explores teachers' reluctance to admit to bullying by a pupil due to perceived shame, fear of being judged by others and concern for their career whilst the final two themes look at the impact of State funding on teachers' on SBTB. Theme 4 looks at the negative impact of on-going cuts to the education budget on managements' ability to adequately support teachers in

coping with SBTB whilst the final theme looks at teachers' experiences of SBT behaviours in schools located in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. These findings are explored in more depth in Chapter 7, Section 7.3 in which the overall conclusions of the study are presented.

7

Discussion

&

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

As has been illustrated throughout the thesis, the student bullying of teachers is a distinct and complex phenomenon (Terry, 1998; Pervin and Turner, 1998) which has received significantly less research, media or policy attention than other forms of bullying or more violent student behaviours, and so understanding and awareness surrounding this particular phenomenon is lacking (Terry, 1998; James et al., 2008; Turkum, 2011). In addition, research regarding effective responses to address the issue is rather limited (Espelage et al., 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012). Such data is necessary in acquiring a more accurate understanding of the experiences and needs of teachers in Irish second level schools and in gaining an insight into some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of contemporary policy responses to address the issue.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore teachers' experiences of student bullying behaviours in Irish second level schools and teachers' perspectives regarding contemporary training, policies and support structures. Specifically, the study sought to explore the influence of historical low State intervention in education on the development of contemporary policy responses to address the issue in Ireland. As the study endeavoured to explore the subjective experiences and perceptions of teachers and also to provide an indication of the nature and prevalence of the phenomenon in an Irish context; a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis was selected. This approach allowed the researcher to generate an abundance of both statistical, and rich, experiential data, in attempting to answer the following research questions:

- What is the historical, social and cultural context in which issues of school discipline have been addressed in Ireland?
- How has low State intervention in education influenced the development of the contemporary response to discipline in schools?
- What is the contemporary response to SBTB in Ireland, in policy and practice and how is that linked to the historical low interventionism?

- What are teachers' perceptions regarding training, policies and support mechanisms to address SBTB in Ireland?

The interviews, conducted with 17 teachers, Year Heads, union and management body representatives, combined with a questionnaire of 531 second level school teachers, provided the data for this study and thus the answers to these questions. Following rigorous data analysis procedures outlined in Chapter 5, coupled with a comprehensive review of the literature, a number of key findings have emerged from the study. These key findings will be outlined in Section 7.2 and then discussed in greater depth in Section 7.3, prior to an exploration of the contributions and limitations of the study.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

This study has been guided by the research questions outlined, and in doing so, has established a pattern of gradual State intervention in education, and in matters of school discipline. Historically, a more hands-off, subsidiary approach to education policy was assumed by the State; the reasons for which have been outlined in earlier chapters. However, the State has become increasingly more interventionist in relation to student discipline, commencing with the abolition of corporal punishment in schools in 1982 followed by the establishment of the Task Force on Student Behaviour in 2005. The recommendations of the Task Force *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) forms the basis for policy decisions on student behaviour to the present day. Socially, culturally and economically, Ireland has seen immense changes taking place, particularly over the past two decades; such societal changes and developments are undoubtedly reflected in students' behaviour in schools (Martin, 1997; 2006).

Despite a number of positive developments and strengths in the Irish contemporary response to SBTB, as outlined in Chapter 4; this study reveals that the majority of teachers' feel unsupported and ill-equipped to respond adequately to this issue. State intervention in addressing challenging student behaviour and SBTB to date, has been limited, and therefore, the contemporary response may be described as piecemeal, un-coordinated, under-resourced and ad-hoc. Coupled with the complexity of the issue, the

potential negative consequences of SBTB on teachers' well-being and professional performance and thus, on the education system itself, underlines the need for greater State intervention. A strategic, evidence-based, resourced and integrated approach is required which includes as a pivotal component, consultation with teachers, whose contribution to the process is crucial.

7.3 Discussion and Conclusions

7.3.1 Increasing State Intervention in Education

Tracing the Irish State's role in education, from the origins of the second level education system in the early nineteenth century to the present day, a pattern of increasing State intervention in education is evident. Historically, the State had adopted a hands-off approach to education policy; an approach, which was influenced by a number of factors including the power and influence of the Roman Catholic Church and the harsh social, political and economic climate of the newly established Free State (Coolahan, 1981; O' Buachalla, 1988; Lynch, 2006). The principle of subsidiarity, informed by the Papal Encyclical on Education (1929), underpinned the Irish Constitution, *Bunreacht na hÉireann*;(1937), leading to successive Governments' adoption of a 'minimal interference' (O' Buachalla, 1988, p. 61), subsidiary approach to education policy-making (Coolahan, 1981; Coolahan, Hussey and Kilfeather, 2012). Evidence of historical low State intervention in education may be seen in the freedom granted to schools once they complied with the State's rules for recognised status; leading to quite a gap between central authority and the day-to-day running of the school. It may also be seen in the Free State's failure to act on the recommendations of numerous inquiry commissions (Pallas Inquiry Commission, 1898; Dale and Stephens Report, 1905; Killanin and Molony Committees, 1918) which had highlighted major flaws within the education system (Coolahan, 1981; O' Buachalla, 1988; Hanna, 2006) and in the State's failure to intervene in the use of corporal punishment in schools despite excessive violation of the Department's rules. Low State intervention is also evident in the lack of any educational legislation under the new Irish Government with the exception of the School Attendance Act (1926) and the Vocational Education Act

(1930) until the late 1950s (Coolahan, 1981; O' Sullivan, 2005; Maguire and O' Cinneide, 2005; O' Sullivan, 2005).

A gradual increase in State involvement in education is evident from the 1960s onwards, beginning some authors (e.g. Coolahan, 1981; O' Sullivan, 2005) have argued, with the publication of the Investment in Education (IIE) report (1962). Following the economic crises of the 1950s which saw widespread industrial and agricultural decline, high inflation and massive emigration; the 'demand for reform became so insistent that the State was finally forced to take the initiative' (Pellion, 1982, p. 150) leading to a 'key re-direction in economic development' (O' Sullivan, 2005, p. 135). The IIE report (1962) is said to mark a 'radical ideological departure in Irish educational thinking' (Brown, 2008, p. 250) which normalised the relationship between education and the economy. O' Sullivan (2005) argues that this period saw an abrupt move away from an education system inspired by a Roman Catholic worldview to a system now driven by the needs of the economy. The purpose of education, which had historically centred on developing and equipping individuals to reach their full potential, began to focus instead on preparing young people for the needs of the market (O' Sullivan, 2005). A number of policy initiatives took place throughout the 1960s and 1970s, including the first State grants for secondary school expansion (1965), the establishment of the State psychological service (1965) and the free education and free transport schemes of 1967 (Coolahan, 1981). Public expenditure in education increased dramatically during this time (NESC, 1976) as the State's investment in education came to be widely regarded as a crucial component in achieving economic growth (O' Sullivan, 2005).

However, it was not until the late 1990s that the State became increasingly more active in education (O' Sullivan, 2005) due to a wide range of societal, cultural, ideological and economic factors including the influences of neo-liberalism, European social policy, international human rights treaties and the rapid economic growth of the Celtic Tiger era. Beginning with the Government's White Paper, *Changing Our Education Future* (1995), followed by the introduction of the Education Act in 1998, and the Education (Welfare) Act in 2000, the Irish education system became increasingly defined by a 'new and rigorous legislative framework' (Burke et al., 2004; Martin, 2006, p. 8;

Hyland, 2012). Educational policy centred on high-quality educational reform, and greater awareness of issues such as equality of educational opportunity and childrens' rights. For the first time, the State acknowledged, in the Education Act (1998), its legal obligation to provide an education for every member of society and to be accountable for that education to all stakeholders (Burke et al., 2004; Hyland, 2012), signalling a significant shift from the subsidiary role, which it had previously accepted for itself.

Also during this time, the State began to take a more active interest in the problem of student discipline; evidenced in the issuing of Circular M33/91: *Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline*; Circular M12/98: *Violence towards Staff in Schools* and Circular M18/99: *Guidelines on Violence in Schools* to staff in all schools. In addition, the provision of discipline policies and codes of behaviour became a legal requirement of all primary and post-primary schools under Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act in 2000. Meanwhile, in 1997, the State commissioned a scoping study on discipline in schools (Martin, 1997), followed in 2005, by the establishment of a Task Force on *Student Behaviour in Second Level Schools* leading to the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006); the recommendations of which were intended to inform discourse and policy decisions in the area. All of these developments appear to indicate that the State has assumed quite an active role in addressing the issue of discipline in schools. However, despite the stated aims and commitments of successive Governments, this study suggests that the State's approach to student behaviour in schools remains limited, poorly resourced, fragmented and even at times, self-contradictory. As has been discussed in previous chapters, the Task Force members had strongly urged the Government to implement each and every one of the report's recommendations, stressing that each recommendation was contingent upon the other. Martin (2006, p. 7) assured the Education Minister that it was the Task Force's strong conviction that 'if implemented in a consistent and coherent fashion, these recommendations will work, and work well'. Positive advances cannot be disregarded, such as the establishment of the National Behaviour Support Service, the publication of the NEWB Guidelines (2008), amendments to Section 29 of the Education Act and to DES circulars and significant reform in teacher education and training, which now includes a process of induction and limited access to behaviour management training. However, implementation of the Task Force recommendations has been piecemeal, un-

coordinated, delayed and insufficiently resourced whilst developments in relation to class size and Year Heads are entirely at variance with the policy recommendations which were welcomed by the then Minister for Education, Mary Hanafin (2006).

Admittedly, policy development and implementation are not straightforward or linear. Many influences— financial, political, ideological and economic— often in contention with each other, may be vying for consideration. Coupled with these influential variables, changes in Government often translate as changes in the direction of policy. The economic downturn and recession which followed the publication of the *School Matters* report (Martin, 2006) may certainly be considered as factors which have impeded State investment in addressing discipline in schools and which have hindered comprehensive implementation of the *School Matters* (Martin, 2006) recommendations. However, it must be acknowledged that even at the height of the economic boom, the Irish State's investment in education was amongst the lowest in Europe (OECD, 2009). Therefore, austerity measures alone cannot explain the contemporary response to SBTB.

7.3.2 Investment in Education

The low level of State investment in education may be influenced by the neo-liberal principles underpinning the education system in Ireland. The neo-liberal approach to education, which according to Mooney-Simmie (2012, p. 488), has taken even a stronger 'hold on the public sector' since the bank bailouts in 2010, has led to a 'largely unchallenged' new national discourse which pits the 'public against all aspects of the public sector for the first time in the history of the State'. Mooney-Simmie (2012, p. 490) asserts that politicians 'consistently remind people that money is scarce and they promise value-for-money from all public services'; working 'tirelessly to achieve greater productivity for less pay from all public sector workers'. The education system is presented as 'a balance sheet with freedom of choice for parents and value-for-money for all taxpayers' (Mooney-Simmie, 2012, p. 490). The author (2012, p. 294) argues that this re-framing of education centres on 'decreasing levels of investment while demanding increased productivity' and performativity, resulting in a new culture of 'competitive individualism' within the teaching force.

Grummell, Devine and Lynch (2009, p. 191) caution that this culture of competitive performativity may foster a 'care-less' attitude amongst teaching staff in which colleagues and management are less attuned to or compassionate about the emotional and personal needs of teachers and pupils. The authors (2009, p. 191) suggest that 'this indifference to the emotional subject may be intensifying with the glorification of performativity'. Ball (2003, p. 219) concurs that teachers' relationships with colleagues and management may be negatively impacted by the 'culture of competitive performativity'; evident in Ireland through such Government practices as the publication of league tables and the publication of whole school evaluation reports.

Within this environment of performativity, teachers who are experiencing classroom management difficulties or complain of being bullied by a student may be regarded as letting down the 'team' and threatening the 'construction of convincing institutional spectacles and outputs' (Ball, 2003, p. 224). Teachers in this study had mixed reports regarding collegial support with some interviewees suggesting that there may be a 'man, mind thyself' attitude amongst teachers, wherein staff are more concerned with taking care of their own needs rather than reaching out to other teachers who they are aware may be having difficulties. This theme came through from a number of interviewees who acknowledged that 'not enough was done' to support teachers experiencing SBTB, either by management or fellow staff. For instance, one interviewee spoke of the cyber-bullying of a colleague and admitted that the rest of the staff were 'just glad it was her, and not one of us'. Another interviewee described a fellow teacher's experience of SBTB and confessed 'we all knew about it' but 'turned a blind eye' whilst interviewee 4 stated 'it's almost as if we don't care that another teacher is being bullied, that's her problem'. Whilst Ball (2003) argues that the culture of competitive performativity in second level schools may be undermining collegiality, Mooney-Simmie (2012, p. 487) suggests that a 'paradigm shift from competitive individualism to a different logic of collaboration, care and creativity' is now required in Irish education. However, such a radical change in the conceptualisation of education signals a massive political challenge, which cannot be achieved easily or without resistance.

In addition to weakened collegiality, reforms which centre on increased accountability, competitive performativity and self-regulation have also been linked in the literature with low teacher morale (Troman et al., 2007; Morgan, 2009), reduced job satisfaction (Morgan, 2009), increased stress (Troman, 2007), low motivation (Sugrue, 2006) low self-confidence and reduced self-efficacy (e.g. Leroy et al., 2007; Bangs and Frost, 2012). These factors in turn may lead to increased authoritarian modes of teaching, negative classroom climate, low student motivation (OECD, 2005; Leroy et al., 2007) and diminished teacher support for students' emotional well-being and individual needs (OECD, 2005; Leroy et. al, 2007; Biesta, 2012), therefore, creating the conditions for potential difficulties with SBTB.

The combined influences of neo-liberalism, global education reform and on-going austerity in Ireland have led to significant cuts in the education budget over the past six years, since the beginning of the global economic downturn. These budget cuts include reduction in teachers' salaries and rates of pay, an incentivised early retirement scheme, reduced teacher allocations, a removal of the ex-quota provision for guidance posts, a reduction in student capitation grants and a moratorium on appointments to posts of responsibility which was in place from 2009 to January 2014 (Lillis and Morgan, 2012; JMB, 2014). Both the literature (e.g. ASTI, 2013; JMB, 2014; Kerr et al., 2011; Cahill, 2012; TUI, 2012), and primary research findings underline the significant negative impact of persistent cuts to the education sector on teachers' well-being, managements' ability to support teachers and on increasing levels of challenging student behaviour in second level schools. The data in this respect illuminated teachers' dissatisfaction with management support but also revealed that teachers acknowledge that principals are just too over-stretched with increasing bureaucratic, administration and management responsibilities and ever-tightening budgetary constraints to provide them with the level of support which they require. The moratorium on posts of responsibility was consistently put forward by interviewees as having the single, most damaging impact of austerity measures on both student behaviour and managements' ability to support staff. Interviewee 14 seemed to cover the collective perception of the interviewees, that the moratorium is putting teachers under immense pressure, in his comment: 'Don't talk to me about that moratorium, it's crucifying us'.

The importance of good school leadership in effectively addressing challenging student behaviour and in supporting teachers to build a positive school climate which promotes strong student-teacher relationships has been underlined by a host of authors (e.g. Martin, 1997, 2006; Kasen et al., 2004; Gottfredson, 2005 and Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2007) and by teachers and union representatives in the present study. However, interviewees urge that a ‘principal-ship is just an impossible proposition now’ as principals are forced to operate under substantial pressure due to persistent education cuts, increasing legislation, administrative duties and responsibilities undermining their ability to concentrate on effectively fulfilling the role of leader.

Whilst the negative impact of austerity measures on managements’ ability to support staff and on teachers’ experiences of SBTB has been outlined, this study explores the possibility that additional State investment in education may have a positive influence on reducing levels of challenging student behaviour and SBT. Although further statistical analysis is required as statistical significance of the data in this respect has not been confirmed, the quantitative data show that participants working in DEIS schools located in Rapid areas reported the lowest levels of all student behaviours, with the exception of on-going class disruption. This is an unexpected finding and appears to be at odds with empirical data both in an international and a national context, with the exception of the INTO report (2000) as has been discussed. Certain behaviours such as cyber bullying (41% v 10%), sexual innuendo (63% v 30%) physical threats (57%, v 45%) and personally offensive graffiti (59% v 20%) appear to be significantly lower in DEIS Rapid schools than in non-DEIS schools. DEIS schools in the most disadvantaged areas of the country benefit from additional capitation funding based on the level of disadvantage, reduced pupil-teacher ratios and improved staffing schedules (Department of Education and Skills, 2012). These schools also benefit from a suite of initiatives such as the Home School Community Liaison Initiative and the School Completion Programme which promote greater partnership and collaboration between schools, teachers, parents, students and the local community. Supports in DEIS schools also include ‘in-school, after-school and holiday time activities, which are designed to make school more relevant, meaningful and attractive to those most at risk’ (DES, 2012, p. 19). Non-DEIS schools which are not in receipt of these additional resources and initiatives reported the highest levels of SBTB for 5 out of the 9 behaviours.

Interestingly, DEIS schools which are not located in Rapid areas and therefore receive additional funding and supports based on their level of disadvantage reported figures that fell midway between both non-DEIS and DEIS Rapid figures.

The INTO (2002) report suggests that additional resources and initiatives provided to schools in disadvantaged areas may impact positively on student behaviour. The present study supports these findings, based on both quantitative and qualitative findings, in suggesting that the lower rates of SBTB in DEIS Rapid schools may be attributed to, amongst other variables, the success of the DEIS programme and the additional resources and supports invested in schools and community initiatives in Rapid areas. These combined programmes, resources and initiatives may provide more vulnerable students with higher levels of support and perhaps foster greater levels of student engagement, student-school bonding and in turn contribute to lower levels of frustration and aggression directed towards teachers.

Following descriptive and frequency statistical analysis which suggested that teachers experience lower levels of SBTB in DEIS Rapid schools, interviews took place with a teacher from each category of school – non-DEIS, DEIS and DEIS Rapid –to consider these unexpected findings. In addition to attributing these findings to resource allocation, interviewees also suggested that the greater focus and recognition afforded to the non-academic needs and strengths of pupils in disadvantaged schools may be influential in the levels of SBTB in these schools. It was suggested that these schools may foster more positive, student-centred school climates which have been strongly linked with lower levels of challenging student behaviour (Dupper and Meyer-Adams, 2002; Payne et al., 2003; Stewart, 2003; Gottfredson et al., 2005; Peterson et al., 2001).

7.3.3 Outdated Structures

Second level students in non-DEIS schools may experience a more hierarchical, academic orientated environment which is focused on maximising points in the Leaving Certificate rather than on meeting the holistic needs of the pupil. The present education

system in Ireland has been criticised heavily, both in terms of its structures and practices by a number of authors (Lynch and Lodge, 2002; Grummell, Devine and Lynch, 2009; Smyth and McCoy, 2011; Mooney-Simmie, 2012) and also by the participants of this study, as being too academically orientated and out-of-kilter with students' needs. The hierarchical nature of schooling in Ireland may be experienced by some young people as an 'involuntary incarceration' (Irish Times, 15/12/2007) which serves only to 'strait-jacket' certain students and 'limit their ability to adapt and respond to new situations' (Irish Times, 13/03/2007). Authors (e.g. Martin, 1997, 2006; Leoschut and Burton, 2006; Benbenishty, 2008) stress that schools reflect what is taking place in society; yet, interviewees in this study stated that schools have not adequately evolved to reflect these societal changes.

A number of participants suggest that the education system in Ireland has failed to progress in a way which reflects the vast societal and technological changes of the past decade and is now outdated and 'no longer functional' in meeting students' diverse and changing needs. The culture of strict rule enforcement imposed upon students and the hierarchical nature of relationships within Irish second level schools are in contention with 'the spirit of partnership' and 'respect for diverse values and beliefs' laid out in the Education Act (1998). These participants argue that the current education system does not allow for individual student expression or recognise the autonomy afforded to contemporary youth in their lives outside of school. Union representative 1, for example, spoke of the freedom which sixth year students have in terms of driving, drinking alcohol and earning a wage and yet within the school walls they are expected to don the same uniform as a 12 year old boy and 'obey the same rules'. Such a system, union representative 1 suggests, leads to frustration in students who rebel 'against unfair practice'. Schools with a 'hierarchical, authoritarian and non-democratic culture' (Smith and Monks, 2008. p. 154) and those with low levels of student participation and low student-school engagement have been linked in the literature with aggressive student behaviour and SBT (Fraser, 1996; Natvig et al., 2001; Chen and Astor, 2010).

Union representative 1 acknowledges, as does well-known educationalist, Tom Collins, that schools need to have 'tight management' (Irish Times, 20/02/2007) of large

numbers of students within the school setting. However, union representative 1 questions whether schools ‘have to keep order at the cost of where complete contempt for the rules is one of the results’, suggesting that the strict imposition of rules, leads to the alienation of pupils. Collins (Irish Times, 13/03/2007) suggests that the Irish education system remains geared towards sustaining students with a barrage of skills in preparation for the cessation of their compulsory education; an approach which ‘patently no longer applies’ (Irish Times, 13/03/2007) within Ireland’s life-long learning culture. Schools’ pre-occupation with enforcing student compliance within a hierarchical, subject-orientated framework may therefore lead to increased levels of student frustration, resentment and hostility. Collins (Irish Times, 13/03/2007) urges that a more favourable and effective approach to discipline lies instead in the ‘active engagement of the students in self-directed learning’ and advocates a move from ‘containment to engagement’ of pupils.

Researchers (Espelage et al., 2011) urge that teachers must be made aware of the impact of employing a student-centred teaching approach in reducing the levels of SBT. The OECD (2009) report found that one quarter of teachers in most countries spend between 30% and 50% of class time on student disruptions and administrative tasks, a feature which is closely associated with the disciplinary climate in the classroom. The report suggests that teachers who strive to support students as ‘active participants in the process of acquiring knowledge’ (OECD, 2009, p. 93) and focus on student-orientated activities are more likely to report a positive classroom disciplinary climate. An education system, which is more focused on preparing pupils for the needs of the economy rather than on supporting pupils’ holistic development, may indirectly contribute to SBTB, suggesting that the way in which education itself is viewed, may need to be re-considered.

7.3.4 Inadequate Training, Policy and Guidelines

Despite the complexity of the issue, this study provides evidence that some teachers in Irish second level schools are left to deal with this issue without adequate support, guidelines or training. Similar to findings reported by Kerr et al. (2011), the findings of

this study show that teachers perceive the present teacher training provision, both in terms of ITT and CPD to be inadequate in equipping them to manage SBT and challenging student behaviour. This may be seen in comments such as ‘no training on how to deal with it or how to cope with it, no absolutely not’; ‘the current system of the higher diploma is certainly not adequate’; ‘there is no formal training on how to deal with indiscipline’ and ‘I don’t think teacher preparation programmes actually prepare teachers for the reality of the classroom’.

Teachers stated that continuing professional development was extremely difficult to access and must be completed largely on teachers’ own time as substitution cover is not available for elective modules such as classroom management. A number of international researchers underline the need for schools to continually educate incoming and qualified teachers throughout their careers (Smith, 2004; Mooij, 2010; McMahon et al., 2011; Turkum, 2011; Hyland, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). Research (Colvin, 2004; Munn et al., 2004; McMahon et al., 2012) shows that pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes should provide teachers with not only a ‘range of theoretical explanations’ for the causes of challenging and aggressive student behaviour but also with a ‘repertoire of skills and knowledge upon which they can draw to respond effectively’ (Munn et al., 2004, p. 75). Teachers require a combination of ‘pedagogical, social, curricular, and disciplinary differentiation measures’ (Mooij, 2010, p. 18) to assist them in promoting positive social behaviour in students. This approach may assist in the preclusion or reduction of antisocial behaviour and resultant aggressive behaviour towards teachers (Sørliie, Hagen and Ogden, 2008). Initial teacher training and on-going professional development in Ireland must therefore, provide teachers with the knowledge, reflective and interpersonal skills, conflict de-escalation and behavioural management strategies to establish classroom climates which inhibit aggression and reinforce positive teacher-student relationships based on empathy and mutual respect (Rogers, 2000; Kokkinos et al., 2004; Wubbels and Brekelmans, 2005; NCES, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013). Teachers also need to be trained to recognise the signs of SBTB and be equipped with the techniques to effectively manage this behaviour and to also manage their own well-being.

Inadequate training to equip teachers to deal with SBT in Irish second level schools is accompanied by a lack of policy on the issue. Findings suggest that teachers in Irish second levels schools are forced to respond to SBTB, based on their own intuition, experience and perceptions. As discussed in previous chapters, an absence of guidelines, understanding, awareness and training on the issue has resulted in high levels of anxiety, self-doubt, self-reproach and uncertainty amongst teachers as to the most appropriate ways to respond to SBTB. The general consensus amongst interviewees is that teachers learn from experience, the best ways to cope with these situations.

However, many teachers continue to regret and feel embarrassed about prior attempts to deal with the situation and admit that some of their previous responses to SBTB were handled poorly and in fact, caused the situation to escalate. For instance, interviewee 6 recounted an incident in which she reprimanded, in front of the other students, a popular pupil in the class for being disrespectful. This in turn led to the whole class turning against the teacher and ‘making my life hell’ for the duration of the school term. In retrospect, she admits, a less confrontational approach on her behalf would have been more effective. Therefore, teachers’ responses to SBTB in Irish second level schools may be described as reactive, incidental, spontaneous and impulsive rather than an ‘informed critically reflective approach underpinned by national guidelines and substantive state investment’ (Devine, 2005, p. 65).

Similarly, principals and Year Heads who are tasked with supporting teachers have not received training or guidelines on how best to support and advise teachers who are being bullied by pupils. This has resulted in widely varying teacher experiences of seeking support. Interviewees explained that positive experiences of receiving support had significantly assisted them both in the practicalities of dealing with bullying and also in reducing the negative impact of the experience. In contrast, those teachers who had received poor support or a negative response from colleagues or management reported that the experience had been ‘soul-destroying’, ‘condescending’ and ‘demoralising’. In particular, teachers spoke of the negative impact of ‘nothing being done about it’. Not only was this seen to lead to apathy, anger, despair and disillusionment in the teacher but also teachers felt that lack of action leads to a continuation and/ or escalation of challenging behaviour in the student because ‘they get

away with it and that's why they do it'. Interviewees suggested that management need to know how to respond to teachers' needs but some also argued that management need to appreciate the factors, which may prevent staff from seeking support.

7.3.5 Reluctance to Seek Support

As has been stated throughout the thesis, the phenomenon of SBT has received little research, societal or policy attention in comparison with school violence and other forms of bullying which are highlighted frequently in the media. The limited conceptual understanding and recognition of the issue may contribute to teachers' feelings of 'shame', 'humiliation', self-blame and 'embarrassment' at being an adult, with professional training and State-imbued superior status, who is nonetheless bullied by a child (Tew, 2006; Aslund et al., 2008; Grummell et al., 2009; Turkum, 2011). The literature suggests that teachers' reluctance to disclose their experiences of SBTB may be related to a general lack of awareness and recognition of SBT in academic, societal or political discourse (Terry, 1998; Ferfolja, 1998; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) leading to a difficulty amongst teachers in recognising particular patterns of pupil behaviour as SBTB and thus attributing such behaviour to poor classroom management skills or personal shortcomings (Choquet et al., 1997; Hatfield, 2008; De Wet, 2010). The findings of the present study support these assertions and in addition, reveal three key reasons for teachers' reluctance to disclose: fear of being judged by others, shame, and fear of damaging their career prospects.

The construction of SBTB as a reflection on teachers' classroom management skills or other personal shortcoming may lead to a paradoxical situation in which teachers are being held responsible for the abuse even when it is directed at them (Hunter, 2010; Tew and Nixon, 2010). This in turn may reinforce teachers' feelings of powerlessness, self-blame and isolation leaving teachers feeling 'demoralised' and 'helpless'. These teachers may subsequently be more at risk of SBTB (Terry, 1998; Galloway and Roland, 2004; James et al., 2008; Chen and Astor, 2009) and less likely to seek further support (Zeira et al., 2004; Tew, 2005; Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Du Plessis, 2008),

therefore perpetuating the hidden nature of the phenomenon, which in turn prevents the issue from gaining political attention and thus policy response.

Historically, in Ireland education policy has evolved from pressure being placed on the State to respond to an issue, as distinct from a pro-active or preventative policy approach (Harvey, 2002). Therefore, the hidden nature of SBTB means that this issue has not been prioritised for Governmental action. The unspoken nature of SBTB is compounded by teachers' insecurity regarding job security, an understandable concern considering the shortage of permanent teaching positions in the current climate. Furthermore, teachers' fears of being judged by others and of damaging future career prospects may be well-founded within the competitive collegial dynamic outlined previously (e.g. Terry, 1998; Zeira et al., 2004; Daniels et al., 2007; Du Plessis, 2008; De Wet, 2010). It is crucial that teachers are encouraged to speak out about their experiences of SBTB in the reassurance that this is a global phenomenon, experienced by most teachers at some point in their career, rather than an individual shortcoming on the teachers' behalf, or a reflection of poor classroom management skills. The present author supports Espelage et al.'s (2011) assertion that teachers should be made aware of the potential problem of SBTB and be equipped with strategies and supports to minimise the likelihood of its occurring. The fact that 94% of teachers in the present study reported that they had experienced at least one form of SBT behaviour suggests that the probability of novice teachers being bullied by a student at some time in their career may be quite high.

7.3.6 Teachers' Experiences of SBTB

In fact, consistent with international findings (Terry, 1998; Salmi and Kivivuori, 2009), this study shows that novice teachers appear to be the group most targeted by pupils, whilst similar to findings reported by Benefield (2004), teachers in the eldest age bracket also seem to experience high levels of SBTB. Given that young, inexperienced teachers appear to emerge as the group which experience the highest levels of student bullying behaviours, it is disconcerting to note that only 10% of respondents, the lowest of all age categories, reported that they had sought support for bullying by a pupil.

These findings suggest that additional supports may need to be put in place to support newly qualified teachers, as this appears to be the most vulnerable group. As teachers' perceptions, experiences and reactions to SBTB seem to change throughout their careers, supports for teachers need to be tailored to meet these changing needs. In addition, teachers should be made aware of the potential difficulties, which they may experience at varying points throughout their teaching career and training should be adapted accordingly rather than the use of a 'one-size-fits-all approach' to the issue.

Additional interesting findings relate to teachers' gender. Consistent with the literature (Martin, 1997; Terry, 1998; Kivivuori and Tuominen, 1999; Benefield, 2004; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kinney and Pörhölä, 2009), the survey findings indicate that male and female teachers experience quite equal levels of SBTB. However, also consistent with the literature (Crick and Bigbee, 1998; Munn et al., 2004; Mooij, 2010), this study found that it is the ways in which the bullying behaviours are experienced and perceived by male and female teachers which seem to differ. It appears that not only do the forms of SBT behaviours experienced by male and female teachers vary, but interviewees also suggest that the teacher-student dynamic is highly influenced by both the teachers' awareness and use of their own gender, a finding supported by Lahelma et al (1996). Therefore, teachers' gender may be seen as either advantageous or dis-advantageous in managing SBTB, depending on the school setting in which the teacher works.

Qualitative data also suggests that the student-teacher relationship may be more complex than just the gender of the teacher or the student involved, as this dynamic may also be informed by parental influences and gender role modelling within the family environment; a proposition supported by a number of authors (e.g. Johnson et al., 1999; Miller et al., 2002; Rolland and Galloway, 2004; Du Plessis, 2008; James et al., 2008; IACP, 2010). Data suggests that the ways in which students learn to treat members of the opposite sex may influence the ways in which students will subsequently treat their teachers. Such a finding underscores the need for a multi-level response to SBTB which includes a focus on the home environment, such as parenting programmes or media campaigns to highlight the links between positive parenting practices and lower levels of challenging and aggressive behaviour in young people.

Also in keeping with international (e.g. Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012) and national (Martin, 1997, 2006; TUI, 2006; James et al., 2008; O' Dowd Lernihan, 2011) findings, this study found that SBTB is more frequently perpetrated by male pupils and most commonly experienced by teachers working with second year and fifth year student groups (e.g. Munn et al., 2004; ASTI, 2004; Martin, 2006; Du Plessis, 2008; McMahon, 2011). Collins (Irish Times, 15/12/2007) suggests that the issue of male students as perpetrators of challenging and aggressive student behaviour may be linked to a much more complex societal problem which needs more in-depth exploration. Meanwhile, students' feelings of restlessness, boredom or bravado which may set in throughout second and fifth year due to increased familiarity within the school and the absence of exam pressures, have been put forward as possible explanations for higher prevalence of SBTB in these class groups. Therefore, these findings may indicate that teachers working with male pupils and second and fifth year class groups may need additional supports and training. Also pro-active and preventative programmes may be targeted at these year groups and particularly at male students.

Perception is an integral component of an authentic understanding of SBT (Munn et al., 2004; Blasé and Blasé, 2008; De Wet, 2010). However, teachers' perceptions may be influenced by a combination of demographic, cultural and organisational factors (Twemlow et al., 2004; Vaillancourt et al., 2008; Davies, 2012) as well as teachers' psychological, social and emotional well-being at the time of the incident (Silverman et al., 2005). Therefore, as perception is infinitely a subjective experience, efforts to support teachers should focus on identifying points of commonality or trends and patterns in teachers' perceptions and experiences based on similar demographic or cultural characteristics, and concentrate on putting in place, more relevant and accurate training and supports for these teachers, based on identified needs.

7.3.7 A Comprehensive, Resourced, Multi-Level Response

SBT is an intrinsically subjective, multi-faceted and contextual phenomenon, which impacts significantly on both teachers and school systems in Ireland and throughout the

world (Astor et al., 2002; Wright and Keetley, 2003; Benbenishty et al., 2005; Chen and Astor, 2009). Throughout this study, attempts to clearly conceptualise the phenomenon have led the researcher to numerous incongruities, contradictions, inconsistencies and irreconcilabilities, both within the literature and within the primary data, underlining the complexity of the issue. The causes of SBT are often complex, intersecting and contingent upon a number of variables, and the effects may impact teachers' personal well-being and professional performance in a number of ways, as has been explored in the previous chapter. A fractured response to SBTB which is uni-level rather than holistic, may not tackle the fundamental root causes of students' behaviour or teachers' and society's role in the problem or their ability to deal with it (Henefer, 2010; Espelage et al., 2013). Successful intervention requires a 'comprehensive and multi-layered response that seeks to intervene at a number of different levels' and across a range of life domains (Mishna and Pepler, 2006; X Ma, 2012; Espelage et al., 2013; Richardson et al., 2013, p. 109).

Therefore, policy efforts to address SBTB need to be pre-emptive and proactive and take into consideration the needs and rights of both students and teachers (INTO, 2004; Espelage et al., 2013). Responses need to be supportive of students' holistic needs rather than just focused on their in-school behaviour, cognisant that behaviour in school is dependent on many complex variables (Martin, 2006). Schools must be made aware of the importance of creating a positive school climate, developing strong links with parents, community groups and other agencies and of fostering a culture of student engagement, participation and collaboration (Cohen and Brown, 2013; Steffgen et al., 2013). In addition, the necessity to promote positive relations between students and staff and to support collegiality and strong leadership must be underlined, as each of these factors may positively influence the levels of SBTB in schools (INTO, 2002; Lee, 2004; Martin, 1997, 2006; Chen and Astor, 2009).

At the same time, future policy efforts must take into account the needs and rights of teachers to feel safe, respected and empowered within the classroom (Martin, 2006; Espelage et al., 2013). In line with findings reported by Kerr et al. (2011) and McMahon et al. (2011), this study suggests that teacher training and education must focus on

developing a range of skills and competencies in teachers, so that teachers are better equipped to effectively manage challenging pupil behaviour and SBT. Teachers also require greater opportunities for advice, support and affirmation and time to de-brief following serious incidents of SBTB (McMahon et al., 2011). Crucially, teachers need to be encouraged and supported to speak out about their experiences of SBTB and to seek support in the assurance that such disclosure will not result in negative personal or professional consequences for the teacher (Turkum, 2011). To this end, there needs to be greater societal recognition that SBTB is an international phenomenon rather than an individual teacher's failing (Terry, 1998; Ferfolja, 1998; De Wet, 2010). Such public recognition of the issue may open the conversation on SBT, but policy makers should be aware that shame and fear may still stand in the way of disclosure to management. Therefore, alternative sources of support, such as access to a supportive mentor, colleague or counsellor, may need to be made available to teachers (Pervin and Turner, 1998; Munn et al., 2004).

Policy makers must also recognise the conflictual views and perceptions between, and even within, teachers in relation to the best way to respond to SBTB. As discussed in Chapter 6, Section 6.7.2, a cohort of participants in this study urged that SBTB would be best addressed through the consistent implementation of strict rules and severe sanctions for rule infraction whilst other participants called for increased counselling for pupils and a more student-orientated, less constricting approach to education. Findings also highlighted that teachers may advocate a very punitive approach to dealing with bullies, yet may simultaneously support a holistic, student-centred focus when discussing policy. These wide-ranging, conflicting and paradoxical teacher positions underline the need for policy makers to recognise the intricacies, contradictions and complexities involved in addressing this issue and to take into account the depth and range of perceptions and emotions which this phenomenon may elicit in teachers, based on their own subjective experiences.

The researcher openly acknowledges that an adequate response to address this phenomenon signals a huge challenge for policy makers. The State is asked to respond on multiple levels, in multiple ways across multiple life domains and to consider even

the structure and rationale of the Irish education system itself; all within the constraints of austerity and the complexities involved in education policy making and implementation. However, in the course of the interview process, the management body representative stated that ‘there are some red light issues that come across your desk’ and ‘everyone has to prioritise when they are under pressure’. He suggested that principals would be wise to prioritise the student bullying of pupils ‘because it is something that will really grow and grow if you don’t put it out early’. In the same way, the present author underlines the seriousness of SBTB and the necessity for the State to recognise and respond to this issue. At present, teachers in Irish schools are attempting to manage this problem in the absence of adequate training, recognition, support or guidelines whilst the State concentrates its attention on maximising efficiency and value for money rather than on the holistic needs of students and teachers (Mooney-Simmie, 2012) and all the while, this issue is allowed to ‘grow and grow’.

Speaking at a Seanad Éireann debate on the implementation of the new, comprehensive National Anti-Bullying Strategy for schools, Education Minister Ruari Quinn (2013) stated that bullying ‘is not a problem that schools can solve alone’. In the same vein, the present author argues that the student bullying of teachers is not a problem that teachers or schools can, or should be expected to, handle on their own. This form of school bullying needs to be afforded the same level of recognition, response and State intervention which other forms of school bullying have received in the recent National Anti-Bullying Strategy.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

As discussed previously, the construction of bullying in this study was imposed from the outset, as all participants were provided with a definition of SBT, prior to their participation in the research. Having read the accompanying definition, participants were asked to indicate whether they had experienced any of the outlined ‘bullying behaviours’ but were not provided with the opportunity to indicate whether or not they self-identified as ‘bullied’ by pupils. As teachers may experience bullying behaviours and yet, not necessarily self-identify as a victim of bullying, due to subjective

interpretation of pupils' behaviour, a distinction is necessary between the student bullying of teachers (SBT) and teachers' experiences of bullying behaviour - SBTB. Such a distinction between SBT and SBTB allows for more authentic and accurate depiction of teachers' experiences. The questionnaire, as a research instrument is not very suitable for exploring the complexity of an issue such as SBT, therefore, in-depth exploration of teachers' experiences and subjective constructions of themselves as bullied by pupils, took place during the qualitative interviews. Nevertheless, it would have been valuable to have ascertained the prevalence of teachers who had expressly identified as 'bullied' by a pupil, as this would have added a further dimension to data analysis.

The use of a medium-scale survey, using proportionate stratified random sampling principles, means that quantitative findings are representative of the strata under study. However, these findings are reflective of teachers' experiences of student bullying behaviours in a particular area of Cork city and county, rather than generalisable to the wider population, or representative of all second level teachers in Irish schools. As figures relating to teachers' experiences of student bullying behaviours in an Irish context are so limited, a larger scale survey would have been very beneficial in establishing a more accurate account of the prevalence and nature of SBTB in Ireland. In addition, as statistical significance was not achieved in relation to the cross-tabulation of variables such as teachers' age, gender, professional experience and school type, the statistical findings of the study in this regard need to be considered guardedly and further research to investigate these variables conducted.

A mixed qualitative and quantitative methodology was used in the current study in an attempt to capture the fullest sense of the phenomenon, and to crosscheck data in order to increase validity of the findings and to gain a deeper understanding of research results. Although the researcher considers that this was a suitable methodology for the study, it has limitations as a methodology, as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.8, such as the generation of copious amounts of data and the associated difficulties with attempting to condense this data without losing valuable threads. Because the student bullying of teachers, as a distinct phenomenon, is so sparsely researched, it was difficult

to access specific literature relating to the phenomenon. Therefore, at times the researcher had to rely on school violence literature and more generic data pertaining to student behaviour, to supplement the research endeavour, which may have led to confusion at times for the reader. Attempting to integrate data, which were used for a purpose other than SBT, presented a number of challenges for the researcher who strived to ensure that source literature were represented as intended. As many of these studies were not conducted to explore SBT specifically, the researcher has acknowledged that their contribution must be considered cautiously. Further, as data relating to SBT in Ireland, such as baseline national figures or nationally representative studies, were not available, the study had to rely on studies (TUI, 2006; Martin, 2006) which are up to 8 years old and which have been conducted within a different cultural, ideological and economic context than the present situation.

Finally, this study was conducted from the teachers' perspective using semi-structured interviews and a self-report survey questionnaire. Therefore, as there was no observational strand to the study or inclusion of students' perspectives, this study provides only a construction of teachers' relationships with students and an exploration and description of SBT and other negative student behaviours from the teachers' point of view. Effectively therefore, this study explores the phenomenon of SBT as it is perceived by teachers, rather than from an objective standpoint. A more accurate analysis of the phenomenon would require that the perspectives of students would need to be included. Although, this is beyond the scope of the present study, future research exploring the voice of the student is important.

7.5 Contributions of the Study

This study extends the existing national and international literature in an under-explored area of research by increasing knowledge, understanding and awareness of the nature, manifestation, causes and effects of SBT behaviours. Within an Irish context, this research provides an up to date indication of the prevalence of SBTB in Irish second level schools and an insight into teachers' feelings and experiences regarding the manifestation and impact of this phenomenon. The study also highlights teachers'

perceptions regarding contemporary supports, training and policies to deal with challenging student behaviour and SBT and illuminates the impact of austerity measures on teachers' well-being and on student behaviour in schools.

This research provides the only comprehensive exploration of both the historical and contemporary responses to challenging student behaviour and SBT in Ireland, whilst also exploring the societal, cultural, economic and ideological factors, which have influenced both SBTB and the development of the State's response to the phenomenon. With respect to contemporary responses to challenging and aggressive student behaviour, this study provides a valuable exploration of the State's implementation of the Task Force *School Matters* (Martin, 2006) recommendations, highlighting both positive and negative developments in policy-making. The study is also important, in that it offers an insight into teachers' perceptions, regarding both the effects of limited State resourcing of schools on challenging student behaviour and also the positive benefits of additional resourcing on SBTB, through its findings in relation to DEIS schools in Rapid areas. The study highlights strengths and limitations in contemporary policy and provides an insight into teachers' perceptions in this regard, as well as teachers' preferred supports. Finally, this study raises the profile of SBT and encourages greater discourse, debate and awareness of the phenomenon as a first step in effectively addressing the issue. Therefore, this study may be considered a useful starting point for the development of policy in this area, as well as a springboard for further research on the phenomenon.

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Appendices

Appendix A Informed Consent Form for Interviewees

I am a University College Cork postgraduate student pursuing a PhD in Social Science. I am undertaking a research study to examine the bullying of teachers by students in Irish second level schools. The study seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of teachers and the prevalence, types and effects of this form of bullying. The study is also concerned with teacher and principal contributions regarding a range of related issues such as the systems in place to support staff, and school environmental factors which may encourage or perpetuate the culture of student- teacher bullying.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are known to the researcher and are recruited on the basis of accessibility, potential knowledge and experience of the issue. If you decide to participate, we will arrange a semi-structured interview, which will be of approximately 1 hour in duration and will take place in a location of your choosing (e.g. the researcher's workplace, your home or workplace etc.). The purpose of these interviews is to assist in the design of a survey based questionnaire and to inform and focus its content.

The interviews will be audio-taped. All personal data, such as participant names and contact information, will be stored in electronic form on a secure password protected computer and will be deleted in line with University guidelines. A coding system known only to the researcher will be used to match transcribed interviews with participants. Quotes or comments which may be traceable to the contributor, as well as identifying features relating to the schools involved in the study will not be disclosed.

Your school will receive a copy of the findings of the study. A copy will also be sent to the Department of Education and to each of the teacher trade unions.

If you are willing to participate, please sign this form. You will be offered a copy of this form to keep.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

Signature of Participant	Date
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You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate. You may withdraw at any time.

Signature of Researcher	Date
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Please find Appendix AA on p.363

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Key Informants

SBT is defined as repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

- In your opinion, is there a problem of teachers being bullied by students in second level schools in Ireland?
- Do you have you any personal experience of being bullied by a pupil?
- Have you witnessed other staff members being bullied by a pupil?
- Are some teachers more targeted than others? What are the reasons for this?
- Are there any differences in the way male and female teachers are treated by students?
- In your experience, what forms may SBT take?
- Where does the bullying take place?
- What are the effects of SBT on the teacher and on the school?
- What factors may contribute to the teachers being bullied?
- What training do teachers receive on how to deal with behaviour management?
- What training is provided to educate teachers on the issue of bullying by pupils?
- What supports are in place for staff experiencing SBT?
- Are you aware of any school policies or Department of Education policies in relation to teachers being bullied by students?
- Is there anything you feel would be important to explore in terms of a study like this?

Appendix C Interview Guide for Teachers

SBT is defined as repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

- In your opinion, is there a problem of teachers being bullied by students in secondary schools?
- Have you any personal experience of being bullied or intimidated by a student?
- Have you witnessed other staff members being bullied by students?
- What do you consider to be the profile of a bully? (age, gender, personality etc.)
- Is bullying normally carried out by an individual or more than one student?
- What do you feel is the most effective method of dealing with this bullying, what have you personally found helpful?
- Are some teachers more targeted than others? What are the reasons for this?
- Are there any differences in the way male and female teachers are treated by students?
- In your experience, what forms does the bullying take?
- In what ways are teachers affected by SBT?
- Are there any school conditions which may contribute to the bullying of staff?
- What supports and policies are in place for staff who experience bullying ?
- Have you received training on how to manage challenging behaviour and SBT?

Appendix D Interview Guide for Year Heads

SBT is defined as repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

- In your opinion, is there a problem of teachers being bullied by students in Irish second level schools?
- Do you believe teachers are adequately trained and equipped to deal with challenging student behaviour and SBT?
- How have budget cuts and the moratorium affected school managements' ability to address challenging student behaviour and to support teachers?
- Do Year Heads have sufficient time, training and support to effectively respond to challenging student behaviour and SBT?
- Do Year Heads have sufficient time and training to support teachers who are experiencing bullying by a pupil?
- Do you believe the current middle management and normative structures are sufficient and effective?

Appendix E Interview Guide for Union Representatives

The student bullying of teachers is defined as repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

- Do you think there is a problem of teachers being bullied by students in Irish second level schools?
- Do you believe teachers are adequately trained and equipped to deal with challenging student behaviour and SBT?
- Do you feel the current support structures in place are sufficient to enable teachers to deal effectively with challenging student behaviour and SBT?
- How have budget cuts affected school managements' ability to address challenging student behaviour and to support teachers?
- What additional supports do you feel would be beneficial in assisting teachers to deal more effectively with challenging student behaviour?
- Does your organisation believe the current middle management and normative structures are sufficient and effective?

Appendix F Interview Guide for Management Body Rep.

The student bullying of teachers is defined as repetitive acts of aggressive behaviour directed at a teacher by a student which cause physical, psychological, emotional or professional harm. SBT is characterised by an imbalance of power where the student (s) is in a position of greater power than the teacher, based on factors which may not be apparent to the observer and are irrespective of the teacher's perceived superior authority. Acts of aggression may be direct or indirect and include any behaviour which the teacher perceives to be bullying.

- Have your members highlighted a problem of teachers being bullied by pupils in Irish second level schools?
- How have the on-going cutbacks in education impacted on principals and school management?
- Have principals' increased workload impacted on their ability to support teachers dealing with SBT?
- Do you believe that the current middle management structure is sufficient and effective?
- What structures or measures may assist teachers in adequately supporting teachers dealing with bullying by a pupil?

Appendix G

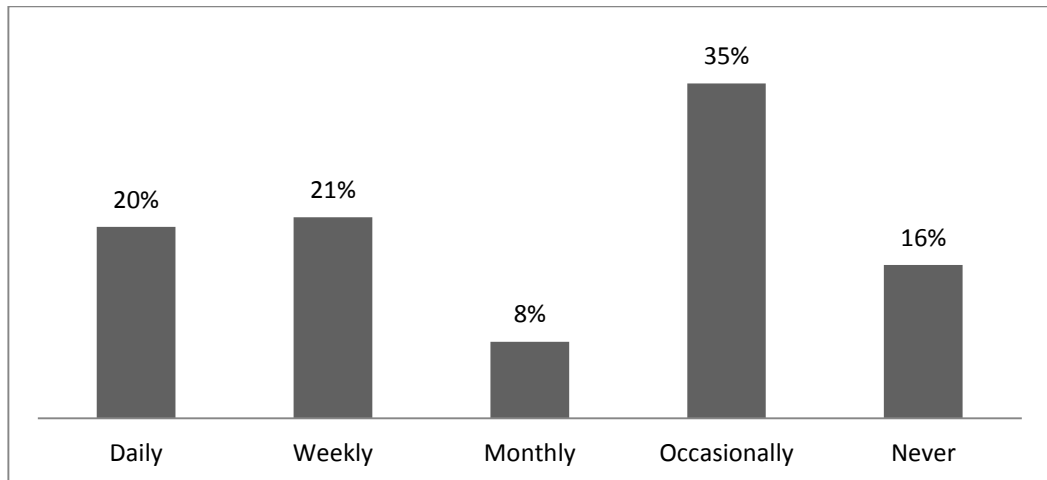
Attribute Coding of Interviewees

Interview No	M/F	Age	Experience	O/S/PoR	S/ R/ C	B/G/M	O/ D/DR
1	F	36-45	11-25	O	C	G	DR
2	F	36-45	11-25	O	R	B	O
3	M	36-45	11-25	O	S	G	D
4	M	46-55	>25	O	S	M	D
5	F	56-65	>25	O	S	M	O
6	F	26-35	6-10	O	C	G	D
7	F	26-35	<1	S	C	M	DR
8	M	<25	<1	S	R	M	O
9	M	56-65	>25	O	R	B	O
10	F	26-35	6-10	O	C	B	DR
11	F	46-55	11-25	O	S	B	O
12	F	36-45	11-25	PoR	R	B	O
13	F	46-55	>25	PoR	C	G	DR
14	M	36-45	11-25	PoR	C	M	DR

Legend:

Interview Number	1-14
Gender of Interviewee	M= Male, F= Female
Age of Interviewee	<25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65
Number of Years Teaching Experience	<1, 1-5, 6-10, 11-25, >25
Category of Teaching Post	O= Ordinary, S= Student, PoR= Post of Responsibility
Location of School	S=Suburban, R= Rural, C= City Centre
Gender of Pupils	B= Boys, G= Girls, M= Mixed
Category of School	O= Ordinary, D= DEIS, DR= DEIS Rapid

Appendix H Persistent In-Class Disruption



Frequency:

84% of all teachers disclosed that they have endured persistent class disruption; 20% on a daily basis, 21% weekly, 8% monthly and 35% occasionally whilst 16% of teachers said that they did not experience on-going in-class disruption.

Gender Differences:

86% of males indicated that on-going in-class disruption was an issue for them in their work, while similarly 83% of female respondents also reported this behaviour.

Teachers' Age:

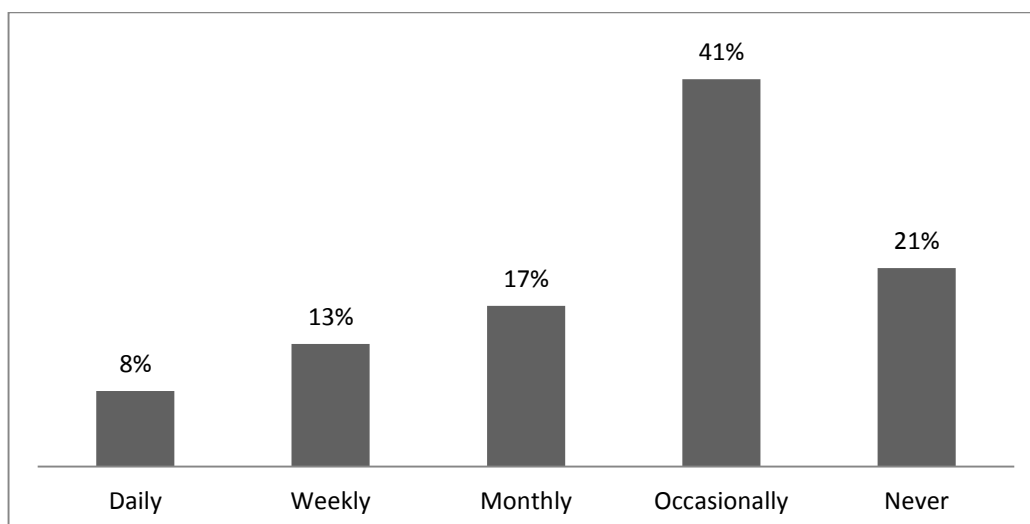
85% of teachers in both the under 26 years and 26 to 40 years age groups and 84% of 41 to 55 year olds and 82% of over 55 year olds experienced persistent disruption, indicating that age does not seem to be an influential factor in this form of bullying.

In-Class Disruption Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
84%	86.1%	83%	79.9%	87.5%	92.8%

DEIS	Non-DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
89.5%	81.9%	86.8%	74.2%	89%

Appendix I Verbal Abuse



Frequency:

79% of respondents indicated verbal abuse is an issue for them in their work. 8% of teachers experience verbal abuse on a daily basis, 13% weekly, 17% monthly and 41% occasionally whilst 21% of teachers do not experience verbal abuse from their students.

Teacher Age:

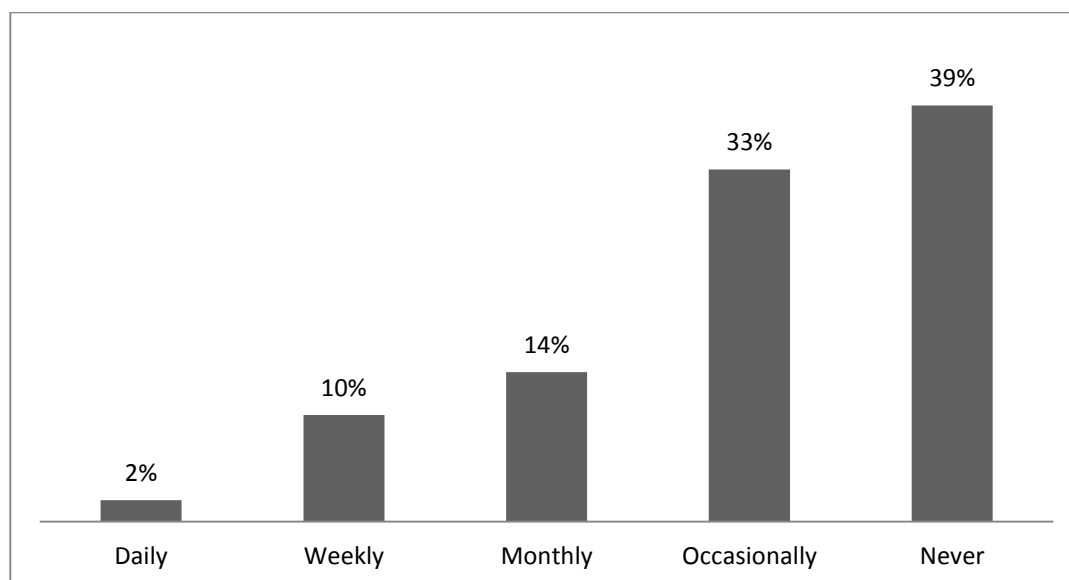
72% of teachers who are under 26 years of age and 83% of 26 to 40 year old teachers reported a problem in school with verbal abuse from their students. 80% of 41 to 55 year olds and a quite significantly lower rate of 65% of over 55 year olds also reported this issue.

Verbal Abuse Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
79.3%	79.2%	79.3%	77.8%	80.5%	84.1%

DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
86.8%	76.4%	75.8%	67.4%	88.2%

Appendix J Sexual Innuendo



Teacher Age:

72% of teachers who are under 26 years of age and 60% of 26 to 40 year old teachers reported sexual innuendo from their students. 56% of 41 to 55 year olds and 65% of over 55 year old also said that this is a problem for them in the workplace.

DEIS RAPID Schools:

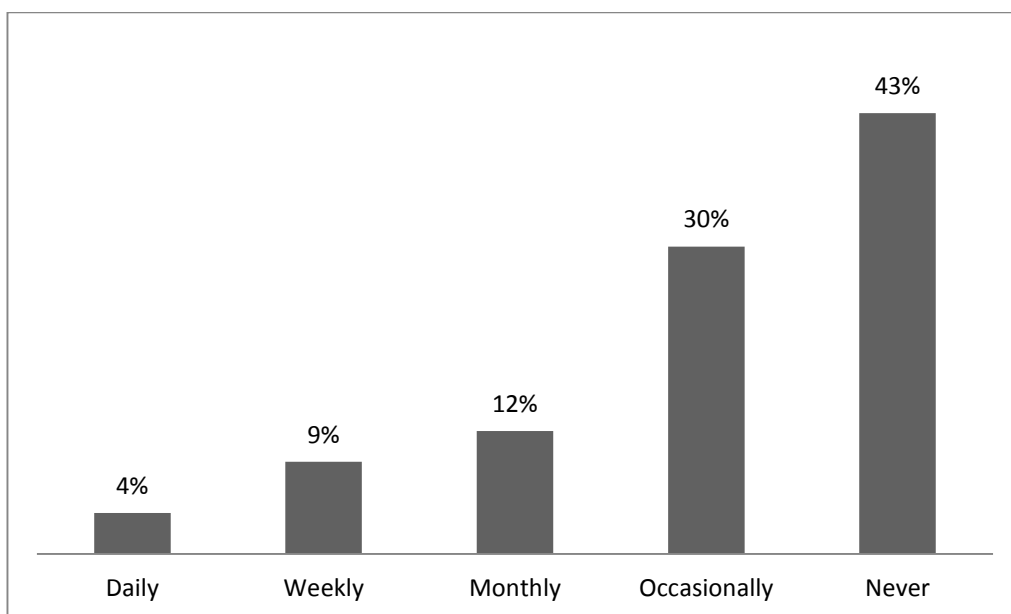
64% of respondents from DEIS schools, 30% of DEIS RAPID staff and 64% of teachers from non-DEIS schools reported sexual innuendo by pupils.

Sexual Innuendo Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
59.3%	53.8%	62%	58.1%	60.3%	30.4%

DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
64%	63.5%	75%	36.1%	67.1%

Appendix K Intimidation



Frequency:

55% of all teachers in the study specify intimidation by their students as a bullying behaviour. 4% of teachers experience intimidation on a daily basis, 9% weekly, 12% monthly and 30% occasionally whilst 43% of teachers do not experience intimidation from their students.

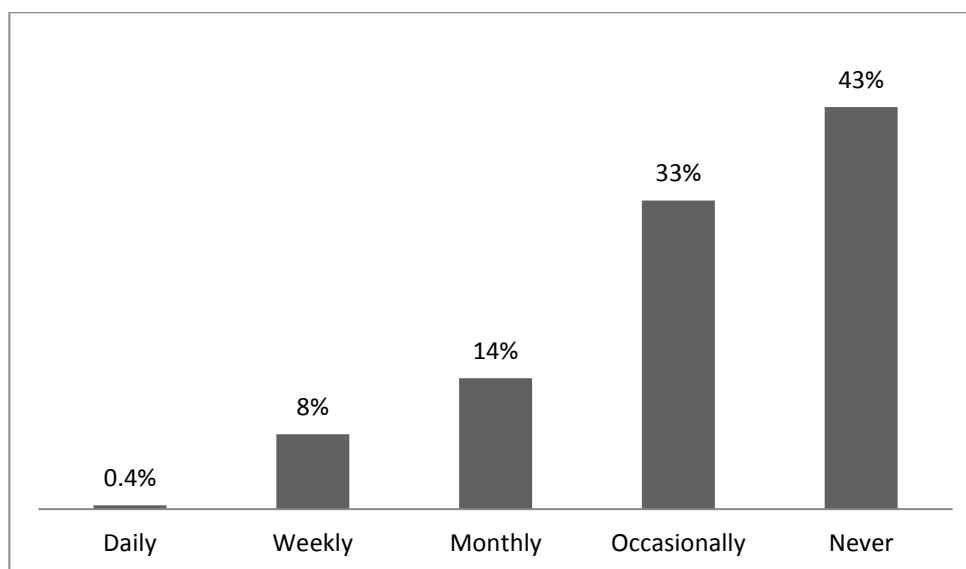
School Gender:

Intimidation is highest in all boys' schools at 62%, followed closely by a rate of 61% in mixed schools and a lower 40% in all girls' schools.

Intimidation Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
55.2%	48.6%	58.4%	50.4%	50.4%	59.2%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
52.7%	56%	62.5%	40.4%	61.3%	

Appendix L Physical Threats



Frequency:

55% of all teachers involved in the study reported physical threats by students. 0.4% of teachers reported physical threats on a daily basis, 8% weekly, 14% monthly and 33% occasionally whilst 43% of teachers do not experience physical threats from students.

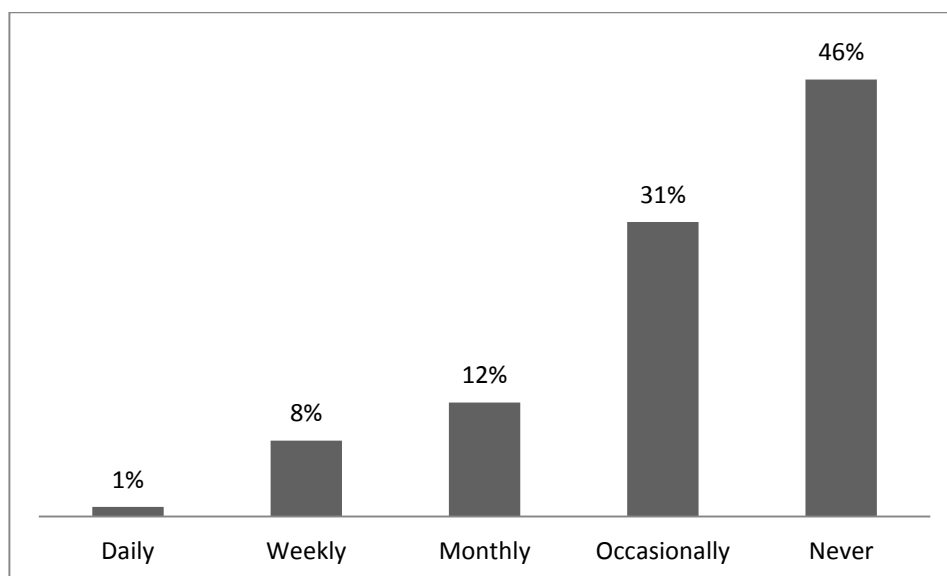
School Gender:

All boys' schools reported the highest rate of physical threats to staff, with mixed schools at 62% and all girls' schools at 34%.

Physical Threats Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban
55%	59%	53.1%	49.6%	59.6%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
48.6%	57.3%	68.7%	34.3%	62.1%

Appendix M Personally Offensive Graffiti



Frequency:

53% of all teachers in the study indicated graffiti is an issue for them in their work. 1% of teachers experience offensive graffiti on a daily basis, 8% weekly, 12% monthly and 31% occasionally whilst 46% of teachers do not experience personally offensive graffiti.

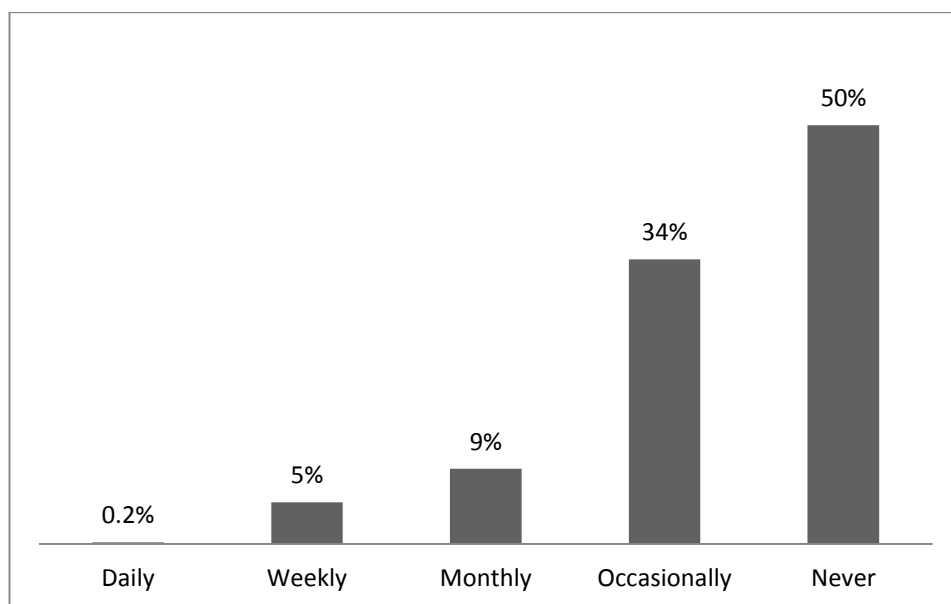
DEIS RAPID Schools:

37% of respondents in DEIS schools, 20% of DEIS RAPID staff and 59% of teachers in non-DEIS schools reported that personally offensive graffiti is an issue in their work.

Personally Offensive Graffiti Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban
52.9%	56.1%	51.4%	52.5%	53.3%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
36.8%	58.9%	64.2%	33.7%	60.1%

Appendix N Damage to Personal Property



Frequency:

48% of all respondents reported damage to their personal property. 0.2% of teachers experience damage to property on a daily basis, 5% weekly, 9% monthly and 34% occasionally whilst 50% of teachers do not experience damage to their property.

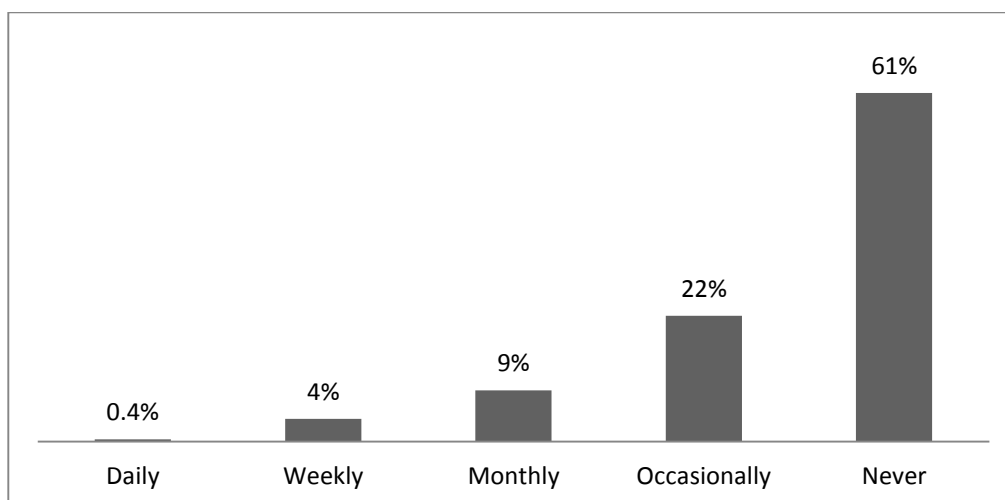
School Gender:

Boys' schools appear to have the highest incidence of property damage at 62%, followed by mixed schools at 55% and girls' schools at a rate of 26% .

Damage to Property Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban
48%	47.4%	48.3%	45.1%	50.5%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed
43.7%	49.6%	62.5%	26.3%	55.4%

Appendix O Cyber Bullying



Frequency:

35% of all teachers reported cyber bullying by pupils; 0.4% of teachers experience cyber bullying on a daily basis, 4% weekly, 9% monthly and 22% and 61% said never.

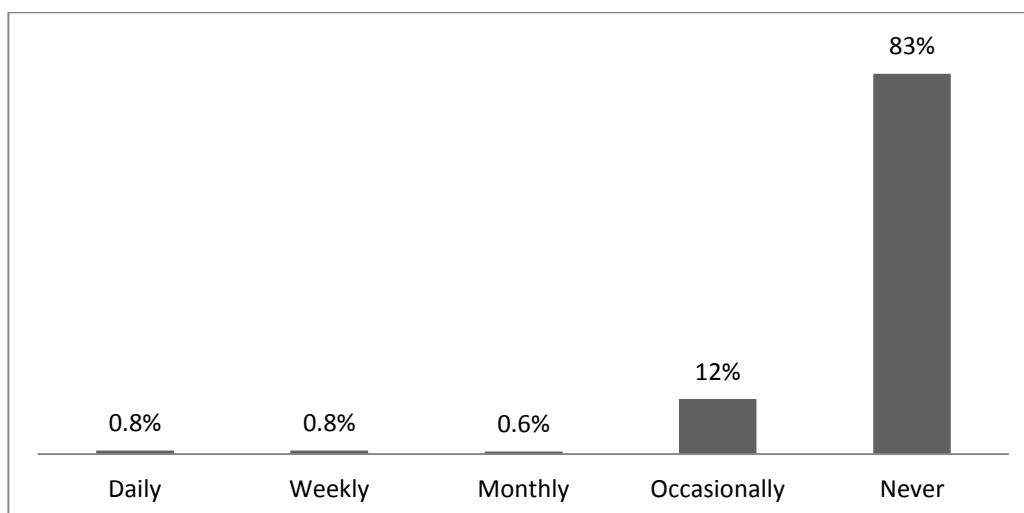
DEIS RAPID Schools & School Gender:

10% of respondents from DEIS RAPID and 19% of respondents from DEIS schools reported cyber bullying compared with 41% of teachers in non-DEIS schools.

Cyber Bullying Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
35.2%	32.9%	36.3%	33.6%	36.6%	10.1%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
19.4%	41%	50%	22.6%	36.7%	

Appendix P Physical Assault



Frequency:

14% of teachers in the study said they have been subjected to physical assault by a pupil. 0.8% of teachers experience physical assault on a daily basis, 0.8% weekly, 0.6% monthly and 12% occasionally whilst 83% of teachers did not report physical assault.

Teacher Age:

12% of teachers aged under 26 years and 15% of 26 to 40 year old teachers report being subjected to physical assault by their students whilst 11% of 41 to 55 year olds and 20% of over 55 year old teachers also experienced assault by a pupil.

Physical Assault Overview:

General	Male	Female	Rural	Suburban	DEIS Rapid
13.7%	17.9%	11.7%	14.3%	13.2%	10.1%
DEIS	Non DEIS	Boys	Girls	Mixed	
12.5%	14.2%	15.1%	12.2%	14%	

Appendix Q Exploring Location and SBTB:

Behaviour	Rural	Suburban	City
On-going In-Class Disruption	79.9%	83.8%	89.9%
Verbal Abuse	77.8%	80.5%	79.8%
Sexual Innuendo	58.1%	60.3%	52.6%
Personally Offensive Graffiti	52.4%	53.3%	46.1%
Intimidation	50.4%	59.2%	60.9%
Physical Threats	49.5%	59.6%	55.6%
Damage to Property	45%	50.5%	49.7%
Cyber Bullying	33.6%	36.6%	33.1%
Physical Assault	14.3%	13.2%	16.5%

Most Prevalent Type Reported by Location - All Schools:

1. Persistent In-Class Disruption	89.9%	City Centre
2. Verbal Abuse	81.3%	Suburban
3. Sexual Innuendo	71.1%	Suburban
4. Physical Threats	65.2%	Suburban
5. Personally Offensive Graffiti	63.5%	Suburban
6. Intimidation	60.9%	City Centre
7. Damage to Property	51.6%	Suburban
8. Cyber Bullying	41.5%	Suburban
9. Physical Assault	16.5%	City Centre

Appendix R Exploring School Gender and SBTB

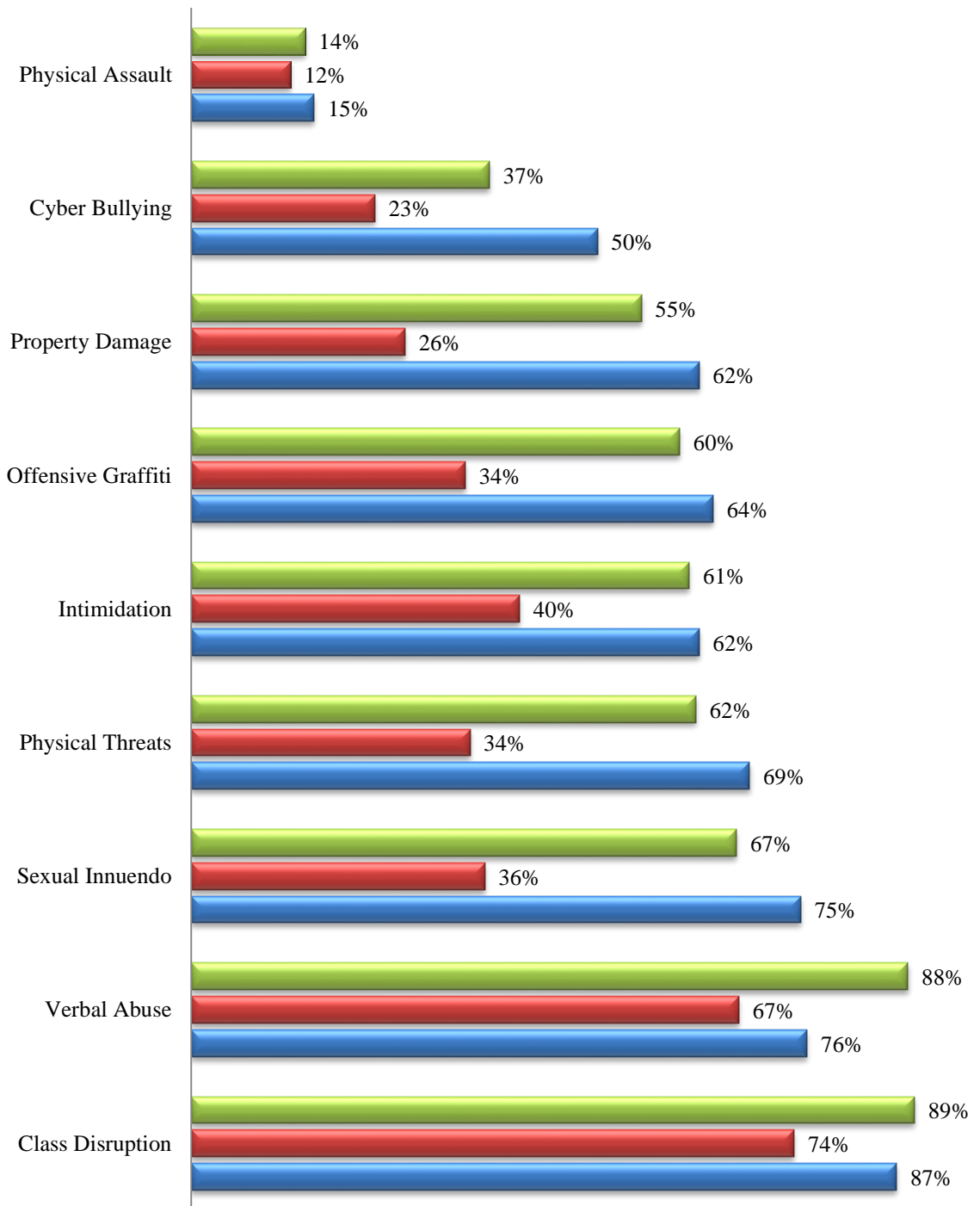
Behaviour	Boys	Girls	Mixed
On-going In-Class Disruption	86.8%	74.2%	89%
Verbal Abuse	75.8%	67.4%	88.2%
Sexual Innuendo	75%	36.1%	67.1%
Physical Threats	68.7%	34.3%	62.1%
Offensive Graffiti	64.2%	33.7%	60.1%
Intimidation	62.5%	40.4%	61.3%
Damage to Property	62.5%	26.3%	55.4%
Cyber Bullying	50%	22.6%	36.7%
Physical Assault	15.1%	12.2%	14%

Most Prevalent Type Reported by School Gender:

1. Persistent In-Class Disruption	89%	Mixed
2. Verbal Abuse	88.2%	Mixed
3. Sexual Innuendo	75%	Boys
4. Physical Threats	68.7%	Boys
5. Personally Offensive Graffiti	64.2%	Boys
6. Intimidation	62.5%	Boys
7. Damage to Property	62.5%	Boys
8. Cyber Bullying	50%	Boys
9. Physical Assault	15.1%	Boys

Frequency by School Gender

■ Mixed ■ Girls ■ Boys



Appendix S

Survey Questionnaire

1. Are you Male or Female?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. What is your age?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-55	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 55	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Are you	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other European	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non European	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Are you a student teacher?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. How many years' teaching experience do you have?	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	10 years or less	<input type="checkbox"/>	11-24 yrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	25 yrs +	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you been subjected to any of the following bullying behaviours by students? Please tick one box for each question.										
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never
6. Personally offensive graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Physical threats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Sexual innuendo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Verbal Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Cyber bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Physical assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Ongoing class disruption	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Other, please explain: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ever experienced bullying in the following environments? Please tick one box for each question.										
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never
16. On the way to/ from school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. In the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. In the corridors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. In the school yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. At weekends (in town etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Other, please explain: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

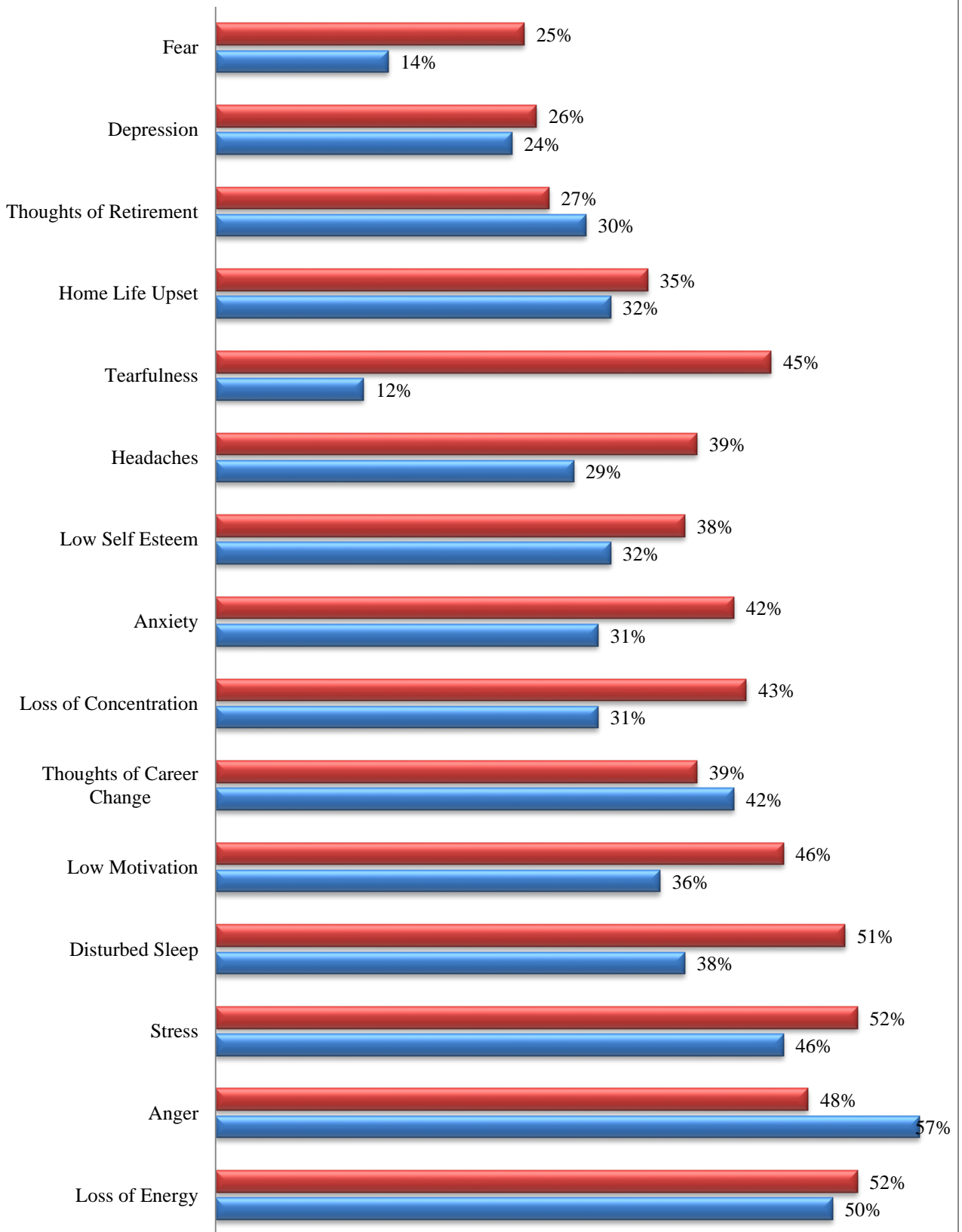
22. How many students are normally responsible for the bullying incident? Please tick one box.												
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	2-3 pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	4-5 pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	6+ pupils	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full class			
23. In your experience, what is the gender of the bully?												
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Both							
24. In your experience, which year group is most likely to bully a teacher? Please tick as many as apply:												
<input type="checkbox"/>	1st year	<input type="checkbox"/>	2nd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	3rd year	<input type="checkbox"/>	4th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	5th year	<input type="checkbox"/>	6th year	
25. Have you ever experienced any of the following affects as a result of being bullied by a student, please tick as many as apply:												
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anger	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thoughts of retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Depression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tearfulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thoughts of career change	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disturbed Sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of concentration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	Low self esteem	<input type="checkbox"/>	Headaches	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fear	<input type="checkbox"/>	Home/ family life upset	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of energy	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other, please explain: _____												
26. Have you ever sought support due to bullying by a pupil? (from colleague, doctor, counsellor etc)												
Please explain: _____									<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
27. What supports do you feel would be beneficial for teachers being bullied by students?												

Appendix T Exploring SBTB by Gender

Impact	Male	Female
Anger	57.2%	48%
Loss of Energy	50.3%	51.7%
Stress	46.2%	52.5%
Career Change	42.2%	39.4%
Disturbed Sleep	37.6%	51.4%
Low Motivation	35.8%	46.1%
Low Self Esteem	31.8%	38.5%
Home/ Family Life Upset	31.8%	35.5%
Loss of Concentration	31.2%	43%
Anxiety	31.2%	41.6%
Thoughts of Retirement	30.1%	27.4%
Headaches	28.9%	38.8%
Depression	23.7%	25.7%
Fear	14.5%	24.6%
Tearfulness	12.1%	45.3%

Exploring SBTB by Gender

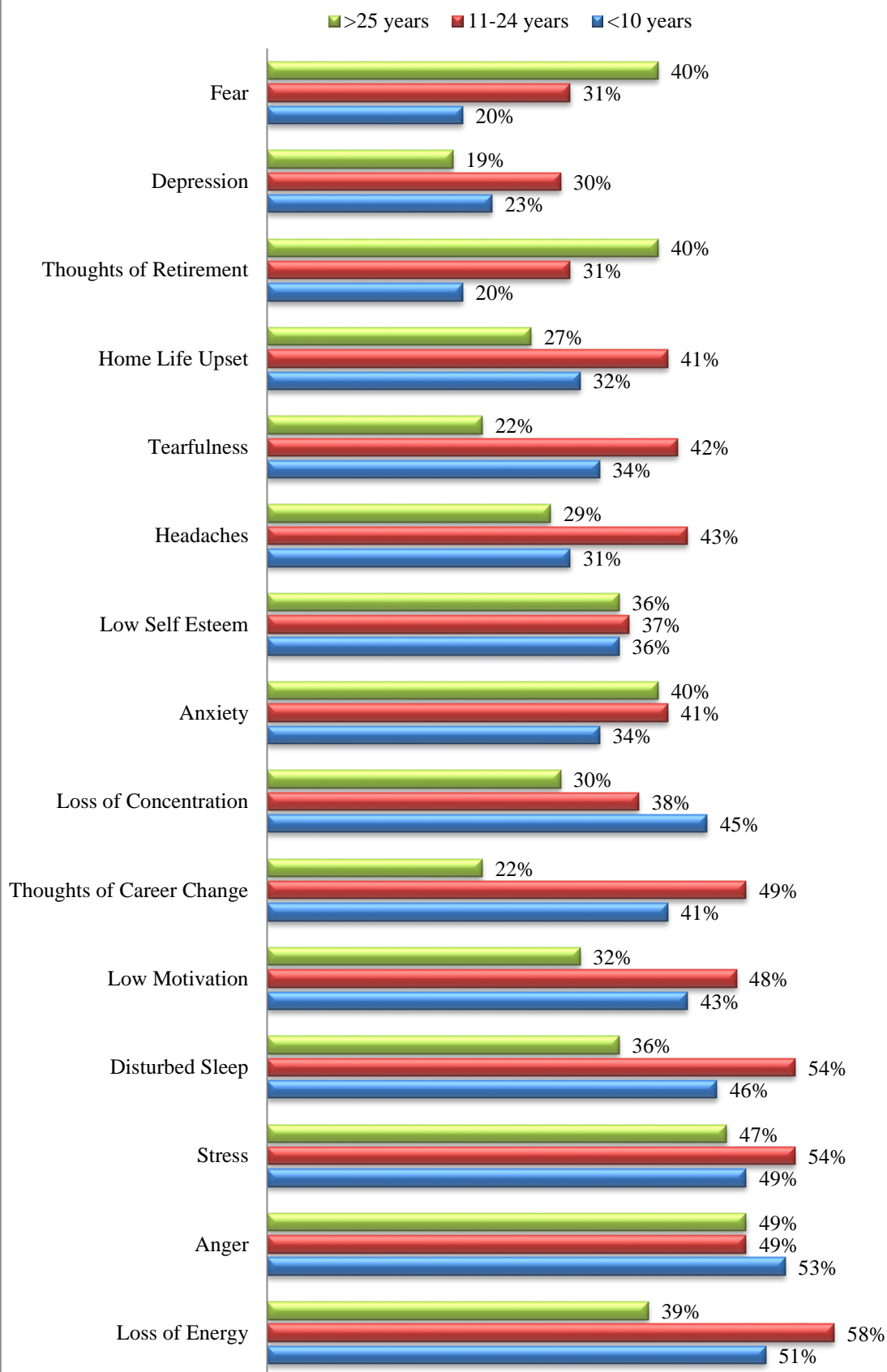
■ Female ■ Male



Appendix U Exploring SBTB by Teaching Experience:

Impact	<10 years	11-24 years	>25 years
Loss of Energy	51.2%	58%	38.7%
Stress	48.8%	54.1%	46.8%
Disturbed Sleep	46%	53.6%	36%
Anger	53.5%	49.3%	49.5%
Career Change	41.3%	48.8%	22.5%
Low Motivation	43.2%	47.8%	32.4%
Loss of Concentration	45.1%	38.2%	29.7%
Headaches	31.5%	43.5%	28.8%
Anxiety	34.3%	41.5%	39.6%
Thoughts of Retirement	19.7%	30.9%	39.6%
Tearfulness	33.8%	42%	21.6%
Home/ Family Life Upset	31.9%	40.6%	27%
Low Self Esteem	35.7%	37.2%	36%
Depression	23%	30.4%	18.9%
Fear	21.1%	24.2%	16.2%

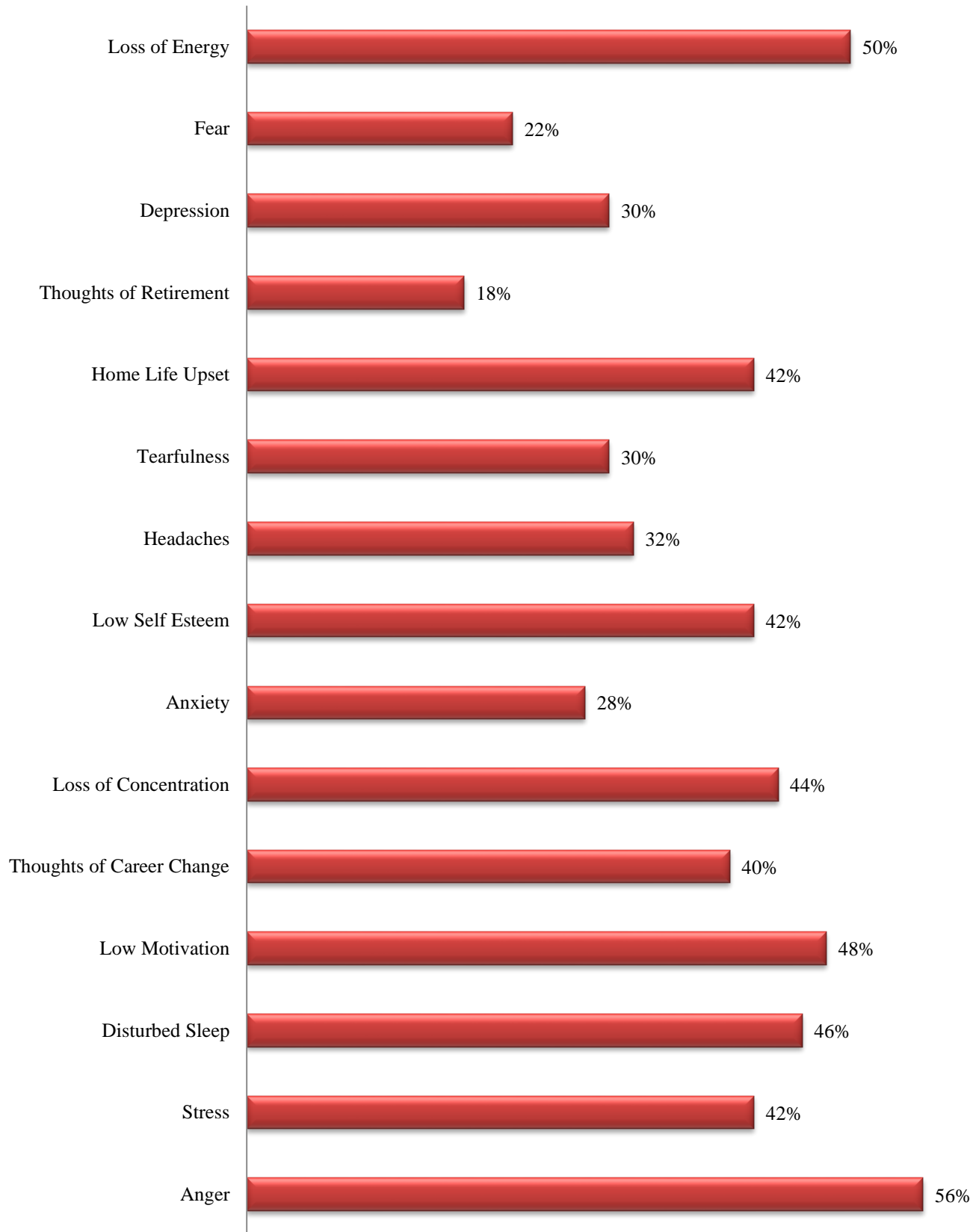
Frequency of Affect by Experience



Appendix V Exploring Student Teachers & SBTB

1. Anger	56%
2. Loss of Energy	50%
3. Low Motivation	48%
4. Disturbed Sleep	46%
5. Loss of Concentration	44%
6. Home/ Family Life Upset	42%
7. Low Self Esteem	42%
8. Stress	42%
9. Thoughts of Career Change	40%
10. Headaches	32%
11. Depression	30%
12. Tearfulness	30%
13. Anxiety	28%
14. Fear	22%
15. Thoughts of Retirement	18%

Student Teachers & SBTB



Appendix W Cross-Tabulation Analysis of Statistical Data

Chi-Square Tests p value ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

Teachers' Age & Forms of SBTB

P varied from 0.079-0.898 with the exception of sexual innuendo ($p=0.044$) therefore results are not statistically significant and require further investigation.

Teachers' Age & Effects of SBTB

P varied from 0.120-0.981 with the exception of depression, tearfulness, thoughts of retirement and thoughts of career change (p varied from 0.005-0.041), therefore taken together, results are not statistically significant and require further investigation.

Teachers' Gender & Forms of SBTB

P varied from 0.085-0.970 with the exception of intimidation ($p=0.041$) and physical assault ($p=0.052$) therefore results are not statistically significant and require further investigation.

Teachers' Gender & Effects of SBTB

P varied from 0.000-0.029 for anxiety, sleeplessness, fear, anger, tearfulness, lack of concentration, lack of motivation and headaches; 8 out of the 15 listed effects. The 7 remaining effects of SBTB varied from 0.077-0.418. Therefore, taken together, these results may show some statistical significance but require further investigation.

Teachers' Professional Experience & Forms of SBTB

P varied from 0.000-0.008 for offensive graffiti, physical threats, intimidation, sexual innuendo, cyber-bullying and damage to property; 6 out of the 9 listed SBT behaviours. The p value for the remaining 3 behaviours varied from 0.810-0.942. Therefore, taken together, these results may show some statistical significance but require further investigation.

Teachers' Professional Experience & Effects of SBTB

P varied from 0.000-0.052 for depression, sleeplessness, tearfulness, lack of concentration, family/ home life upset, thoughts of retirement, thoughts of career change, lack of motivation, loss of energy and headaches; 10 out of the 15 listed effects. The 5 remaining effects of SBTB varied from 0.246-0.946. Therefore, taken together, these results appear to show some statistical significance but require further investigation.

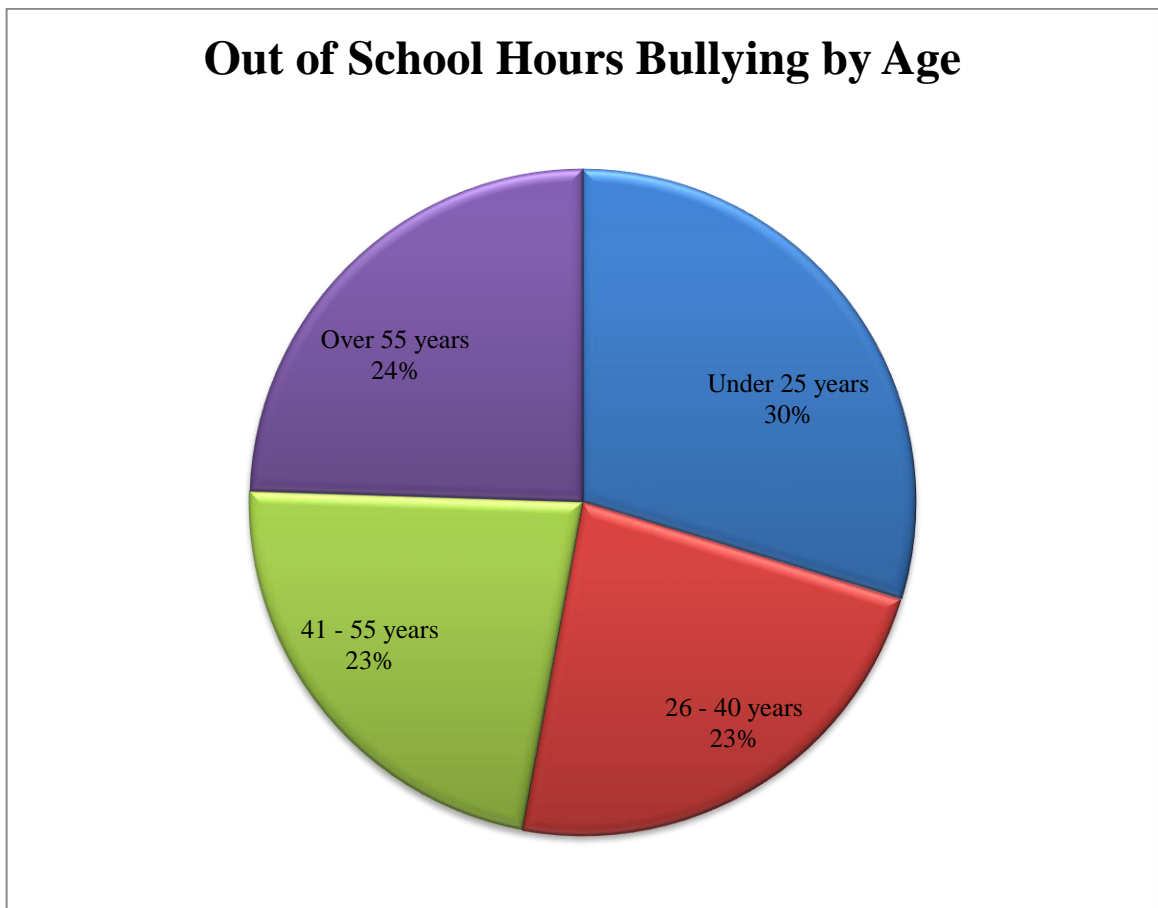
Prevalence of SBTB in DEIS, non-DEIS and DEIS Rapid Schools

P varied from 0.000-0.041 for personally offensive graffiti, sexual innuendo, cyber-bullying, verbal abuse and on-going classroom disruption; 5 out of the 9 listed forms. The remaining 4 forms of SBTB varied from $p = 0.130-0.780$, therefore although these results may show some statistical significance, further investigation is required.

Appendix X Teachers Most Targeted Outside of School Hours

Frequency by Age of Teacher:

1. Under 26 years	30%
2. 26 – 40 years	23%
3. 41 – 55 years	23%
4. Over 55 years	24%



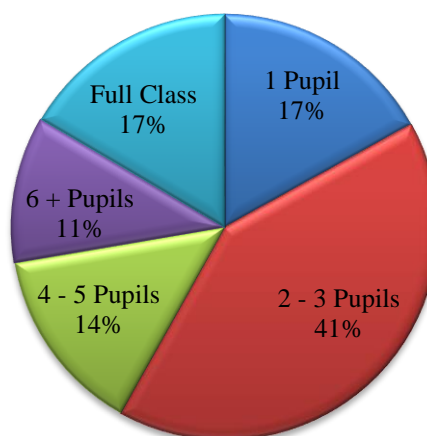
Appendix Y Profile of Bullying Student

The study endeavoured to construct a profile of the bullying student based on the information gathered through the survey. The preliminary profile suggests that between two and three students will instigate the behaviour and these students will most likely be from second, third or fifth year class groups. Consistent with international literature (Ananiadou and Smith, 2002; Munn et al., 2004; Benbenishty and Astor, 2005; Martin, 2006; West, 2007; Smith and Monks, 2008; Kauppi and Pörhölä, 2012), male students are more likely to carry out SBTB.

Number of Students Involved:

1) 1 Pupil	17%
2) 2 – 3 Pupils	41%
3) 4 – 5 Pupils	14%
4) More than 6 Pupils	11%
5) Full Class	17%

Number of Bullying Students



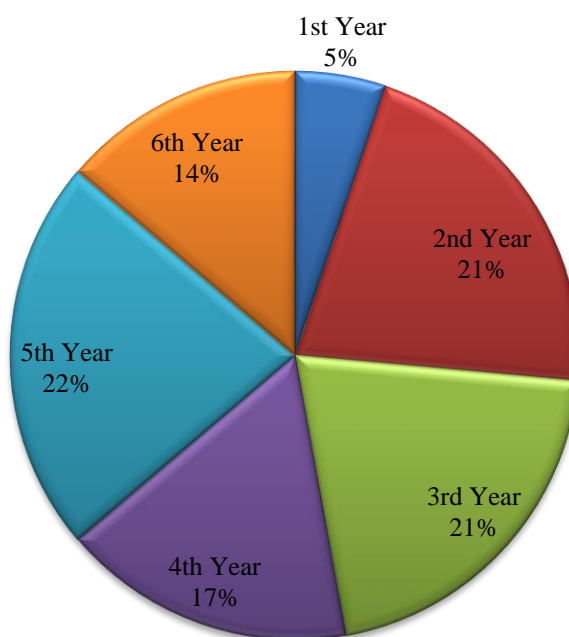
Frequency by Gender of Pupil:

1) Male Pupils	41%
2) Female Pupils	35%
3) Both Male & Female Pupils	24%

Frequency by Class Group Involved:

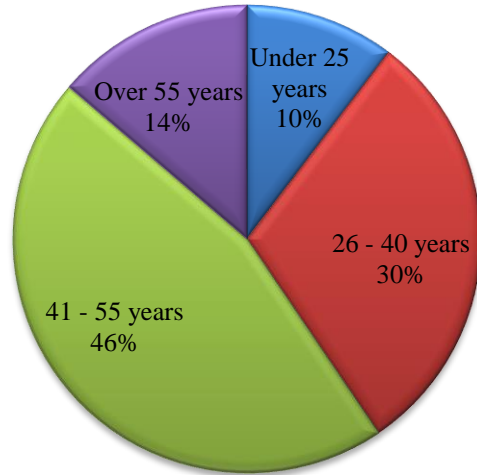
1) First Year	5%
2) Second Year	21%
3) Third Year	21%
4) Fourth Year	17%
5) Fifth Year	22%
6) Sixth Year	14%

Profile of Bullying Student by Class Group

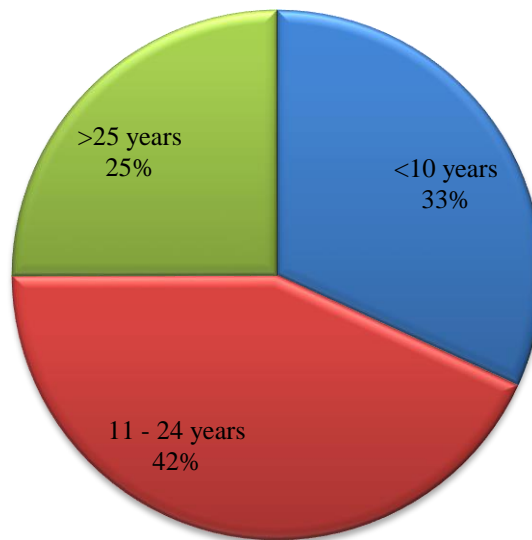


Appendix Z Teachers Seeking Support Due to SBTB

Teachers Seeking Support by Age



Teachers Seeking Support by Experience



Appendix AA Summary of Key International Findings on SBT

Author(s) & Year	Country	Focus of the Study	Main Findings
Pervin & Turner (1998)	United Kingdom	A Study of Bullying of Teachers By Pupils in An Inner London School.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Particular patterns & characteristics of student behaviour towards teachers may be identified as bullying, rather than general disruptive behaviour or violence. -The absence of sufficient supports & policies may contribute to higher levels of SBTB. -Due to SBTB, 15% admitted to lowering their expectations of students' behaviour & academic performance whilst 32% restricted lesson plans to maintain class control.
Terry (1998)	United Kingdom	Teachers as Targets of Bullying By their Pupils: A Study to Investigate Incidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Younger & less experienced teachers are more at risk of SBTB. - SBTB most often occurs in the classroom. - Male teachers are at greater risk of physical assault by a pupil. - Students may have usable power over their teachers. - Need greater societal recognition of SBT.
Ferfolja (1998)	Australia	Australian Lesbian Teachers – A Reflection of Homophobic Harassment of High School Teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Male students are the main perpetrators of sexual harassment, inappropriate sexual comments and conduct. - Teachers' reluctance to disclose experiences of SBTB may be related

			to a lack of awareness and recognition of SBT in academic, societal & political discourse.
Benefield (2004)	New Zealand	Teachers — The New Targets of Schoolyard Bullies? (An exploration of the teachers most frequently harassed and bullied by pupils. This study explores the incidence, frequency and manifestation of SBTB whilst also looking at the differences between specific groups of teachers as well as the resources identified by teachers to combat violence).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers may perceive themselves to be in a position of lesser power to pupils despite the superior power imbued on them by the State. - Whilst youngest staff experience very high levels of SBTB, teachers over 60 years of age are most targeted. - Repetition should be re-considered as a key criterion of bullying.
De Wet & Jacobs (2006)	South Africa	Educator-Targeted Bullying: Fact or Fallacy? (This study examined the nature and extent of ETB, the influence of ETB on the victims' private and professional lives, and the identification of the most likely victims of ETB).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research & discourse on ETB is very limited. - The majority of respondents indicated that they were exposed to some form of ETB. - Teachers & education leaders were reluctant to discuss issues of ETB. - ETB should form a key feature of a whole school anti-bullying policy.
Neill (2007)	UK	A Survey of Teachers' Experience of Sexism And Harassment in Schools And Colleges Analysed For the National Union of Teachers. (A questionnaire on sexist language, sexual harassment and sexual assault & the ways in which institutions support staff in dealing with these problems, as well as respondents' views on how schools should take action against them).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexist behaviour was a key concern for female, LGBT & younger staff. - Less than half of teachers are reporting sexist language or harassment which they experience or witness. - Only half of serious incidents were reported to senior colleagues as institutional support was seen as unsatisfactory. - Many respondents felt senior management did not take these issues seriously.

James et al. (2008)	Ireland	<p>Bullying Behaviour in Secondary Schools: What Roles Do Teachers Play?</p> <p>(This study examines both the bullying of teachers by students and the bullying of students by teachers when evaluating the roles that teachers play in the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A negative school climate is associated with a higher incidence of teacher victimisation. - Teachers experiencing SBTB may suffer both acute and long-term physical, psychological and behavioural effects. - Teachers who cannot effectively manage SBTB do not inspire confidence in victimised students in the teacher's ability to help them with a bullying problem. - Increased training at both pre and in-service levels is needed. - SBTB is more frequently perpetrated by male pupils.
Salmi & Kivivuori (2009)	Finland	Harassment and Violence Directed At Teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Newly qualified teachers experienced the highest rates of SBTB. - Women experience more intimidation and sexual assault by pupils whilst males experience more physical threats and physical assault.
De Wet (2010)	South Africa	Victims of Educator-Targeted Bullying: A Qualitative Study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Certain isolated acts of student aggression may be considered bullying, as the fear elicited in the recipient may lead to constant reliving of the event making it repetitive in nature. - Persistent minor low-level behaviours may have serious negative effects on teachers. - Teachers who sought support report feelings of shame, isolation and feeling unsupported by colleagues. - The relentless and repetitive nature of

			SBTB leads to teachers' feeling de-motivated, disillusioned and weary.
Kauppi & Pörhölä (2012)	Finland	Teachers Bullied By Students: Forms of Bullying and Perpetrator Characteristics. (This study examines the attributions made by teachers for their victimisation; the people with whom they share their experiences; and the links between these).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Male students are the greatest perpetrators of SBTB. - SBTB may elicit high levels of teacher stress. - Teachers attribute SBT to student-related, institution-related and teacher-related factors. - Selection of the persons with whom teachers share their experiences is determined by the nature of the attributions given for victimisation.

