

Staff Relations: A Report on Adult Bullying in Schools



An INTO Publication

Irish National Teachers' Organization
35 Parnell Square
Dublin 1

Telephone: 01-872-2533
Fax: 8722462
Email: info@into.ie
Web: <http://www.into.ie>

General Secretary
Senator Joe O'Toole

Cumann Múinteoirí Éireann
35 Cearnóg Pharnell
Baile Átha Cliath 1

Guthán: 01-872-2533
Fax: 8722462
Ríomhphost: info@into.ie
Gréasán: <http://www.into.ie>

Ard Rúnaí
An Seanadóir Joe O'Toole

Cover design by David Cooke.

INTO 2000

Contents

Bullying in the Workplace	1
Definitions of Bullying	3
Prevalence of Bullying	4
Who are the Bullies?	5
Who are the Victims?	5
Motives for Bullying Behaviour	6
Forms of Bullying	7
The Effects of Bullying	8
Combating Bullying in the Workplace	10
Creation of an Anti-Bullying Climate	13
The Importance of Self Esteem	13
Leadership and Management	14
Training for Leadership Roles	14
Communication	15
The School Plan	15
Survey on Adult Bullying and Staff Relations in Primary Schools	17
Methodology	17
Bullying Behaviours	17
The Effects of Bullying	24
School Policies	29
Staff Relations	30
Adult Bullying: A Qualitative Approach	36
Conclusion and Recommendations	38
Appendix 1	42
Selected Bibliography	47

Foreword

Workplace bullying is now widely recognised as a problem of significance. This report deals with the issue of bullying in the workplace in general and provides a review of the literature available on the subject. The results of the INTO Survey on Adult Bullying and Staff Relations in schools are included. Because the use of quantitative methods for a topic such as bullying are not without their limitations, it was decided to supplement the statistical findings of the Survey by including an analysis of qualitative research conducted by Jacinta Kitt into the experiences of five primary school teachers in relation to this matter. Included in the final part of the document are procedures for dealing with cases of Adult Bullying in schools.

In publishing this report the organisation wishes to raise awareness of the issue of adult bullying. While the INTO Survey revealed that the number of teachers experiencing bullying is relatively low nonetheless even one, is one too many. By informing members of the characteristics, causes, and consequences of the problem it is hoped that the incidence of adult bullying will be eliminated from our schools. Where Adult Bullying persists it is hoped that the procedures on Dealing with Adult Bullying will assist members in solving the problem.

The INTO wishes to thank the Equality Committee, and in particular Ms Patricia Shanahan, Ms Jayne Doran, and Ms Joan Keating for their valuable contribution to the research and compilation of this report.

The INTO also acknowledges Mr Jim Bennett for his valuable contribution to the report and Jacinta Kitt who very generously allowed her research to be included.

The INTO wishes to thank Deirbhile Nic Craith and Maria Mc Carthy for their contribution to the compilation of the report.

Finally, the INTO wishes to thank Ursula Doyle who was responsible for typesetting the document.

Senator Joe O'Toole
General Secretary
April 2000

Bullying in the Workplace

The manner in which people are treated in their place of work can have far reaching effects on their self-esteem, their self-confidence, their performance in work and their interactions with others. Bullying is one of the most destructive forms of behaviour which any individual can experience either at work or at home, and yet for many years, it was largely ignored as a research topic. Writing in 1989 with regard to the United Kingdom, Delwyn Tattum described bullying as the “most malicious and malevolent form of deviant behaviour practised in our schools”, and he asserted that it had been neglected as an issue by national and local authorities and by teacher unions. *Bullying in Schools* (1989), was the first book in the United Kingdom devoted entirely to this particular topic.

In the Republic of Ireland, the publication in 1993 of Brendan Byrne’s, *Coping with Bullying in Schools* provoked considerable media attention and the Department of Education sought to give a practical expression of its concern by producing *Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools*.

In November 1993, the INTO launched its report, *Discipline in the Primary School* which incorporated a survey on bullying in schools. One of the outcomes of this activity, increased awareness and subsequent action has been that the majority of schools in the Republic of Ireland have policies in place with regard to bullying and children. However, the question of the bullying of adults in schools in Ireland has not been addressed, and this report seeks to redress this lacuna.

In recent years, adult bullying in the workplace has been the focus of some attention from members of the academic community and from a number of trade unions and professional organisations. The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (1995) suggests that bullying in the workplace may be more prevalent than the numbers who complained in the past would indicate, but accepts that it is difficult to establish the full extent of the problem because precise figures do not exist. In the opinion of Lenore Mrkwicka, Assistant General Secretary of the Irish Nurses Organisation (1997), it is at last being accepted that bullying in the workplace is a form of harassment, irrespective of who the bullies are.

Moriarity (1997, pp. 6-7) of the Manufacturing Science and Finance Union (MSF) argues that bullying at work is increasingly being seen as an important issue throughout Europe with the Scandinavian countries to the forefront in recognising it as a work environment and a health and safety issue. He contends that in Ireland bullying in the workplace is largely unrecognised as a problem because bullying is still regarded as something which occurs only in the school playground. O'Moore, (1997, p. 1) who established the Anti Bullying Centre in Trinity College in 1996, reiterates this contention that public interest and research into workplace bullying is increasing, and she also refers to the inextricable links between bullying and schools. She suggests, somewhat controversially, that bullying in the workplace in Ireland is inevitable in view of the fact that this form of behaviour was tolerated in schools for so long.

At this juncture, there is considerable research evidence available with regard to the bullying of children, but there is a paucity of material regarding the bullying of teachers in schools. Field, (1996, p. 12) in his seminal work, suggested that bullying was widespread in the public sector in the United Kingdom, and he stated that the two professions most badly affected were nursing and teaching. He puts forward the hypothesis that while both nursing and teaching in the U.K have a keen vocational element and a strongly hierarchical management structure, those in the vocational professions tend to attract people with skills of empathy whereas those in management are attracted by the sense of power. According to Field if the skills of the latter are inadequate to manage the former especially in a climate of commercialism and accountability, then the potential for conflict is very high. Arguably, while Field may have drawn too great a distinction between those in management positions and those who teach and nurse, it is necessary that further research be undertaken to examine the validity of this hypothesis with regard to the prevalence of bullying in teaching and nursing in the United Kingdom.

With specific reference to Ireland and the nursing profession, Mrwicka (1997, p. 2) reported that 95% of nurses stated that they had been bullied, and the other 5% asserted that while they had not been bullied, they had witnessed bullying in their place of work. These alarming figures make this present survey all the more timely, and it is significant that the ASTI is also

conducting a survey to ascertain the extent and seriousness of workplace bullying in 2nd level schools (*Irish Times*, 6 October 1998).

Definitions of Bullying

One of the difficulties encountered in a review of literature on workplace bullying is the multiplicity of definitions. While certain behaviours are generally included, there are also significant differences, both philosophical and psychological, in the various authors' interpretation of this topic. However, according to O Moore differences in definitions and differences in measurement do not lessen the validity of the findings. The Department of Education (1993, p.2), defined bullying as "repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others." It emphasised that isolated incidents did not constitute bullying, and that for bullying to occur, the behaviours must be systematic and sustained. The Eastern Health Board's, 'Policy Guidelines on Bullying' also referred to the regular and persistent nature of the behaviours when it stated that bullying occurred when a person treated another in an 'aggressive, intimidating or derogatory manner' which was perceived by the recipient as offensive, demeaning and/or threatening.

It is with regard to intent to bully that some of the most significant differences in the research literature emerge. For example, Marie Murray and Colm Keane (1998, p. 11) define bullying in terms of deliberate aggressive acts and they state that:

Every study, every piece of research and most sociological or psychological analyses of bullying confirm that it is an intentional, conscious and persistent cruelty perpetrated against those who are unable to defend themselves...

Randall (1997, pp. 4-5) reiterates Murray and Keane's contention that bullies are always aggressive individuals who intend to cause pain, but he accepts that many behavioural psychologists are opposed to the inclusion of intention in definitions of bullying. He quotes Buss (1961) who believes that it is unnecessary to put the mentalistic concept of intention into a definition of bullying because there is no means by which such a concept can be subjected to scientific scrutiny. It is arguable that it is unhelpful to concentrate on the perpetrators' intentions, because in the opinion of the Institute of Personnel Development (IPD, 1997, p. 1), the key to deciding if

bullying has occurred is whether or not the behaviour is unacceptable by normal standards and is disadvantageous. This opinion is reiterated by Moriarity (1997, p. 3) when he argues that 'bullying is defined largely by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient, not its intention'.

In examining what bullying is, it is important to clarify what does not constitute bullying. The Eastern Health Board Policy Statement points out that legitimate criticism by a 'line manager of a staff member's behaviour or performance is not bullying as long as it is conducted with fairness, courtesy and respect'. Field (1996, pp. 3-4) differentiates between bullying and management, and he contends that bullying and management have nothing in common. The goal of management is to motivate staff and lead whereas the goal of bullying is to gain gratification from hurting others.

Prevalence of Bullying

It is difficult to ascertain the full extent of bullying in the work place in view of the variety of definitions that have been used by different commentators and researchers. The Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union survey (1997, p. 1) reported that 30% of its respondents thought that bullying in the work place had become a significant problem. O'Moore (1997, p. 2) in reporting the following figures for bullying in the work place, also cautioned against ascribing too much significance to the variations among countries in view of the different measurements and definitions used.

Sweden	3.5%
Norway	8.6%
Finland	10%
United Kingdom	12.5%
Austria	26.6%

With specific reference to teaching, the National Association of School Masters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT, 1996, p. 10) conducted a survey of three thousand five hundred of its members in England and Northern Ireland in 1995/96 in order to ascertain the prevalence of adult bullying in schools, and it found that 72% of its respondents reported either being subjected to serious bullying or of witnessing the bullying of others.

Who are the Bullies?

There is no typical profile of a person involved in bullying behaviour. Research (Einarsen, 1996) on adults who bully adults indicate that they have authoritarian and abrasive personalities. Moriarity (1997, p. 3) reiterates this assertion that there are certain personality characteristics of the bully such as aggressiveness, sarcasm, and maliciousness that may come to the fore in certain circumstances. He contends that bullies may feel insecure in their position and see every suggestion or disagreement as a challenge to their authority. Field (1996, pp. 23 – 24, p. 3) argues that bullying is a behaviour which everyone can exhibit, but that most people display bullying behaviours infrequently, whereas the bully exhibits the behaviour almost all of the time. He contends that most cases of bullying occur when managers use their positions of power to bully a subordinate, but he accepts that colleagues can also visit this type of behaviour on each other, and in rare instances, managers have been bullied by their staff. The Institute of Personnel Development's (O'Moore, 1997, p. 5) findings indicated that almost one third of victims reported that they were bullied by their head of department or section, and 16% ascribed the bullying to their chief executive or managing director. The NASUWT survey (1996, p. 14) reported that adult bullies in schools were mostly male, in their forties and headteachers. In view of the fact that teaching is predominantly a female profession, the NASUWT survey concluded however that the high proportion of men identified as bullies was a reflection of the gender imbalance in the senior ranks of teaching, and that bullying was more closely linked to seniority than it was to gender. Field (1996, p. 112) reiterates this assertion that bullying is not a gender issue, and he states that when women achieve positions of power and authority, they can bully with 'equal ruthlessness'.

Who are the Victims?

There is no typical profile of the victims of bullying. In the words of O'Moore (1997, p. 5), 'anyone can be bullied. Bullying knows no boundaries of age, gender, level of education, socio-economic status, type or status of job.' The categories of people that ICTU (1995, p. 4) identified as being most at risk from bullying were young people, those who were different by virtue of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or regional background, shy or withdrawn people and persons with speech impediments or other communication difficulties. The NASUWT survey (1996, p. 14) reported that victims were mostly female, in their forties and were standard scale teachers. The risk of being bullied was

shown to be shared equally by men and women when the bully was a man, but women were significantly more likely to be victims of bullying when the bully was a woman.

Motives for Bullying Behaviour

The research literature suggests that envy and jealousy are the main reasons for people being bullied. Vartia (O'Moore, 1997, p. 9) reported that 63% of victims ascribed envy as being the chief reason that they were bullied. This is the belief which underpins Field's (1996, pp.110 -111) analysis of bullying. He asserts that the two principal criteria which identified people as candidates for being bullied were "being good at their job and being popular with people". He also provides another list of reasons such as standing up for a colleague who is being bullied, resisting subjugation, informing the authorities of the existence of malpractice, being too highly qualified, being involved in a trade union, being highly experienced, having high moral standards and being unwilling to accept increased workloads.

There are also organisational issues which contribute to the prevalence of bullying in the work place. In the NASUWT survey, 88% of the respondents attributed the incidence of bullying to authoritarian/dictatorial management styles. O'Moore (1997, p. 8) argues that a tough competitive environment aggravates negative behaviour, and that the pressure felt by chief executives to meet targets causes them to use bullying tactics. In addition to the two factors, competitiveness and authoritarianism which have already been alluded to, Moriarity (1997, p. 4) provides a useful list of other organisational factors which may contribute to the incidence of bullying in the work place:

- fear for one's position;
- a culture of promoting oneself by putting others down;
- organisational change and uncertainty;
- little participation in decision-making;
- lack of training;
- no respect for others' point of view;
- poor work relationships;
- no clear codes of acceptable conduct;
- excessive workloads and demands on people;
- no procedures for resolving problems.

He suggests that in some organisations bullying may be seen as strong management, as the effective way of getting things done, with the result that it may be condoned and sometimes even encouraged.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying can range from extremes such as violence to less obvious forms such as ignoring someone. (IPD, 1997, p. 6). O'Moore (1997, p. 4) suggests that bullying behaviours may be classified into 5 main dimensions:

- The manipulation of the victim's reputation through the spreading of rumours and gossip;
- Victims being subjected to loud voiced criticism and not being allowed to express their opinions;
- Victims being excluded socially;
- Manipulating the nature of victims' work so that they are given meaningless tasks to perform or not given tasks at all;
- The use of physical abuse or the threat of physical abuse.

O'Moore suggests that it is useful to distinguish between direct bullying in which open attacks are visited on the victim and the use of social exclusion from the group. Moriarity (1997, p. 5) also refers to the 'subtle, insidious forms' of bullying which gradually wear a person down over a period of time. Randall (1997, pp. 50– 51) develops this distinction between direct and indirect bullying, and he points out that organisations are now so complex that directly aggressive bullying in the workplace is not as prevalent as it once was. He suggests however that bullying is on the increase between people of equal status because of a tendency towards short-term contracts for senior executives where people encounter a 'take it or leave it' mentality.

With specific reference to bullying in schools, the NASUWT survey reported that being subjected to constant criticism and innuendo (57%) were the most common forms of bullying. The use of intimidatory disciplinary and competence procedures was encountered by 47% of the respondents with 46% stating that they had been shouted at in front of colleagues. Other forms of bullying reported in this survey were verbal threats (39%), being shouted at in front of the pupils (28%), and having areas of responsibility removed without consultation (27%). Only 2% of the respondents reported that the

perpetrators had damaged property belonging to the victims, and a further 2% reported that either they or their colleagues had suffered physical violence.

The Effects of Bullying

The effects of bullying may be addressed from the perspective of the victim and for their impact on an organisation. People who are subjected to constant bullying may lose their self-confidence, their self-esteem and they are at an increased risk of suffering from stress. (Moriarity, 1997, p. 5) Professor Cary Cooper of the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (NASUWT, 1996, p. 9) has estimated that between 30% and 50% of all work-related illnesses in the workforce are caused by workplace bullying. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA, 1998, pp. 3-4) has outlined the manner in which individuals may manifest the effects of bullying:

- Emotional effects (severe anxiety);
- Cognitive (concentration) effects (making mistakes, having accidents);
- Behavioural effects (smoking, excess drinking, over-eating);
- Physiological effects (contributing to blood pressure and heart disease);
- Reduced resistance to infection, stomach and bowel problems;
- Skin problems.

The most serious effects are fear, anxiety and depression which can lead to lead nervous breakdown, heart attack and suicide (Moriarity, 1997, p. 6).

Bullying has a detrimental effect on the organisation as a whole because the quality of a person's work is affected if there is a climate of fear and resentment (O'Moore, 1997, p. 6; HSA, 1998, p.3). The effects on an organisation can include:

- Increased absenteeism;
- Low motivation;
- Reduced productivity;
- Reduced efficiency;
- Hasty decision-making;
- Poor industrial relations;
- Increased staff turnover.

There is no doubt that organisations beset by problems of this sort will not function efficiently or effectively, and that urgent remedial action will be required to avert a major catastrophe. With specific reference to schools in the United Kingdom, 74% of the victims suffered a loss of confidence, 57% 'dreaded' going to work, and 56% had sleepless nights. 20% of the victims left their jobs in order to escape from the bully and 10% relinquished posts of responsibility (NASUWT, 1996, p. 20).

In this survey of theoretical and practical literature, definitions of bullying have been compared and contrasted, and its manifestations and effects have been analysed. A distinction was drawn between effective management and bullying, and an attempt was also made to outline behaviours which did not constitute bullying. The question of whether or not bullying was a gender related issue was addressed, and the various forms which bullying takes were outlined. The prevalence of bullying in the workplace in general, in nursing and in schools in the United Kingdom was examined, but in many respects, this question of the prevalence of bullying is not the critical one because it is unacceptable that any person should be subjected to bullying behaviour. The aim of every employer, trade union and employee therefore should be to ensure that a climate is created in every organisation to ensure that this type of behaviour does not occur, or if it does that structures and procedures are in place to deal with it effectively.

Combating Bullying in the Workplace

The resolution of any problem involves at the outset recognising that a problem exists. Speaking on 22 October 1998 at the launch of the Health and Safety Authority's document, *Bullying at Work*, Tom Kitt, Minister for Labour, Trade and Consumer Affairs stated that people must recognise that workplace bullying is a real problem, and that there must be an awareness of what can be done to tackle it. Many of the trade unions have issued guidelines on the form which such a raising awareness campaign should take.

The MSF (1997) advises its representatives to use posters, leaflets and meetings to raise awareness about workplace bullying. It recommends that an organisation's safety representative conduct a survey to ascertain the prevalence of bullying. It suggests that this be done anonymously, and that the findings should then be discussed and the issue raised with management.

ICTU (1997) has produced a set of guidelines in which the union's role and the employers' responsibilities are outlined. This leaflet also highlights the importance of awareness, and it suggests that dealing with bullying should be included on training courses for officials and union representatives. Unions are advised to raise the issue of bullying during negotiations, and they are cautioned against using bullying and intimidation at union meetings.

There are also guidelines on what ICTU sees as the employers' role in combating bullying. It recommends that employers should outlaw bullying practices and ensure that incidences are dealt with through disciplinary procedures. Individuals should be made responsible for dealing with allegations of bullying, and there should be a procedure for handling complaints. The emphasis should be on prevention and early intervention before damage to the victim becomes the subject of disciplinary action.

Each of the unions which has produced guidelines places an emphasis on the need for an agreed policy between employees and employers. The IPD (1997) contends that a policy statement on bullying shows an organisation's commitment to solving the problem and the policy statement should be the

subject of regular review. The IPD recommends that a policy statement on bullying in the workplace should:

- give examples of what constitutes bullying and intimidating behaviour;
- explain its damaging effects and why it will not be tolerated;
- state that bullying will be treated as a disciplinary offence;
- convey that such behaviour is unlawful;
- describe how to get help and complain;
- undertake to investigate allegations speedily, seriously and confidentially;
- promise protection from victimisation for making a complaint;
- make it the duty of supervisors and managers to implement the policy and ensure that it is understood;
- emphasise every employee's responsibility with regard to their behaviour.

MSF (1997) recommends that the policy should include a commitment from management to assess the risk of bullying occurring in the workplace and to rectify the organisational deficiencies that give rise to bullying. It recognises that bullying may be rooted in an organisation's own culture and value system, and that this makes it particularly difficult to address. The standard grievance procedures may not be suitable for dealing with a complaint about bullying because the procedures may be too lengthy and leave the victim vulnerable to further bullying. Additionally, standard procedures may not allow for a complaint to be made over the head of a supervisor or line manager, and this constitutes a major problem if the allegations are being made against a supervisor or line manager.

In dealing with a complaint, organisations should have formal and informal procedures in place. The IPD (1997) recommends that complainants should have the support from a counsellor who can give advice with regard to what course of action should be taken. Complainants should be encouraged not to ignore behaviour which makes them uncomfortable and counselling should also be made available to the individuals whose behaviour is unacceptable. They may be unaware of, or insensitive to the impact of their actions.

The EHB's informal procedures for dealing with bullying are as follows:

- talk to friends, family and colleagues to ensure that you get both advice and support;
- check with colleagues to see if anyone else is receiving similar treatment;
- talk to your Union representative;
- talk to a staff counsellor;
- if possible, make it clear to the bully that their behaviour is unwelcome and ask them to stop. The intimidating nature of bullying means that this approach may not be possible except in the very early stages of the problem;
- approach your supervisor / manager informally, if that is appropriate. If this is not possible, contact a more senior manager or the Personnel Department;
- keep a written record for future reference, quoting dates, times, places and any witnesses to the bullying.

MSF (1997) outlines what should occur if the informal procedure fails to resolve the problem. There should be a clear procedure to enable a person to make a formal written complaint, and this procedure should allow a person to bypass their line manager or supervisor if these staff members are the subject of the complaint. The formal procedure should set out clearly:

- whether or on what basis the alleged bully will be suspended pending the results of the investigation;
- how the investigation will be carried out;
- the timetable for the investigation;
- what disciplinary action may be invoked;
- rights to be represented or accompanied;
- procedures for appeal;
- the requirement for confidentiality;
- whether or in what circumstances mediation will be available.

Moriarity (1997) points out that a training is prerequisite for the successful implementation of a bullying policy. Staff should be given information so

that they understand the nature of bullying, why it is unacceptable, what the procedures are if one needs to complain and what disciplinary action will be taken against those who fail to comply with the organisation's policy on bullying. He recommends that additional training be provided for those who will be involved in implementing the policy. Among the components of a training programme might be:

- What is meant by bullying
- The effects of bullying
- The situations, culture and value systems which may give rise to and perpetuate bullying
- Details of the bullying policy and procedures
- Practical counselling skills

The IPD (1997) points to the need for regular reviews to be undertaken to ensure that policies and procedures are appropriate and effective. The EHB guidelines end with the statement that 'managers and supervisors should seek, through their own behaviour, attitude and example to ensure that staff members can carry out their work in a climate of respect'.

Creation of an Anti-Bullying Climate

The creation of an anti-bullying climate is identified in the literature as being a key element in combating bullying. Such a climate can be best created through the existence of harmonious staff relations. The INTO in its previous publications (1996) has emphasised the importance of good staff relations in the creation of a positive ethos where people in schools treat each other with dignity and respect. In this section, the factors that influence staff relations are examined, and the contribution which leadership and whole school planning can make to the development of a workplace environment where no form of bullying behaviour is ever acceptable.

The Importance of Self Esteem

One of the most significant factors in the nurturing of positive staff relations is the level of self esteem of individual staff members. According to Humphreys (1993) teachers' individual levels of self-esteem affect their styles of communication, their acceptance of others and their flexibility. It is important for teachers to be aware of the influence which their own self-

esteem has not only on classroom management, but also on their relationships with their colleagues. Furthermore, self-esteem is not fixed irrevocably, but can be altered by experiences in the workplace and in the wider community. If teachers do not have a positive self-image, then staff morale as a whole will inevitably suffer. Strong staff morale is the foundation stone on which a healthy staff environment is built. If teachers have high self-esteem, they can be honest, open and co-operative with each other, and this sense of openness permeates every aspect of life within the school and in the wider school community.

Leadership and Management

The importance of leadership is a recurring theme in the literature which examines school effectiveness and school improvement, and its role in the development of positive staff relations cannot be over emphasised. The style and quality of leadership which exist in a school will determine the ethos, atmosphere and culture in that school. Mortimore and Mortimore's research in 1991 showed that the manner in which principals approached their role was the vital element in creating a positive working environment in the school. The leadership style adopted by the principal serves as an example for everybody who works in the school. This has become even more important with the advent of the new middle management structures in primary schools. The principal must be receptive to other people's ideas, and delegate authority and responsibility so that all members of the school community have a shared sense of pride, respect, dignity and ownership. Such an approach to leadership is positive and it involves all staff members in a collaborative process.

Training for Leadership Roles

The role of the principal teacher is qualitatively different from that of the other teachers in the school. It is paradoxical therefore that no formal training is given to people who are expected to fulfil the most important role in the school. There have been many calls from the INTO for training for principals prior to their appointment as principals and then at recurrent periods throughout their careers. The INTO has provided leadership in this regard with the establishment of Summer courses and the delivery of 4-day courses inschool time but these by definition are merely an interlude in a career

whereas what is required is a genuine commitment by the Department of Education and Science to provide support and training throughout their careers. It is to be hoped that the working party on the role of the principal will produce some definite recommendations in this regard.

Among the skills required for leadership roles are the capacity to initiate and maintain positive working relations with others. Without training, the era of what Professor John Coolahan has referred to as the 'gifted amateur' will continue to be the approach adopted to the management of schools, with principals picking up the skills informally. Lynch has suggested that those who are in leadership positions should receive training in leadership styles that will promote the psychological well-being of colleagues. He focuses on staff development as a priority in preventing bullying and inappropriate behaviour, and also in providing counselling for those who may encounter bullying.

Communication

To promote and maintain positive staff relations requires continuous open communication. If all the members of the school community are to be involved in a successful collaborative process, attention must be paid to the systems of communication within the school. The 'grapevine' prospers in schools where communication systems are inadequate or totally lacking. The adoption of a collegial approach ensures that all members of the school staff feel valued and their contribution appreciated. Procedures and policies should be openly discussed and every staff member should be empowered to hold his or her point of view without feeling that they will be ostracised or intimidated if this view point is contrary to the principal's perspective. The result of open communication and a sharing of opinions is that all staff members share a common responsibility because they have had an input into the formulation of the policies.

The School Plan

A school plan developed in consultation with all staff members should address all issues that pertain to school policies. Factors that might cause stress or low morale among staff should be addressed with a view to deciding what are the best policies and procedures to deal with whatever difficulties that may arise. Staff relations are enhanced and an anti-bullying climate created when each individual feels valued, recognised and affirmed in their workplace.

If consultation does not take place on school policies, individuals can feel undervalued and tensions can develop. In situations such as these, it is very difficult for teachers to maintain a high level of self-esteem, and it then becomes virtually impossible for positive staff relations to exist. This can culminate in an ethos developing in a school where bullying type behaviours may flourish and even be condoned. This has serious implications for all who work and attend the schools. Schools are microcosms of society and at times, they can reflect the unacceptable in addition to the acceptable values of that society. There is a need for schools to examine their own value systems and to ensure that every member of the school community is treated with dignity and respect.

Survey on Adult Bullying and Staff Relations in Primary Schools

Methodology

A total of 751 questionnaires were distributed to members of the INTO in the Republic of Ireland and in Northern Ireland. Random selection was utilised to ascertain the members to whom questionnaires were sent, and this encompassed a specific sample of teachers of a variety of ages and years of teaching experience working in different categories of school, and of different status within their schools. The teachers who responded to the questionnaire were representative of the membership. Four out of five were female. The majority of the respondents were assistant teachers (56%) and the others were principals (17%), Vice Principals (9%) and post holders (18%). This is generally in line with the breakdown of these positions in the profession. 402 completed questionnaires were returned, and this represents a response rate of 54%.

Bullying Behaviours

Having examined the various definitions of bullying as outlined in the literature review and in consultation with Dr. O' Moore, it was decided to use the following definition in the questionnaire,

“repeated, aggressive behaviour of verbal, physical or psychological nature.”

The questionnaire focussed on inappropriate behaviours that were likely to occur in a school situation and that could be perceived as being bullying type behaviours. Respondents were asked to indicate had they been publicly humiliated, undermined in a work situation, shouted at, verbally abused, physically abused, threatened with loss of job, intimidated and/ sexually harassed. Respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced these behaviours once, occasionally or often and who had behaved in this way towards them. Respondents were not asked to state their interpretation of the behaviour. In the analysis of the responses the main emphasis will be on the 'often' responses as behaviours which occur once or occasionally do not constitute bullying under the definition used in the questionnaire. Respondents' comments will also be analysed. Where there is a significant difference between the genders with regard to different facets of

bullying, this will be adverted to, otherwise the number of respondents will be referred to as totals. It is recognised at the outset that the use of quantitative methods for a topic such as bullying has certain shortcomings. Statistics and figures cannot do justice to the victim’s sense of hurt arising from incidents of bullying.

The tables outline the number of respondents who experienced each behaviour and who behaved in this way towards them. The percentages given are for the total number of respondents who experienced such behaviour and the frequency of occurrence of these is also given Analysis of these percentages indicate that only a small minority often experienced any of the bullying behaviours. Nonetheless, if bullying occurs it is a cause for concern.

Have you ever been publicly humiliated in your work situation?

Yes	41% (164 out of 402)
-----	----------------------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	22	20	5
Principal teacher	15	36	7
Vice Principal	3	7	2
Inspector	6	1	0
Chairperson	11	5	1
Other BOM member	3	3	1
Parent	49	27	1
Pupil	5	6	2
Total	114	105	19

During their careers, teachers will work with very large numbers of children, meet with lots of parents, chairpersons of Boards of Management, inspectors, principals and other colleagues and therefore the potential for some instance of public humiliation is great, given the essentially public nature of teaching. It should be noted however that in a sample of 402 teachers whose teaching experience ranged from less than 5 years to more than 40 years, 59 % of teachers never encountered public humiliation at any stage of their careers.

Analysis of the frequency with which the incidents occurred shows a divergence between the number of teachers who stated that they had been publicly humiliated and the numbers who were reported to have been responsible for the public humiliation. The reason for this discrepancy is that a number of teachers alleged that they had been humiliated publicly by more than one person. Any conclusion which can be drawn from that fact must of necessity be very tentative. Teachers work in the public domain, and their working day is very concentrated. By virtue of this and the fact that very few schools have the facilities or the opportunities for teachers to meet privately with parents, inspectors, chairpersons and colleagues, if a confrontation occurs it tends to happen in the classroom, on the corridor or in the school playground. In these circumstances, the potential for a sense of humiliation is obvious because an incident may have been heard or seen by many members of the school community.

Analysis of the incidence of public humiliation shows that out of the 114 responses which indicated that there had been an incident on one occasion, parents were deemed to have been responsible for 42% of these incidents. It is important to place this figure in perspective and to bear in mind the number of positive encounters which occur between parents and teachers on a daily basis, but at the same time not to deny or ignore the sense of hurt which a person who has been publicly humiliated may feel.

Encounters between teachers and inspectors have the potential to be stressful given the nature of the inspectors' role, and it is noteworthy that inspectors were deemed to be responsible for 5% of the single occasion incidents of public humiliation. This is indicative of the improved working relationships which now exist between teachers and inspectors.

Of the 105 instances of occasional public humiliation, the results with regard to parents, principals and assistant teachers are the most notable. Principals were deemed to have been responsible in 34% of the instances of occasional public humiliation. Parents were responsible for 26% of those incidences. Assistant Teachers were responsible for 19% of incidences.

Have you ever been undermined in your work situation?

Yes	192 (48%)
-----	-----------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	16	39	7
Principal teacher	17	36	25
Vice Principal	1	13	2
Inspector	6	4	2
Chairperson	5	6	2
Other BOM member	3	4	1
Parent	22	41	2
Pupil	4	16	3
Total	74	159	44

The responses with regard to teachers being undermined follow a broadly similar pattern to the ones for public humiliation, but the incidence of teachers being undermined is greater by 7%. It is not intended to examine the once and occasional categories in detail because this would be a replication of the work done on the first set of responses. The main focus will be on the 'often' category, and on the 44 out of 402 respondents (10.9%) who stated that they had been undermined often. Of this 44, principal teachers were deemed to have been responsible for this behaviour by 25 respondents (57% of the 'often' category). This brings into focus the question of definitions and interpretations, and the difficulties with a quantitative approach to this topic. The results do point however to the necessity for in-service and pre-service training for all teachers in human relations and conflict resolution.

Have you ever been shouted at in your work situation?

Yes	194 (48%)
-----	------------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	19	10	2
Principal teacher	16	23	1
Vice Principal	4	1	0
Inspector	1	0	0
Chairperson	0	1	1
Other BOM member	2	2	1
Parent	54	37	5
Pupil	14	43	8
Total	110	117	18

Pupils and parents are deemed to be mainly responsible for this form of behaviour, but the overall pattern is similar to the previous two categories. While the overall incidence of shouting at teachers may be low, there is still the qualitative effect that a particularly difficult pupil may have in a class. The procedures and facilities to deal with such pupils are grossly inadequate, and the recent establishment of the psychological service is welcome, if belated action in this regard. The extension of the psychological service to serve all schools is a matter of urgency.

Have you ever suffered verbal abuse in your work situation?

Yes	226 (56%)
-----	-----------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	11	21	2
Principal teacher	16	28	7
Vice Principal	4	5	0
Inspector	1	1	0
Chairperson	11	2	1
Other BOM member	0	3	1
Parent	50	70	5
Pupil	12	35	8
Total	105	165	24

This is the category which contains the highest prevalence of difficulties for teachers. There are 24 responses in the 'often' category, and pupils account for 8 of these. If the often category is excluded parents, particularly male parents, emerge as using this type of behaviour most. In the INTO's 1992/93 survey, verbal abuse by pupils of their teachers reported 2% of pupils perpetrating this form of misbehaviour very often with 5% of pupils in the often category. In this present survey, the comparable figures are 2.7% (8 out of an overall total of 294). The use of verbal abuse is attributed to seven principals in the often category. While abuse of any sort is unacceptable at all times, in general, principals and teachers endeavour to work together in a harmonious and professional manner.

Have you ever suffered physical abuse in your work situation?

Yes	33 (8%)
-----	---------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	1	0	0
Principal teacher	3	0	0
Vice Principal	0	0	0
Inspector	0	0	0
Chairperson	0	0	0
Other BOM member	1	0	0
Parent	5	1	0
Pupil	13	9	2
Total	23	10	2

Even though the over all incidence of physical assaults on teachers is low it is important to note that of the 35 reported incidences of physical assault the majority of these were committed by pupils, particularly male pupils. (Female pupils 4 Male pupils 20) One incident of physical assault is one incident too many for the teacher who encounters physical abuse, and it is necessary therefore to guard against complacency by putting structures in place to ensure the safety of all members of the school community against physical attack.

Have you ever been threatened with the loss of your job?

Yes	39 (10%)
-----	----------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	2	2	0
Principal teacher	9	7	0
Vice Principal	0	1	0
Inspector	4	1	0
Chairperson	1	2	0
Other BOM member	1	1	0
Parent	9	5	0
Pupil	1	1	0
Total	27	20	0

It is extremely unpleasant for any person to have to listen to threats regarding their employment and it is very unsettling if such threats are made by a chairperson of the Board of Management, a principal or an inspector. It is noticeable that in this survey, no teacher encountered such a threat on a frequent basis.

Have you ever been intimidated in your work situation?

Yes	167 (42%)
-----	-----------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	5	28	6
Principal teacher	14	37	10
Vice Principal	2	9	0
Inspector	7	4	0
Chairperson	3	5	1
Other BOM member	2	1	1
Parent	26	35	3
Pupil	2	13	4
Total	61	132	25

For a person to be subjected to any form of intimidation in their work is distressing, but if a person encounters it on a regular basis, this makes going to work a very daunting and upsetting experience. The figures for each category are unacceptably high, and it is imperative that counselling be made available to those who suffer such behaviour and those who are responsible for it.

Have you ever been sexually harassed in your work situation?

Yes	16 (4%)
-----	---------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	1	2	1
Principal teacher	0	3	2
Vice Principal	0	0	0
Inspector	0	1	0
Chairperson	1	3	0
Other BOM member	0	0	0
Parent	1	0	0
Pupil	0	0	1
Total	3	9	4

The incidence of sexual harassment in primary schools is low. Only 16 incidents were reported with 14 being encountered by female teachers, and of these, 4 female teachers suffered sexual harassment on a frequent basis.

Have you ever been ignored or excluded in your work situation?

Yes	139 (35%)
-----	-----------

By Whom ?	Once	Occasionally	Often
Assistant teacher	9	40	15
Principal teacher	10	34	22
Vice Principal	3	8	3
Inspector	0	1	0
Chairperson	3	2	1
Other BOM member	2	2	1
Parent	2	8	0
Pupil	0	5	3
Total	29	103	47

This is the one question where the ‘often’ category exceeds the ‘once’ responses, and there are not sufficient additional comments from respondents to form any definite conclusions on this situation. In certain instances, teachers may seek to avoid confrontation by not speaking to some of their colleagues, but unfortunately, this can then cause feelings of exclusion, and the sense of hurt is even more pronounced than it would have been if whatever was the cause of contention had been discussed openly. It may be that given the isolated nature of teaching teachers may feel further ignored or excluded in situations where there are difficulties in communications and relations. This is another example of the need for training to be provided for school staffs on conflict resolution and on facilitation skills.

The Effects of Bullying

The next section of the survey is concerned with the effects of bullying and the attempts which were made to resolve the difficulties which arose. In addition to statistics, respondents’ comments, will be addressed where they are relevant.

How has this behaviour affected you?

Stress	41% (165 / 402)
Low self esteem	24% (98 / 402)
Low motivation	15% (61 / 402)
Depression	11% (43 / 402)
Sick leave	5% (22 / 402)
Did not seek promotion	4% (18 / 402)
Career break	2% (10 / 402)
Regular absences	0.7% (3 / 402)

The most common effect of bullying according to the survey is stress. The survey did not set out to ascertain the nature of the stress experienced. Another serious effect was where the bullying is such that teachers feel unable to attend for work. The responses show that 10 (2%) teachers took career breaks, and 3 (0.7%) were absent from school regularly. There were two reported instances where teachers resigned positions due to the emotional stress, and there were references to panic attacks, a fear of going to school each day, a physical illness which has not yet cleared up, serious ongoing health problems, and difficulties in relationships at home due to bullying behaviour at school.

An analysis of the other comments which were appended to this response shows that the most common emotion which teachers felt when they encountered bullying was anger. Among the other reactions were apathy, frustration, disillusionment, introversion, isolation and anxiety. This catalogue of health problems illustrates the impact which bullying can have, and it provides ample evidence if such were required of the need for the recently established Employee Assistance Service Scheme for Teachers where teachers can be provided with counselling to help them to combat bullying.

How did this experience affect your work?

Of the 60% of teachers who responded to this question 74 (31%) stated that they were very much affected, 122 (50%) stated that the experience had little effect and 46 (19%) stated that the experience had no effect.

It is clear from the responses that many teachers were able to withstand the experience and to overcome it, but that may also be a function of the type of

behaviour which they encountered. Practically one third of the teachers who encountered bullying were severely affected by the experience, and one can simply speculate on the extent to which going to work must have constituted a severe trauma for those teachers, and how difficult it must have been for them to provide their pupils with a pleasant learning environment.

With whom did you raise the problem of bullying?

228 (56%) of respondents responded to this question:

With other colleagues	143 (63%)
With family and friends	128 (56%)
With the principal	80 (35%)
With the bully	60 (26%)
With the INTO	42 (18%)
With BOM	31 (15%)
With nobody	31 (14%)
With vice-principal	27 (12%)
With inspector	17 (7%)

The responses to this question illustrate the importance of a supportive environment in school and the value of support systems at home. The majority of teachers who were bullied discussed the problem with a colleague, and the second most important source of support was family and friends. Many principals were also seen as being supportive, and there were instances where teachers were sufficiently assertive to discuss the situation with the 'bully'. In 58% (128) of cases the respondents stated that the problem had been solved.

How was the problem solved?

The responses to this query evoked a wide variety of intervention strategies and other actions, and these ranged from victims asserting themselves, to INTO involvement, to meetings with counsellors, principals resigning and/or being transferred, teachers resigning, consultations with inspectors and attendance at assertiveness courses. Many respondents referred to the support which their principals and chairpersons provided. Unfortunately, in a number of instances, the problem was resolved only partially because some

of the victims no longer speak to their professional colleagues, even though they have remained in the same schools.

Why was there not a resolution?

There is a real sense in the responses to this question of victims feeling overwhelmed by circumstances. For example, one respondent referred to the people who bully as being ‘so over-powering and powerful in their positions that victims are in a no-win situation’. Another person asked ‘how does one get through to a dictator who is backed up by a fellow dictator?’ Yet another person referred to the fact that the principal intimidated the Board of Management so that there was a general sense of powerlessness to do anything about the principal’s aggressive nature. At the other end of this scale were the principals who did nothing to address incidents when parents and children intimidated teachers, but allowed instead a sort of anarchy to reign in their schools.

In the instances where the problems were with pupils, there are references to the children being psychologically disturbed, and parents who were in stressful situations taking out their problems on the schools. Some respondents stated that it was difficult to complain to the INTO when the person responsible for the behaviour is a member of the same union. A frequently articulated complaint was the lack of proper procedures to deal with adult bullying, and some victims said that they saw their difficulties as being unsolvable.

Have you ever been accused of bullying behaviour?

Yes 18 (5%)	No 370 (95%)
----------------	-----------------

Of the respondents who replied yes, one sought counselling, and another said that by virtue of offering advice to colleagues and in checking out their work, s(he) was called a bully.

One respondent considered her/himself to be a bully and stated that s/he had sought counselling.

Are you aware of staff in your school being bullied?

Yes	202 (50%)
-----	-----------

What type of behaviour was the person subjected to?

Verbally abused	102 (25%)
Undermined	65 (15%)
Excluded or ignored	59% (14%)
Publicly humiliated	52 (12%)
Intimidated	51 (12%)
Shouted at	49 (12%)
Threatened with loss of job	16 (4%)
Physically abused	13 (3%)
Sexually harassed	9 (2%)
Total number of reports	417

Respondents were not asked to indicate the frequency with which these incidents occurred so it is not possible to compare the results with the earlier ones. It is noticeable however that the rank ordering of the categories is broadly similar to that which was reported in the first section of this survey.

Who was responsible for bullying?

Principal	92 (35%)
Parent	65 (25%)
Assistant teacher	61 (24%)
Pupil	17 (7%)
Vice principal	13 (5%)
Inspector	5 (2%)
Chairperson of BOM	4 (1.5%)
Other member of BOM	0
Total number of reports	257

The same comment can be made with regard to these figures as was made with regard to the previous question in that they do not give the frequency with which the incidents occurred.

School Policies

The need for staffs of schools and management to be proactive with regard to bullying is one of the themes that has permeated this survey. The next four questions were concerned with the issue of school policies and procedures to deal with bullying of adults or of pupils. The majority of respondents stated that the issue of bullying had been discussed in their schools. In most cases, however, school policies on bullying related to pupils only.

Has the staff of your school discussed the issue of bullying?

Yes	341 (85%)
-----	-----------

If, yes, was it addressed as an issue pertaining to pupils and staff, pupils only, staff only?

Pupils and staff	84 (24%)
Pupils only	251 (73%)
Staff only	8 (2%)

Does your school have a policy with regard to bullying?

Yes	319 (79%)
-----	-----------

If yes, does the policy address the needs of pupils and staff, pupils only, staff only?

Both pupils and staff	72 (23%)
Pupils only	242 (77%)

If no, would your school benefit from having an overall policy on bullying?

Yes	275 (68%)
-----	-----------

The need for in-service training to deal with human relations issues has been referred to on a number of occasions throughout this survey. The respondents were asked if they thought that in-service training would be of

benefit in dealing with this issue. Indeed, 83% (335) of respondents stated that adult bullying was a very suitable topic to address at in-service courses. Among the topics suggested were assertiveness, communications, relationships with parents, self-esteem, stress management, classroom management, staff relations and management techniques, and these suggestions will be addressed by the INTO's in-service programme committee.

The final question on the section which dealt with bullying asked if there was a need for legislation to combat adult bullying in the workplace, and 85% (342) of the respondents were of the opinion that legislation was necessary.

Staff Relations

In the previous section of the study, certain conclusions were drawn with regard to staff relations, but in this section, the respondents' own opinions on staff relations will be the focus. This element of the survey therefore is an important counterpoint because by its very nature a topic such as bullying can have negative connotations, and this section will provide evidence and comment with regard to the nature of staff relations in Irish primary schools.

How would you describe communication processes in your school?

Open and communicative	195 (49%)
Moderate	55 (39%)
Poor / non-existent	46 (12%)

The quality of communication is a crucial determinant of the quality of staff relations within any organisation. Almost half of the respondents were satisfied with the communication processes within their schools. This reflects well on the initiatives which principals and teachers have put in place to ensure that effective communication exists within schools. However a significant number of respondents (39%) indicated that processes were moderate which implies that there is room for improvement. The negative element however is the figure of 12% of respondents who described communication processes as either poor or non-existent. Any one of a multiplicity of factors can be responsible for poor communication. The difficulties may be at an organisational level in that there may not be structures in place to enable communication to occur. Supervisory duties can be such as to make it difficult for teachers to meet with each other at any

stage of the day. There may be problems at a personal level in that a principal and/ or teacher may not be communicating due to some past conflict. Criticism of a person's performance in school can produce a defensive mentality, and the strategy adopted can be to retreat to the office or the classroom, and only speak to colleagues where it is absolutely unavoidable. In the very recent past, there have been some differences of opinion with regard to the establishment of the new middle management structures in schools. If openness exists within a school, many of these difficulties can be resolved amicably, but if the channels of communication are blocked, every issue becomes another source of grievance.

How would you describe staff relations in your school?

Excellent / very positive	198 (50%)
Moderate	167 (42%)
Poor / negative	32 (8%)

The responses to this question are broadly similar to the question on the communication process in the school, with half of teachers claiming to be very satisfied with the quality of relations within their schools. This figure corroborates the conclusions which had been drawn in the previous section, and it shows that many Irish primary school teachers relate very well with each other. The figure of 8% for teachers who described staff relations as poor or negative, is somewhat anomalous insofar as it is 4% less than the figure for non-existent communication within their schools. This implies that a minority of teachers may be satisfied with staff relations in the school in spite of the absence of communication.

How would you describe the climate/atmosphere in your school?

Harmonious	229 (58%)
Moderate	128 (32%)
Tense	39 (10%)

Again, there is a reiteration of the attitudes of the previous two questions, and it demonstrates that most Irish primary schools have a harmonious atmosphere.

Does your school hold staff meetings?

Weekly	26 (6%)
Monthly	101 (26%)
Once a term	185 (47%)
Annually	41 (10%)
Never	42 (11%)

Staff meetings are an important formal means of communication because they provide a vital opportunity for teachers to examine school policies and procedures. It is interesting to note that 11% of schools reported rarely or never holding staff meetings. In a number of instances, school size was given as a reason, with respondents stating that there was no necessity for a meeting because the teachers met every day. Nevertheless, it is arguable that if schools do not hold some formal meetings during the course of the year they are missing out on the opportunity to develop and review school policies and procedures. Staff may feel that they are not actively included in the decision making process of the school.

Have parents been made aware of the school's procedures and policies?

Yes	330 (82%)
-----	-----------

In addition to communication within schools, there is also the issue of communication between schools and the wider community. Parents are a vital element of the school community, and it is imperative that teachers and parents work together for the benefit of the pupils. The effectiveness of a school can often be gauged from the quality of the co-operation between home and school, and the quality of the communication between the school and parents.

A significant number of respondents stated that parents had not been made aware of the school's policies and procedures. Arguably, this represents a lost opportunity for these schools because without an awareness of the policies, it is very difficult for parents to support the school. This is a situation which will change with the enactment of a new Education Act, as schools will be obliged to develop formal channels of communication.

How would you describe the style of management within your school?

Authoritarian	91 (23%)
Democratic and collaborative	257 (66%)
Laissez faire	10% (38)

The research literature points to importance of leadership in schools, and it also suggests that collaborative leadership styles are most suited to this democratic era. Over 66% of respondents classified the leadership style in their schools as being democratic and collaborative, while practically one quarter of teachers considered that the leadership style in their school was authoritarian. One in ten referred to the general approach as being laissez faire which may denote no leadership at all or it may be indicative of a style in which the leadership is low key, but everything is proceeding smoothly. One of the difficulties in the classification of leadership styles is that teachers and principals perceive the implementation of their roles in different ways and some teachers may see the principal as being authoritarian whereas the principal may perceive him/herself as being a paragon of democratic leadership. Further analysis would be required but there appears to be preliminary evidence of a correlation between authoritarian leadership styles and bullying in schools.

Are you happy in your current working environment?

Very happy	209 (53%)
Moderately happy	159 (40%)
Unhappy	28 (7%)

These figures bear out the validity of the comments which have been made with regard to the quality of relationships within Irish primary schools.

Did you ever leave your employment in a school as a result of poor staff relations?

Yes	32 (8%)
-----	---------

This figure speaks for itself, although it may be important to add the

qualification that these teachers were fortunate to be able to obtain alternative positions. Opportunities for mobility in teaching do not always arise, particularly given the decline in school population since the early 1980s.

If you had the opportunity, would you leave your current school as a result of poor staff relations?

Yes	65 (16%)
-----	----------

This is a significant number of teachers who would leave their present schools if they had the opportunity. This figure is appreciably higher than the number of teachers who described staff relations as tense and communication as non-existent indicating that some teachers who described communications as moderate may also wish to leave their schools.

In the case of this question, the respondents have appended comments, so it is possible to examine this issue in greater depth. The majority of teachers are very happy in their schools, as articulated in the following comments 'thank God in this 2 teacher school, we work as a team', and 'I love my school, I love teaching, I look forward to each day.'

In certain instances, respondents differentiated between the quality of staff relations and the quality of the relationship which they had with their pupils, and said that even though the quality of adult relations in the school was indifferent, they would not leave because they enjoyed working with the pupils – 'I love teaching and enjoy a good relationship with pupils and parents'. With others there was the great uncertainty, would things be any better in another school? This is graphically illustrated by one respondent:

It may be out of the frying pan and into the fire. From what I hear there is a problem in many schools. The leadership comes from the top and if the principal has poor communication skills or management skills, stress levels are raised. Many teachers or principals are authoritarian and very dogmatic in their views and methods.

As a counter-balance to the above comment with regard to principals, another respondent stated that 'she was very lucky to be 21 years in a school

where staff relations are excellent and harmonious. The Principal is very diplomatic and efficient’.

There are references to the domestic and professional sacrifices involved in leaving a school, with loss of seniority and posts of responsibility being mentioned as key factors. One respondent stated that ‘running away from a problem does nothing to solve it, whereas another teacher simply said ‘I left because I was being bullied.’ Many of the teachers who said that they would leave if they had the opportunity were equivocal insofar as they would have to be sure that relationships would be better in the next school. One teacher said that there should be a facility for assistant teachers to interview principals so that the assistant teachers could also be satisfied if they wanted to work with the principals.

The final section of this survey gave respondents the opportunity to raise any issue which they considered to be important with regard to adult bullying and staff relations. A number of respondents congratulated the INTO and expressed their gratitude that these issues were being highlighted. One respondent’s comments encapsulated the feelings of many people who are bullied:

I think that it is excellent that the INTO are (sic) bringing the issue of Adult bullying/harassment into the open. Unless one has experienced this form of abuse, one may not be aware of it. It is very destructive to a teacher’s professional, social and family life.

The respondents who had direct experience of being bullied had significantly more to say in this section, and while some of their comments will be reported here, it is important to stress that these are the comments of a minority. One respondent was unhappy with the present method of appointing principals, and considered that political and clerical favouritism played too great a role. Another respondent was also critical of the fact that so many males were appointed to principalships. One person suggested that the role of administrative principal be abolished. There was a complaint that the grievance procedure was too cumbersome, and that people tolerated bullying rather than go to the INTO. On the positive side, some teachers said that they had not been aware that bullying of adults occurred in schools until they received this questionnaire. A respondent said that having read the questionnaire, she felt ‘very fortunate to be in a happy working environment with very good staff relations’.

The overall message from the section on staff relations is that the majority of Irish primary teachers are very happy in their schools, and that the norm in our schools is a harmonious atmosphere. However, a sizeable minority of teachers (between 8% and 16%, depending on which measure of discontent is used) describes the situations in their schools as tense, and this figure should act as a corrective to any feelings of complacency. This points to the need for work to be done on human relations at school level and for the Employee Assistance Service to be extended to all primary teachers in the country so that genuine support is available to those teachers who are encountering difficulties in their relations within their schools. It would be incorrect and invalid to state that there is not a problem with adult bullying in our schools, because if even one teacher is being bullied, that is a problem for them. The important issue is for schools to ensure that awareness is raised so that any form of bullying behaviour is seen as being unacceptable, and for policies and procedures to be available to all members of the school community to combat such pernicious behaviour, if and when it occurs.

Adult Bullying : A Qualitative Approach

The first part of this report highlighted the existence of Workplace bullying as a problem of significance. The INTO Survey provided empirical evidence of its prevalence in our primary schools and identified in general terms the manifestations and effects of the phenomenon. However, it has been recognised that a purely quantitative approach to this problem is not without its limitations and cannot entirely do justice to the victim's sense of hurt arising from incidents of bullying. Hence, it is hoped in this section of the report to supplement the findings of the INTO Survey by examining a different type of research on the issue conducted by Jacinta Kitt*. Kitt's research was based on a case study approach. The focus of Kitt's research is the individual rather than a group. It does not aim to generalise but rather presents an analysis which highlights and explains the bullying phenomenon from the individual teacher's perspective. In her research Kitt conducted an in-depth analysis of the experiences of five primary school teachers in relation to bullying. The five teachers' declarations in relation to their victim status were supplemented by the use of an internationally recognised questionnaire which confirmed that they had been bullied.

The findings of the INTO's empirical research when considered in conjunction with Kitt's qualitative analysis of the teachers' experiences enables the identification of "clear and consistent patterns in terms of the characteristics, causes, consequences and costs of this serious and escalating problem" (Kitt, 1999).

The first section of this report has alluded to the many definitions of workplace bullying available. In these definitions, Kitt suggests that the terms persistent, systematic, unrelenting and uncompromising are almost universally implied. She further suggests that despite the fact that bullying at work occasionally involves overt aggression such as physical violence and angry verbal outbursts, "the less obvious, more devastating insidious and subtle forms of bullying are much more prevalent" (Kitt, 1999). Kitt's research also highlighted that demeaning, dismissive and hurtful behaviour is frequently well disguised in the context of innocuous and trivial verbal and non-verbal actions. The targets of these actions, according to Kitt, are left in no doubt that they are being singled out as persons of no consequence. Their dignity, value and confidence are eroded on a daily basis. Inevitably their self-respect and self-esteem suffer. In Kitt's study the bullying manifested itself particularly through isolation, where teachers were systematically ignored, snubbed and excluded. Non-recognition of work, accompanied by a gradual withdrawal of resources and facilities were frequently used to undermine. Verbal and non-verbal forms of abusive communication caused pain and hurt to all five teachers interviewed.

The five schools alluded to in Kitt's study could, to a greater or lesser extent be described as dysfunctional. "The paucity of openness, cooperation, trust, sensitivity, caring, inclusivity and team work rendered them such. In reality they were characterised by suspicion, watchfulness, denial, isolation, tension, victimisation and abuse. In all five schools the true state of affairs was neither alluded to nor exposed. Feelings, emotions and problems were undiscussable. Denial and fear prevented onlookers from confronting the situation and saying what they really wanted to. The absence of laughter and fun was glaringly obvious in all five schools hosting bullying behaviour" (Kitt, 1999). In terms of the effects of bullying, Kitt's research describes some of the more intangible consequences for victims. A strong sense of injustice, felt by all five victims in her study, manifested in bouts of extreme distress, sadness and

tearfulness. Hopelessness and helplessness negatively affected the quality of their work lives and their lives generally. Relationships with colleagues were influenced by the degree of support and validation they received. Kitt's research concurs with the INTO survey findings, indicating that Workplace bullying detrimentally affects the victim's work. The teachers in her study were effectively inhibited and prohibited from giving their full commitment to their work. Their enthusiasm, creativity and innovation were curtailed. Pupils were either directly or indirectly affected by the tensions between their teachers.

Good quality staff relations have been alluded to as a preventative of Workplace bullying in schools. Kitt's research attests, in this regard that bullying would not thrive in schools characterized by democracy, openness and good human relations. She recommends that increased emphasis be placed on promoting healthy psychological environments in schools.

*Jacinta M Kitt NT, M St, is a former primary school teacher and currently a researcher/lecturer on the subject of the Psychological Environment in the Workplace with special emphasis on Workplace Bullying.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This report has endeavoured to raise awareness of the issue of adult bullying in the working environment, a problem which tends to remain hidden as by its very nature it is subtle and difficult to identify. A number of issues relating to bullying of teachers in primary schools in Ireland have been identified in the INTO survey, which gives rise to a number of recommendations regarding professional development, school policies and the need for procedures. It is evident that bullying and other negative behaviours feature in different working environments including schools. However, on a positive note, as outlined in the INTO survey, the majority of teachers have never experienced bullying and report positive staff relations and communication within their schools.

A minority of teachers however, reported poor communication processes, poor staff relations or a tense atmosphere in the school. It is also evident that some teachers experience negative behaviours in the school community. A clear need has, therefore, emerged for professional development and training for both teachers and principals, in the areas of communication and conflict

resolution. A greater understanding of the respective roles of principals and teachers, in relation to school leadership and management, would assist in situations where conflict arises. Issues pertaining to staff relations and communication with parents and the wider school community should be addressed as part of preservice education for teachers. These issues should be addressed in the induction programme for newly qualified teachers, a time when teachers encounter the practical realities of working with colleagues and dealing with parents. Newly appointed principals should also be provided with professional development courses which deal specifically with the challenges facing principals regarding staff relations, communication processes within the wider school community, facilitation and conflict resolution skills. Communication processes and conflict resolution skills should also feature in training courses provided to members of Boards of Management and to the inspectorate.

Teachers expressed frustration with a lack of clear procedures to deal with problems of bullying and other negative behaviour. The existing grievance procedure was considered inadequate in this context of finding resolutions to problems pertaining to staff relations and behaviour. There is clear need, therefore, for procedures which are negotiated between the parties specifically to deal with bullying and other negative behaviours. Organisations which have already devised procedures stress the importance of both formal and informal procedures which facilitate the resolution of the problem. Teachers must have confidence in the procedures and the reporting processes contained in the procedures, if they are to be effective. The CEC of the INTO have revised in consultation with management the grievance procedures in addition to devising specific and more appropriate procedures for dealing with bullying and other negative behaviours in schools. A copy of the bullying/harrasment procedure is contained in Appendix 1 of this report. In addition to aiming to resolve the problem, opportunities for counselling and/or emotional support for teachers who are victims of bullying or other negative behaviours should be available. The establishment of the Employee Assistant Scheme, is a welcome development in this regard and must be expanded to serve all areas of the country.

Some of the difficulties teachers experienced regarding negative behaviours involved parents. A school environment where all people in the school

community are treated with respect and dignity would contribute to reducing incidents of negative behaviour of parents towards teachers. Parents often have many legitimate concerns regarding their children's educational progress in school and need to discuss same with principals and class teachers. Parents also need to be kept informed about issues which relate to them and their children's education. Therefore, schools have an obligation to develop communication processes with parents, outlining clearly how complaints or issues of concern should be brought to the attention of the teacher or individual concerned. A lack of procedures, or a lack of awareness about existing procedures leads to unnecessary conflict which may result in bullying or other negative experiences.

Open discussion among staff on professional issues also assists the development of harmonious staff relations. Regular staff meetings where issues can be raised and discussed should therefore, be an integral feature of internal school organisation. There is an increasing trend towards collaboration and collegiality in schools in relation to school planning and for collective responses and approaches on school policy matters. The introduction of the revised curriculum is likely to increase the need for communication and collaboration among teachers. It is imperative that time for such activities be allowed in order to ensure effective implementation of the curriculum throughout the school.

A positive ethos in schools where people treat each other with respect can contribute to harmonious staff relations. Schools' policies and strategies should strive to create an anti-bullying climate and they should involve both staff and pupils. Bullying and other negative behaviours must be seen to be unacceptable by the whole school community. School policy statements should state unequivocally that such behaviours are unacceptable by any member of the school community. A school climate which encourages open and honest discussion can prevent bullying from occurring in the first place. The majority of schools have already developed policies in relation to bullying behaviour among pupils. The extension of these policies to include all adults in the school community goes one step further in addressing problems which arise concerning such behaviour among adults. Creating an environment free of bullying and other negative behaviours in our schools involving either pupils or adults, will have important positive consequences

for society as pupils graduate to the world of work with a philosophy of respecting the dignity of others.

In summary, therefore, the INTO recommends:

- (i) that all schools create an anti-bullying environment pertaining to the whole school community;
- (ii) that schools promote harmonious relationships within the school community by ensuring that all people, both adults and pupils, are treated with dignity and respect;
- (iii) that communication processes, issues pertaining to staff relations, and conflict resolution skills become an integral part of preservice education for teachers;
- (iv) that an induction programme for newly appointed teachers be introduced which would also include communication processes, issues pertaining to staff relations and conflict resolution skills;
- (v) that an orientation programme for newly appointed principals be introduced which would address issues such as, leadership and management skills, learn building skills, conflict resolution skills and other matters pertaining to staff relations;
- (vi) that communication and conflict resolution skills be included in training courses for members of Boards of Management and for the inspectorate;
- (vii) that professional development opportunities be available to all teachers who wish to enhance their self-esteem and develop their assertiveness skills;
- (viii) that teachers awareness of bullying and procedures to deal with same be incorporated into INTO trade union training programmes for staff representatives, branch officers and national committees;
- (ix) that time be allocated for school planning and for regular staff meetings to enable all members of staff to participate in collective decision making;
- (x) that schools develop policies in relation to communication with parents;
- (xi) that procedures be developed, agreed and negotiated with the relevant parties, to deal with difficulties which arise regarding interpersonal matters, bullying and other negative behaviours;
- (xii) that the Employee Assistance Scheme be expanded to provide a service to all teachers who require counselling and/or emotional support.

Appendix 1

Bullying/Harassment/Procedure

Preamble:

The procedure outlined below is designed to address adult bullying, sexual harassment or other harassment arising in the workplace or otherwise in the course of employment, in a fair and effective manner. In implementing the procedures, it is recommended that emphasis should be placed on assuring the party who considers that he/she is being bullied/harassed that his/her complaint will be acknowledged, that the matter will be investigated effectively and sensitively and in accordance with due process.

Equally, where it is found that bullying or harassment has occurred, the emphasis, firstly, is to ensure that the offending behaviour immediately cease and secondly, to help the offending party acknowledge that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that steps must be taken to address the matter constructively thereby avoiding any recurrence.

It is important to ensure that resolution is achieved at the earliest opportunity. Further, it may be appropriate for the victim or the offender to attend counselling or obtain such other help as may be required.

Stage 1 – Decide to Address the Matter

1. The party (party A) who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other discriminatory grounds, should decide to address the matter. However, in light of the potential effects of bullying or harassment on an individual, including loss of confidence, extreme upset, anxiety or fear, party A may initially decide to seek INTO or other assistance, including counselling, in order to consider the most appropriate application of the procedures, in the circumstances.
2. Party A should keep a record of the pattern of behaviour or instances where he/she considers that bullying/harassment has occurred. The record should contain details such as dates, times, persons present, details of what was said or what occurred. (Further details on the keeping of records are outlined in INTO publication *Working Together – Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*, in section B, pgs 12-13)

Stage 2 – Informally Address the Problem

1. The party who considers that he/she is being bullied, sexually harassed or harassed on other discriminatory grounds (party A), should request a meeting with the other party (B), in order to discuss matters. The following should apply:
 - where necessary, the meeting may be facilitated by a third party, generally a teaching colleague.
 - party A should clearly outline his/her difficulties and should clearly object to the bullying/harassment and request that it stop.
 - it is important that party A bear in mind, that the other member of staff may not be aware that his/her behaviour is causing difficulty.
 - both parties should seek to resolve their differences and establish a pattern of interaction exclusive of any forms of bullying/harassment.
 - party B may respond to party A at that meeting or if requested, should be given an opportunity to consider his/her response, in which case the meeting may be adjourned. Party B should respond in a constructive manner.
 - the resolution, as appropriate, may include any of the following, eg, a commitment to cease the particular behaviour, modify the behaviour, plan to eliminate situations where the parties would be in conflict or monitoring. Alternatively, it may emerge as a result of the discussions between the parties, that there may have been a degree of misunderstanding in relation to certain behaviours and the resolution may make provision for compromise or appropriate explanation or acknowledgement;
2. If there is no satisfactory indication of resolution between the parties, party A should refer the complaint to stage 3, ie formal procedures.

(3) Stage 3 – Principal Teacher or Chairperson of the Board of Management

1. Stage 3 provides a mechanism for the Principal Teacher to intervene and resolve the matter. However, if the Principal Teacher is one of the parties, the Chairperson of the Board of Management, should then be involved, in an individual capacity, in order to achieve resolution. In circumstances

where the Chairperson may also be involved at stage 2, another member of the Board, may be designated to intervene.

2. Party A should advise party B that he/she is proceeding with Stage 3;
3. Party A should state his/her complaint in writing and request the Principal Teacher (or Chairperson of the Board of Management, as the case may be) to investigate the matter;
4. The Principal Teacher (or Chairperson of the Board of Management, as the case may be) should:
 - obtain background details including details of what occurred at the previous stage;
 - consider the pattern of behaviour and the timescale;
 - hear the parties and seek to resolve the matter;
 - act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of due process;
 - exercise judgement and make decisions which he/she considers necessary to resolve matters;
5. The outcome of the discussions should be noted by the parties;
6. The matter should be dealt with confidentially.
7. Where resolution has not been possible and particularly, where there is a likelihood of the offending behaviour continuing, either party or the Principal Teacher (or Chairperson of the Board of Management as the case may be) should refer the matter to the Board of Management in accordance with stage 4 below.

Stage 4 – Board of Management

1. It is open to any of the parties or the Principal Teacher (or Chairperson of the Board of Management, as the case may be) to refer the matter to the Board of Management for investigation. The referral should be in writing and dated and should include a copy of the written complaint.
2. The Board of Management should consider the issues and investigate the matter:

- the Board may enquire into the background of the difficulties including obtaining details on the sequence of initiatives taken at previous stages;
 - the Board or the Chairperson of the Board may meet teachers individually or collectively and may also request written submissions from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process (INTO publication *Working Together – Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*, pg 12);
 - the Board may request the Principal Teacher to furnish a written submission;
 - the Board may afford the parties, an opportunity to present their case orally at a Board meeting, in each other's presence;
 - following oral presentations the Board of Management may designate the Chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required or to work towards resolution;
 - the Board of Management may convene a number of meetings in order to achieve resolution;
 - the Board of Management shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem;
3. Having considered all matters, the Board of Management should reach a view on the matter not later than 20 school days after receipt of the written request/referral;
 4. Where the Board of Management finds that bullying/harassment has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complainant provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken.
 5. Where the Board of Management finds that bullying/harassment has occurred, the Board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively. This may include:
 - the issuing of a clear warning that bullying/harassment is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated;
 - a demand that all forms of bullying/harassment cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction be established between the parties;

- an instruction to the offending party that he/she apologise/express regret or give an assurance that the bullying/harassment behaviour will cease;
 - seeking a commitment to attend counselling or the welfare service;
 - more serious disciplinary sanctions as may be commensurate and appropriate, such as:
 - oral warning
 - written reprimand
 - written warning
 - final written warning
 - suspension
 - dismissal
6. As part of any resolution, the Board of Management should monitor the situation and should put systems in place to ensure that it is kept informed that resolutions are being implemented. The Board of Management should keep matters under review.

Selected Bibliography

- Department of Education (1993) *Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools*, Dublin: Department of Education.
- Eastern Health Board (nd) *Policy Guidelines on Bullying at Work*.
- Einarsen, S., and Skogstad, A. (1996) 'Bullying at Work: Epidemiological Findings in Public and Private Organisations' *European Journal of work and Organisational Psychology* 5, (2), pp .185-201 quoted in O' Moore, Workplace Bullying.
- Field, T. (1996) *Bully in Sight*, Wantage: Success Unlimited.
- Horan, T. (1997) 'Battling against the Bullies' *World of Irish Nursing* 5 (7), pp.5-7.
- Health and Safety Authority (1998) *Bullying at Work*, Dublin: HAS.
- Humphreys, T. (1993) *A Different Kind of Teacher*, Cork: Tony Humphreys.
- Institute of Personnel Development (1997) *Harassment at Work: Key Facts*, London: IPD.
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions (1995) *Bullying in the Workplace*, Dublin: ICTU.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1993) *Discipline in the primary school: Report of a survey incorporating aspects of bullying in school*, Dublin: INTO.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1995) *Enhancing Self-Esteem*, Dublin: INTO.
- Irish National Teachers' Organisation (1996) *Effective School Organisation*, Dublin: INTO.
- Irish Nurses' Organisation (1997) *Policy on Bullying: A Programme for Positive Action*. Dublin: INO.
- Kitt, J. (1999) Unpublished Thesis UCD.
- Lynch, J. Unpublished Thesis, University of Ulster.

- Moriarity, T. (1997) *Bullying in the Workplace*. Paper presented at 'Workplace Bullying'. Conference held on 22 May 1997. (T. Moriarity is research officer with the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union, (MSF) and references to Moriarity and MSF are used interchangeably).
- Mortimore, P., and Mortimore, P. (1991) *The Primary Head: Roles, Responsibilities and Reflections*. London: Paul Chapman.
- Mrwicka, L. (1997) Address at the launch of INO policy on bullying. Paper delivered on 20 November 1997.
- Murray, M., and Keane, C. (1998) *The abc of Bullying*, Cork: Mercier Press.
- Murray, F. (1997) *Bullying and Harassment: Pilot Policy in ESB*. Paper delivered at 'Workplace Bullying'. Conference held on 22 May 1997.
- NASUWT (1996) *No Place to Hide: Confronting Workplace Bullies*, Birmingham: NASUWT.
- O'Moore, M. (1997) *Bullying at Work*. Paper delivered at 'Workplace Bullying'. Conference held on 22 May 1997.
- Quinlan, M. (1997) *Harassment and Bullying: Highlighting the Problem*. Paper delivered at 'Workplace Bullying'. Conference held on 22 May 1997.
- Randall, P. (1997) *Adult Bullying: Perpetrators and Victims*, London: Routledge.
- Roland, E. (1989) 'A System Oriented Strategy Against Bullying' in Roland, E., and Munthe, E. (eds) *Bullying: An International Perspective*, London: Fulton.
- Smith, P., and Thompson, D. (eds) (1991) *Practical Approaches to Bullying*, London: Fulton.
- Tattum, D. P. and Lane, D. (eds) 1989) *Bullying in Schools*, Stoke: Trentham Books.
- Tattum, D. and Herbert, G. (eds) (1993) *Countering Bullying: Initiatives by schools and local authorities*, Stoke: Trentham Books.