

*‘An Exploration into the Nature and Extent of Violence Experienced by
Secondary School Teachers’*

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Technology, in partial fulfilment of the requirements leading to the award
of the MA in Child, Family and Community Studies*

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the

MA in Child, Family and Community Studies

is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for assessment for any academic purpose other than the partial fulfilment for that stated above

Signature of Candidate: _____

Date: _____

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore the nature and extent of violence experienced by secondary school teachers. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods were used in order to gain the greatest insight into teachers experiences of violence and intimidation in schools. The research instrument used in order to gather data was a questionnaire. One hundred and ten questionnaires were gathered from teachers in a number of different schools. The study investigates teachers own experiences of violence and intimidation, the reporting of violence, the effects of violence on teachers health, moral and personal and professional lives. Adequate levels of teacher training and in-services on dealing with violence are also investigated. Finally, support services available for teachers who are experiencing difficulties and an awareness of such support services amongst teachers are also investigated. The findings highlighted that teacher's experience violence in a number of different forms ranging from verbal abuse, physical abuse, threats and intimidations. A number of different perpetrators were found to abuse teachers including students, parents and other staff members. A number of effects were also found to have affected teachers who experienced violence and intimidation. Stress, anxiety, taking leave from working, visiting a GP and low morale are a number of the key issues found to have affected teachers. A lack of awareness amongst teachers of support services available to them was also found in this study. The importance of teacher training is presented and the demand for an increase in such training has been supported by this study. School policies on violence have been found to be very important for schools in dealing with incidences of violence and the incorporation of teachers within is vital. In accordance with the findings the present research recommends that all schools have a clear policy on violence in place that incorporates teachers. Also compulsory and increased training on preventing and dealing with incidences of violence be given to teachers. Finally a greater awareness amongst teachers of support network in place for them be created so as teachers can avail of them if they so require.

Abbreviations

- **ASTI** : Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland
- **ATL**: Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- **TUI** : Teachers Union of Ireland
- **WHO**: World Health Association
- **SPSS** : Statistical Package for Social Scientists
- **DEIS**: Delivering Equality of Opportunities in Schools
- **PGDE**: Postgraduate Diploma in Education
- **H-Dip**: Higher Diploma in Education
- **BOM**: Board of Management
- **DES**: Department of Education and Skills
- **ASTIR**: Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland
- **NAHT**: National Association of Head Teachers
- **EAS** : Employee Assistance Scheme
- **NSSC**: National School Safety Centre
- **NCES**: National Centre for Educational Statistics

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Chapter one:

Introduction

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent of violence and intimidation experienced by teachers in secondary schools in Ireland. The nature, extent and types of violence will all be of interest to this study. The effects of such experiences on teachers both on a personal level and a professional level will also be of relevance to the study alongside the issues of school policies on violence and the incorporation of teachers within school policies.

Having worked as a secondary school teacher for the last four years, the researcher has witnessed a number of acts of violence ranging from verbal abuse and threats to physical abuse whereby a teacher was kicked in the head. This study hopes to obtain teachers opinions on violence and intimidation in schools and also on the topic of training for dealing with situations of violence and intimidation. This study proposes to bring forth relevant and new findings and update issues and trends that are emerging.

1.2 Definition of Key terms

The following definitions of key terms have been adopted for this study;

Exploration: A systematic consideration

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Nature: A particular type of thing

wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Extent: The point or degree to which something extends

wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn

Violence: A behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally on other people, (Norris 1990).

1.3 Hypotheses

- In secondary schools teachers are experiencing verbal and physical abuse and intimidation frequently
- Dealing with violence and intimidation can have a profound effect on the health and wellbeing of teachers
- Secondary school teachers experience violence and intimidation from a number of different perpetrators, including students, parents and other staff members

1.4 Aims and Objectives

Aims

The aim of this study is to investigate the nature and the extent of violence which exists in our secondary schools today.

Objectives

- To explore the types of violence that are most prevalent in secondary schools
- To discover the frequency of violent and intimidating behavioural incidents in schools
- To highlight who the main perpetrators of such acts are
- To examine the effects that such experiences are having upon teachers both on a personal level and on a professional level
- To investigate school policies and the inclusion of violence against teachers
- To examine the level of satisfaction amongst teachers in relation to adequate levels of training for dealing with violence and intimidation in schools
- To investigate support networks available for teachers affected by issues of violence and intimidation

1.5 Rationale for Research Study

This research project was undertaken due to the researchers four years experience of working in a secondary school. When the researcher began teaching she found a negative change in students' behaviour which was very different from her own experiences as a student. During the researchers four years teaching she witnessed on a number of occasions teachers experiencing different forms of verbal and physical abuse.

On a number of occasions parents of students were indeed the perpetrators and on two occasions the researcher witnessed the Gardaí being called to intervene in situations. The researcher found a frequent topic of conversation in the staffroom to be that of student's intimidating and violent behaviour and on occasions teachers reporting not feeling safe in the classroom on their own with particular students. During such discussions teachers have expressed that they feel the students hold the power and that teachers rights are diminishing. Recently the researcher also witnessed two teachers being sent home from school due to injuries after intervening between two students who were fighting. One teacher was kicked in the head and the other was shaken by the experience.

1.6 Outline of the Study

The Researcher has divided this research into six separate chapters in order to ensure a clear and presentable layout for the reader.

Chapter one: The current chapter gives a brief introduction into the study and outlines the researchers' aims and objectives and rationale for conducting the study. Working definitions for key terms, hypotheses and an outline for the study is also given.

Chapter two: Chapter two gives a greater insight into our understanding of violence through a review of the literature. The use of current models and theories of violence provide a greater insight into the topic at hand. The period of adolescence is also reviewed and other influences such as parenting styles which may affect violent and intimidating behaviour by students in schools. Bullying in the workplace, in schools and cyber bullying of teachers are also reviewed. The importance of policies in the workplace and in schools is examined. Finally, in this chapter relevant recent studies and findings in Ireland and worldwide on violence and intimidation in schools are presented.

Chapter three: Chapter three focuses on the research methodology and offers an explanation for the chosen research method. A mixed method approach was used and so the philosophical underpinning for both quantitative and qualitative research is presented. The procedures for the data collection and analysis are explained alongside the sampling method. Ethical considerations of the Researcher in conducting this research study and the limitations of the study are also outlined.

Chapter four: Chapter four presents the findings of the questionnaire. Open and close-ended question findings are presented using charts, graphs and brief outlines.

Chapter five: Chapter five discusses the main findings of the study. Findings from the researcher study will be linked with existing research and findings.

Chapter six: Chapter six will conclude the study and provide recommendation for interested and relevant parties to further progress in addressing the issue of violence and intimidation in schools.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter serves as an introduction to the research study. Key terms and definitions are outlined. The aims and objectives of the study are also clearly outlined. The three main hypotheses outlined by the researcher when conducting this study are also clearly presented. The researchers' rationale for under taking this study is also discussed for the reader. A clear outline of each chapter is also displayed for the reader.

Chapter two focuses on the existing literature which is relevant to this study.

*Chapter Two:
Literature Review*

Chapter two

2.1 Introduction

Teachers not only face experiences of violence, intimidation and bullying behaviour from students but also from other staff members, those in managerial roles and from parents. Such experiences can have profound effects upon teachers and may affect their work and wellbeing. Such problems are a worldwide issue and one that is often overlooked. They can also impact heavily upon the educational experiences of young people, as periods of leave taken by teachers due to stress caused by such experiences may interrupt the continuity of teaching and also may affect the teachers ability to deliver classes enthusiastically and effectively. “It should also be noted that where bullying exists, the whole school atmosphere can be affected resulting in a climate of fear, intimidation and low morale” (ESRI 2001)

According to Esteve (2000) profound social changes have affected the relations between teachers and pupils. In the past he reports that the teacher had all the privileges and the authority, the pupil had only duties and could suffer all kinds of humiliation. “This was manifestly unjust, but equally unjust is the situation in which pupils verbally, physically, or psychologically attack teachers or their fellow pupils when the arbitration mechanisms designed to correct injustice do not function” (Esteve 2000). Esteve (2000) also believed that many teachers and staff collectives have not found satisfactory ways to organise a peaceful social environment that offers respect to everyone including staff and pupils.

The increasing issue of violence in schools in Ireland was recognised in the Circular M12/98 by the Minister of Education and Science. This circular was distributed to all schools firstly in 1998.

“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 Skills 1998)

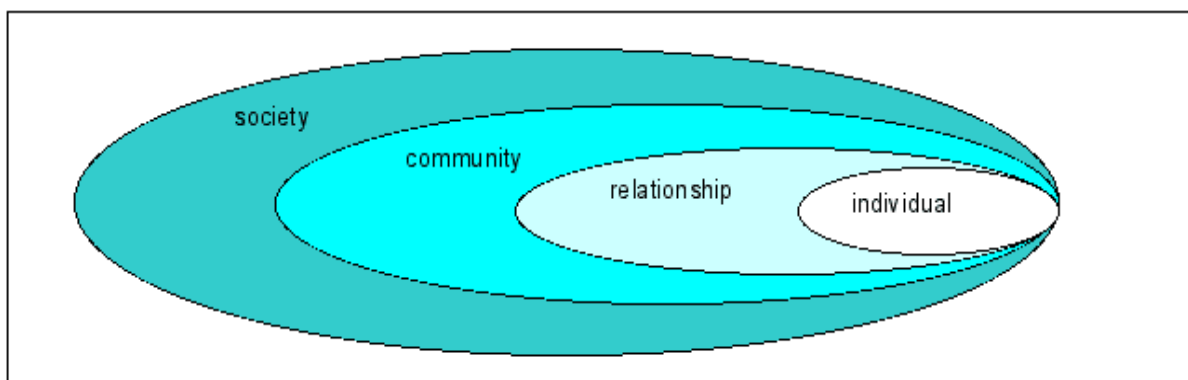
Teachers are also vulnerable to intimidation, threats and violence in their workplace from managers and other colleagues as is in any workplace setting. On the 25th March 2011 an Irish teacher was awarded 88,000 euro by the High Courts due to ‘deliberate and conscious bullying and harassment of her by her school Principal.’ The teacher in question had taken 209 certified sick days due to work related stress. “The teacher was found to have suffered a psychiatric illness, clinical depression, between February 2008 and June 2010, arising from continuous bullying by her principal from March 28th, 2007.” (Carolan 2011)

Within the second level education sector there are two main teachers unions, the ASTI (Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland) and the TUI (Teachers Union of Ireland) which works towards ensuring a workplace environment that is characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and affirmation. Both unions have conducted research into violence, intimidation and bullying of secondary school teachers in Ireland. It is important that we have a clear understanding of violence in a theoretical context before proceeding further.

2.2 Understanding Violence: A Theoretical Model

The Ecological model is the most widely used model for understanding the multifaceted nature of violence. It proposes that violence is a result of risk and protective factors operating at four levels: individual, relationship, community and societal. The model allows for the examination of the factors that influence behaviours or which increase the risk of committing or being a victim of violence. “No single factor explains why one person and not another behaves in a violent manner. Violence is a complex problem rooted in the interaction of many factors such- biological, social, cultural, economic and political” (WHO 2002).

Figure 1: An Ecological Model for understanding Violence



The first level is that of the ‘individual’, which focuses on “biological and personal history factors that influences how individuals behave and increase their likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence,” (WHO 2002). Such factors may also include demographic characteristics, age, education, income, psychological or personality disorders, substance abuse and behavioural history.

The second level of the Ecological model explores relationships with other people such as family members, partners, spouses, friends and peers and how such relationships may influence an individual’s role in being a victim or a perpetrator of violence.

The third level looks at the Community and the context of which social relationships occur for example the workplace, schools and neighbourhoods and again looks to identify factors which may cause increased risks for an individual in becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence. Such influential factors may include levels of unemployment in the community, high rates of crime, drug trade, population density and residential mobility.

The fourth level of the Ecological model looks at the broad societal factors that help “create a climate in which violence is encouraged or inhibited,” (WHO 2002). Such societal factors as the health, economic, educational and social policies and cultural norms of the country; Such norms include “those that give priority to parental rights over child welfare, those that regard suicide as a matter of individual choice instead of a preventable act of violence, those that entrench male dominance over women and children and those that support the use of excessive force by police against citizens,” (WHO 2002).

The overlapping rings demonstrate how different factors can be strengthened or changed by other factors. For example individual factors may impact upon relationship factors and influence them. The Ecological model also highlights that the prevention of violence involves addressing the issue at all levels at the same time.

The second level of the ecological model explores relationships with families and others and how they may influence the individuals' role in becoming the victim or the perpetrator. Bowlby's attachment theory will further help explain the impact of such relationships even from an early stage.

2.3 Attachment Theory

Bowlby's attachment theory proposes that "early parent infant relationship serves the vital functions of ensuring that safety and security of the infant, as well as providing the basis for the development of the human personality, interpersonal interaction, and affect regulation through the lifespan" (Reinert & Edwards 2009). Therefore a weak attachment during infancy and early childhood may contribute as a factor to the perpetrators of violence and intimidation.

Egeland & Erickson (1993) as cited in Gewirtz & Edleson (2004) also support this finding, "The development of secure attachments is a key task of the infant, toddler and preschool periods, and insecure attachment is a risk factor for later emotional and behavioural.

Furthermore Bowlby (1969) theorised that "early parent-child affectional relationship provides the basis for the infant to form internal working models (IWMs) of the self and the other." (Reinert & Edwards 2009) If a child is mistreated their IWM may adversely be affected.

The form of parenting used further impacts upon the child's development, and so parenting styles are very important.

2.4 The Impact of Parenting Styles

Alongside socialization and the many other changes and developments which adolescents are faced with, their childhood, previous experiences and parenting styles also play a major role in the creation of the 'bully'. Baumrind (1971) outlines three different parenting styles.

- ❖ Authoritarian parenting. "Such parenting leads to behavior in adolescence that is socially incompetent. "(Sullivan, Cleary & Sullivan 2004 pg 36)

- ❖ Permissive parenting can take two forms. Firstly, neglectful which does not offer much support or guidance to the child as they develop. "Adolescent behavior in this type of setting is socially incompetent and children from these sorts of families often lack self control" (Sullivan et al., 2004 pg 36)

Secondly indulgent parenting where by the parent is too involved in the child's life. Resulting in children who are "incompetent socially as adolescents and lack a sense of boundaries and self control" (Sullivan et al., 2004 pg 37)

- ❖ Authoritative parents encourage individual thinking. "Authoritative parenting is synonymous with socially competent behavior adolescence"(Sullivan et al., 2004 pg 37)

As the child moves into the period of adolescence they further develop and begin to seek independence. As secondary schools are dealing with twelve to seventeen year olds predominantly it is important that we have a clear understanding of this transitional period of an individual's life.

2.5 Understanding Adolescence

Violence and intimidation is a problem which exists in every school despite its status. Research has also shown that bullying is at its utmost during adolescence years. Therefore it is fair to say that violence, abuse and intimidation exists in our secondary schools. Such behaviours do not only occur student to student and can indeed often take the form of student teacher and teacher student. It is important that we define clearly the term adolescence. “Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical and mental human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood. This transition involves biological, social, and psychological changes,” (www.wikipedia.org). Early adolescence occurs between the ages of 11 and 15, while late adolescence is between the ages of 16 and 19. Adolescence for many is a challenging and trying time. “Never at any stage of human development is change so rapid, extreme, and unpredictable as it is in adolescence” (Sullivan et al., 2004 pg27)

It is during this period that bullying can often emerge as a major problem for adolescences and is often rampant in our secondary schools and communities.

2.6 Bullying a Form of Violence

According to Whitted & Dupper (2005) bullying is the most prevalent form of low-level violence in schools today. Bullying may be defined as “repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others” (DES 2011). There are a number of forms of bullying including verbal bullying, physical bullying, psychological bullying, relational bullying, sexual bullying and racist bullying. “There is growing evidence that bullying has a profound and pervasive effect on the learning environment of a school” (Whitted & Dupper 2005 pg167). As this study focuses on violence and intimidation the term ‘bullying’ is an integral part of the study as it

incorporates a number of forms of abuse that are relevant to the study and is a form of violence.

Bullying is based on an imbalance of power. Acceptance amongst peers is vital in the life of any adolescent particularly in early years. Many bullies choose a victim whom they perceive to be weaker or any easy target. In many cases this victim may indeed be the teacher if they perceive them to be weak. They use their victim to win power and often to make themselves feel better about themselves. It may also be used as a mechanism to 'look cool' on front of their peers. "What happens to many bullies is that their social development becomes stuck at that point where they win power and prestige through bullying, and they do not tend to progress towards individuation and empathy as adolescents usually do" (Sullivan et al., 2004 pg 17). This may lead to problems later in life and may involve the individual becoming a bully in the workplace.

2.7 Workplace Bullying

As in any other place of employment 'workplace bullying' exists within our schools. Many definitions of workplace bullying incorporate violence and intimidation under the same umbrella. Therefore we will briefly examine the topic of workplace bullying in order to gain greater insight and understanding of the issue at hand.

"Workplace Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity at work," (Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001).

Findings from the study on workplace bullying which was undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) found that, incidences of bullying for both genders were 56% higher for those working in the Public sector than in the Private sector.

Such incidences of bullying were highest in Public Administration/ Defence at a rate of 12.6%, Education at 12.1% and Health/ Social Work at a rate of 10.5%. Significant differences were also noted between different genders. For example within the Education sector 7.8% of males reported being bullied as opposed to almost double that for females at

14.3%. Indirect bullying can also affect teachers. With social networking sites becoming more and more popular they are being used by parents, students and colleagues to attack teachers.

2.8 Cyber Bullying of Teachers

Teachers are now also reporting increased experiences of cyber bullying not only from students but also from parents and other staff members. Cyber bullying may be defined as “the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.” (ATL 2011) Social networkings sites such as ‘Facebook’ and ‘Bebo’ are being used to attack teachers similarly are emails and text messages.

A 2009 survey conducted by the Association of teachers and lecturers questioned 539 teachers on their experiences of cyber bullying. Findings revealed that one in seven of its respondents had experienced cyber bullying, and one in five reported knowing of another teacher who had been a victim of cyber bullying. Findings also revealed that the perpetrators included pupils 44% and 28% another colleague or manager. Over a quarter had had offensive messages posted about them on social networking sites such as Facebook and 28% described being sent unwelcome text messages.

Each teacher’s experience of violence is different. Violence can take a number of forms and can be inflicted by a number of different perpetrators towards a teacher including the student, parent or other staff members.

2.9 Experiences of Violence

People have different expectations that can significantly impact how they experience violence in the workplace,” (McCann 2002 pg121).

The Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) conducted a survey on bullying of teachers in 1999. This study revealed that ‘teachers can be bullied by those in authority, by colleagues, by students and by parents.’

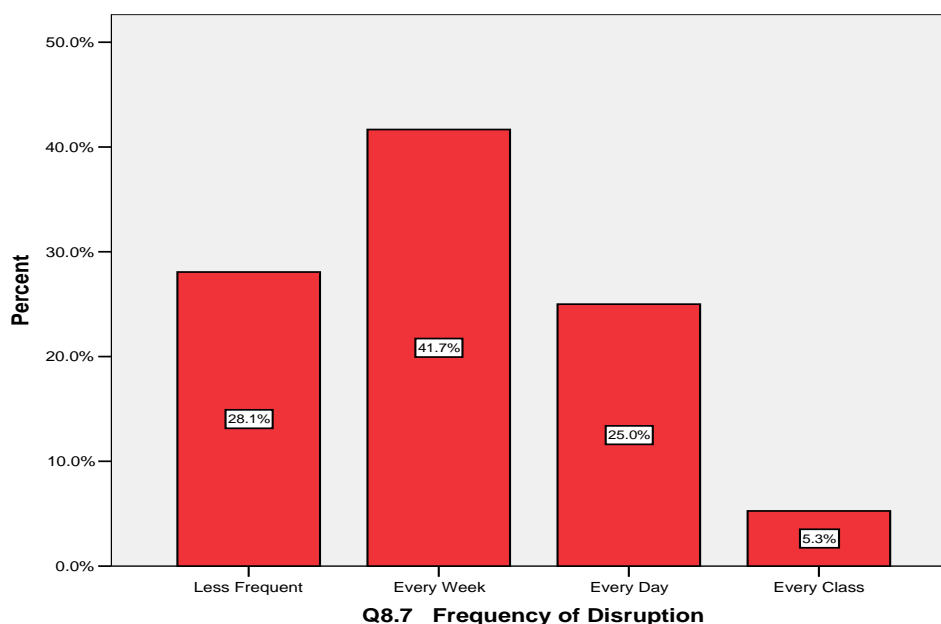
Further findings revealed that 68% of respondents had experienced verbal abuse at some point in their careers. Fifty percent stated that they had been deliberately excluded by another person. Twenty six percent of respondents reported that they had been the target of personally offensive graffiti, abusive work related telephone calls or malicious damage to their property. Fourteen percent indicated that an immediate member of their family had experienced abuse or harassment as a direct result of the respondent's work. Ninety percent of respondents reported that they had experienced positive reinforcement and praise at work from school Authorities, colleagues, students and parents. Eighty three percent reported that the atmosphere in their school was "harmonious" or "moderate" and 16% described it as "not acceptable" or "tense".

In 2006 the TUI (Teachers Union of Ireland) conducted a similar disciplinary survey in Post Primary Vocational and Community and Comprehensive Colleges in Ireland. Findings reported that 'discipline of students in schools was a problem. Eleven percent believed that it was not a problem, 39% saw it as a minor problem, 38% saw it as a major problem and 11.8% saw it as a very serious problem.

Findings from this survey highlighted a number of key problems in schools according to teachers. Thirty six percent of respondents reported 'verbal abuse directed at teachers by students' as a problem. Twenty one percent of respondents reported 'threatening / intimidating behaviour directed at teacher by students as a problem. 'Sexual innuendo / harassment directed at teachers by students' were reported by 8%. 'Verbal abuse directed at teachers by parents of students' was reported by 7% of respondents of the survey. Unacceptable damage caused to the property of other students or teachers or school property by students' was reported by 30% of teachers in this survey.

Further research conducted by TUI (2006), investigated the frequency of experiences by teachers of 'threatening or intimidating behaviour from students directed at the teacher'. Twenty eight percent reported less frequent, 41.7% reported experiencing such behaviour on a weekly basis, 25% on a daily basis and 5.3% during every class.

Figure 2: Threatening or Intimidating Behaviour from Students



Of those who experienced threatening or intimidating behaviour it was found that it was exhibited by very few students 35.2%, a minority of students 55.9%, a majority of students 8.4% and by all students 4%.

“Initial (incomplete) sample analyses did not suggest any substantial significant differences in responses from teachers of different ages or in terms of their teaching experience or their sex or the size or type of school in which they are teaching or where it is located,”(TUI 2006, p xxix).

In the United States of America the National Centre for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported findings from the National Crime Victimization Survey 2010, on teacher’s experiences of violence in the USA. The study was conducted over a five year period from 1997 to 2001. The study included victimization of teachers not only by students but also parents. Findings revealed that approximately 1.3 million teachers were the victims of nonfatal crimes, which included 817,000 thefts and 473,000 violent crimes, which included “rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault and simple assault”. Over the five year period 48,000 serious violent crimes were recorded. Gender and race differences were also highlighted in the report. Over the five year period, male teachers were noted to have been

more likely than female teachers to be victims of violent crimes 39 vs. 16 crimes per 1,000 teachers. Black teachers were also more likely to be victimized than white teachers 12 %vs. 9%.

The location and type of school also played a role. The report found that teachers in urban areas were more likely to experience violent crime victimization than those in rural or suburban schools, 28 vs. 13 and 16 crimes per 1,000 teachers. Differences were also revealed in relation to public school teachers versus private school teachers. Ten percent of public school teachers reported having been threatened with injury compared to 4% of private school teachers, also 4% of public school teachers reported being physically attacked by students compared to 2% of those who worked in private schools. This revealed that teachers working in central city public schools were four times more vulnerable to being targets of threats and injury, and three times more likely of attacks.

In the United Kingdom the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) conducted a study in 2010. Over 1,108 primary, secondary and further education staff working in schools and colleges was surveyed. Over ¼ of school and college reported having dealt with physical aggression from students and 1/3 reported having been confronted by an aggressive parent or guardian according to ATL.

Of the Secondary school teachers that were survey by the ATL (2010), 57.7% reported having been verbally insulted, or having derogatory comments made towards them. Forty four percent reported experiencing intimidation in the forms of threats, shouting and being sworn at. Twenty percent reported experiencing physical abuse, 4.2% other and 87.5% experienced disrespect.

Similar to NCES (2010) findings, ATL (2010) findings found that public school teachers reported higher levels of violence and intimidation than private school teachers. Significant differences were highlighted, including verbal abuse in public schools 56.9% versus private schools 18.3%, intimidation 43.4% versus 11.1%, physical abuse 31.7% versus 9.5% and other 4.9% versus 1.6%.

When asked if they had found student behaviour to have changed over the past five years, 59.2% of respondents reported that it had worsened, 29% said it remained the same, 3.1% found it to have improved and 8.8% didn't know.

Further UK findings revealed teachers being abused outside of the classroom. In 2009 the Guardian newspaper reported that, "teachers have made over 200 personal insurance claims cases to the union for damage to property by pupils over the last two years – 69 incidents of malicious damage to vehicles, such as "keying" of cars, and 146 of damage to property," (Lipsett, April 6th, 2009).

Parental Behaviour towards Teachers

The general secretary of ATL Dr. Mary Bousted said that "it is totally unacceptable that poor student behaviour continues to be such a widespread problem in schools and colleges, and that it is shocking that 1/3 of staff experience aggression from students, parents and guardians".

In 2009 the ATL reported that "Four in 10 teachers have faced verbal or physical aggression from a pupil's parent or guardian", (BBC News, 2009 para.1).

Leaders of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) reported that "members are being faced with an increasing amount of violence and abuse and clearly if parents persist in behaving like this it makes it very difficult for the staff if the child remains at the school." (Garner, 2011 para.10). Furthermore the NAHT in a bid to curb abusive and violent attacks on school staff are in support of giving head teachers the right to expel a pupil whose parents harass or threaten teachers.

2.10 Reporting Violence

While many teachers are faced with dealing with cases of violence and intimidation in their job many don't bother to report threats and acts of violence committed against them. According to the National School Safety Centre (NSSC), " For some it's a matter of believing that they can control the situation themselves and others keep quiet out of fear

for their lives or even their jobs—fearing that they look somehow incompetent or incapable of controlling their students,”(NSSC 2011).

Research conducted by the Health and Safety Authority where employees were absented with injuries received through incidence of violence in their schools from 2001 onwards revealed a total of 24 incidences reported only 3 of which were within the secondary education level. Such figures are very low in relation to the numbers which are employed in this sector.

Table 1: Employee Absenteeism due to Incidents in Schools

Year	Number of incidents Reported	Range of days out of work due to reported incidents
2004	2	14-20 days 14-20days
2005	0	0
2006	1	14-20days
2007	0	0
2008	0	0
2009	0	0
2010	0	0

(Health and Safety Authority 2001)

Research conducted by the NCES (2010) also investigated teacher’s reporting of serious incidents. Eighty two percent of teachers were shown to have reported such incidents while 17.4% did not. Of those who reported such incidents their satisfaction with how the school dealt with such behaviour was investigated. Thirty eight percent were satisfied, 45.5% partially and 16.1% were not satisfied.

2.11 Effects of Violence

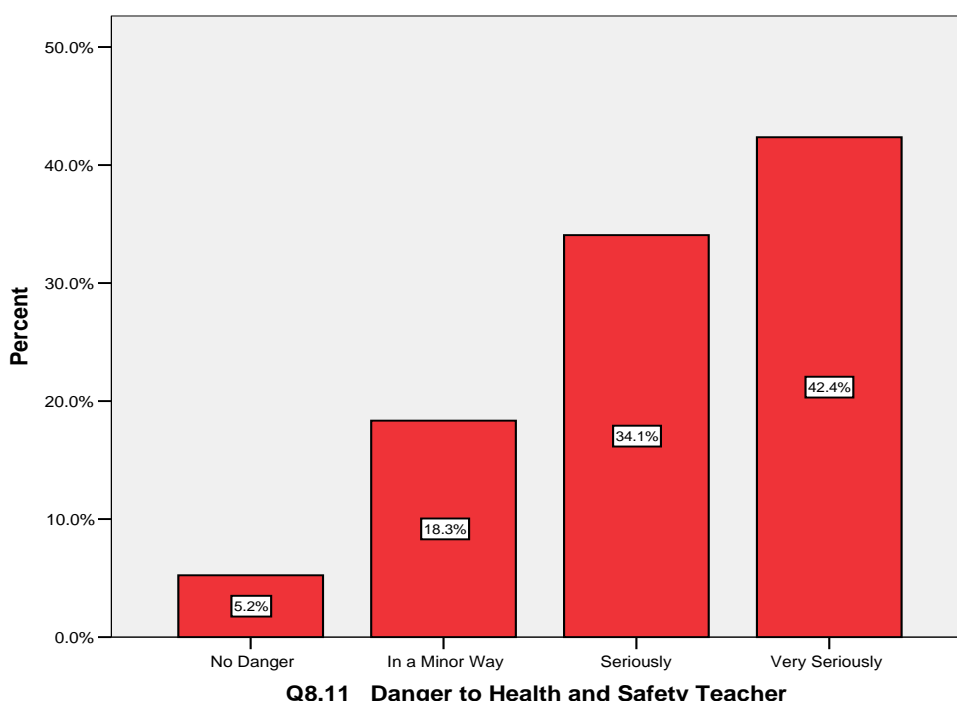
The Health and Safety Authority (2007) outlined teaching as one of the high risk areas for exposure to violence.

Further US findings outlined the effects that experiences of violence and intimidation had on the teachers who were surveyed. Thirty two percent of respondents reported a loss of

confidence in school. Twelve percent refused to teach, while 22.8% reported mental health problems. Further findings showed 7.6% reporting physical harm, 4.5% having to take leave from work, and 7% having to visit a doctor.

The TUI's 2006 study also revealed the effect of such behaviour as a danger to teachers 'Health and Safety'. Five percent believed that it was not a danger. Eighteen percent of respondents noted it as being a danger in a minor way, in a serious way 34.1%, and in a very serious way 42.4%. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3: Dangers to Teacher Health and Safety



The effects of such problems felt at a professional level by teachers were reported as, unaffected by 9.8%, a little frustrated by 39%, quite frustrated by 30% and very frustrated by 20%. On a personal level such effects were experienced, unaffected 11.1%, a little drained 38%, quite drained 36.9% and completely drained 14%.

Such experiences by teachers of threatening or intimidating behaviour by students towards them were also seen to have an effect on 'Health'. Fifteen percent reported their health as

being unaffected, while 41.6% reported being a little stressed, 34.7% as being quite stressed and 9.1% as being completely stressed.

Teacher's morale was also highlighted as being effected by such behaviours. Eleven percent reported no effect on morale, while 40.9% reported an effect in a minor way, 34.5% in a major way and 14.1% as very seriously, (TUI 2006).

In 2004 the ASTI reported findings on the effects of such negative behaviour on teachers. It was reported that, "Serious breaches of school discipline policy can have profound negative effects on teachers. Teachers subjected to abuse or intimidation reported experiencing fears for their safety, lack of sense of dignity at work, intense feelings of anger, fear, humiliation or shame, isolation and depression."

Respondents to the ASTI's 1999 survey noted the effects such negative experiences have had on them. Of those who had been victims of bullying 50% reported tearfulness as a major effect. Forty one percent reported anger, 40% stress, 37% loss of concentration, 32% disturbed sleep, 26% deterioration in work, 23% forgetfulness, 18% low self esteem, 16% home / family life upset, 13% reported headaches, 12% loss of energy, 11% thoughts of retirement, 10% depression and 9% reported low motivation (ASTI 1999).

The ASTI also noted in their 2004 report that "Some teachers may never reveal the nature of the incident or its impact on them". Such findings are supported by the low rate of cases which are reported to the Health and Safety Authority.

The reporting of violence is important in order to deal with situations effectively. Therefore it is important that schools have clear policies in place for dealing with and the reporting of such incidences.

2.12 School Policies

The Department of Education Circular M18/99- Guidelines on Violence in schools, outlines the duty of management authorities to provide a safe school environment, general duties on employees, preventative measures and steps to be followed in the event of an

alleged assault. The circular M33/91 further addresses the issue of violent and inappropriate behaviour towards teachers by any student, parent/ guardian or other adult.

- *Guidelines towards a Positive Policy for Schools Behaviour and Discipline states that aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards teachers is regarded as “serious or gross misbehaviour and may warrant suspension”. Serious breaches of school discipline policy include assault by students on teachers and other students, verbal abuse / offensive language against teachers and other students, sexual and other forms of harassment, threats and intimidation of teachers and other students, carrying offensive weapons, supply or using illegal drugs, intrusion into the school/ classroom by adults with the intention of confronting teachers”, Circular M33/91- (ASTI 2004)*

Many schools incorporate the subjects of violence and intimidation within their Anti-Bullying Policy rather than having a separate policy for violence. As noted previously bullying is a low level form of violence. The 2001 Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, acknowledged that “considerable progress has been made in recent years by a number of organisations such as the Joint Managerial Body and the Council of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools, INTO, ASTI and the TUI,” (Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001).

“It is the view of the Task Force that an effective anti-bullying policy requires a working environment where bullying is actively discouraged. This will involve the training of management in social skills including communication, conflict resolution, leadership, stress management and team building,” (Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001).

The report also recommended that clear procedures be put into for dealing with incidences of bullying. Clear and precise anti-bullying policies should be drawn up by staff and management working together to ensure everyone has an input and is satisfied with the policy. The Task Force also recommends that the policy should be ‘in writing, dated and signed’. Auditing and reviewing the effectiveness of such policies is also important to ensure maximum benefits from such policies.

According to the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying a number of key components should be reflected within an Anti Bullying Policy to ensure its effectiveness.

1. The ethical commitment of the employer and employee to fostering an environment free from bullying.
2. Policy statement- which includes a commitment to ensure 'reprisal-free' complaining
3. The Task Force definition on workplace bullying
4. The procedures for making a complaint should be outlined and the role of the manager, supervisor, contact/ support colleague, trade union representative/ official should be clearly defined. More than one person should be identified to whom a complaint may be made.
5. The involvement of human resources personnel, outside agencies and others should be clarified
6. Complaints should be dealt with as speedily as possible
7. The degree of confidentiality should be clarified
8. The step by step procedures to be followed in the case of an informal allegation
9. The step by step procedures to be followed in the case of a formal allegation
10. The sanctions involved

(Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, 2001)

Research conducted in the US by the NCES (2010), revealed that 88.9% of schools were found to have clear behaviour policies, 8.9% did not and 2.9% of respondents were unsure. Of the behaviour policies, 61.4% were satisfied with the behaviour policy in place in their school, with 26.2% unhappy and 12.3% had no views either way.

Prevention is better than intervention. Through the use of teacher training many situations may be prevented from escalating. It is also important that teachers are prepared and equipped with the skills for dealing with such incidences should they arise.

2.13 Teacher Training

Teacher training on dealing with violence and intimidation from students, parents and other staff members is vital in preparing teachers for the real world of teaching. But how much training is actually given to teachers despite the increasing problem of violence in schools? “Teachers do not expect to have to manage violent behaviour on the job and they often are given no training in how to do so,” (McCann 2002 pg121).

The ATL surveyed 1001 of its members in 2010 and findings revealed that “nearly half of new teachers do not feel properly equipped to deal with violence in the classroom,” (BBC News 2010 Para.1). The ATL (2010) are calling for teacher training in dealing with violence to be made compulsory for all new trainee teachers.

The Health and Safety Authority provide a number of e-learning courses for teachers and principals on Health and Safety within the school which may offer support for schools in preventing and dealing with violent incidences in schools along with other safety measures.

During the PGDE compulsory modules such as ‘Classroom Management’ and ‘The School as a Learning Environment’, deal with dealing with student behaviour and difficult students in the classroom. Dealing with other staff members and parents is rarely incorporated into such modules. A number of areas are covered within such modules and student behaviour is only one of the topics which are touched on during the module.

Not all incidences can be avoided and as with any job teachers may face difficult periods. Therefore it is important that support networks are in place to offer support and advice to teachers.

2.14 Supports for Teachers

External support for teachers who may be experiencing difficulties such as stress due violence and intimidation in schools may seek support from the Employee Assistance

Scheme. The Employee Assistance Scheme was set up by the Department of Education and skills and the VHI. The new service aims to “address, at the earliest stage, problems that a teacher may be experiencing. Ideally what it will be looking to do is tackle issues before a problem manifests itself and affects a teachers' performance in the classroom setting, which ultimately affects pupils,” (VHI 2011).

Services provided by the Employee Assistance Scheme include ‘supportive psychological health services’, short term counselling and critical incident debriefing. The website also includes a number of documents to support teachers such as documents on ‘Challenging Bullying’, ‘Recognising Bullying’, ‘Information on Bullying’ and ‘Guidelines on Bullying in Schools’.

In 2007 the Employee Assistance Services reported receiving on average one hundred calls a month from teachers needing help with stressful work and personal issues. The EAS was contacted by the researcher and more recent figures could not be released by the EAS to the researcher. The service is available for teachers 24hours a day 365 days a year, (ASTIR 2007).

In the ASTI's (1999) report findings revealed that only 14% of schools had in place a support system to deal with incidents of adult bullying.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the current existing literature related to this study. Violence was further explained using a theoretical model. The attachment theory, parenting styles and the period of adolescence were further looked at in order to further understand factors which may influence violence in schools. Bullying a form of violence is also reviewed. The subject of bullying in the workplace and the cyber bullying of teachers as a recent but serious developing topic was also discussed. Findings from recent studies related to violence and intimidation of teachers in schools were also looked at revealing teachers experiences. The reporting of violence and the profound effects such experiences can have on teachers were also highlighted. School policies are very important in the prevention and for dealing with violence and intimidation in schools and so literature relating to school policies are also outlined. Finally, teacher training and existing support networks for

teachers suffering from the effects of experiencing violence and intimidation in schools are also outlined.

Chapter three will outline and discuss the methodology used to conduct this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will firstly give an overview and justification for the chosen methodological approach. This study uses a mixed method approach of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. It aims to explore the nature and extent of violence experienced by secondary school teachers. This chapter will also focus on the sample group used and justification for the use of purposive sampling. Throughout this study the researcher encountered a number of limitations which are to be addressed. Questionnaires are the chosen method for data gathering by the Researcher for this study. Mixtures of open and closed-ended questions are used in order to reduce the demand on the respondent and yet to gain as much insight into personal experiences from respondents as possible in a short time frame. The detailed process of gaining access to secondary schools and the data collection process are also outlined. On completion of the data collection the researcher then conducted data analysis using SPSS. The conduction of this study in an ethical manner is very important to the Researcher. In order to conduct the study ethically the Researcher focuses on six basic principles of ethical research according to the Economic and Social Research Council (2006).

3.2 Research Design and Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a mixed method approach is chosen which combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The mixed method approach is also chosen by the researcher in order to utilise and combine the positive aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods. “Its central premises are that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone,” (Creswell, 2003 pg5).

Quantitative research is based upon a positivist theoretical approach. “According to quantitative approach observation of the world can and must be carried out objectively,” (Marlow & Boone 2010, pg9). Quantitative research as far as possible does not permit for biases and values to play a role and so research instruments such as questionnaires are designed for this purpose.

The philosophical basis for qualitative research is grounded in the interpretive perspective. “The interpretive/qualitative research reality is based on people’s definitions of it rather than on something externally present,” (Marlow & Boone 2010, pg11). The qualitative approach involves the nonnumeric examination of phenomena and focuses on the subjective experience as peoples behaviours cannot be observed objectively.

The theoretical perspective underpinning the mixed method approach is that of pragmatism. A pragmatic approach sees that “instead of methods being important the problem is important and researcher use all approaches to understand the problem,” (Rossman & Wilson 1985 as cited in Creswell 2003 pg12).

Pragmatism allows the researcher to draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions as they progress through their research. According to Creswell (2003) for the mixed method researcher pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different assumptions, different world views along with different forms of data collection and analysis.

The research instrument used is a questionnaire which is comprised of open and closed-ended questions. The closed-ended questions are analysed using the quantitative method of SPSS. The open-ended questions are analysed using a qualitative approach of coding. A combination of both allowed the researcher to gather a greater insight into the experiences of teachers whilst under a restricted time frame.

3.3 Research Instrument

The researcher instrument used in this study is that of a questionnaire. (See Appendix C) The questionnaire comprises of a total of sixty two questions. The questionnaire is divided up into six different sections including, general information, student behaviour, parental behaviour, and other staff members’ behaviour, reporting violence, effects of violence and intimidation on health and school policy.

The questionnaire consists of a mixture of both open and closed ended questions (See Appendix E). A closed or forced-choice question according to De Vaus (2002), is one in

which a number of alternative answers are provided from which respondents are to select one or more of the answers. The close-ended questions are predominantly with ordered choices with a smaller number of unordered response choices. When designing the close-ended questions the research focused on a number of key points including, “the surveys objectives, the amount of information held by the respondent, the likely structure of the respondents ideas/concepts, the respondents motivation and prior knowledge of the population under study,” (Yates, 2004 pg33).

The researcher selected predominantly closed-ended questions with ordered answer choices as they are less demanding for respondents, which is important due to time restrictions and busy schedules of teachers. A small number of unordered response choices, were also used in order to gather sufficient detail and get a greater insight into teachers experiences. Partially close-ended questions were also used in the questionnaire. “Such questions provide a compromise between the open and the close-ended structures. Although answer choices are provided, respondents have the option of creating their own responses,” (Salant & Dillman 1994).

An open-ended question according to De Vaus (2002) is one for which respondents formulate their own answers. The number of open-ended questions used were limited and only one per section was used. This approach was chosen by the researcher in order to give the opportunity to the respondent to outline their experiences in their own words if they so wished or to add any other comments in relation to the section. Open-ended questions also hold other advantageous as they prevent the researcher from ‘putting words into the respondent’s mouth’. Also, they may give a greater insight into the respondents’ experiences and background allowing for a greater understanding of the responses to the closed-ended questions, (Mitchell & Jolley, 2009). By limiting the number of open-ended questions used the researcher also reduced the demand on the respondent and reduced the completion time of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then piloted twice. The first time it was piloted amongst four volunteers. Errors were noted and corrected. It was then piloted a second time to ensure no more errors remained and also that the time taken to complete to the questionnaire did not

exceed eight minutes. Once the questionnaire was complete the researcher then continued forward and chose a sample group.

3.4 Sampling

This study is based on one hundred and ten secondary school teachers from different types of secondary schools including Voluntary Secondary schools, Vocational schools, Comprehensive schools, Community schools, Community schools and Fee paying Grinds schools.

This research project uses a non-probability sampling approach. “In a non-probability sample, units are deliberately selected to reflect a particular features or groups within the sampled population,” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 pg78). A non-probability approach is chosen as the “statistical accuracy of probability sampling is less important than the criterion of ‘fit for the purpose’ in such a case,” (May 2001 pg95). Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 also noted that non probability sampling is suited to small scale in depth studies.

Purposive sampling was used in obtaining secondary school teachers to facilitate this study. According to May (2001), Purposive sampling is whereby a selection of those to be surveyed is made according to a known characteristic, such as being a teacher. Purposive sampling has two main principal aims. “Firstly, to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter is covered. The second is to ensure that within each of the key criteria some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored,” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003 pg79). Whilst the entire sample group chosen were secondary school teachers, years of experience and the location and types of schools they were working in varied across the sample group.

The researchers’ initial aim was to distribute an even number of questionnaires amongst each type of school. As the data collection process continued the researcher found that this would not be feasible due to restricted access to schools. For instance only one of the five fee paying grinds schools which was approached was willing to participate in the study as compared to the larger number of community schools who were willing to facilitate the study. It was important for the researcher to gather as many questionnaires as possible from teachers and so all schools who were willing to participate were used which resulted

positively in the high number of returned questionnaires but negatively on the even distribution of questionnaires.

3.5 Access to Schools

In order to gain access to schools the researcher, firstly, e-mailed the principals' of each of the secondary schools, outlining the research being conducted and requesting where possible the facilitation of the school and its teachers in the study. (See Appendix C) A copy of the questionnaire and cover letter was attached to each e-mail. (See Appendix D&E)

Of the thirty schools which were approached via e-mail the researcher only received two responses, both of which were happy to facilitate the study and so dates and times were arranged. As more participating schools were needed and the response rates from the e-mails were so low, the researcher chose to set up appointments with a number of principals to discuss the study. The researcher phoned each school to do so. This resulted in thirteen schools willing to participate in the study, three schools putting it to the board of management (BOM) at the next quarterly meeting and two schools unwilling to participate due to the sensitive nature of the topic at hand. The schools which chose to put it to the BOM could not be used due to time restraints of the study. Times and dates and the preferred manner of distribution were all discussed and arranged with each individual principal. With a sufficient number of schools on board the researcher could now begin the data collection process. The difficulties which arose in gaining access to the schools interfered with the researcher' initial plan to distribute an even number of questionnaires amongst each school type and locations.

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection process took place from March 2011 to May 2011. Four hundred and twelve questionnaires were handed out in total and one hundred and ten responses were received. The researchers' initial plan having sought permission from the principal was to speak with the staff very briefly during small break and hand out the questionnaires. A marked box was then to be left in a visible place in the staff room for teachers to return the surveys when complete. The box would then be collected at the end of the school day. This

data collection process was not conducted in all cases as a number of principals wished to use their own method for distributing and collecting the completed surveys.

In order to facilitate the schools the researcher allowed each school to choose their own method of distributing the questionnaires that best suited them. A number of principals retained the full staff number of surveys for completion at the next staff meeting, others wished to selected a small number of teachers from the staffroom themselves to ask to complete the survey and a small number of principals were happy for the researcher to address the staff at break and then return to collect them at the end of the school week.

The response rates as predicted were low from schools. As this had been predicted by the researcher a large number of schools were used in the study to overcome this limitation.

Once all the data was collected the researcher could now begin the data analysis stage of the study.

3.7 Data Analysis

“Analysis is part of the data collection and summarises the data,” (Sarantakos, 1998). Once all the questionnaires were gathered they were numbered and each closed-ended question was coded and the data was input into the the computer-based Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19. Then the researcher began the ‘operationalization’ stage. At this stage the researcher took each of the three hypotheses as outlined in chapter one and organised the independent and dependent variables for analyzing to test each hypotheses.

The researcher ran basic descriptive statistics in order to present the research findings. Bivariate correlations were also conducted. (See Appendix B). Bivariate correlation analysis was used to show the measure of the strength of the relationship between variables. Chi-square analysis was also conducted. “Chi-square is used with discontinuous data involving counts of separate individuals or units classified into mutually exclusive categories,” (Nesbitt 1966, pg1) Chi-square analysis was conducted to test the effects such experiences have on teachers’ health.

Multivariate regression was also used with the data. (See Appendix A) “Multivariate regression is interested in predicting several dependent variables from a set of predictors”

(Stevens 2002, pg155). All tables and analysis can be found in chapter four, findings of this dissertation.

The open-ended questions were dealt with separately. The open-ended questions carry as much importance as the close-ended questions as they give the respondent an opportunity to relay personal experiences they may have had in the past. All of the open-ended responses were entered into a Microsoft word document. Following this each answer was dealt with separately. Each answer was colour coded according to the most common form of abuse which was highlighted within the answer, ranging from verbal abuse to physical abuse, (See Appendix F). Some of the open-ended answers were also kept in their original form and used as quotations.

3.8 Ethical Issues

“Ethics is concerned with the attempt to formulate codes and principles of moral behaviour,” (May 2001). It is important that ethical decisions of a study are not exclusively guided by what is advantageous to the study and that the best interests of the participants are respected throughout the study. The Economic and Social Research Council (2006) outline six basic principles of ethical research which promote good ethical practice for social science researcher. While conducting this research the researcher adhered to these six principles at all times.

1. Research must ensure integrity and quality: The questionnaires were compiled carefully after much research and were piloted to ensure no mistakes or misleading questions were in place. The reputable computer-base Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 19 was then used to analysis the data carefully and allows a lesser chance of bias on behalf of the researcher.
2. Participants must be fully informed of the research and their participation in the research. The researcher was interviewed by a number of principals which allowed for the opportunity to explain the research being conducted and of the importance of such an investigation. A detailed cover letter was also attached to each survey outlining the study and for further information regarding the study my name and e-mail address was also outlined.
3. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants must be respected: When dealing with such personal issues such as experiences of violence and intimidation and

effects on health it is important that total anonymity and confidentiality of information of each participant is respected throughout the course of the research process. Total anonymity of the participating school and of each participating teacher was assured in the meetings to the principals and in the cover letter attached to the questionnaire and was adhered to at all times. By leaving a box in the staffroom it also allowed teachers to complete the questionnaire in their own time and in private and return it confidentially.

4. Participation must be voluntary: Teachers of the schools in the study were invited to participate in the study if they so wished. The completion of the questionnaire was entirely voluntary and teachers were free to provide what information they saw fit and did not have to answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable with.
5. Harm to participants must be avoided: As experiences of violence and intimidation are personal and may bring back feelings of distress from a difficult time in a teachers career, teachers were directed to contact their unions, ASTI or the TUI if they felt that they needed support in dealing with issues related to workplace intimidation or violence.
6. The research must be independent: All participants of the study were given time with their questionnaire to complete it alone and without any influence from the researcher.

3.9 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered a number of limitations whilst conducting this study. The first limitation was that of access to schools and teachers. The researcher sent thirty e-mails (See Appendix C) to the principals of thirty different secondary schools. A one hundred percent response rate was not expected by the researcher but difficulties began to arise when only two responses were received. The researcher then had to arrange appointments with principals in order to discuss the study and ask for permission to conduct research in their school. Again, difficulties arose in getting appointments with principals but the researcher succeeded in getting fourteen face to face interviews and four over the phone interviews.

The second limitation the researcher encountered was that of timing limitations. Secondary schools are busy places particularly after the Christmas term as schools have mock examinations, orals, practicals, open-evenings, mid-term break, Easter holidays and the Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. The researcher was aware of this and therefore the initial time line for data collection completion was the 15th of April when schools closed for the Easter holidays. Due to the time consumed arranging to meet with principals, travelling around Ireland, meeting with principals, arranging access to schools and returning to collect complete questionnaires this time line was not kept. The researcher continued to collect data up until the end of May when schools closed. The researcher had initially planned to distribute and collect the questionnaires on the same day and so reduce travel time but most schools wished for the researcher to return the following week or on an arranged date to collect the surveys.

The third limitation the researcher was challenged with was the low response rate of questionnaires. A number of principals opted to take between five to ten questionnaires to give to staff members in their schools of which the response rate was high. Of the schools which took questionnaires for each staff member generally ranging between thirty five to forty five staff members the response rate was much lower. One school returned the full number of questionnaires taken, and the return rate from other schools was between 5-25 questionnaires.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter gave a description of the research design of the study. The theoretical underpinnings of quantitative, qualitative and a mixed method approach were all outlined. The research instrument the questionnaire was also discussed and justified. The sampling method and sampling group chosen was also described. The important processes of data collection and data analysis were detailed. Finally, this chapter saw the ethical considerations of the researcher mapped out and the limitations which this study faced noted and overcome.

An analysis of the research findings is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Four: *Findings*

Chapter Four

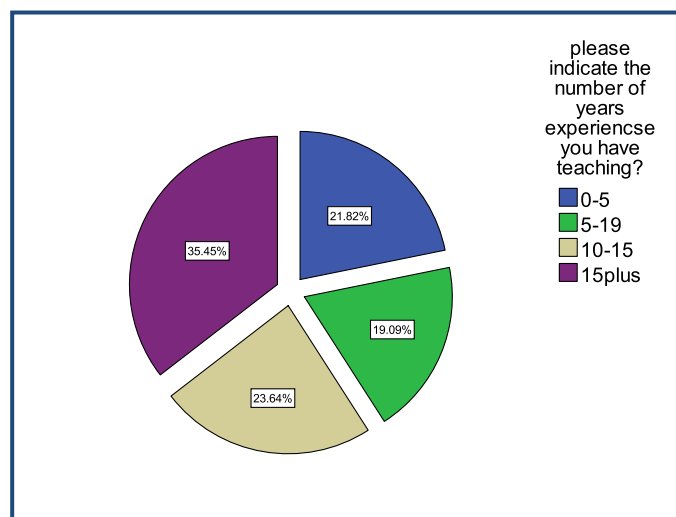
4.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides the statistical information collected from the questionnaires on the nature and extent of violence and intimidation experienced by secondary school teachers. This chapter is divided into sections. The first section will outline the background of participants. Section two will focus on student behaviour, section three on parent's behaviour, section four on the behaviour of other staff members. Then in section five the findings for reporting violence will be outlined followed by sections five and six which focus on the effects of such experiences on teachers' health and school policies.

4.2 Background of Participants

This section provides some background information on the one hundred and ten participants in the study. The gender make up of the participants showed that 19% of respondents were male and 81% of respondents were females. The schools which participated were mainly urban schools 72% and 28% of the schools had a suburban location. The gender makeup of the schools which participated was co-educational (66%) and all girls' schools (34%). No single sex male schools participated in the study. Community schools (34%) and voluntary secondary schools (32%) were the most common types of schools to partake in the study. Other school types that also partook include Community Schools (19%), Vocational Schools (9%), Grinds Schools (5%) and Comprehensive Schools (1%). Of the schools which participated in the study 68% were part of the DEIS programme. Years of experience of respondents found that 75% had less than fifteen years teaching experience. (See figure 4.)

Figure 4: Years of Experience of Respondents



A summary of the data on the background of participants may be seen below in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Data on Participants

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Respondents' Gender (110)		
<i>Female</i>	89	80.9%
<i>Male</i>	21	19.1%
Teaching Experience in Years (110)		
<i>0 to 5 Years</i>	24	21.8%
<i>5 to 10 Years⁺</i>	21	19.1%
<i>10 to 15 Years⁺</i>	26	23.6%
<i>15 Years or More</i>	39	35.5%
School Type (110)		
<i>Voluntary Secondary School</i>	35	31.8%
<i>Vocational School</i>	10	9.1%
<i>Comprehensive School</i>	1	0.9%
<i>Community College</i>	37	33.6%
<i>Community School</i>	21	19.1%
<i>Grinds School</i>	6	5.5%
DEIS School (108)		
<i>Yes</i>	73	67.6%
<i>No</i>	35	32.4%
School Gender (110)		
<i>Co-Educational</i>	73	66.4%
<i>Girls Only</i>	37	33.6%
School Location (109)		
<i>Urban</i>	79	72.5%
<i>Suburban</i>	30	27.5%

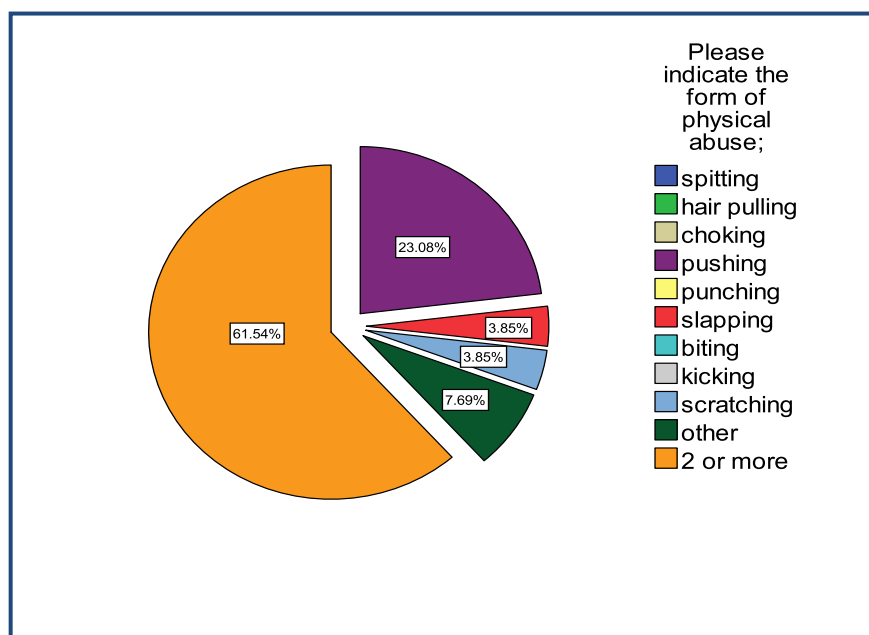
4.3 Student Behaviour

This section will look at teachers' experiences of violence and intimidation with the student as the perpetrator. Findings showed that 85% of teachers experienced verbal abuse from a student, while 15% noted that they have never experienced verbal abuse from a student. Of those who experienced verbal abuse from a student 8% experienced it daily, 23% experienced it weekly, 16% monthly and 46% less frequently.

The percentage of teachers who reported feeling intimidated by a student was 68%. The frequency of feeling intimidated varied, weekly 18%, monthly 11%, and daily 3%.

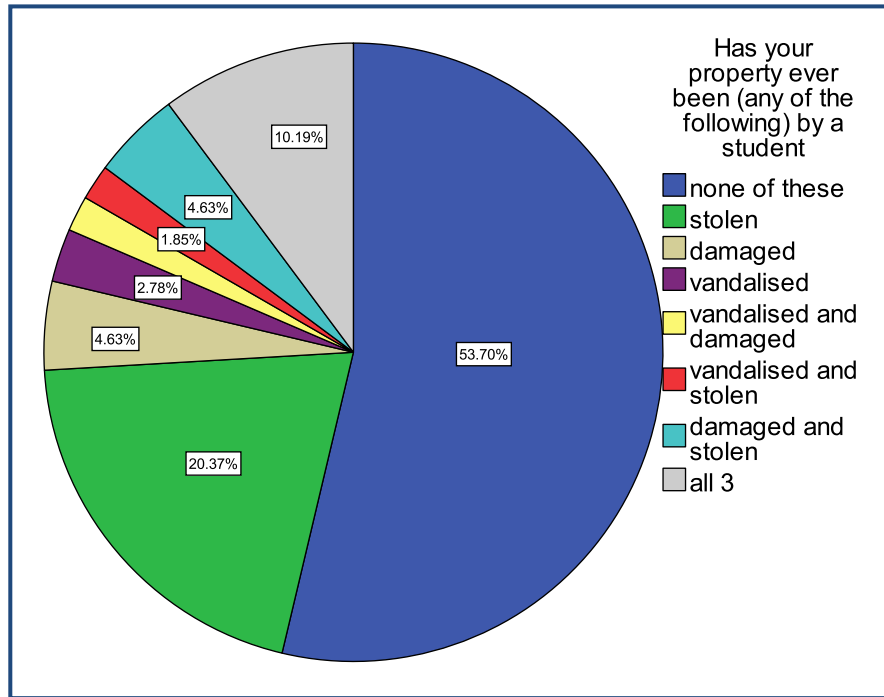
Being physically assaulted by a student was reported by 19% of teachers. Of those 9% reported physical abuse weekly while the majority 9% experienced it less frequently. The forms of physical abuse varied from pushing (23%) to slapping (4%). 62% of teachers reported experiencing two or more forms of abuse. (See figure 5 below)

Figure 5: Forms of Physical Abuse Experienced by Teachers



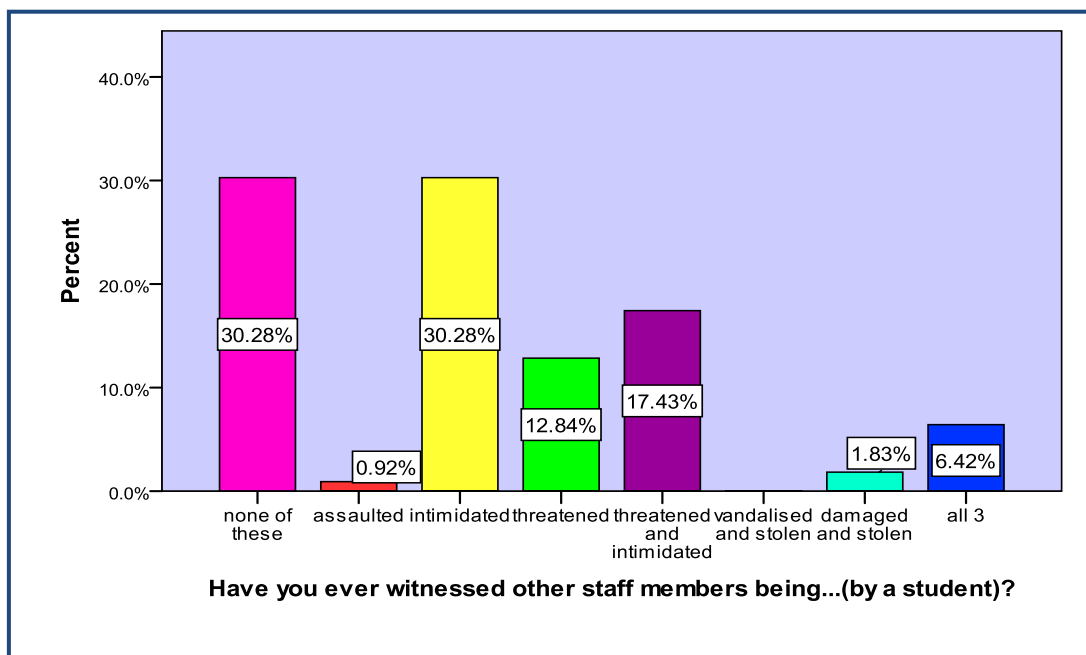
A low 1% of teachers reported experiencing sexual assault by a student at a frequency level of 'less frequent'. Over 46% of teachers reported their property being interfered with by a student by being stolen, damaged or vandalised. (See figure 6 below)

Figure 6: Property Being Interfered with by a Student;



When asked “have you ever witnessed any other staff members being assaulted, intimidated or threatened, 31% of teachers reported witnessing intimidating behaviour from students towards other teachers, while 13% reported having witnessed threatening behaviour towards other teachers. (See figure 7)

Figure 7: Witnessing Other Staff Members Being Intimidated, Threatened or Assaulted



The questionnaire also asked teachers if they had ever been affected by violence or intimidation from students outside of the school grounds and hours. Findings showed that 27% of teachers have been affected by such issues outside of school. Examples of this were evident from the open-ended questions, where teachers' personal experiences were shared

“When shopping in town once during the holidays with a friend a number of students followed me around the shops. They were shouting and jokingly slagging me but would not stop following me despite me telling them good bye and I would see them back in school Monday.”

The open-ended questions asked teachers to outline the most recent serious incident they encountered with a student. Forty seven of the one hundred and ten respondents completed this section of the questionnaire. Incidents relating to verbal abuse were outlined by 37% of respondents. Such serious incidents reported included;

“. I told a student to stop throwing water at others. He told me to fuck off and he walked off.”

“Shouting, name calling; refusal to cooperate. Damage to my books. Handbag opened and purse taken.”

“A student called me a slut while walking down the road on a Friday after school.”

Incidents of physical abuse were also outlined by 44% of respondents. Such incidents reported included;

“A student once threw an item at me and knocked me unconscious”

“Books and tools thrown at me”

“Being pushed to the door for a violent student to leave. A knife was once brought out in class.”

Incidents of intimidation and threatening behaviour experienced by teachers from students were also reported by 19% of teachers. Such incidents included;

“A student squared up to me in the hall and told me he’d put me in the ground if I stood in his way.”

“One student physically threatened me but didn’t follow through with his threat but he did however punch and break a glass window.

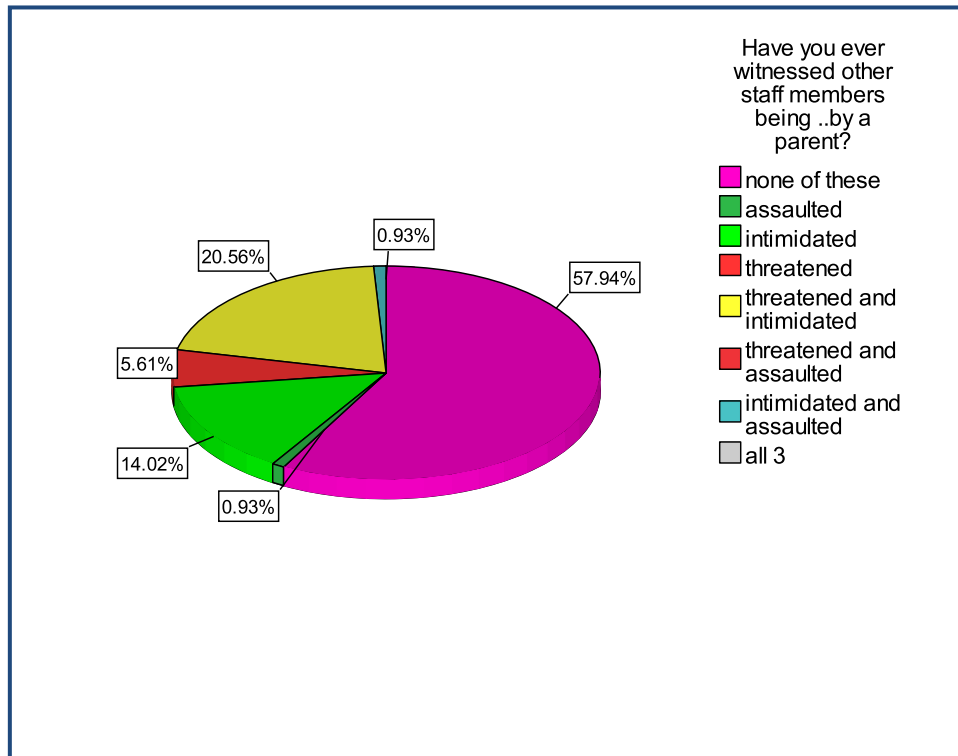
I was also accused of inappropriately feeling a student which I didn’t. But I suffered a stressful 3days until her parents and family sorted it out. (She had a history of this)”

4.4 Parental Behaviour

This section will focus on parental behaviour towards teachers. Experiences of verbal abuse from parents were reported by 34% of teachers who also stated that it was a less frequent occurrence (98%). A greater number of teachers reported feeling intimidated by a parent (43%). Again the frequency by 94% of respondents was ‘less frequent’. Physical abuse towards teachers from parents was low with only 1% of teachers having experienced physical abuse. Slapping and ‘other forms’ were the two main forms of physical abuse reported (40%). The frequency again by 100% of respondents was ‘less frequent’. There were no reports of sexual assaults by a parent.

Property being interfered with by a parent was reported by 1% of respondents. Being affected by such issues outside of school either frequently or infrequently was reported by 17% of respondents. Thirty eight percent of respondents reported witnessing other staff members being, intimidated, threatened or assaulted by a parent. (See Figure 8)

Figure 8: Witnessing Other Staff Members Being Assaulted, Intimidated or Threatened by a Parent



The open-ended questions asked teachers to outline the most recent serious incident they encountered with a parent. Fifteen respondents completed this section of the questionnaire. Intimidation and threatening behaviour was reported by 56% of respondents. Incidents outlined included;

“A parent threatened another teacher and refused to leave the car park. The Gardaí had to be called”

“Two traveller parents tried to force their way past a teacher into the lunchroom to deal with an argument between their children and another called 8. In a previous position I witnessed parents threatened by a parent.”

Verbal abuse was outlined by 38%. Incidents of verbal abuse outlined included;

“A parent walked into school wandered around walked upstairs to my room and preceded in front of my class to shout abuse at me.”

“A parent was once talking loudly about an incident with their child in the next aisle of a shopping centre knowing I was there.”

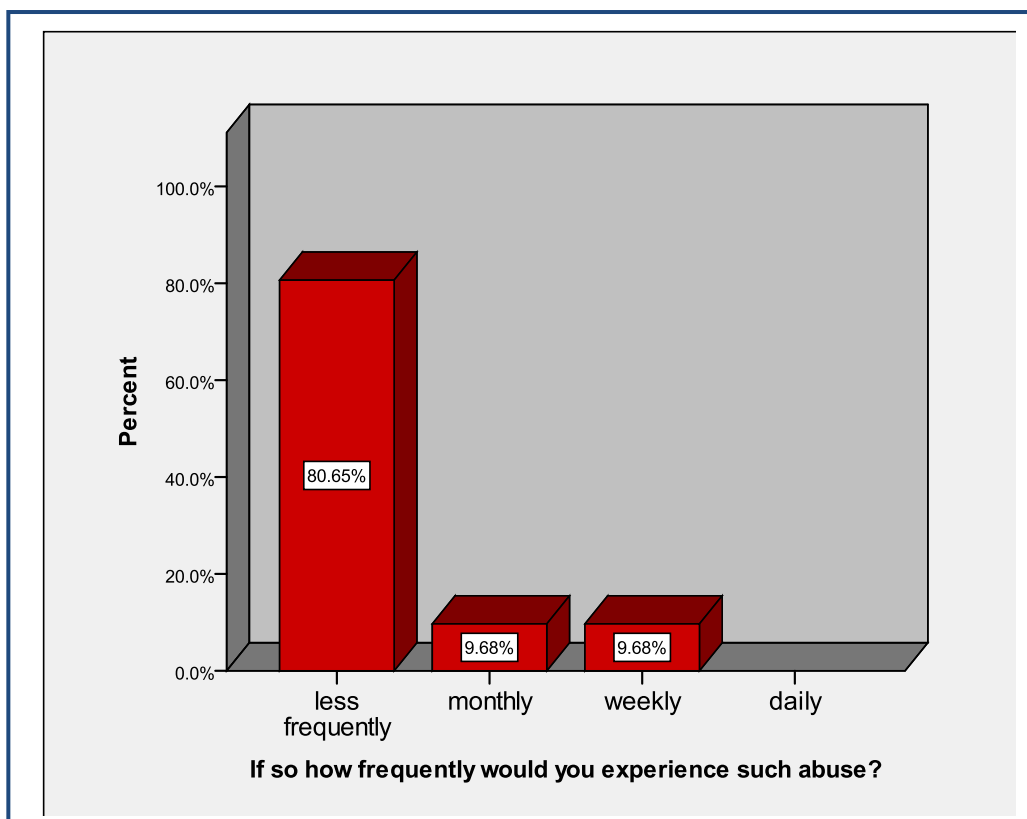
Physical abuse was outlined by 6% of respondents.

“A volatile parent entered the school at lunch time came into my office and attempted to slap and throw punches at me.”

4.5 Other Staff Members Behaviour

This section will focus on the behaviour of staff members. Findings from the study revealed that 23% of teachers experienced verbal abuse from other staff members. Of the 23%, 20% experienced it monthly or weekly. (See figure 9)

Figure 9: Frequency of Verbal Abuse from Other Staff Members



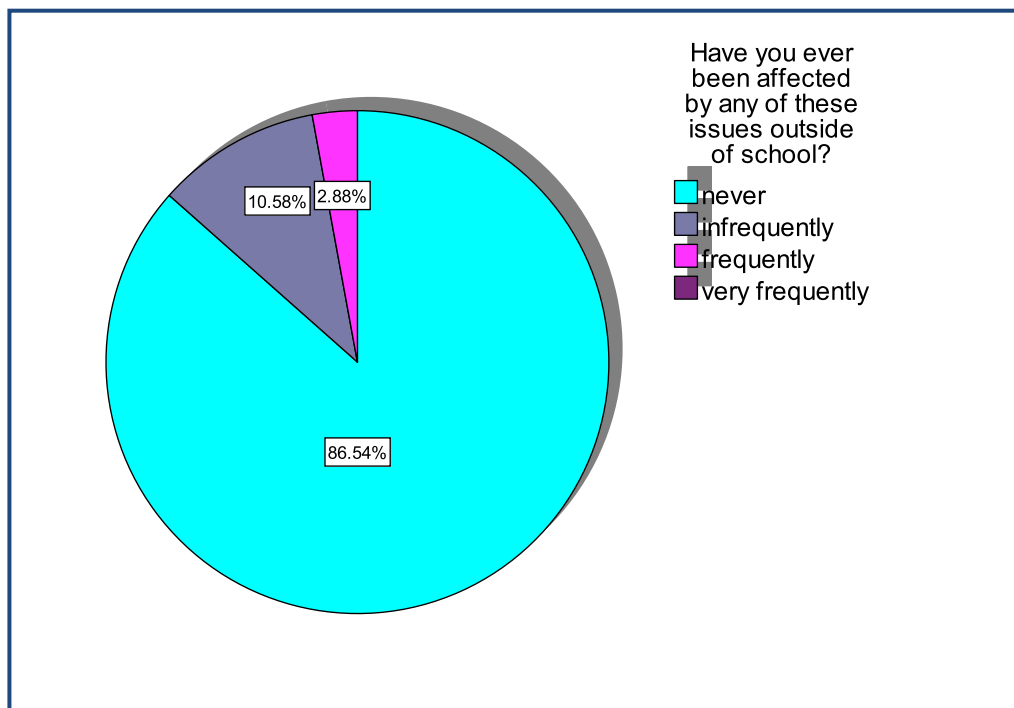
When asked if they had ever felt intimidated by another staff member 38% of teachers reported feeling intimidated by other staff members. Nineteen percent of teachers experienced it monthly, 12% on a weekly basis and 2% daily.

Physical abuse from another staff member was reported by 2% of respondents all of which noted it as occurring less frequently. The types of physical abuse from another staff member ranged from pushing 50%, kicking 25% and punching 25% also. Examples of this were also given in the open-ended questions.

“Another staff member is very aggressive in passing me in the corridor and won’t move aside, ignoring me, pushing me and using words like fuck, porn etc constantly in the staffroom.”

There were no reports of sexual assaults amongst other staff members. Property being stolen, damaged or vandalised was reported by 25% of teachers. Witnessing other staff members being assaulted, intimidated or threatened, was reported by 38% of teachers. Being effected by such issues outside of school on a frequent basis was reported by 3% of teachers and infrequently by 11% of teachers. (See figure 10 below).

Figure 10: Effected by Such Behaviour Outside of School



The open-ended question accompanying this section asked teachers to outline the most recent serious incident they had encountered with another staff member. Only six of the one hundred and ten respondents completed this section. Of that 57% reported verbal abuse,

“Another teacher shouting at me in the corridor, threatening to “go to the principal” because they were unhappy at my decision not to do what they were demanding.”

Intimidation and threatening behaviour was reported by 42% of respondents.

“I witnessed an older staff member being bullied by two other teachers and she was very upset over it.”

Damage to property and stolen goods was outlined a number of times in this open-ended section by respondents.

“Money, jackets, books stolen by other staff members from the staffroom. “

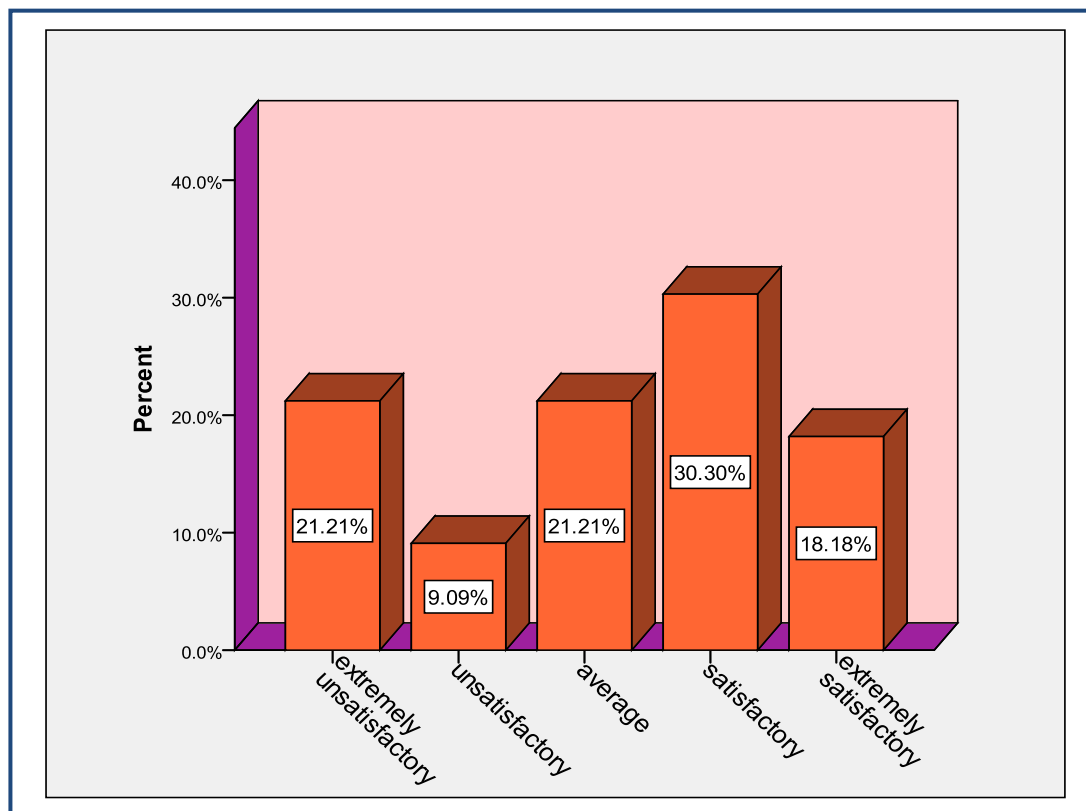
“Staff members vandalising equipment.”

4.6 Reporting Violence

This section focuses on the reporting of incidences. Eighty three percent of respondents reported ‘yes’ to having reported incidents of violence and intimidation. Seventeen percent said that they did not report incidents of violence and intimidation which had occurred. Of those who reported such incidences 70% were satisfied with how the situation was dealt with by the school. (See figure 11 below)

The ratings of support levels given to teachers after serious incidences of violence and intimidation varied. Extremely unsatisfactory to average support was rated by 52% of respondents. (See figure 11 below)

Figure 11: Ratings of Support Given by Schools to Teachers



Awareness of external support amongst teachers was low. Fifty seven percent of teachers were unaware of external supports for teachers and 43% of teachers were aware of external supports. Inadequate support for teachers externally was reported by 30% of teachers while 13% felt that adequate support was available and 57% answered 'don't know'.

Teacher training on violence and intimidation during the PGDE / H-Dip was reported as being inadequate by 75% of teachers surveyed. Only 2% found it to be adequate and 24% were unsure. Again training in the form of in-services on dealing with violence and intimidation was found to be insufficient by 77% of respondents with only 6% reporting it to be sufficient and 16% were unsure

4.7 Effects on Teachers Health

This section will focus on the effects of experiences of violence and intimidation on teachers' health. When asked 'have such experiences of dealing with intimidation and violence affected your health? Twenty eight percent reported feeling a little stressed, 26% reported feeling quite stressed, 2% reported feeling completely stressed. When broken up by gender females (59%) experienced greater effects than males (45%). (See Table 3)

Table 3. Chi-Square Analysis 'Have Such Experiences of Dealing with Intimidation and Violence Affected Your Health?' by Gender

	All	Male	Female
(n)	(107)	(20)	(87)
<i>Unaffected</i>	47 (43.9%)	11 (55.0%)	36 (41.4%)
<i>Little Stressed</i>	30 (28.0%)	6 (30.0%)	24 (27.6%)
<i>Quite Stressed</i>	28 (26.2%)	3 (15.0%)	25 (28.7%)
<i>Completely Stressed</i>	2 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.3%)

$\chi^2_{(3,107)} = 2.353; p = \text{not significant.}$

When respondents were asked, 'On a professional level do you feel you have been affected by experiences of intimidation and violence? Thirty two percent reported feeling a little stressed, 16% reported feeling quite frustrated, and 7% reported feeling very frustrated. Further investigation chi-square analysis revealed that when broken up by gender females (56%) experienced greater affects on a professional level than males (45%), (See Table 4).

Table 4. Chi-Square Analysis of 'On A Professional Level, Do You Feel You Have Been Affected by Experience of Intimidation and Violence?' by Gender

	All	Male	Female
(n)	(108)	(20)	(88)
<i>Unaffected</i>	48 (44.4%)	11 (55.0%)	37 (42.0%)
<i>Little Stressed</i>	35 (32.4%)	5 (25.0%)	30 (34.1%)
<i>Quite Stressed</i>	17 (15.7%)	4 (20.0%)	13 (14.8%)
<i>Completely Stressed</i>	8 (7.4%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (7.4%)

$\chi^2_{(3,108)} = 3.132; p = \text{not significant.}$

Teachers also reported feeling effects at a personal level. Of the respondents 29% reported feeling quite drained, 27% reported feeling a little drained and 4% reported feeling completely drained. When broken down by gender findings revealed that females (61%) were affected more on a personal level than males (50%), (See Table 5).

Table 5. Chi-Square Analysis ‘On A Personal Level, Do You Feel You Have Been Affected by Experience of Intimidation and Violence?’ by Gender

	All	Male	Female
(n)	(109)	(20)	(89)
<i>Unaffected</i>	45 (41.3%)	10 (50.0%)	35 (39.3%)
<i>Little Stressed</i>	29 (26.6%)	2 (10.0%)	27 (30.3%)
<i>Quite Stressed</i>	31 (28.4%)	7 (35.0%)	24 (27.0%)
<i>Completely Stressed</i>	4 (3.7%)	1 (5.0%)	3 (3.4%)

$\chi^2_{(3,109)} = 3.478; p = \text{not significant.}$

The effects on teachers’ morale were also investigated. When asked, ‘Do you feel such experiences have affected your morale? Results showed that 17% reported experiencing a major effect on morale, 41% reported a minor effect on morale and 4% reported experiencing a very serious effect. When broken up by gender findings revealed that females (64%) experienced a greater affect on their morale than males (50%), (See Table 6).

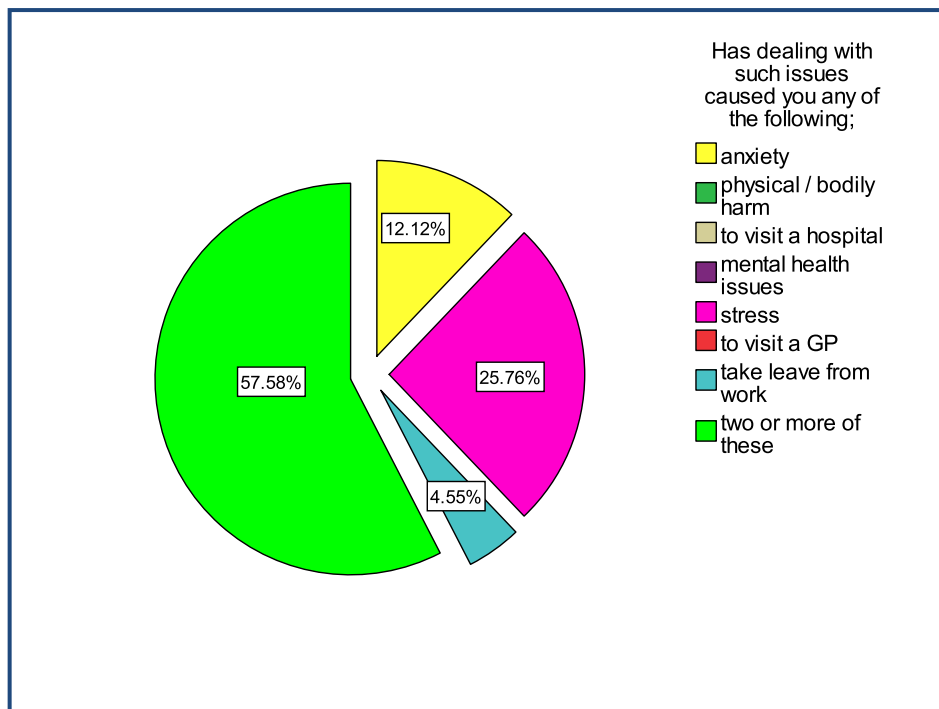
Table 6. Chi-Square Analysis ‘Do You Feel Such Experiences Have Affected Your Morale?’ by Gender

	All	Male	Female
(n)	(107)	(20)	(87)
<i>No Effect</i>	41 (38.3%)	10 (50.0%)	31 (35.6%)
<i>Minor Effect</i>	44 (41.1%)	7 (35.0%)	37 (42.5%)
<i>Major Effect</i>	18 (16.8%)	3 (15.0%)	15 (17.2%)
<i>Very Serious Effect</i>	4 (3.7%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (4.6%)

$\chi^2_{(3,107)} = 2.068; p = \text{not significant.}$

The effects of dealing with experiences of violence and intimidation on teachers has caused stress amongst 26% of respondents, anxiety amongst 12%, 5% to take leave from work and two or more was reported by 58% of respondents. (See figure 12 below)

Figure 12: The Effects of Dealing with Violence and Intimidation



This section concluded by asking respondents to add any other comments they may have. Six respondents completed this section. Additional comments included;

“I’d certainly consider taking a career break now something I wouldn’t have contemplated before now.”

“Rethinking future job prospect as principal has too much power.”

“I could see that you may possibly feel intimidated by certain students and that you would certainly need excellent support around you. I think it would be important for a teacher to manage their stress levels and get help were required.”

4.8 School Policy

This section focuses on schools policies on violence and intimidation. When respondents were asked, ‘Does the school hold a policy on violence?’ findings showed

- 13% reported ‘No’
- 45% reported ‘Yes’
- 42% reported they ‘Didn’t know’

Respondents were also asked if teachers were incorporated into the policy on violence.

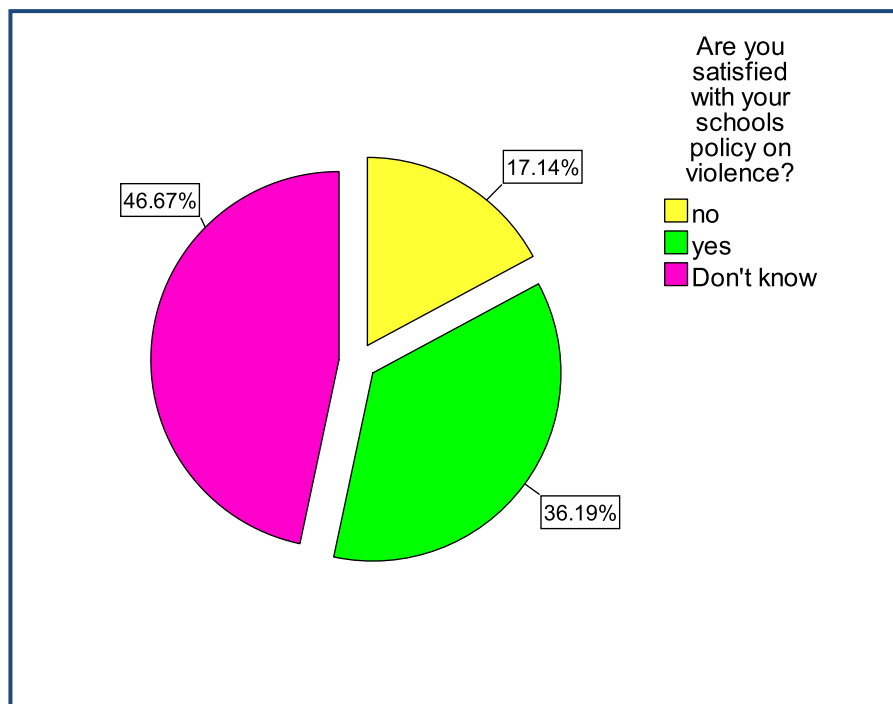
Findings revealed that;

- 35% incorporated teachers
- 7% did not incorporate teachers
- 58% did not know

Staff input into school policy was satisfactory amongst 65% of respondents, 17% were unsure and 18% felt that staff were not given sufficient input into designing staff policy.

Whether teachers were satisfied with their schools policy was also investigated in this study. Findings showed that 47% didn’t know, 36% respondent ‘Yes’ they were satisfied and 17% reported ‘No’ they were not satisfied with their schools policy. (See figure 13)

Figure 13: Satisfaction with School Policy



Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of a questionnaire which was completed by one hundred and ten secondary school teachers in Ireland. The findings are represented using graphs, charts and basic reporting of findings. In the following chapter, chapter five discussions of findings, the researcher will discuss the findings of this study in relation to existing literature and findings in this research area.

*Chapter five:
Discussion of
Findings*

Chapter five

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five the discussion of findings will link the findings which are presented in chapter four to the aims of the study and will relate back to the relevant literature from chapter two. The aim of this study was to investigate the nature and the extent of violence which exists in our secondary schools today. The objectives of the study as presented in chapter one were;

- To explore the types of violence that are most prevalent in secondary schools
- To discover the frequency of violent and intimidating behavioural incidents in schools
- To highlight who the main perpetrators of such acts are
- To examine the effects that such experiences are having upon teachers both on a personal level and on a professional level
- To investigate school policies and the inclusion of violence against teachers
- To examine the level of satisfaction amongst teachers in relation to adequate levels of training for dealing with violence and intimidation in schools
- To investigate support networks available for teachers affected by issues of violence and intimidation

This chapter is again broken up into sections to clearly discuss the findings. The areas being focused on include teachers' personal experiences, the issue of reporting violence, and the effects of experiences of violent and intimidating behaviour on teachers. Other areas also being discussed include school policies, teacher training and support networks for teachers.

5.2 Experiences of Violence and Intimidation

Pupil Behaviour

The Association of Secondary School Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) conducted a survey on teachers in 1999. This study revealed that 'teachers can be bullied by those in Authority, by colleagues, by students and by parents.' Teachers may experience violence and intimidation by a number of different perpetrators including students, parents and other

staff members. It may be experiences in a number of different forms including verbal, physical and emotional abuse and threatening and intimidating behaviour.

Findings from the TUI (2006) survey highlighted a number of key problems in schools according to teachers. 36% of respondents reported 'verbal abuse directed at teachers by students' as a problem. 21% of respondents reported 'threatening / intimidating behaviour directed at teacher by students as a problem. 'Sexual innuendo / harassment directed at teachers by students' were reported by 8%.

Teachers' being verbally abused by students appears to be an ongoing issue and one that is on the increase as this study found that of the secondary school teachers that were surveyed findings showed that 85% of teachers experienced verbal abuse from a student,

Teachers' experiencing threatening and intimidating behaviour from students also appears to be an ongoing issue and one that is also on the increase as the percentage of teachers who reported feeling intimidated by a student was 68%.

Research conducted by TUI (2006), investigated the frequency of experiences by teachers of 'threatening or intimidating behaviour from students directed at the teacher'. Twenty eight percent reported less frequent, 41.7% reported experiencing such behaviour on a weekly basis, 25% on a daily basis and 5.3% during every class. The frequency of feeling intimidated by a student in the current study varied from, weekly 18%, monthly 11%, and daily 3%. Such findings would suggest a significant reduction in the frequency of acts of intimidating behaviour towards teachers by pupils.

'Unacceptable damage caused to the property of other students or teachers or school property by students' was reported by 30% of teachers in the TUI (2006) study. Further UK studies revealed teachers being abused outside of the classroom. In 2009 the Guardian newspaper reported that, "teachers have made over 200 personal insurance claims cases to the union for damage to property by pupils over the last two years – 69 incidents of malicious damage to vehicles, such as "keying" of cars, and 146 of damage to property," (Lipsett, 2009).

Over 46% of teachers reported their property being interfered with by a student by being stolen, damaged or vandalised again such findings show an increase of 16% from the 2006 TUI study which was conducted.

The location and type of school as an influential factor on experiences of violence and intimidation must also be discussed. Existing literature found that the location and type of school also played a role. Research in the USA found that teachers in urban areas were more likely to experience violent crime victimization than those in rural or suburban schools, 28 vs. 13 and 16 crimes per 1,000 teachers. Differences were also revealed in relation to public school teachers versus private school teachers. 10% of public school teachers reported having been threatened with injury compared to 4% of private school teachers, also 4% of public school teachers reported being physically attacked by students compared to 2% of those who worked in private schools. This revealed that teachers working in central city public schools were four times more vulnerable to being targets of threats and injury, and three times more likely of attacks.

Similar to USA findings the ATL (2010) study found that public school teachers reported higher levels of violence and intimidation than private school teachers. Significant differences were highlighted, including verbal abuse in public schools 56.9% versus private schools 18.3%, intimidation 43.4% versus 11.1%, physical abuse 31.7% versus 9.5% and other 4.9% versus 1.6%. Over the five year period, male teachers were noted to have been more likely than female teachers to be victims of violent crimes 39 vs. 16 crimes per 1,000 teachers.

Despite such finding in the USA and UK the TUI (2006) study did not find any substantial significant differences in responses from teachers on the size or type of school in which they are teaching or where it is located.”(TUI 2006, p xxix)

The current study showed that the longer a teacher has teaching experience, the less violence they would experience from students. When separated by gender, being at a grinds school and a suburban school on the male side has significantly less experience from students’ violence while working in a community school increased the experience of violence and intimidation. On the female side, having longer teaching experience reduced experiences of violence and intimidation significantly. (See Appendix B)

Parental behaviour

The TUI (2006) survey found that ‘Verbal abuse directed at teachers by parents of students’ was reported by 7% of respondents of the survey.

In 2009 the ATL reported that “Four in 10 teachers have faced verbal or physical aggression from a pupil's parent or guardian”, (www.bbcnews.co.uk)

Findings from the current study revealed that experiences of verbal abuse from parents were reported by 34% of teachers. A greater number of teachers reported feeling intimidated by a parent (43%). Physical abuse towards teachers from parents was low with only 1% of teachers having experienced physical abuse. Slapping and ‘other forms’ were the two main forms of physical abuse reported (40%). There were no reports of sexual assaults by a parent.

Property being interfered with by a parent was reported by 1% of respondents. Being affected by such issues outside of school either frequently or infrequently was reported by 17% of respondents. Thirty eight percent of respondents reported witnessing other staff members being, intimidated, threatened or assaulted by a parent.

Comparing the existing literature against the current research findings it is apparent that experiences of verbal abuse from parents and intimidating and threatening behaviour from parents towards teachers is becoming an increasing problem. Dealing with violent and intimidating parents can have an effect on teachers’ health as is evident from the effects section of this chapter.

Other Staff Members

As previously noted bullying is form of violence. Most data related to staff violence and intimidation was covered under work place bullying. Findings from the study on workplace bullying which was undertaken by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) found that, incidences of bullying for both genders were 56% higher for those working in the Public sector than in the Private sector.

Such incidences of bullying in the education sector were at 12.1%. Significant differences were also noted between different genders. For example within the Education sector 7.8% of males reported being bullied as opposed to almost double that for females at 14.3%.

The nature of bullying was also investigated and it was revealed that verbal abuse/ insults were the most common form of bullying experienced which was reported by 81% of victims. 35% of victims reported feelings of exclusion. 3.3% of victims reported experiences of sexual harassment while 1.8% reported physical abuse. 16.8% noted 'other' as the form of victimisation.

Findings from the current research study found that 23% of teachers experienced verbal abuse from other staff members. An example was given by a teacher of their experiences;

“I have witnessed bullying amongst two teachers towards an older teacher on a foreign school tour once and upsetting her greatly and shouting at her even in front of the students.”

When asked if they had ever felt intimidated by another staff member 38% of teachers reported feeling intimidated by other staff members. Physical abuse from another staff member was reported by 2% of respondents. The types of physical abuse from another staff member ranged from pushing 50%, kicking 25% and punching 25% also.

There were no reports of sexual assaults amongst other staff members. Property being stolen, damaged or vandalised was reported by 25% of teachers. Witnessing other staff members being assaulted, intimidated or threatened, was reported by 38% of teachers. Being effected by such issues outside of school on a frequent basis was reported by 3% of teachers and infrequently by 11% of teachers.

Such behaviour amongst staff members again appears to be a continuous problem in our Secondary schools. Intimidation and threatening behaviour followed by verbal abuse appear to be the greatest problems. Again such experiences can affect a teacher's health and job satisfaction and in turn affect their ability to successfully deliver at work. The reporting of violence is important in order to deal with the situation.

5.3 Reporting Violence and Intimidation

In order to make our schools a safer place it is important that violence is reported and that the issue is resolved and the perpetrator and the victim are dealt with appropriately. As highlighted in the literature review many teachers do not report such incidences. “ For some it’s a matter of believing that they can control the situation themselves and others keep quiet out of fear for their lives or even their jobs—fearing that they look somehow incompetent or incapable of controlling their students”(NSSC 2011). This finding was further supported by the number of reported incidences to the Health and Safety Authority. Between 2004 and 2010 only three incidences were reported.

In comparison to this 83% of teachers in the current study revealed that they did report cases of violence. Findings from this study found a similar result to the US study (83%). Eighty three percent of teachers revealed that they did report incidences of violence and intimidating or threatening behaviour towards them

The satisfaction rates of how reports of incidences were dealt with by schools were again similar between existing data and the current study. In the US 45.5% of teachers were partially satisfied and 16.1% were not satisfied. Of the respondents of the current study 52% reported satisfaction of how the incident was dealt with by the school as average to extremely unsatisfactory.

“Keeping something of this magnitude to yourself will only aggravate things and allow it to continue and even escalate” (NSSC 2011). Therefore reporting incidences is important for a number of reasons and by dealing with the situation it may minimize the effects on the teachers’ health.

5.4 Effects of Violence and Intimidation

Job satisfaction is a very important component of any job in order to increase productivity. “A happy employee is a productive employee,” (Saari and Judge 2004). When a teacher’s job begins to take a toll on their health job satisfaction may become low. Furthermore it

not only affects the teacher but also the students the teacher is teaching and the whole school environment.

The Health and Safety Authority have outlined teaching as one of the high risk areas for exposure to violence (HSA 2007). Dealing with violence and intimidation and threatening behaviour can take its toll on teachers' health.

The TUI's 2006 study revealed the effect of such behaviour as a danger to teachers 'Health and Safety'. Five percent believed that it was not a danger. Eighteen percent of respondents noted it as being a danger in a minor way, in a serious way 34.1%, and in a very serious way 42.4%. These findings were further supported by the reported published by the ASTI in 2004. It was reported that, "Serious breaches of school discipline policy can have profound negative effects on teachers. Teachers subjected to abuse or intimidation reported experiencing fears for their safety, lack of sense of dignity at work, intense feelings of anger, fear, humiliation or shame, isolation and depression."

Existing literature from the TUI (2006) report revealed the effects on teachers. The effects of violence and intimidation were felt by teachers at both a personal (89%) and professional level (89%), (TUI 2006). Such experiences by teachers of threatening or intimidating behaviour by students towards them were also seen to have an effect on 'Health'. Fifteen percent reported their health as being unaffected, while 41.6% reported being a little stressed, 34.7% as being quite stressed and 9.1% as being completely stressed.

Teacher's morale was also highlighted as being effected by such behaviours. Eleven percent reported no effect on morale, while 40.9% reported an effect in a minor way, 34.5% in a major way and 14.1% as very seriously.

Findings for the current study also found that dealing with violence and intimidation can have a negative effect on teachers' health. Stress levels ranging from a little stressed to completely stressed due to dealing with violence and intimidation was reported by 56% of respondents.

Effects were also shown on a professional level by 55% of participants and on a personal level by 60% of participants due to such experiences. The effects on teachers' morale revealed that 62% of participants found that experiences of dealing with violence and intimidation had an effect on their morale at some level.

Respondents to the ASTI 1999 survey noted the effects such negative experiences have had on them. Of those who had been victims of bullying 50% reported tearfulness as a major effect. Forty one percent reported anger, 40% stress, 37% loss of concentration, 32% disturbed sleep, 26% deterioration in work, 23% forgetfulness, 18% low self esteem, 16% home / family life upset, 13% reported headaches, 12% loss of energy, 11% thoughts of retirement, 10% depression and 9% reported low motivation.

The current study also revealed a number of effects of dealing with experiences of violence and intimidation on teachers. For example stress amongst 26% of respondents, anxiety amongst 12%, 5% to take leave from work and two or more was reported by 58% of respondents.

It is evident from existing literature and from findings of the current study that dealing with violence and intimidation can have an effect on teachers' health. Not only is this effect felt on a personal level but also on a professional level and on teachers' morale. Anxiety, stress, taking leave from work, visiting a GP, disturbed sleep and depression are but a number of negative effects which are felt by teachers who have experienced violence and intimidation in their profession.

5.5 School Policies

“The Education Act, 1998 specifies that it is the responsibility of the Board of Management of a school to arrange for the preparation of a school plan, and to ensure that it is regularly reviewed and updated” (Department of Education and Skills 2011). Included in this plan must be the schools policy on topics such as violence, intimidating and threatening behaviour and bullying. As previously noted bullying is a low level form of violence and the term ‘bullying’ incorporates verbal, physical and emotional abuse, also threatening and intimidating behaviour. Therefore many schools term the policy on such behaviours as an “anti-bullying policy”. Schools have policies on violence in place to deal with violent incidences promptly and effectively. While many policies focus on student on

student behaviour, not all school policies outline student behaviour towards teachers, parents' behaviour towards teachers or staff behaviours.

Existing literature in the USA revealed that 88.9% of schools were found to have clear behaviour policies, 8.9% did not and 2.9% of respondents were unsure.

Findings from the current study revealed that 45% of schools held a policy on violence, 13% of schools did not and 42% of teachers were unsure if their school had a policy on violence.

Respondents were also asked if teachers were incorporated into the policy on violence. The importance of having clear and precise policies in place in a school has been noted previously. In order to protect teachers it is important that teachers are aware of their schools policy and to ensure that they are incorporated into such policies. Findings revealed that 35% incorporated teachers, 7% did not incorporate teachers, 58% did not know. This represents a large number of teachers who are unaware of their policies and their own protection within their employment area.

Of the behaviour policies in the USA study, 61.4% were satisfied with the behaviour policy in place in their school, with 26.2% unhappy and 12.3% had no views either way.

Whether teachers were satisfied with their schools policy was also investigated in this study. Findings showed that 47% didn't know, 36% respondent 'Yes' they were satisfied and 17% reported 'No' they were not satisfied with their schools policy. Just over a third of Irish teachers are satisfied with their schools policy. This is much lower than that of USA findings. There also appears to be a lower awareness of policies and content in Ireland than in the USA.

5.6 Teacher Training on Violence and Intimidation

Teacher training on dealing with violence and intimidation from students, parents and other staff members is vital in preparing teachers for the real world of teaching. Behaviour management is vital for the successful running of any school and all staff members should be given training on behaviour management and dealing with violence and intimidation in order to be well equipped for dealing with school life.

Existing literature revealed that in the UK in 2010 “nearly half of new teachers did not feel properly equipped to deal with violence in the classroom” (BBC News 2010). The ATL (2010) were looking for teacher training in dealing with violence to be made compulsory for all new trainee teachers.

In Ireland teacher training on violence and intimidation is limited. The literature revealed that the Health and Safety Authority provide learning courses which offer support for schools in preventing and dealing with violent incidences in schools along with other safety measures

The PGDE also covers a minimal amount on dealing with violence and intimidation in modules such as ‘classroom management’ but violence towards teachers and violence amongst staff is rarely covered and the general focus is on student on student behaviour.

The need for greater training amongst Irish teachers is supported by the findings from this study. Inadequate training on intimidation and violence during the PGDE was reported by 75% of participants of this survey. Further training for teachers in the form of in-services was also found to be insufficient by 77% of participants.

Existing literature and research findings from this study both highlight the demand amongst teachers for greater training and education in dealing with violence and intimidation in schools.

5.7 Support Networks for Teachers

“Under Health & Safety legislation employers have a duty of care for their employees” (ASTI 2011).

The ASTI and TUI had been working towards getting a support network in place for the 55,000 teachers in Ireland for many years. On 25 July 2006, the Minister for Education and Science commissioned the setting up of an Employee Assistance Service for the 55,000 teachers in the country.

In 2007 the Employee Assistance Services reported receiving on average one hundred calls a month from teachers needing help with stressful work and personal issues. This high

number of calls supports the demand for such services amongst teachers. The EAS reported to the researcher that;

“for teachers we are the main source of support although each school is unique in itself and some may have a peer support group in place for teachers but each school is independent in setting up such groups” (EAS employee, 2011).

In the ASTI’s (1999) report findings revealed that only 14% of schools had in place a support system to deal with incidents of adult bullying in schools.

The ratings of support levels in this study given to teachers by schools after serious incidences of violence and intimidation varied. Extremely unsatisfactory to average support was rated by 52% of respondents. One respondent noted that;

“I could see that you may possibly feel intimidated by certain students and that you would certainly need excellent support around you.”

Findings from this research revealed a relatively low awareness amongst teachers of external supports available to them. Being unaware of external supports for teachers was reported by 57% of respondents. Inadequate support for teachers externally was reported by 30% of teachers while 13% felt that adequate support was available and 57% answered ‘don’t know’.

With such a low awareness of external supports for teachers the researcher draws the conclusion that with greater awareness of the service the number of calls to the EAS would possibly increase and demonstrate further the need for such support systems.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings from this research in light of the existing literature. A number of key topics were discussed, including teachers’ experiences of violence and intimidation from students, parents and other staff members. It became evident from existing research and findings from the current study that teachers are faced with verbal abuse, intimidation and threatening behaviour, physical abuse and damage to goods and property.

The reporting of violence, by teachers and the effects of violence and intimidation on teachers' health, morale and personal and professional lives was also discussed. School policies on violence, teacher training on dealing with violence and finally support networks available for teachers who are having difficulties were also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter six will outline the recommendations from this study and will conclude the research.

*Chapter six:
Conclusions and
Recommendations*

Chapter six

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to point out the main recommendations derived from this study which may be of use to a number of different organisations including the Department of Education, Universities running PGDE courses, teachers unions including the TUI and the ASTI and finally to Secondary schools across Ireland.

These recommendations will then be followed with concluding remarks drawing together the main aspects of the research study conducted.

6.2 Recommendations

Following the research conducted by the researcher the following recommendations are made by the researcher.

All schools should have in place detailed and precise policies for dealing with violence and intimidation. It is also important that within these policies the teacher is incorporate and protected from all forms of violence and intimidation and threatening behaviour from students, parents and other staff members. Also included in the schools policy on violence should be the clear procedures for dealing with violent or intimidating and threatening behaviour for all perpetrators. It is also important that the schools policy is reviewed frequently and its effectiveness assessed.

A greater awareness of support networks such as the Employee Assistance Scheme needs to be made amongst teachers. As evident from the research findings teachers do experience difficulties such as dealing with violence and intimidation during their job. Furthermore it has been shown that such experiences can impact upon their health. If teachers are unaware of external supports as 57% of participants in this study were then a lack of support may lead to further effects on health.

Support networks within schools should also be available to teachers to support them further and help alleviate difficulties. Similar to external supports having someone to talk too or discuss difficulties with may reduce the negative effects felt by teachers due to violent and intimidating behaviour such as stress and low morale.

Prevention is better than intervention and in keeping in line with this it is important that teachers are adequately trained during the PGDE on dealing with violence and intimidation and threatening behaviour from students, parents and other staff members. An increased focus on preventing such situations arising would benefit teachers and equip them better for heading into the real world of school life. But such incidences cannot always be diverted and so it is important that teachers are also trained in dealing with violent and intimidating behaviour in an efficient manner.

Regular in-services on training and dealing with violence in schools should also be put into place. Ongoing training is important for teachers in order to keep an awareness of such issues alive and to educate teachers on dealing with such issues. Support networks for teachers should also be promoted during in-services to create a greater awareness for teachers of available services.

6.3 Conclusion

The outlined recommendations may serve as a guide to a number of different organisations including the Department of Education, Universities running PGDE courses, teachers unions including the TUI and the ASTI and finally to Secondary schools across Ireland. The recommendations outlined highlight areas which need further attention and development in order to sufficiently deal with the issue of violence and intimidation which teachers in our secondary schools deal with every day. Such experiences can have an effect on teachers' health, morale, personal and professional lives.

This research project has attempted to gain a greater insight into teachers' experiences of violence and intimidation. It became evident to the researcher throughout the study that there may be a number of different perpetrators who abuse teachers including students, parents and other staff members. Violence can take a number of different forms including verbal abuse, physical abuse and emotional abuse. Bullying is also a low level form of violence and a term that is frequently used by schools in dealing with the issue of violence and intimidation.

Teacher training on violence and intimidation has been highlighted as a key area which needs greater focus in order to equip teachers sufficiently for dealing with such issues in schools. Ongoing training and in-service days are also important to keep the awareness alive and facilitate and equip teachers in dealing with situations.

School policies have also been highlighted as being a vital component for schools in dealing with violence and intimidation. A clear school policy on violence with clear definitions and guidelines for dealing with issues should be available to all staff members in schools. Clear procedures for reporting incidences are essential in order for the situation to be dealt with efficiently. Also, it is essential that teachers are incorporated into such policies and all perpetrators students, parents and other staff members are addressed.

Finally, external support is available for teachers through the Employee Assistance Scheme. While research showed that in 2007 over one hundred call were made by teachers to the service there are still a large number of teachers who are unaware of such services and may be in need of availing of such support and so it is important that a greater awareness of such support networks are made for teachers who may be experiencing difficulties for situations such as experiences of violence and intimidation in schools.

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Appendices

**Appendix A: Multivariate Regression Model Summary with Students’
Violence Scale as the Dependent Variable¹**

Table 7. Multivariate Regression Model Summary with Students’ Violence Scale as the
Dependent Variable¹

	All (<i>N</i> = 110)	Model 1 Male (<i>n</i> = 21)	Female (<i>n</i> = 89)
<i>Constant</i>	0.559** (0.168)	0.410* (0.142)	0.537** (0.164)
Female	-0.060 (0.060)	-	-
Years Teaching Experience	-0.050* (0.023)	0.041 (0.036)	-0.068* (0.027)
<i>Voluntary Secondary Ref.</i>	-		
Vocational	0.108 (0.145)	-	0.068 (0.150)
Comprehensive	-0.027 (0.232)	-	-0.019 (0.224)
Community College	0.049 (0.144)	-	0.040 (0.152)
Community School	0.066 (0.145)	0.245+ (0.113)	-0.009 (0.152)
Grinds School	-0.114 (0.167)	-0.301* (0.110)	-0.007 (0.195)
DEIS	0.064 (0.061)	-0.001 (0.106)	0.90 (0.073)
Girls Only	-0.019 (0.135)	-0.141 (0.116)	0.003 (0.139)
Suburban	-0.045 (0.063)	-0.390** (0.092)	0.040 (0.075)
Policy on Violence Exists	-0.027 (0.069)	-0.183 (0.189)	-0.052 (0.075)
Incorporate Teachers Adequate Training	0.061 (0.076)	0.278 (0.175)	0.009 (0.087)
Sufficient In-Service	0.174 (0.175)	-	0.131 (0.188)
	-0.049 (0.096)	-0.143 (0.087)	-0.084 (0.137)
<i>F</i> (<i>df</i> Regression, <i>Residual</i>)	1.155 (14, 87)	4.741 (9,11)	1.139 (13,67)
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	0.021	0.627	0.022
<i>R</i> ²	0.157	0.795	0.181

Appendix B: Table 2. Bivariate Correlation

Table 2. Bivariate Correlations (N)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. Students' Violence Scale	1.00 (105)															
2. Female	-.038 (105)	1.00 (110)														
3. Teaching Experience Yrs	-.187 (105)	-.194* (110)	1.00 (110)													
4. Voluntary Secondary	-.182 (105)	.133 (110)	.228* (110)	1.00 (110)												
5. Vocational	.089 (105)	.154 (110)	.020 (110)	-.216* (110)	1.00 (110)											
6. Comprehensive	.029 (105)	.047 (110)	-.143 (110)	-.065 (110)	-.030 (110)	1.00 (110)										
7. Community College	.147 (105)	.003 (110)	-.397* (110)	-.486* (110)	-.225* (110)	-.068 (110)	1.00 (110)									
8. Community School	.059 (105)	-.176 (110)	.234* (110)	-.332* (110)	-.154 (110)	-.047 (110)	-.346* (110)	1.00 (110)								
9. Grinds	-.160 (105)	-.189* (110)	-.013 (110)	-.164 (110)	-.076 (110)	-.023 (110)	-.171 (110)	-.117 (110)	1.00 (110)							
10. DEIS	.166 (103)	.010 (108)	.148 (108)	-.155 (108)	.085 (108)	.067 (108)	.028 (108)	.279** (108)	-.350** (110)	1.00 (108)						
11. Girls Only	-.167 (105)	.150 (110)	.217* (110)	.918** (110)	-.158 (110)	.135 (110)	-.507** (110)	-.279** (110)	-.171 (110)	-.084 (108)	1.00 (110)					
12. Suburban	-.011 (104)	-.011 (109)	-.005 (109)	-.149 (109)	.089 (109)	-.059 (109)	-.095 (109)	.324* (109)	-.149 (109)	-.200* (107)	-.171 (109)	1.00 (109)				
13. Policy on Violence	.002 (105)	-.021 (110)	-.021 (110)	.278* (110)	-.162 (110)	.105 (110)	-.148 (110)	-.025 (110)	-.058 (110)	-.045 (108)	.278* (110)	-.073 (109)	1.00 (110)			
14. Incorporate Teachers	.005 (105)	-.126 (110)	.089 (110)	.219* (110)	-.143 (110)	.143 (110)	-.185 (110)	.025 (110)	.013 (110)	-.142 (108)	.190* (110)	.073 (109)	.733** (110)	1.00 (110)		
15. Adequate Training	.041 (105)	.066 (110)	.032 (110)	-.093 (110)	-.043 (110)	-.013 (110)	-.191 (110)	-.066 (110)	-.033 (110)	-.198 (108)	-.097 (110)	.222* (109)	-.124 (110)	-.091 (110)	1.00 (110)	
16. Sufficient In-Service	-.009 (105)	-.158 (110)	.029 (110)	-.098 (110)	-.082 (110)	-.025 (110)	.130 (110)	.063 (110)	-.063 (110)	-.059 (108)	-.107 (110)	.258** (109)	.136 (110)	.229* (110)	.243* (110)	1.00 (110)

* - $p < 0.05$; ** - $p < 0.0$

Appendix: E-mail to Schools

Dear Principal,

I am a Masters student in the Dublin Institute of Technology. I am currently studying on the MA in Child Family and Community Studies. As part of my course I must complete a Dissertation. The title of my dissertation is “An Exploration into the Nature and Extent of Violence Experienced by Secondary School Teachers”.

I am hoping to conduct this research using a qualitative method of data collection. In order to do so I have compiled a short questionnaire for teachers this should take approximately six to eight minutes to complete.

I would be very grateful if your school could facilitate this study by allowing me to speak briefly with staff at small break and explain my research. Following this any staff members who would be interested in completing a questionnaire could do so and return it before the end of the school day when I would return to collect the box.

In order to protect the participants and participating schools total anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed by the researcher.

If you have any further queries regarding this research please feel free to contact me on _____ or my Supervisor _____.

Please find attached a copy of the questionnaire and cover letter.

Many Thanks

Ciana O’Dowd Lernihan

Appendix D: Cover Letter Accompanying Questionnaire

March 2010

Dear Teacher,

I am a Masters student in the Dublin Institute of Technology, studying 'Child, Family and Community Studies'. In order to complete my thesis, I must conduct research focussing on teacher's experiences of intimidation and violence from pupils, parents and other staff members. This study also aims to investigate school policies on violence and the effects which violence has on teachers who experience it.

In order to collate the relevant data, I have compiled the attached brief questionnaire (completion time max 6-8 minutes) and I would very much appreciate if you could take the time out of your schedule to complete for me. I will return to your school at the end of the day to collect the completed questionnaires. A box clearly marked 'questionnaires' will be placed in a visible place in the staffroom for completed questionnaires.

I understand and appreciate that this is a very busy time of the school year and thank you sincerely for facilitating me in preparing my thesis.

A copy of the research findings will be sent to participating schools in the first term of the next school year. If you have been affected by any of these issues you can free phone the Employee Assistance Scheme on **1800 411 057**, who offer free advice and counselling for teachers.

Yours sincerely

Ciana O'Dowd Lernihan

Appendix E: Questionnaire

Please keep in mind the following definition of violence as you complete this questionnaire.

*“Violence may be defined as behaviour which produces damaging or hurtful effects, physically or emotionally on other people”
(Norris 1990)*

General Information

1. Please indicate your gender (tick appropriate box)
Male Female
2. Please indicate the number of years experience you have teaching: (tick one box only)
0-5 yrs 6-10 yrs 11-15 yrs 16+ yrs
3. Please indicate the type of School you are currently working in: (tick one box only)
Voluntary Secondary School Community College
Vocational School Community School
Comprehensive School Grinds School
4. Is your school part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) scheme?
Yes No
5. Does your school cater for;
Girls only Boys only Co-Educational
6. Please state the location of the school you are currently teaching in.
Urban Suburban

Student Behaviour

7. Have you ever been verbally abused by a student (including being threatened)? (If

no please go to question 9.)

Yes No

8. If so how frequently would you experience such verbal abuse?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

9. Have you ever felt intimidated by a student? (If no please go to question 11.)

Yes No

10. If so how frequently would you experience feelings of intimidation?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

11. Have you ever been physically assaulted by a student? (If no please go to question

14.)

Yes No

12. Please indicate the form of physical abuse;

Spitting Pushing Biting

Hair pulling Punching Kicking

Choking Slapping Scratching

Other (Please specify)

13. If so how frequently have you experienced such physical assaults?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

14. Have you ever been sexually assaulted by a student? (If no please go to question 16.)

Yes No

15. If so how frequently have you experienced sexual assault?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

16. Has your property ever been (by a student) (Please tick relevant boxes)

Vandalised Damaged Stolen None of these

17. Have you ever witnessed other staff members being (by a student)

Threatened Intimidated Assaulted None of these

18. Have you ever been affected by any of these issues outside of school?

Very frequently Frequently Infrequently Never

19. Please outline the most recent serious incident you encountered with a student;

Parental Behaviour

20. Have you ever been verbally abused by a Parent (including being threatened)? (If

no please go to Question 22.)

Yes No

21. If so how frequently would you experience such verbal abuse?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

22. Have you ever felt intimidated by a Parent? (If no please go to Question 24.)

Yes No

23. If so how frequently would you experience feelings of intimidation?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

24. Have you ever been physically assaulted by a parent? (If no please go to Question

27.)

Yes No

25. If Yes please indicate the form of physical abuse;

Spitting Pushing Biting

Hair pulling Punching Kicking

Choking Slapping Scratching

Other (Please specify)

26. If so how frequently have you been physically assaulted?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

27. Have you ever been sexually assaulted by a parent? (If no please go to Question 29.)

Yes No

28. If so how frequently have you experienced sexual assault?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

29. Has your property been (by a parent)

Vandalised Damaged Stolen None of these

30. Have you ever witnessed other staff members being (by a parent)

Threatened Intimidated Assaulted None of these

31. Have you ever been affected by any of these issues outside of school?

Very frequently Frequently Infrequently Never

32. Please outline the most recent serious incident you encountered with a parent (if applicable);

Other Staff Members Behaviour

33. Have you ever been verbally abused by another member of staff (including being threatened)? (If no please go to Question 35.)

Yes No

34. If so how frequently would you experience such verbal abuse?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

35. Have you ever felt intimidated by another member of staff? (If no please go to Question 37.)

Yes No

36. If so how frequently would you experience feelings of intimidation?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

37. Have you ever been physically assaulted by another staff member? (If no please go to Question 40.)

Yes No

38. If Yes please indicate the form of physical abuse;

Spitting Pushing Biting
Hair pulling Punching Kicking
Choking Slapping Scratching
Other (Please specify)

39. If so how frequently have you been physically assaulted?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

40. Have you ever been sexually assaulted by another staff member? (If no please go to Question 42.)

Yes No

41. If so how frequently have you experienced sexual assault?

Daily Weekly Monthly Less frequently

42. Has your property been (by another staff member)

Vandalised Damaged Stolen None of these

43. Have you ever witnessed other staff members being (by another staff member)

Threatened Intimidated Assaulted None of these

44. Have you ever been affected by any of these issues outside of school?

Very frequently Frequently Infrequently Never

45. Please outline the most recent serious incident you encountered with another staff member (if applicable)

Reporting violence

46. If you have been the victim of such behaviours did you report the incident?

Yes No N/A

47. If so, were you satisfied with how the situation was dealt with by the school?

Yes No N/A

48. How would you rate the support given to you after by your school?

Extremely satisfactory Satisfactory Average

Unsatisfactory extremely unsatisfactory N/A

49. Are you aware of external support available for teachers?

Yes No

50. Do you feel adequate external support is available for teachers who may be

experiencing difficulties?

Yes No Don't know

51. Do you feel adequate training is given during the H-DIP / PGDE to deal with

intimidation and violence?

Yes No Don't know

52. Do you feel sufficient In-services are given on dealing with violence and

intimidation in schools / classroom?

Yes No Don't know

Effects of Violence and Intimidation on Teachers

53. Have such experiences of dealing with intimidation and violence affected your health?

Unaffected little stressed quite stressed completely stressed

54. On a professional level do you feel you have been affected by experiences of intimidation and violence?

Unaffected little frustrated quite frustrated very frustrated

55. On a personal level do you feel you have been affected by experiences of intimidation and violence?

Unaffected little drained quite drained completely drained

56. Do you feel such experiences have affected your morale?

No effect minor effect major effect very serious effect

57. Has dealing with such issues caused you any of the following, (Please tick as appropriate)

Anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stress	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical/ bodily harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	To visit a GP	<input type="checkbox"/>
To visit a hospital	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take leave from work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

58. Any other comments. _____

School policy

59. Does your school hold a policy on violence in the school?

Yes No Don't know

60. If yes, does it incorporate violence towards teachers?

Yes No Don't know

61. Are you satisfied with your schools policy on violence?

Yes No Don't know

62. Do you feel staff members are given sufficient input into policy development in your school?

Yes No Don't know

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire and facilitating my study.

***Many Thanks
Ciana O'Dowd Lernihan***

Appendix F: Qualitative Questionnaire Responses

Colour coding

Green = Verbal abuse

Purple = Physical abuse

Blue = intimidation and threatening behaviour

Red = stolen, damaged and other

Orange = effects on teachers

Student Behaviour

50- I experienced threatening behaviour from a 5th year student when he refused to follow a basic instruction. He got up out of his seat, walked towards me in a very threatening manner, suddenly passed a nasty comment to me and walked out of class.

46-I have witnessed teachers been hit and kicked very hard while breaking up fights between students. It happened to me once and it did leave me feeling shaken and with bruises.

43. A student head butted me once with great pressure.

42. Incident involving a male student losing his temper and resorting to verbal abuse and insulting language. Student later calmed and apologised.

40. A student fighting another student in my class. I attempted to separate the students with a colleague's assistance but the student pushed me out of the way injuring my shoulder and back.

28. breaking up a fight once between two students I was blocked in and unable to get help and was pushed up to the wall as a by product of them fighting. They head butted and choked each other in front of me and would not stop for what seemed like a good ten minutes.

26. A student threatened to come to my house by following me home and giving me a Halloween surprise. This incident occurred on a bus and so it was in an enclosed space that added to the intimidatory nature of the incident.

25. I told a student to stop throwing water at others. He told me to fuck off and he walked off.

6. Verbal abuse – shouting, name calling; refusal to cooperate. Damage to books. Handbag opened and purse taken.

5. A student called me a slut while walking down the road on a Friday after school.

24. A student squared up to me in the hall and told me he'd put me in the ground if I stood in his way.

12. A student saying they that would lie and tell this lie to their mother and make sure I would lose my job for asking a student to work during class.
52. One student physically threatened me but didn't follow through with his threat but he did however punch and break a glass window
- I was also accused of inappropriately feeling a student which I didn't. But I suffered a stressful 3days until her parents and family sorted it out. (She had a history of this)
19. I was supervising at a sports day recently and I was pushed against a bouncing castle. The said student was intent on giving me a shock. He was reprimanded later but it was the first time I felt so infringed upon in the ten years I have been teaching.
18. I have been told to 'fuck off' by students.
15. Refusal to leave classroom when requested to do so. I cannot force students to leave therefore the student remained in the classroom, to my embarrassment in front of the rest of the class and I also felt intimidated and threatened by the student.
13. I was once grabbed by a student because I was in her way. I was left with red marks on my arm
9. Phone stolen/ laptop vandalised.
8. Verbal abuse by student yesterday and threat of intimidation.
7. Being pushed to the door for a violent student to leave. A knife was once brought out in class.
109. A student "accidently" let a door slam in my face once. I couldn't prove it so nothing could be down about it.
9. Throwing books/tools.
36. A student once threw an item at me and knocked me unconscious
4. Student shouting at me, standing over me but not actually physically touching me.
2. I have had a verbally aggressive/ angry student who refused to get up off her seat, she wouldn't calm down so I walked her to the VP's office, she behaved in the same manner for a while then eventually calmed down.
1. A student raised his hand as if to punch me and instead punched the wall. The student in question was considerably bigger than me.
68. Physically threatened by student – fist held up.
65. Physical pushing during break up of altercation.
61. A verbal attack, using many swear words, when not allowing a student out of class to go to the toilet.

60. I have had comments made at me when walking down the street by students of mine.

59. Two girls began a fight in a class once. They began to say snide comments to each other. I asked them to stop but they were quite agitated. One stood up and knocked her desk and chair over. I was afraid she would attack the other girl and called for a Q. I spoke to the second girl and the year head afterwards. Other than this, I have never been involved in violent encounters with students.

58. In 2010 I was teaching a student from third year. She was absent quite frequently and caused a lot of disruption in the classroom. During a lesson I instructed the student to stop distracting her fellow students and she immediately threw her school bag across the room and stormed out of the classroom.

56. A student screamed abuse at me as they stood face to face with me.

55. When shopping in town once during the holidays with a friend a number of students followed me around the shops. They were shouting and jokingly slagging me but would not stop following me despite me telling them good bye and I would see them back in school Monday.

54. Verbal abuse from a student towards a number of teachers.

107. A member of staff had their hair pulled once by a student who was attempting to attack another student.

104. Personal, rude remarks references written on my board.

100. I was called a bastard after asking a student to do something in class.

93. I was verbally insulted and then pushed back onto another student as I was blocking them. They caught my hair as they were going for the other student and refused to let go when I told them. After this incident I was also approached by the parent and intimidated.

86. Being shouted at and the particular students mother rushing into the classroom screaming abuse at me in front of the other students. This student and parent didn't stop ask me to clarify what the situation was. This was eventually sorted through my own interest and that of the principal. This situation caused me a lot of personal distress.

83. Book thrown at teacher.

81. While on supervising duty on the yard of a group of second year student were acting badly. They were playing football and were behaving in a dangerous manner so I attempted to remove them from the game. Eventually they refused and began deliberately kicking the ball at me with force. I brought three students to the office and while I was

waiting for the principle I was subjected to slugging, verbal abuse and intimidation. The students were punished and parents called in.

80. Student placed drawing pins under the cushion of my seat. Eventually owned up and appropriate action was taken.

Parent

50- A volatile parent entered the school at lunch time came into my office and attempted to slap and throw punches at me.

93. A parent approached me after I broke up a fight involving their daughter. She was trying to get at the other student and kept asking me if I hit her daughter and was in my face trying to intimidate me.

100. A parent walked into school wandered around walked upstairs to my room and preceded in front of my class to shout abuse at me.

31. A parent was once talking loudly about an incident with their child in the next aisle of a shopping centre knowing I was there.

55. I have been verbally abused and intimidated by a parent at a parent teacher meeting.

54. Verbal abuse on the phone from a parent over a student refusing to follow school policy

109. Mostly undergrimming attitudes and blame for pupils problems

56. The guards had to be called to remove a parent from the school once.

43. At a parent teacher meeting 15 years ago a threat was issued in a subtle way which I didn't take seriously. It was a parent letting off steam because I had disciplined their daughter who had been suspended because she had accused me of something serious.

28. A parent coming into my room after school time during holidays. Demanding to see the work I was doing with their daughter and looking for their work. She was very rude and condescending towards me.

9. Being threatened at a parent teacher meeting.

1. A parent threatened another teacher and refused to leave the car park. The Gardaí had to be 107. Two traveller parents tried to force their way past a teacher into the lunchroom to deal with an argument between their children and another called 8. In a previous position I witnessed parents threatened by a parent.

. 46- I have seen parents shout and raise their hands to teachers.

60. I had a parent approach me aggressively in town one day in relation to their daughter.

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Staff

46-Money, jackets, books stolen by other staff members from the staffroom.

55. I have witnessed bullying amongst two teachers towards an older teacher on a foreign school tour once and upsetting her greatly even in front of the students.

25. Another staff member is very aggressive in passing me in the corridor and won't move aside, ignoring me, pushing me and using words like fuck, porn etc constantly in the staffroom.

9. Staff members vandalising equipment.

8. Another staff member removed work that one was doing from a photocopier and interrupted her work and threw it in a mess.

4. Another teacher shouting at me in the corridor, threatening to "go to the principal" because they were unhappy at my decision not to do what they were demanding.

60. I witnessed an older staff member being bullied by two other teachers and she was very upset over it.

Effects.

61. Much of the above mentioned in relation to student behaviour seems part and parcel of the working school day.

60. There have been times when I have been anxious to go to work.

104. At the time of the incidences I suffered very low moral however once overcome I think it has made me stronger.

86. I'd certainly consider taking a career break now something I wouldn't have contemplated

before now.

4. Rethinking future job prospect as principal has too much power.

2. I could see that you may possibly feel intimidated by certain students and that you would certainly need excellent support around you. I think it would be important for a teacher to manage their stress levels and get help where required.

