TEACHERS' VIEWS ON STUDENT BEHAVIOURS IN THE CLASSROOM

Punish Them or Engage Them?

Behaviour at School Study

Behaviour at School Study: Technical Report 1
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Australian Government

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Key Messages

Contrary to media reports, aggressive and anti-social student behaviours do not occur frequently in South Australian classrooms. However, low-level disruptive behaviours and disengaged behaviours occur more frequently and teachers find these difficult to manage.

Data analysis revealed that:

- Primary teachers reported low-level disruptive behaviours and aggressive/anti-social behaviours significantly more often than middle/secondary teachers.
- Early career teachers reported significantly higher instances of managing low-level disruptive behaviours than the majority of other categories of experience.
- Younger teachers (<30 years) reported the highest mean scores for low-level disruptive and disengaged categories of behaviours, therefore more frequently addressed these behaviours than all other age groups.
- Teachers employed in schools with a low ICSEA value reported significantly more instances of low-level disruptive and disengaged behaviours than those in schools with higher ICSEA values.
- Teachers in remote schools, who tended to be younger and have less teaching experience, reported significantly more instances of disengaged behaviours and aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers in other locations.

Socio-cultural influences, economic forces, geographic differences, and in some cases gender differences confound our findings and caution us against drawing overly simple conclusions.

In our sample of teachers, 47% indicated that they are not stressed about unproductive student behaviours. Of the 53% who reported feeling stressed, results showed that:

- Teachers who also have leadership responsibilities (e.g. principals and coordinators) report being less stressed than other teachers.
- Primary teachers are more stressed than middle/secondary teachers.
- Younger teachers (<30 years) and those in the 50–59 age bracket are the most stressed age groups.

Generally, teachers tend to attribute unproductive student behaviour to individual student and out-of school factors rather than to school factors.

The findings of this study indicate that teachers should be supported to gain a greater understanding of how the broader ecology of the classroom can influence engagement and therefore behaviour. Such an understanding of the classroom ecology, that is, the interactions between the physical environment, teacher characteristics, curriculum (including pedagogy and resources) and student variables, might lead to positive changes in pedagogical practices and perceptions, and therefore an increase in productive behaviours.

Executive Summary

This report presents the initial findings from an ARC Linkage Study, titled 'Punish them or engage them? Identifying and addressing productive and unproductive student behaviours in South Australian schools' (LP110100317), more commonly referred to as the Behaviour at School Study (BaSS).

Research on student behaviour suggests that orderly classrooms are associated with high student engagement and achievement (Angus et al., 2009; Hattie, 2003; Lewis, Romi, Qui, & Katz, 2005; Overton & Sullivan, 2008; Sullivan, 2009). Yet the media claims widespread public and political concern over allegedly negative and deteriorating student behaviour in the nation's schools (Cameron, 2010; Donnelly, 2009). However earlier international research (Wubbels, 2007) suggests that the 'problem' has been overplayed.

In this study we intentionally focused on engagement as a central theoretical construct, as research has shown that it directly influences student behaviour. Drawing on an ecological model (adapted from Conway, 2012) we viewed a learning environment as an ecosystem involving interactions between the physical environment, teacher characteristics, curriculum (including pedagogy and resources), and a multitude of student variables, all of which influence student behaviour.

We aimed to investigate the extent to which student behaviour is a concern for teachers. We used the Behaviour at School Study Teacher Survey (BaSS Teacher Survey) to investigate the views of teachers about student behaviour in South Australian schools. This initial report focuses on teachers' views on student behaviour in the classroom.

The pool of respondents comprised teachers who taught in primary (49%) and middle/secondary (51%) schools. Approximately two thirds of respondents were female (68%). The majority of teachers were employed full time (80%) and on a permanent basis (79%). Most respondents were employed as teachers (71%) and the remainder were employed at management levels: senior teacher (22%); principal or deputy principal (7%); One per cent did not indicate their employment status.

The teachers were employed in schools across all sectors in South Australia, which included metropolitan (66%), rural (24%) and remote (5%) locations (and other 5%). The size of the schools varied from small enrolments of less than 100 students (5%) to very large enrolments of greater than 1000 students (18%).

We organised the 23 items related to unproductive behaviours in classrooms conceptually into three groups: (a) low-level disruptive, (b) disengaged behaviours, and (c) aggressive/anti-social behaviours. We used descriptive statistics to quantify the nature and frequency of student behaviours reported by teachers. We used cross tabulations to analyse the behaviours of students according to age, gender, location, type of school, and socioeconomic status. We conducted ANOVAs and post hoc analyses to investigate any differences in teachers' responses to particular student behaviours and the attributions for those behaviours on the basis of teacher age, gender, location, level of schooling, level and type of position, teaching experience, and the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage status of the school.

Key Findings

While teachers identified that all categories of behaviour exist in schools, the most common behaviours of concern were disengaged behaviours and low-level disruptive behaviours. While aggressive/anti-social behaviours do occur in schools, they are infrequently encountered by most teachers. Hence the findings of this study do not support popular perceptions that schools are out of control and that violent behaviours are common.

There were differences in the behaviours identified by teachers based on the location of their school within the state, the ICSEA status of the school, the size of the school and whether the school was a primary or a middle/secondary school. Schools in lower categories of the ICSEA, schools in remote locations and schools with enrolments between 100 and 299 students identified higher levels of responding to aggressive/anti-social behaviours, although these behaviours were still in the minority when compared to the other two behaviour categories. Secondary teachers reported lower levels of disengaged behaviours compared to primary teachers, although this may have been a function of the closer, more sustained, daily engagement primary teachers have with their students.

We also examined teacher characteristics including gender, age, length of experience and time in their current schools. As identified in the literature (e.g. Day et al., 2006; Jones, 2006), early career and young teachers more commonly reported having to manage unproductive behaviours both in primary and middle/secondary settings. Together with 50–59 year old teachers, they reported being more stressed by student behaviour than other teachers did.

Teachers were far more likely to see the reasons for disengaged behaviour in the individual student or in home or family factors. Few teachers believed that any in-school factors, particularly curriculum and pedagogy, contributed to student behaviour. This finding is concerning as it reflects an inaccurate perception that teachers do not directly influence student behaviours in their classroom by their own actions.

The findings also highlight the focus of teachers across both primary and secondary schools on low-level approaches to responding to unproductive student behaviour. Teachers particularly identified the use of a stepped approach or reasoning with the student either inside or outside the classroom to address the behaviour. They also identified requiring additional work, keeping students in and referring the student to another teacher as the least effective responses.

In summary, the results suggest that low-level disruptive and disengaged student behaviours are very concerning in classrooms. These behaviours occur frequently and teachers find them difficult to manage, yet they accept very little responsibility for such behaviour. We argue that teachers need a greater understanding of how the broader ecology of the classroom can influence engagement and therefore behaviour.

Acknowledgements

The Behaviour at School Study has relied on the generous commitment of time and support from many people.

This study involved the collaboration and commitment of major education partner organisations in South Australia, namely:

- Department of Education and Child Development (DECD)
- Catholic Education South Australia (CESA)
- Association of Independent Schools South Australia (AISSA)
- South Australian Secondary Principals Association (SASPA)
- Association of Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools, South Australia (APCSS)
- South Australian Primary Principals Association (SAPPA)
- South Australian Catholic Primary Principals Association (SACPPA)

Researchers from the University of South Australia and Flinders University, employer representatives from the government, Catholic and independent sectors, and delegates from the principals' associations participated in regular roundtables. The roundtables were established to facilitate a collaborative approach to the research. In particular, our intent was to provide a forum to better understand and respond to issues associated with student behaviour in schools.

We acknowledge the contribution of the teachers and leaders who saw value in participating in this study. Thank you for providing your 'voice'.

1. Introduction

Issues related to student behaviour increasingly are becoming a shared concern especially as 'behaviour is one of the dominant discourses of schooling' (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 98). In many countries like Australia, there is a growing sense of social and moral panic about students' behaviour in schools (Ball et al., 2012). The media reflect society's unease by consistently reporting widespread public and political concern over allegedly negative and deteriorating student behaviour in the nation's public schools (e.g. Barr, 2009; Cameron, 2010; Donnelly, 2009; Watson, 2012). Politicians, systems and schools are producing a plethora of policies, strategies and practices that promote a sense of 'control'. Earlier international research (Wubbels, 2007) suggests that the 'problem' has been overplayed. Yet what do we know about the nature and extent of problems related to student behaviour in today's schools?

1.1 Background: A Brief Review of Classroom Behaviour Studies

In response to media reports and professional association concerns throughout the 1980s that levels of violence towards teachers and lack of discipline had increased in schools, the British government established the Elton Enquiry (Department of Education and Science, 1989) into discipline in schools. This enquiry found that most behaviours of concern to teachers were relatively trivial, but persistent. 'Talking out of turn', 'hindering other pupils', 'calculated idleness or work avoidance' and 'verbal abuse towards other pupils' were among the behaviours most frequently mentioned. Following considerable public debate about discipline in schools, a team of South Australian researchers (Adey, Oswald, & Johnson, 1991) conducted a series of surveys on teachers' views of discipline in schools. They employed a modified version of the questionnaire used in the Elton Enquiry to investigate the views of over 3000 teachers in metropolitan and country, public, private and Catholic schools across the state. In general terms, the findings were similar to those of the Elton Enquiry; that is, a consistent pattern of minor discipline problems was found from Reception to Year 12. The most common misbehaviours included idleness and work avoidance, hindering others and talking out of turn. Serious behaviours such as physical destructiveness and aggression were relatively uncommon. In essence, the findings did not support the widespread concern about students being out of control in the school system. However it was clear that many teachers did experience minor but persistent discipline problems on a regular basis. The authors concluded that, although the actual behaviours seemed somewhat minor, they impeded learning and their repetitive nature was a major source of teacher stress.

In a review of the literature on teacher perceptions of troublesome classroom behaviour, Beaman and Wheldall (1997) concluded that media reports of violence in schools were sensationalist. Their review showed that, consistent with the earlier reports (Department of Education and Science, 1989; Johnson, Oswald, & Adey, 1993), most of the misbehaviour in schools was innocuous. For instance, talking out of turn was found to be the first choice of almost half of the teachers in all samples that they reviewed. This was followed by hindering other students, and idleness and slowness. Although relatively trivial, the authors agreed that the high frequency of these

behaviours make them 'irritating and time-wasting and, over time, ultimately exhausting and stressful' (1997, p. 53).

Beaman, Wheldall and Kemp (2007) returned to the issue of troublesome classroom behaviours ten years later in order to update their literature review. Their review once again confirmed the earlier findings that, while classroom behaviour is of great concern to teachers, the main classroom disruptions are relatively trivial. Once again talking out of turn topped the frequency list and again these behaviours happened so often that they ultimately caused considerable stress for teachers. As in previous research, boys were consistently identified to cause more difficulty for teachers than girls.

In summary, over a period of twenty years, research focused on student behaviour difficulties has consistently found that, generally, schools are functioning effectively and that most of the behaviours that teachers find difficult are relatively minor, but high in frequency. It is these repetitive behaviours that teachers find challenging and which lead to stress and burnout.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

A central theoretical premise guiding this study is that engagement in learning directly influences student behaviour. We know that there is a well-established link between student engagement, student behaviour and academic achievement (Angus et al., 2009; Hattie, 2003; Marzano & Marzano, 2003). In this study, therefore, we use the terms 'productive' and 'unproductive' behaviours (Angus et al., 2009) rather than the more commonly used terms in the literature of 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' behaviours to reflect the link between behaviour and teaching and learning.

Recently, a significant longitudinal study investigated the relationship between classroom behaviour and academic performance (Angus et al., 2009). In this study teachers were asked to rate their students on a checklist of ten 'unproductive behaviours', defined as actions that impede a student's academic progress. The unproductive behaviours included the following: aggression, non-compliance, disruption, inattention, erratic behaviour, being impulsive, lack of motivation, being unresponsive, being unprepared and irregular attendance. The authors found that in any year 60% of students were considered to behave productively, 20% were disengaged, 12% were low-level disruptive and 8% were uncooperative. Over the four-year period of the study, 40% of students were consistently productive, 20% were consistently unproductive and the others fluctuated from year to year. In relation to academic performance, the uncooperative group, typified by aggression, non-compliance and disruption, performed worst, but the disengaged group, who were compliant and not aggressive, performed only marginally better. Students in the disengaged group were generally cooperative but found their school work uninteresting, gave up on tasks, were easily distracted, did not prepare for lessons and opted out of class activities. As the authors noted, the group that received the greatest time and resources in relation to behaviour was the uncooperative group, while the quiet, disengaged group was often left unnoticed. In their recommendations, the authors highlighted the importance of increasing levels of student engagement via changes to policy, pedagogy and resources.

We recognise the importance of creating classroom conditions that promote academic engagement as these are crucial in establishing schools and classrooms where

behaviours are more productive. We draw on an ecological approach to explaining and managing both productive and unproductive student behaviour (Conway, 2012). In the ecological model we use (see Figure 1), the classroom (or any teaching space) is thought of as an ecosystem involving interactions between the physical environment, teacher characteristics, curriculum (including pedagogy and resources), and a multitude of student variables in examining specific productive and unproductive behaviours and teacher responses.

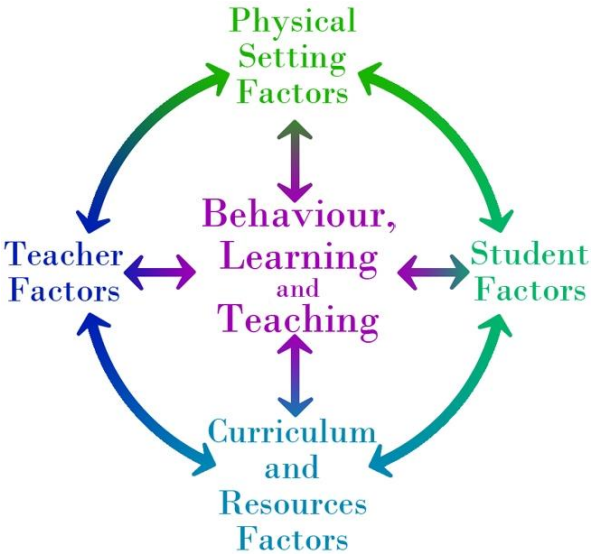


Figure 1 Ecological Model of the Classroom (adapted from Conway, 2012)

Explanations of both productive and unproductive behaviours must therefore consider the interaction of all four components of the specific learning ecosystem. At a broader school level, behaviour within multiple school settings (e.g. classrooms, playground/yard, canteen) is again the result of interactions between the setting, the participants and the activities. Hence the key principle is that student behaviour does not exist in isolation but within the interaction between all elements of the relevant ecosystem. At the whole-school level, the influences of outside factors (home, socioeconomic, political, cultural/racial/religious) impact on the ecology of the school as well as internal factors.

2. Methodology

2.1 Aim and Research Questions

This report presents the initial findings from a larger study funded by an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant (LP110100317) and education partner organisations in South Australia.

The aim of this initial phase of the study was to identify the nature and extent of unproductive student behaviour in South Australian schools.

The research reported here addresses two main questions, namely:

- What is the nature and extent of unproductive student behaviour in schools?
- What strategies do teachers use to manage the range of unproductive student behaviours they encounter?

2.2 Behaviour at School Study Teacher Survey

We used the Behaviour at School Study Teacher Survey (BaSS Teacher Survey) to investigate the views of teachers about student behaviour in South Australian schools. We adapted the survey from the Discipline in Schools Questionnaire (DiSQ), (Adey et al., 1991). In the web-based questionnaire, teachers and school leaders were asked to identify a range of student behaviours that they observed or encountered in their classrooms and around the school during the week prior to completing the survey. The student behaviours listed in the survey ranged from relatively minor misdemeanours to more serious acts of verbal abuse, bullying and physical violence. We added a number of extra student behaviours to those in the DiSQ to capture the unproductive behaviours associated with passive disengagement reported by Angus et al. (2009) and indirect forms of aggression and cyberbullying (Owens, 1996; Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000; Spears, Slee, Owens, & Johnson, 2009). As well as identifying the range and frequency of student behaviours in classes and around the school, teachers were asked how they responded to these behaviours, how difficult they found these behaviours to manage, and how stressed they were as a result. Finally, respondents were asked to identify the reasons they thought their students behaved in the ways identified in their classes and around the school. The current report, however, specifically reports on the teachers' perceptions of unproductive classroom behaviours.

2.3 Survey Design

The BaSS Teacher Survey (See http://www.bass.edu.au/survey) was a web-based questionnaire that comprised nine sections, namely:

Section 1: School Details
Section 2: Teachers' Background and Teaching Experience
Section 3: Unproductive Student Behaviour in Classes
Section 4: Unproductive Student Behaviour Around the School
Section 5: Students who Exhibit Unproductive Behaviours
Section 6: Factors that Contribute to Unproductive Student Behaviour
Section 7: Managing Students and Classes

Section 8: Ways to Improve Student Behaviour

Section 9: Teachers' General Views on Student Behaviour

We incorporated a range of measurement scales in the questionnaire, including Likert and dichotomous scales. Examples of a Likert scale include:

- *Referring back to your most recent teaching week, please indicate how frequently you had to manage each type of unproductive student behaviour*[1] *... Being late for class* (Several times daily; At least once a day; On most days; On one or two days; Not at all)
- *Please indicate whether you would agree or disagree with the implementation of the following proposals or strategies at your school. Telling students more firmly and clearly what they can and cannot do at school* (Strongly agree; Agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Disagree; Strongly disagree)

Examples of a dichotomous scale include:

- *During last week, did you experience stress due to students' behaviour around the school?* (Yes; No)
- *Do you work full time or part time?*

The survey was open for 5 months, from 12 June to 6 November 2011. The trimmed mean time for completing the survey was 30 minutes. The questionnaire was hosted on the Behaviour at School Study website, www.bass.edu.au. We used Qualtrics survey software, Microsoft Excel 2007 and IBM SPSS Statistics 20 to facilitate survey development, distribution and analyses.

The data set reported here draws on the following sections:

Section 1: School Details

Section 2: Teachers' Background and Teaching Experience

Section 3: Unproductive Student Behaviour in Classes

Section 6: Factors that Contribute to Unproductive Student Behaviour

Section 7: Managing Students and Classes

Section 8: Ways to Improve Student Behaviour

2.4 Sampling Procedures

The target population for this phase of the research was the total pool of government, Catholic and independent school teachers and leaders in South Australia who had classroom teaching responsibilities for 50% or more of their working week.

Exclusion criteria included:

- principals and teachers employed in special education schools; and
- temporary relief teachers.

[1] To facilitate readability of this report we have replaced the term 'you' with the term 'teacher'.

The survey was advertised for five months. The partner organisations involved in the project actively promoted the survey. For example, they sent numerous emails to principals seeking their support. Furthermore, the researchers posted hard copies of advertisements to all schools.

A total of 1750 teachers began the survey and 1380 (or 79%) completed the survey.

2.5 Development of Scales: Assessment Criteria

There were 23 items in Section 3: Unproductive Student Behaviour in Classes. We organised these items conceptually into three theoretical constructs or categories (see Appendix A for the behaviours we grouped in each category):

a) low-level disruptive behaviours
b) disengaged behaviours
c) aggressive and anti-social behaviours.

We applied rigorous psychometric criteria to help confirm construct validity. We followed internal consistency reliability and convergent and discriminant validity guidelines. Specifically, we examined the Cronbach alpha and applied the following guidelines (George, 2003):

>0.9	Excellent
>0.8	Good
>0.7	Acceptable
>0.6	Questionable
>0.5	Poor
<0.5	Unacceptable.

Additionally, in all but two instances, we only retained items that demonstrated a corrected item-total correlation (CITC) >0.3. The two items that initially demonstrated CITC <0.3 were unproductive behaviours related to the use of technology, namely, *using a mobile phone inappropriately* (CITC .27), and *using a laptop or iPad inappropriately* (CITC .29). We decided to examine whether the two items were influenced by the school level, that is, primary or middle/secondary. Further analyses confirmed that the two items demonstrated acceptable CITC when investigations were conducted with the middle/secondary sub-sample, and we subsequently retained the items. As such, we identified three theoretical constructs, namely:

a) low-level disruptive behaviours (Cronbach alpha .90)
b) disengaged behaviours (Cronbach alpha .84)
c) aggressive and anti-social behaviours (Cronbach alpha .88)

2.6 Sample Context

One thousand three hundred and eighty teachers completed the survey. The characteristics of this sample are presented in Table 1: Teacher Characteristics and Table 2: School Characteristics. The categories within the teacher and school characteristics provide a framework for subsequent analyses.

Table 1 Teacher Characteristics[2][3]

Characteristic	Total % n = 1380[4]	Males % n = 441 or 32%	Females % n = 932 or 68%
School level[2]			
Primary (R–7)	49	19 (19)	81 (81)
Middle/secondary (6–9/8–12)	51	45 (43)	55 (57)
Age			
<30	17.5	26	74
30–39	20	34	66
40–49	23	26.5	73.5
50–99	33	38	62
60+	7	33	67
Years of teaching experience			
<5	18	31	69
5–9	18	29	71
10–14	11	34.5	65.5
15–19	9	27	73
20–24	11	31	69
25+	35	35	65
Full time/part time			
Full time	80	37	63
Part time	20	12	88
Tenure			
Permanent	79	34	66
Contract	21	26	74
Level of appointment			
Teachers & others	71	29	71
Senior teachers (e.g. coordinator)	22	36	64
Principals/deputy/assistant principal/heads of sub-school	7	48.5	51.5
Years of teaching at current school			
0–4	48	32	68
5–9	25	32	68
10–14	15	29	71
15–19	5	29	71
20–24	3	43	58
25+	4	39	61

[2] In some instances the percentages do not add up to 100 as they have been rounded.
[3] Percentages are provided in parenthesis for the parent population, that is, 'population' of teachers in the profession across Australia. Figures are obtained from McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, and Murphy (2011).
[4] Seven respondents did not indicate their gender and were excluded from analyses involving gender.

Table 2 School Characteristics[5]

Characteristic	Total %
Size of school (no. of students)	
<100	5
100–199	6
200–299	10
300–399	14
400–499	10
500–599	8
600–699	11
700–799	5
800–1000	13
>1000	18
Location	
Metropolitan	66
Rural	24
Remote	5
Other[6]	5
Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)[7]	
≤900	6 (25)
901–1000	32 (25)
1001–1100	33 (25)
≥1101	9 (25)
Unsure	22
Schooling sector[8]	
Catholic	26 (18)
Government	56 (71)
Independent	18 (11)
Single sex/coeducation	
Coeducation	90
Single sex female	4
Single sex male	6

[5] In some instances the percentages do not add up to 100 as they have been rounded.

[6] In some instances respondents did not specify the geographic location. However inspection of the data reveals that 71% of schools within the 'Other' category are middle/secondary settings. Further, almost a quarter, 24%, of respondents who did not indicate the location of their school setting also did not provide the ICSEA details for their school. In the 'Other' category, 41% of teachers had been at their current school less than 5 years.

[7] The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) was developed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to facilitate investigations into NAPLAN results of students across Australian schools. Please refer to http://www.acara.edu.au/verve/_resources/Guide+to+understankding+ICSEA.pdf for further information. Further note, the ≤900 ICSEA sub-category represents the lowest level of educational advantage and ≥1101 represents schools serving communities with the highest level of socio-educational advantage.

[8] Percentages are provided for the parent population in parenthesis. Figures are obtained from http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/subscriber.nsf/0/90051CE31F11385ECA2579F30011EF35/$File/42210_2011.pdf

The main characteristics of the sample that we considered when analysing the data are detailed in Figure 2.

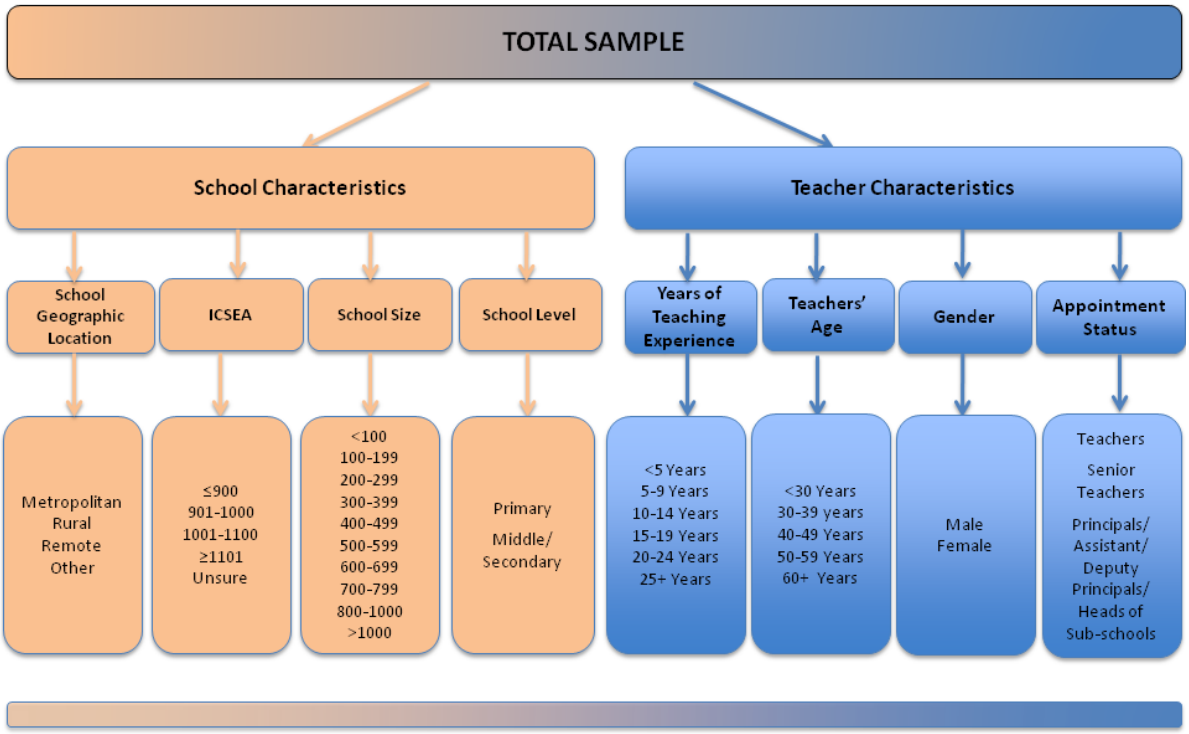


Figure 2 Sample Characteristics

Analyses of the characteristics related to the sample indicated that the findings are complex (See Appendix B for cross tabulations). Furthermore, the characteristics indicate that the findings require an understanding of some broader issues that influence and compound some results. The following summary of interesting features of the characteristics highlights some of the complexities:More primary than secondary schools were represented in the lowest level of socio-educational advantage (ICSEA ≤900).

- 18% of schools in remote regions were classified as the lowest level of socio-educational advantage (ICSEA ≤900).
- One third of teachers employed in rural or remote settings were less than 30 years of age.
- A high percentage of teachers employed in remote schools had less than five years' teaching experience.
- Most large schools were located in the metropolitan area.
- Rural and remote schools tended to have fewer enrolments than metropolitan schools.
- Larger schools tended to have higher levels of socio-educational advantage, while smaller schools were more likely to have lower levels of socio-educational advantage.
- 11 % of respondents in the 50–59 year age group were principals/ deputies/ assistant principals/ heads of sub-schools.
- 72% of male teachers were employed in middle/secondary schools.

- 59% of female teachers were employed in primary schools.
- 73% of senior teachers were employed in middle/secondary schools.

When interpreting the results in this report it is important to consider the socio-cultural influences, economic forces, geographic differences and in some cases gender differences that weave in and out of the data to confound simple explanations. For example, the findings indicate that early career teachers encounter higher levels of unproductive student behaviours. A complication with this finding is that 41% of teachers employed in remote schools and 22% of teachers in schools with the lowest ICSEA value (≤900) have less than 5 years' experience.

These data raise some questions about early career teachers and their reported high incidence of unproductive behaviours:

- Does lack of experience lead teachers to report higher levels of unproductive student behaviours?
- Is it because their students are under more social and economic duress and act out as a result?
- Or is it a combination of these issues?

3. The Nature and Extent of Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours

We performed a series of analyses to investigate teachers' perspectives related to student behaviour in schools. Specifically, we conducted cross tabulations to examine response patterns for each of the individual unproductive behaviours to facilitate the reporting of these findings.

Furthermore, we decided that comparisons of means, specifically t-test and ANOVA procedures, were appropriate for investigations related to the three categories of unproductive classroom behaviours, namely,

- low-level disruptive behaviours
- disengaged behaviours
- aggressive/anti-social behaviours.

In addition to our investigations conducted across the total sample of teachers, we also report a range of findings for categories reflecting sample characteristics. We conducted this analysis to examine whether trends were specific to particular characteristics of the teachers.

Where differences in response patterns are evident, we discuss chi square and post hoc analyses to help further explain the nature and significance of the differences within the specified sample characteristics.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that, although some may argue that surveys present a snapshot of a sample at one specific time point, the overwhelming majority of respondents in this study (97%) indicated that the pattern of student classroom behaviour they reported on was fairly typical when compared with other school weeks.

3.1 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Total Sample

Teachers reported the frequency of unproductive student behaviours they experienced in classes.

Key Findings

- Teachers encountered low-level disruptive behaviours and disengaged behaviours on a daily basis.
- *Talking out of turn*, *avoiding doing schoolwork* and *disengaging from classroom activities* were the most prevalent unproductive student behaviours.
- Over two thirds of teachers reported disengaged behaviours on at least an 'almost daily' basis.
- Over two thirds of teachers reported that aggressive/anti-social behaviours either did not occur at all during the school week or occurred only on one or two days per week.

The most prevalent low-level disruptive and disengaged behaviours teachers addressed several times daily were:

- *students talking out of turn*
- *avoiding doing schoolwork*
- *disengaging from classroom activities* (see Table 3).

The most frequent aggressive/anti-social behaviours teachers managed in a school day were:

- *verbally abusing other students*
- *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours*
- *being physically aggressive towards other students*.

A high percentage of teachers did not need to manage the majority of aggressive/anti-social behaviours at all in their most recent teaching week.

Table 3 Individual Unproductive Student Behaviours by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Disengaged behaviours				
Being late for class	10	24	43	24
Avoiding doing schoolwork	4	21	32	43
Disengaging from classroom activities	5	21	33	41
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Disrupting the flow of a lesson	14	21	32	33
Talking out of turn	4	18	29	50
Making distracting noises intentionally	26	23	26	24
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property	29	32	24	15
Moving around the room unnecessarily	20	27	26	27
Using a mobile phone inappropriately	56	19	11	13
Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately	67	20	8	6
Making impertinent remarks	27	33	21	19
Mucking around, being rowdy	18	34	28	21
Aggressive/anti-social behaviours				
Spreading rumours	38	41	18	3
Excluding peers	33	44	19	4
Verbally abusing other students	43	30	18	9
Verbally abusing teachers	74	18	6	2
Sexually harassing other students	72	21	6	1
Sexually harassing teachers	94	5	1	0
Being physically aggressive towards other students	46	35	14	6
Being physically aggressive towards teachers	93	6	1	0
Being extremely violent towards other students or teachers	94	5	1	0
Being physically destructive	78	18	3	0
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours	46	36	12	6

We conducted a mean analysis to examine the frequency of the three theoretical categories of unproductive student behaviours (see Figure 3). The results indicate that, on average, teachers addressed low-level disruptive behaviours around one to two times per week. Additionally, teachers encountered aggressive/anti-social behaviours less than one/two times per week. However, teachers on average experienced disengaged student behaviours at least 'almost daily'.

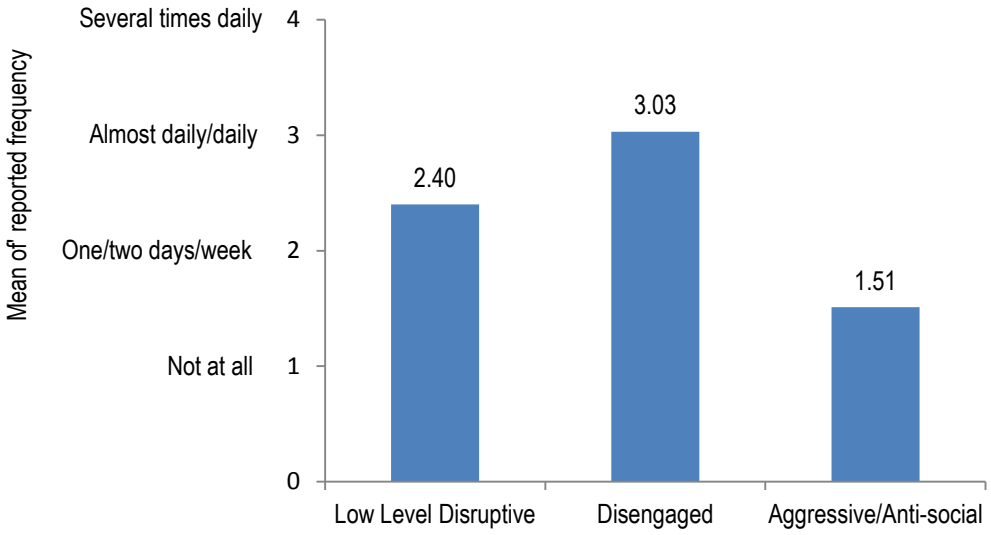


Figure 3 Behaviour Categories by Total Sample

To facilitate the interpretation of results presented in the following tables, we have colour coded behaviours to reflect the grouped behaviour to which they belong.

- Low-level disruptive behaviours
- Disengaged behaviours
- Aggressive and anti-social behaviours

The results indicated that the most reported unproductive student behaviours to occur in the previous week were low-level disruptive and disengaged behaviours. Specifically, unproductive classroom behaviours that were most frequently addressed by teachers several times throughout the school day are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 10 Most Frequently Reported Unproductive Classroom Behaviours in the 'Several Times a Day' Category by Total Sample

Unproductive behaviours	% of all teachers (n = 1380)
Talking out of turn	50
Avoiding doing schoolwork	43
Disengaging from classroom activities	41
Disrupting the flow of a lesson	33
Moving around the room unnecessarily	27
Being late for class	24
Making distracting noises intentionally	24
Mucking around, being rowdy	21
Making impertinent remarks	19
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property	15

Conversely, the least reported unproductive behaviours that occurred in the last week were aggressive/anti-social in nature. In particular, response patterns in the 'Not at all' category were examined. Table 5 presents the percentage of teachers who did not address the unproductive classroom behaviour at all in their most recent teaching week.

Table 5 10 Least Reported Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by Total Sample

Unproductive behaviours	% of all teachers (n = 1380)
Being extremely violent towards other students or teachers	94
Sexually harassing teachers	94
Being physically aggressive towards teachers	93
Being physically destructive	78
Verbally abusing teachers	74
Sexually harassing other students	72
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours	46
Being physically aggressive towards other students	46
Verbally abusing other students	43
Spreading rumours	38

3.2 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by School Level

The nature of student behaviours can vary across school levels. Therefore, we investigated whether teachers' reporting of difficult classroom behaviours differed between primary and middle/secondary settings.

Key Findings

- Primary teachers reported significantly more instances of low-level disruptive and aggressive/anti-social behaviours than middle/secondary teachers.
- Both primary and middle/secondary teachers addressed disengaged behaviours on an almost daily, if not daily, basis.
- Aggressive/anti-social behaviours were the least reported unproductive classroom behaviours across both primary and middle/secondary schools.
- Significantly more primary than middle/secondary teachers reported the need to manage all unproductive classroom behaviours several times a day, aside from *using a mobile phone or laptop inappropriately*, *being late for class* and *sexually harassing other students*, which were very rarely identified as behaviours of concern.

Our examination of individual unproductive behaviours at the school level category (see Table 6) revealed that, of all primary teachers represented in the sample, 13% reported not addressing behaviours related to *being late for class* during their most recent teaching week, in comparison to 7% of middle/secondary teachers. The finding suggests that middle/secondary teachers are more likely to encounter issues related to punctuality than primary teachers. The result is not surprising given the increased movement of secondary students during the school day.

Additionally, the overwhelming majority (90%) of primary teachers reported that they did not address behaviours associated with the *inappropriate use of mobile phones or laptops*. This is in contrast to over a quarter of the middle/secondary teachers who reported that they are managing associated behaviours from almost daily to several times a day. The finding is not unexpected, given that middle/secondary students are more likely to have access to technological devices.

The majority of both primary and middle/secondary teachers reported that they did not need to manage behaviours related to the *sexual harassment of other students* at all during their most recent teaching week. However, approximately one third of middle/secondary teachers reported the need to manage the behaviour on at least one or two days per week, if not more frequently.

Table 6 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by School Level

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Disengaged behaviours				
Being late for class (p <.001)				
Primary	13	25	41	21
Middle/secondary	7	23	44	26
Avoiding doing school work (p <.001)				
Primary	5	19	29	47
Middle/secondary	3	24	35	38
Disengaging from classroom activities (p <.001				
Primary	3	19	32	47
Middle/secondary	7	23	35	36
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson (*p* <.001)				
Primary	11	17	29	44
Middle/secondary	18	26	34	23
Talking out of turn (*p*= <.001)				
Primary	1	10	25	64
Middle/secondary	7	25	32	36
Making distracting noises intentionally (*p* <.001)				
Primary	18	20	27	35
Middle/secondary	34	27	25	14
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property (*p* <.001)				
Primary	24	30	25	21
Middle/secondary	33	35	23	9
Moving around the room unnecessarily (*p* <.001)				
Primary	13	21	28	38
Middle/secondary	27	32	25	16
Using a mobile phone inappropriately (*p* <.001)				
Primary	90	8	2	1
Middle/secondary	25	30	21	25
Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately (*p* <.001)				
Primary	90	8	2	0
Middle/secondary	44	32	14	11
Mucking around/being rowdy (*p* <.001)				
Primary	15	32	27	25
Middle/secondary	21	35	28	16
Making impertinent remarks (*p* <.001)				
Primary	25	33	19	24
Middle/secondary	30	33	23	15
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Spreading rumours (p <.001)				
Primary	30	43	23	5
Middle/secondary	46	39	13	2
Excluding peers (p <.001)				
Primary	18	49	27	6
Middle/secondary	46	40	12	2

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Verbally abusing teachers (p <.001)				
Primary	72	17	8	4
Middle/secondary	76	18	5	1
Sexually harassing other students (p <.001)				
Primary	78	17	4	1
Middle/secondary	66	25	8	2
Being physically aggressive towards other students (p <.001)				
Primary	32	41	18	10
Middle/secondary	58	30	10	3
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours (p <.001)				
Primary	40	36	15	9
Middle/secondary	51	37	10	2
Verbally abusing other students (p <.05)				
Primary	40	30	20	10
Middle/secondary	47	29	16	8

We performed a chi square analysis to establish if there were any significant differences between primary and middle/secondary teachers in relation to the reported frequencies of managing individual unproductive behaviours.

There were significant differences ($p \leq .05$) between primary and middle/secondary teachers for all items other than *being physically destructive*, for which differences between the two categories did not reach significance.

However, a minimum cell count of five is required in order to be able to draw any conclusion about the significance of the differences. Subsequently, although achieving significance, chi square analysis revealed that an insufficient cell count was evident for three items, namely, *sexually harassing teachers*; *being physically aggressive towards teachers*; and *being extremely violent towards other students or teachers*. Therefore, no conclusions regarding significance can be drawn in relation to these items. Given, however, that the low cell counts were evident in the *several times a day* and *almost daily/daily* categories of the Likert scale, the finding further highlights that teachers reported very low frequencies of such behaviours.

Means analyses showed that, on average, both primary and middle/secondary teachers reported managing low-level disruptive behaviours over one/two days per week and almost daily. Teachers across both settings indicated that they addressed disengaged behaviours on an almost daily/daily basis. Encouragingly, however, response patterns suggest that on average teachers in both settings either did not address aggressive/anti-social behaviours at all, or at most encountered the associated behaviours up to one or two days per week.

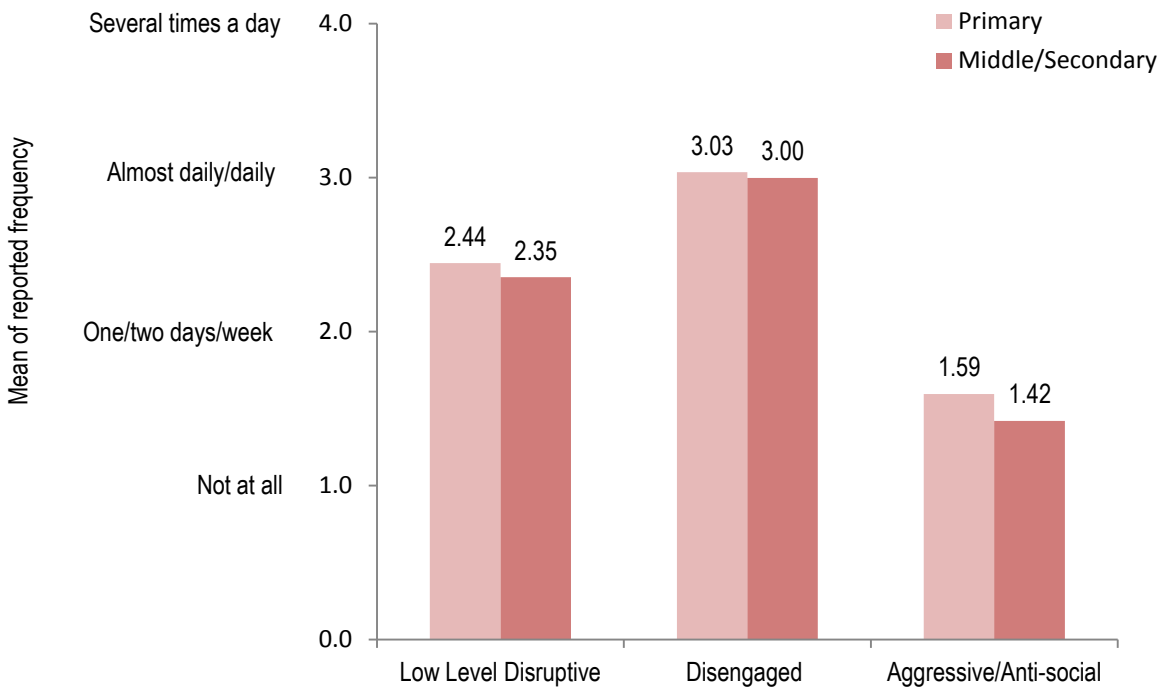


Figure 4 Behaviour Categories by School Level

Although response trends appear similar for teachers of both primary and middle/secondary schools, investigations into response patterns by school level revealed:

- significant differences between primary (*M*= 22.00, *SD*= 6.10, n= 673) and middle/secondary (*M*= 21.19, *SD*= 7.16, n=707) categories, with regard to the reporting of managing low-level disruptive behaviours ($t(1361) = 2.29$, *p= <.05)*
- significant differences between primary (*M*= 17.54, *SD*= 5.60, n= 673) and middle/secondary (*M*= 15.63, *SD*= 4.67, n=707), with regard to addressing aggressive/anti-social behaviours ($t(1310) = 6.88$, *p= <.001)*
- no significant differences between the two categories with regard to the reporting of disengaged behaviours.

3.3 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by School Location

We investigated the reporting of unproductive classroom behaviours by school location.

Key Findings

- On average the disengaged behaviours category was the most frequently reported unproductive classroom behaviour regardless of the school location.
- Teachers in remote school settings reported addressing disengaged behaviours more frequently than teachers from other locations.
- Teachers in remote schools were significantly more likely to address aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers in any other location.
- Of the behaviours for which significant differences between school locations were evident, *deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* was the behaviour most frequently managed on a daily basis by teachers across all geographic settings.

Most differences between school locations are evident in the reporting of low-level disruptive behaviours, aside from *verbally abusing other students*. A chi square analysis confirmed that teachers in remote schools reported significantly more frequent instances of managing seven of the 23 specified behaviours on a daily basis than teachers of schools in any other location (see Table 7 for the specific behaviours).

Table 7 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by School Location

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson p <.01				
Metro	16	22	32	31
Rural	10	22	30	38
Remote	11	13	31	46
Other	19	27	37	18
Making distracting noises intentionally p <.001				
Metro	29	23	26	22
Rural	19	26	27	29
Remote	17	17	26	40
Other	43	16	27	15
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property p <.01				
Metro	31	32	22	14
Rural	21	33	29	17
Remote	21	31	28	21
Other	41	27	19	13

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Moving around the room unnecessarily p <.001				
Metro	22	27	25	25
Rural	12	28	30	29
Remote	13	19	28	40
Other	37	24	24	16
Using a mobile phone inappropriately p <.05				
Metro	57	20	11	12
Rural	59	16	11	14
Remote	47	19	11	22
Other	44	13	1	10
Making impertinent remarks p <.001				
Metro	30	32	20	19
Rural	20	36	24	20
Remote	18	22	28	32
Other	38	38	15	9
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Verbally abusing other students p <.05				
Metro	46	28	17	10
Rural	38	36	19	7
Remote	32	28	25	15
Other	52	28	16	4

Although significant differences between categories were evident for the behaviours listed below, no conclusions about the significance of these findings can be drawn due to insufficient frequencies in some cells:

- *talking out of turn*
- *avoiding doing school work*
- *disengaging from classroom activities*
- *spreading rumours, excluding peers*
- *being physically destructive*
- *verbally abusing other teachers*
- *sexually harassing other students*
- *sexually harassing teachers*.

Analyses of category means (Figure 5) revealed:

- Teachers across all geographic locations reported managing disengaged behaviours on an almost daily/daily basis.
- Low-level disruptive behaviours were more likely to be addressed on one or two days per week.
- Aggressive/anti-social behaviours were the least reported behaviours by teachers, and reported to be addressed either not at all, or on one or two days per week.

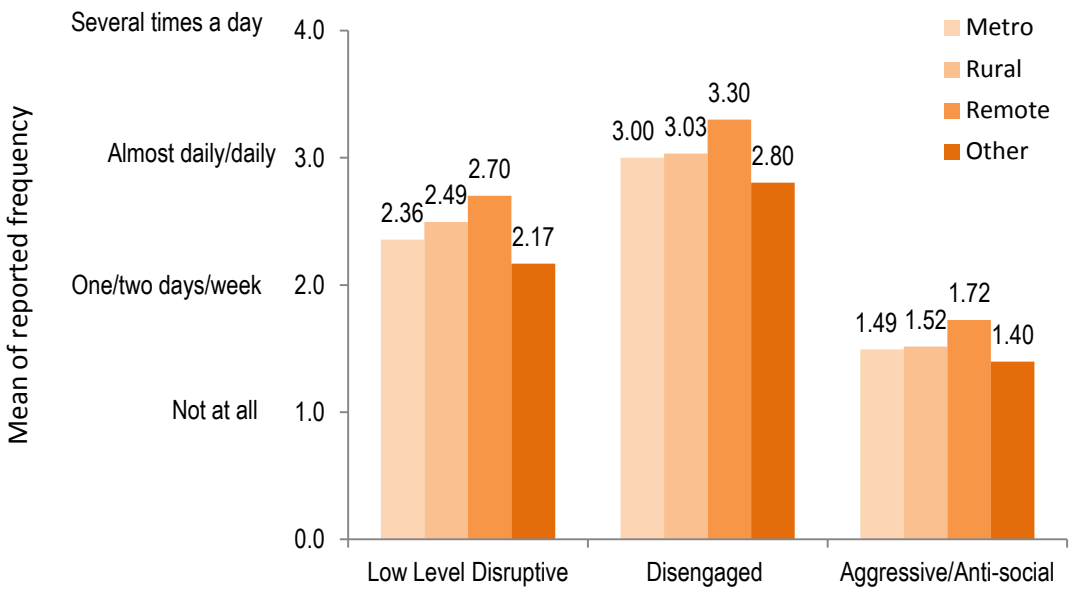


Figure 5 Behaviour Categories by School Location

We conducted ANOVA procedures to investigate the nature of the differences in the categories. Analyses showed significant differences between school locations in the low-level disruptive behaviours category ($F(3,1376)= 9.18$, $p\leq.001$); in the disengaged behaviours category ($F(3,1376)= 5.22$, $p\leq.001$); and in the aggressive/anti-social behaviours category ($F(3,1376)= 6.56$, $p\leq.001$).

Subsequent, post hoc analysis to investigate the nature of these differences indicated:

- Teachers in metropolitan schools addressed low-level disruptive behaviours significantly less frequently than teachers in rural ($p\leq.05$) or remote schools ($p \leq.001$).
- Teachers in remote schools reported addressing disengaged behaviours more frequently than teachers in other locations ($p\leq.05$).
- Teachers in remote schools were significantly more likely to address aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers in any other geographical setting, namely, metropolitan ($p=\leq.001$), rural ($p\leq.01$) and other ($p\leq.001$).

3.4 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA)

We examined categories of unproductive classroom behaviours across the categories representing the Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage. Examples of schools within each ICSEA category are provided in Appendix C. The reader is reminded that the ICSEA categories applied in this section are as follows:

≤900 (most socio-educationally disadvantaged)
901–1000
1001–1100
≥1101 (most socio-educationally advantaged)
Unsure.

The 'Unsure' category includes respondents who did not provide details about their school's ICSEA value.

Key Findings

- Aggressive/anti-social behaviours were the least reported behaviours across all ICSEA categories.
- Teachers in schools in the ≥1101 ICSEA category (highest) reported significantly lower instances of low-level disruptive, disengaged and aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers from schools in all other ICSEA categories.
- Schools in the ≤900 and 901–1000 ICSEA categories (lowest) reported significantly higher instances of low-level disruptive and disengaged behaviours than all other ICSEA categories.
- Teachers in schools from the ≤900 ICSEA reported significantly higher instances of aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers from the remaining ICSEA categories.
- *Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* and *being late for class* were the behaviours most frequently managed throughout a school day across all ICSEA categories.

The findings indicated that two thirds of the teachers employed in schools represented in the ≤900 ICSEA category were primary teachers.

Investigations into unproductive classroom behaviours at the individual level revealed:

- Teachers reported *deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* and *being late for class* as the behaviours most frequently encountered throughout a school day.
- Over 50% of teachers across all ICSEA categories reported the need to manage *punctuality* on an almost daily, if not daily, basis.

At the individual level, chi square analysis revealed the following significant differences (see Table 8):

- There were significant differences between ICSEA categories for 9 of the 23 individual behaviours.
- 72% of teachers employed in schools situated in communities of the highest category of community socio-educational advantage reported that they did not address behaviours associated with *students verbally abusing other students* at all in their most recent teaching week.
- 50% of teachers employed in schools within communities in the lowest category of socio-educational advantage reported the need to manage *students verbally abusing other students* at least 'almost daily'.

Significant differences between groups were most evident in the low-level disruptive behaviours. In particular, a higher percentage of teachers in the ≥1101 category reported that they did not need to address individual behaviours in this category at all during their most recent teaching week. The finding raises questions about the factors that contribute to this significant difference, particularly given that a high percentage of teachers in schools located in communities with the lowest level of ICSEA addressed a large number of unproductive behaviours frequently throughout the school week.

Table 8 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by ICSEA Category

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson p <.001				
≤900	8	9	21	63
901–1000	9	15	34	42
1001–1100	16	26	32	26
≥1101	27	32	30	11
Unsure	16	23	32	30
Making distracting noises intentionally p <.001				
≤900	13	12	31	45
901–1000	14	23	31	33
1001–1100	33	27	22	19
≥1101	56	17	22	5
Unsure	26	24	27	22
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property p <.001				
≤900	17	19	27	37
901–1000	17	34	29	19
1001–1100	34	33	21	12
≥1101	54	30	14	2
Unsure	31	32	24	14

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Moving around the room unnecessarily p <.001				
≤900	9	19	24	47
901–1000	9	24	32	35
1001–1100	24	32	22	22
≥1101	45	28	20	7
Unsure	23	25	28	24
Using a mobile phone inappropriately p <.001				
≤900	59	14	8	8
901–1000	50	17	14	19
1001–1100	58	21	11	10
≥1101	64	28	7	2
Unsure	59	19	10	13
Mucking around/being rowdy p <.001				
≤900	10	17	35	39
901–1000	12	28	34	28
1001–1100	22	37	26	15
≥1101	36	46	12	7
Unsure	16	37	27	20
Making impertinent remarks p <.001				
≤900	17	17	27	40
901–1000	17	33	23	27
1001–1100	33	34	20	13
≥1101	53	33	8	6
Unsure	26	34	23	18
Disengaged behaviours				
Being late for class p <.001				
≤900	3	14	37	46
901-1000	7	20	45	29
1001-1100	12	26	43	20
≥1101	17	32	38	13
Unsure	10	27	41	22
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Verbally abusing other students p <.001				
≤900	26	21	28	26
901-1000	27	35	24	14
1001-1100	54	27	15	4
≥1101	72	20	6	2
Unsure	46	32	15	7

In addition, analyses suggested significant differences between ICSEA categories with regard to a number of other behaviours; however an insufficient cell count prevents any conclusions being drawn. The behaviours were:

- *talking out of turn*
- *using a laptop inappropriately*
- *avoiding doing school work*
- *disengaging from classroom activities*
- *spreading rumours*
- *excluding peers*
- *being physically destructive*
- *verbally abusing teachers*
- *sexually harassing other students*
- *being physically aggressive towards other students*
- *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours*
- *being physically aggressive towards teachers*
- *being extremely violent towards other students or teachers*
- *sexually harassing teachers.*

ANOVA procedures confirmed that there were significant differences between ICSEA categories, specifically, in the low-level disruptive behaviours category ($F(4,1375)= 44.10$, $p=.001$), in the disengaged behaviours category ($F(4,1375)= 28.22$, $p=.001$) and in the aggressive/anti-social behaviours category ($F(4,1375)= 51.71$, $p=.001$).

Our analysis (see Figure 6) indicated:

- Aggressive/anti-social behaviours were the least reported behaviour category across all ICSEA groupings.
- Teachers from schools with the highest bracket of socio-educational advantage (≥1101) reported the lowest mean across all three behaviour categories. This suggests that the teachers in this category of schools are addressing unproductive classroom behaviours less frequently than teachers in schools in the remaining ICSEA categories. Turkey post hoc analysis confirmed this difference was significant ($p\leq.05$).
- Schools in the ≤900 and in the 901–1000 ICSEA categories reported significantly higher instances of addressing low-level disruptive and disengaged behaviours than all other ICSEA categories
- Teachers working in schools in the ≤900 ICSEA category reported significantly higher instances of aggressive/anti-social behaviours than the remaining ICSEA categories ($p \leq.05$).

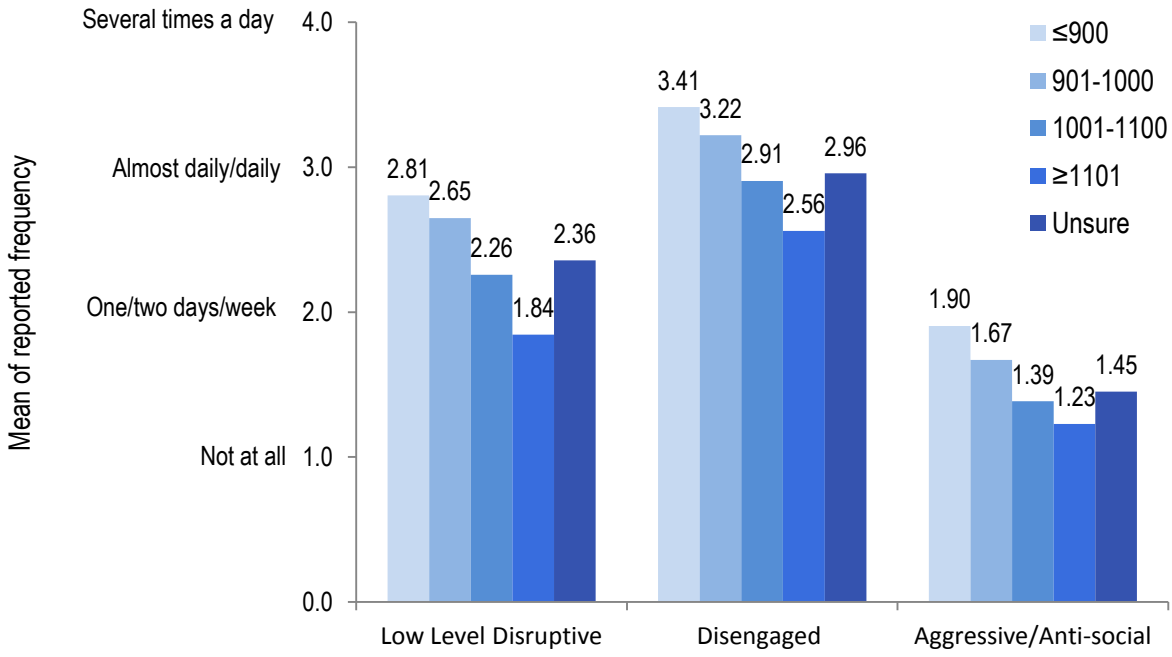


Figure 6 Behaviour Categories by ICSEA Category

3.5 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by School Size

We examined whether there were any significant differences between schools of different sizes.

Key Findings

- Teachers employed in schools with student enrolments of 100–199 and 200–299 on average reported a higher incidence of unproductive behaviours across all three categories.
- *Inappropriate use of mobile phones* was one of the least frequently reported behaviours across all categories of school size.
- *Moving around the room unnecessarily* and *deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* were the behaviours teachers across all categories reported addressing the most frequently throughout the school day.
- Teachers from schools with enrolments in the combined categories of 100–299 reported significantly higher frequencies of managing low-level disruptive behaviours than schools with enrolments above 1000.

Investigations into unproductive classroom behaviours by school size (see Table 9) revealed that, of the behaviours where significant differences between categories of school size were evident:

- *Inappropriate use of mobile phones* was one of the least frequently reported behaviours across all categories of school size, with a third or more of teachers reporting that the behaviour did not occur at all in their most recent teaching week.
- *Verbally abusing other students* was the only aggressive/anti-social behaviour for which significant differences between categories were evident and valid ($p \leq .01$).
- Teachers across all categories reported *moving around the room unnecessarily, making distracting noises intentionally* and *deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* occurred most frequently throughout the school day.

Table 9 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by School Size

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson p <.001				
<100	14	22	32	32
100–199	9	20	27	44
200–299	8	12	29	51
300–399	12	21	30	37
400–499	14	18	20	48
500–599	18	17	34	30
600–699	14	21	33	32
700–799	15	24	35	26
800–1000	16	23	35	26
>1000	18	29	37	16
Making distracting noises intentionally p <.001				
<100	29	22	22	27
100–199	14	15	34	37
200–299	14	23	23	40
300–399	24	23	26	27
400–499	25	18	20	38
500–599	31	16	34	19
600–699	21	27	29	23
700–799	33	24	26	17
800–1000	30	26	28	16
>1000	36	28	23	13
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property p <.001				
<100	32	32	18	19
100–199	22	27	20	31
200–299	18	32	21	29
300–399	29	31	25	15
400–499	24	31	21	24
500–599	38	25	24	13
600–699	25	33	34	8
700–799	29	39	21	11
800–1000	32	32	27	10
>1000	34	37	22	8
Moving around the room unnecessarily p <.001				
<100	18	33	25	24
100–199	11	24	22	44
200–299	7	23	24	47
300–399	15	22	34	29
400–499	16	23	25	36
500–599	24	25	28	23
600–699	19	27	30	24
700–799	23	29	30	18
800–1000	27	30	22	21
>1000	31	32	24	14

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Using a mobile phone inappropriately *p* <.001				
<100	92	5	2	2
100–199	75	11	11	4
200–299	74	13	7	6
300–399	71	19	7	4
400–499	69	15	7	9
500–599	50	15	17	18
600–699	66	16	7	11
700–799	36	23	18	23
800–1000	33	26	16	26
>1000	56	19	11	13
Mucking around/being rowdy *p* <.001				
<100	25	38	24	16
100–199	7	34	31	28
200–299	11	29	30	30
300–399	14	36	26	24
400–499	20	25	26	30
500–599	25	30	28	17
600–699	17	35	31	17
700–799	21	32	26	21
800–1000	22	34	26	19
>1000	19	40	30	11
Making impertinent remarks *p* <.001				
<100	33	33	22	11
100–199	24	29	21	26
200–299	17	32	18	33
300–399	28	30	21	22
400–499	27	31	18	25
500–599	28	30	25	17
600–699	18	42	20	21
700–799	32	27	18	23
800–1000	33	33	20	15
>1000	33	34	24	10
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Verbally abusing other students *p <.01*				
<100	48	35	10	8
100–199	33	31	20	17
200–299	30	37	20	12
300–399	44	29	18	9
400–499	34	33	23	11
500–599	48	24	19	10
600–699	44	32	21	4
700–799	42	26	23	9
800–1000	48	27	16	9
>1000	53	27	13	7

In addition, analyses suggested significant differences between school size categories with regard to a number of other behaviours; however an insufficient cell count prevents any conclusions being drawn. The behaviours were:

- *talking out of turn*
- *using a laptop inappropriately*
- *avoiding doing school work*
- *disengaging from classroom activities*
- *spreading rumours*
- *excluding peers*
- *verbally abusing teachers*
- *being physically aggressive towards other students*
- *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours*
- *being physically aggressive towards teachers*
- *being extremely violent towards other students or teachers.*

Mean analysis of unproductive classroom by school size (Figure 7) indicated:

- Aggressive/anti-social behaviours were the least reported across all categories of school size, with teachers reporting that they either did not address such behaviours at all in their most recent teaching week, or at most on one or two occasions per school week.
- Disengaged behaviours were the most frequently reported behaviours (on one or two occasions a week up to almost daily/daily).
- Schools with student enrolments of 100–199 and 200–299 reported the highest means across all three categories of unproductive behaviours. Data show this for low-level disruptive (*M*=23.04, *SD*=5.98, n=85), disengaged (*M*=9.44, *SD*=1.97, n=85), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=18.51, *SD*=6.23, n=85); low-level disruptive (*M*=23.69, *SD*=5.92, n=137), disengaged (*M*=9.68, *SD*=2.12, n=137), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=18.66, *SD*=6.23, n=137), respectively for each of the two categories of school size.

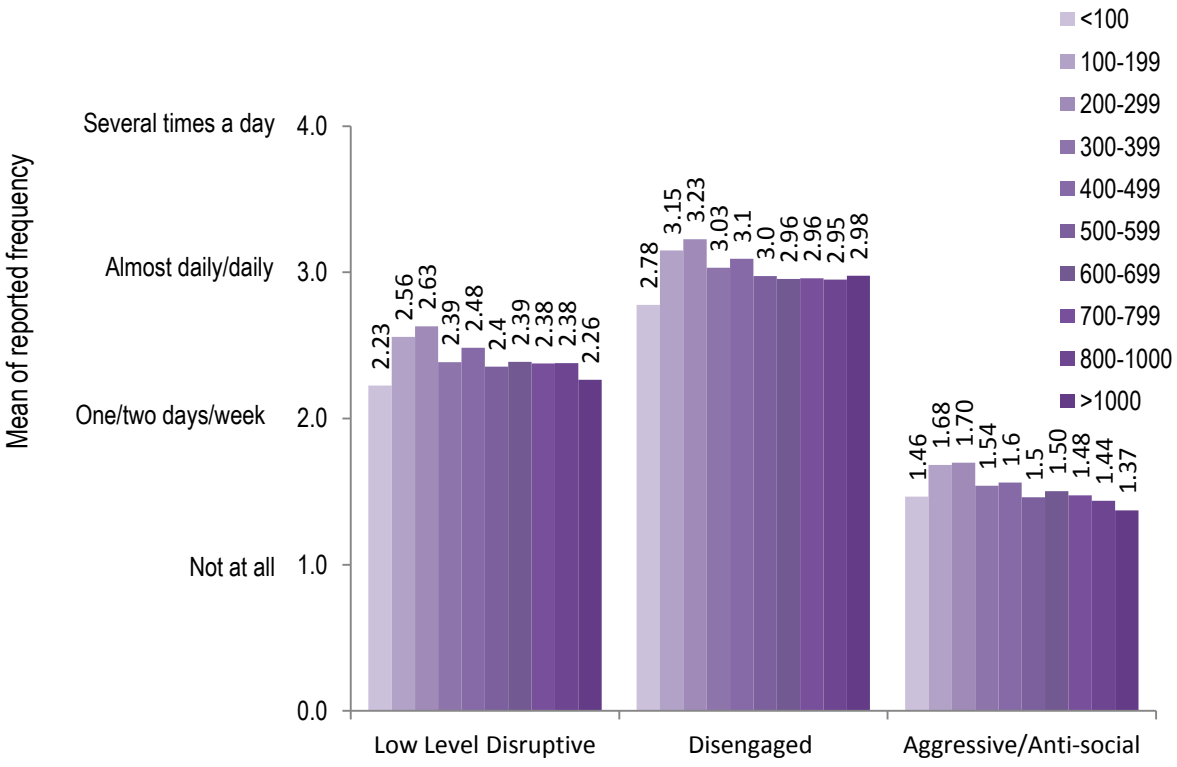


Figure 7 Behaviour Categories by School Size

We conducted ANOVA procedures to gain further insights into the nature of these findings. Results revealed significant differences between categories reflecting school size. Specifically in the low-level disruptive behaviours category ($F(9,1370)= 3.56$, $p=.001$), in the disengaged behaviours category ($F(9,1370)= 2.68$, $p=.01$), and in the aggressive/anti-social behaviours category ($F(9,1370)= 7.15$, $p=.001$). These differences related to the following:

- Teachers in schools with enrolments less than 100 reported significantly fewer incidents of low-level disruptive behaviours (p =.05), disengaged behaviours (p =.01) and aggressive/anti-social behaviours (p =.05) than teachers of schools with enrolments of 200–299.
- Teachers in schools with enrolments of 100–299 reported significantly higher frequencies of managing low-level disruptive behaviours than teachers in schools with enrolments above 1000 (p =.05).
- Teachers from schools with enrolments of 200–299 reported significantly higher incidents of disengaged behaviours than teachers in schools with enrolments of 800–1000.
- Teachers from schools with enrolments of 100–199 reported significantly higher incidents of aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers from schools with enrolments of 500–599 (p =.05), schools with enrolments of 800–1000 (p =.01), and those with enrolments above 1000 (p =.001). The reader is reminded that a higher percentage of smaller schools are indexed with the lowest level of socio-educational advantage, which provides an interesting layer to the findings.

- Teachers employed in schools with enrolments of 200–299 reported more incidents of aggressive/anti-social behaviours than schools with enrolments of 500–599 ($p \leq .01$), 600–699 ($p \leq .05$), 700–799 ($p \leq .05$), 800–899 ($p \leq .001$), and schools with enrolments above 1000 ($p \leq .001$).
- Teachers who worked in schools with enrolments greater than 1000 also reported significantly fewer instances of aggressive/anti-social behaviours than schools with enrolments between 300 and 499 ($p \leq .01$).

3.6 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Teachers' Age

This section examines response patterns within the category of teachers' age.

Key Findings

- Teachers in the youngest age bracket (<30 years) recorded the highest mean across low-level disruptive and disengaged categories of behaviour, indicating they encountered the behaviours more frequently than teachers in other age categories.
- Of all five age groups, teachers in the oldest age category (60+ years) recorded the lowest mean across all three behaviour categories, which indicates they reported the lowest frequency of unproductive classroom behaviours in comparison to teachers in the remaining age categories, although numerically they were the smallest group.
- Teachers in the 50–59 age bracket reported the highest mean for addressing aggressive/anti-social behaviours, although this group also contained most school leaders.
- The major differences between the age groups are apparent in the frequency of low-level disruptive behaviours.
- In all age groups, 20% or more of teachers reported behaviours related to *students verbally abusing other students* on at least an 'almost daily' basis.

An examination of response patterns by teacher age (see Table 10) suggests that the majority of differences between the age groups are evident in the management of low-level disruptive behaviours.

Specifically, closer scrutiny of responses for which significant differences were evident between groups, specifically in the 'several times daily' category, revealed that teachers in the 50–59 age group reported the highest frequency of managing all the behaviours excluding *deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* and *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours* than any other age group.

Examination of the response trends across the 'not at all' category revealed that, in comparison to teachers in the youngest age bracket, a significantly higher percentage of teachers in the 60+ age group reported no need to manage the five low-level disruptive behaviours at all in their most recent teaching week.

Additionally, at the individual behaviour level, although teachers across all age groups reported lower frequencies for managing aggressive/anti-social behaviours than any other behaviour category, it is concerning that 20% or more of teachers in all age groups reported the need to manage behaviours related to *students verbally abusing other students* on an almost daily, if not more frequent, basis.

Table 10 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by Teachers' Age

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/ daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson *p<.01*				
<30 yrs	9	18	37	36
30–39 yrs	13	22	33	32
40–49 yrs	14	26	30	31
50–59 yrs	17	19	30	35
60+ yrs	21	28	27	23
Making distracting noises intentionally *p<.05*				
<30 yrs	19	25	32	24
30–39 yrs	25	23	27	25
40–49 yrs	27	25	28	20
50–59 yrs	28	22	22	29
60+ yrs	37	20	23	19
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property *p<.01*				
<30 yrs	20	33	30	17
30–39 yrs	27	35	23	14
40–49 yrs	31	31	27	11
50–59 yrs	31	32	20	18
60+ yrs	38	28	20	13
Mucking around/being rowdy *p<.001*				
<30 yrs	11	29	38	22
30–39 yrs	17	33	28	22
40–49 yrs	19	35	29	16
50–59 yrs	19	34	22	25
60+ yrs	27	36	25	11
Making impertinent remarks *p<.001*				
<30 yrs	15	40	26	19
30–39 yrs	32	26	22	20
40–49 yrs	28	37	18	17
50–59 yrs	29	29	19	22
60+ yrs	33	33	19	14
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours *p<.05*				
<30 yrs	46	36	10	8
30–39 yrs	50	36	11	4
40–49 yrs	51	31	13	5
50–59 yrs	41	38	15	7
60+ yrs	43	47	6	4
Verbally abusing other students *p<.05*				
<30 yrs	42	29	22	7
30–39 yrs	43	30	20	7
40–49 yrs	47	33	12	8
50–59 yrs	40	28	20	12
60+ yrs	50	29	12	9

Investigations into the reporting of the three categories of behaviours by teachers' age groups revealed that teachers in the oldest age category recorded the lowest mean of all age groups across all three behaviour categories, specifically, low-level disruptive (*M*=19.89, *SD*=6.81, n=99), disengaged (*M*=8.53, *SD*=2.48, n=99), and aggressive/anti-social behaviours (*M*=15.72, *SD*=4.59, n=99). This indicates that on average they reported the lowest frequency of managing these behaviours when compared to all other age categories.

Conversely, the youngest age group reported the highest incidents of managing low-level disruptive behaviours (*M*=22.96, *SD*=5.93, n=242) and disengaged behaviours (*M*=9.31, *SD*=2.09, n=242), and the second highest mean for aggressive/anti-social behaviours (*M*=16.72, *SD*=5.06, n=242). Younger teachers reported unproductive classroom behaviours occurring more frequently than teachers in any other age group.

Additionally, teachers in the 50–59 age bracket reported the highest mean for addressing aggressive/anti-social behaviours (M=17.19, SD=5.79, n=452), which indicates that on average they encountered aggressive and anti-social behaviours most often in the classroom context. Please note that 11% of respondents in the 50–59 year age bracket were principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools.

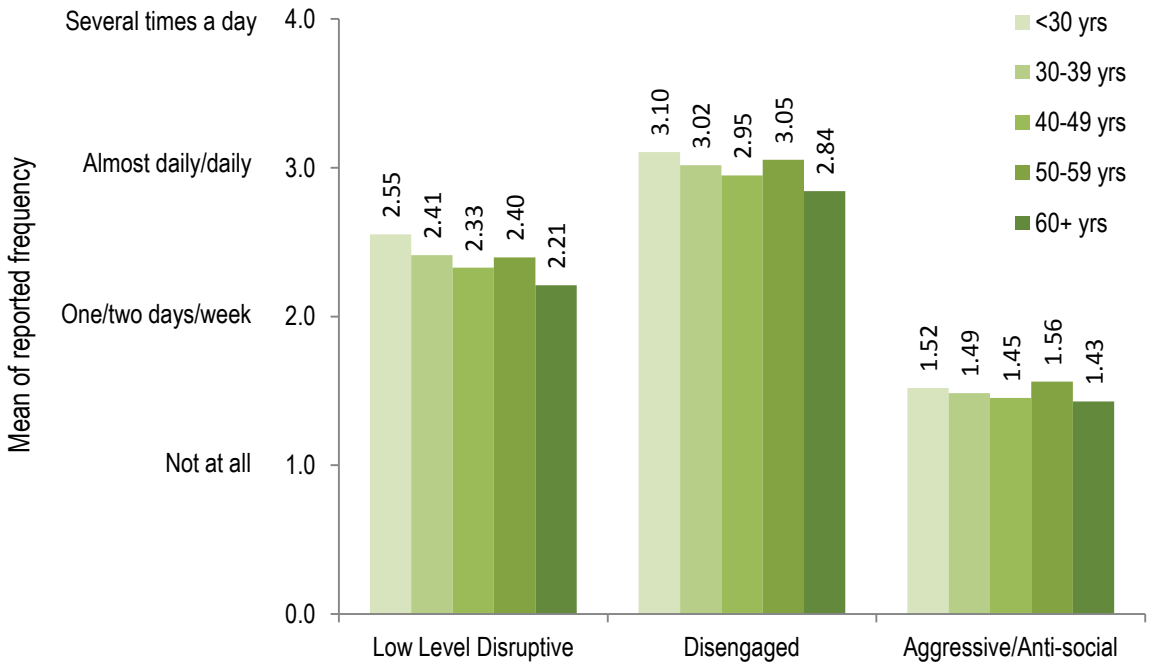


Figure 8 Behaviour Categories by Teachers' Age

We performed ANOVA procedures to establish the nature of the differences between teachers' age groups. Our findings revealed that differences between age groups were significant with regard to low-level disruptive behaviours ($F(4,1375)= 4.10$, $p=.001$), disengaged behaviours ($F(4,1375)= 2.96$, $p=.05$), and aggressive/anti-social behaviours ($F(4,1375)= 3.41$, $p=.01$). Post hoc analysis revealed that teachers in the youngest age bracket reported significantly more instances of managing low-level disruptive behaviours than teachers in the 40–49 age bracket ($p=.01$), and than teachers in the oldest age bracket, that is, at least 60 years of age ($p=.001$).

In addition, teachers in the youngest age group were significantly more likely to be managing disengaged behaviours than teachers in the 60+ age group (p=.05). Teachers in the 40–49 age bracket reported significantly fewer incidents of managing aggressive/anti-social behaviours than teachers in the 50–59 age bracket.

As previously noted, the extent of teaching experience may be a contributing factor in the findings, which show that teachers in the youngest age group consistently reported significantly higher frequencies of managing unproductive behaviours. However, sample characteristics, which show that 52% of principals/deputies/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools were in the 50–59 age category, may help to explain why this age group reported similarly high frequencies of addressing unproductive behaviours to teachers in the youngest age group.

Preliminary analysis indicated additional significant differences between age groups; however chi square analysis revealed an insufficient cell count. As such, no conclusions can be validated with regard to the significance of these findings. The behaviours were:

- *talking out of turn*
- *avoiding doing school work*
- *disengaging from classroom activities*
- *sexually harassing teachers.*

3.7 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Teachers' Gender

The following section examines response trends within the category of teachers' gender.

Key Findings

- No significant differences were evident between male and female teachers in their reporting of managing unproductive classroom behaviours at the category level, although there were significant differences for some specific behaviours.
- At the individual level, of the behaviours for which significant differences were apparent, both male and female teachers reported *talking out of turn* as the most frequently addressed behaviour on a daily basis.
- The majority of both males and females reported they did not need to manage behaviours associated with the *inappropriate use of mobile phones and laptops.*

Although there was no significant difference in managing the 3 categories of unproductive behaviours, significant differences between males and females teachers were evident for three specific behaviours in the aggressive/anti-social category (Table 11). Specifically:

- 72% of female teachers reported that they managed behaviours associated with students *excluding their peers* at least once or twice a week, if not more, in comparison to 60% of male teachers.
- A higher percentage of males than females reported managing behaviours related to students *sexually harassing other students* and students *being physically destructive* at least once or twice a week, if not more.
- The majority of both male and female teachers reported that they did not address the aggressive/anti-social behaviours of *being physically destructive* and *sexually harassing other students* at all in their most recent teaching week.

Additionally, of the remaining individual behaviours for which significant differences were apparent:

- The majority of male and female teachers reported that they did not manage behaviours associated with the *inappropriate use of mobile phones and laptops* during their most recent teaching week.
- A significantly higher percentage of male than female teachers reported managing behaviours associated with the *inappropriate use of mobile phones and laptops*.
- Significantly more female teachers reported the need to address low-level disruptive behaviours than male teachers ($p \leq .01$).
- There were no significant differences between males and females in reporting disengaged behaviours.

Table 11 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by Teachers' Gender

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson *p<.001*				
Male	17	25	35	24
Female	13	20	30	37
Talking out of turn *p<.001*				
Male	5	23	29	43
Female	4	15	28	53
Making distracting noises intentionally *p<.01*				
Male	30	25	27	19
Female	25	22	26	27
Moving around the room unnecessarily *p<.01*				
Male	22	30	28	20
Female	19	25	26	30
Using a mobile phone inappropriately *p* <.001				
Male	39	27	17	17
Female	64	16	9	12
Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately *p<.001*				
Male	54	28	10	8
Female	72	16	7	5
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Excluding peers *p<.001*				
Male	40	40	16	4
Female	29	47	21	4
Being physically destructive *p<.05*				
Male	73	22	3	2
Female	80	16	3	1
Sexually harassing other students *p<.05*				
Male	67	24	7	2
Female	74	20	5	1

Initial inspection of the descriptive data in relation to teacher gender (Figure 9) suggests:

- Both male and female teachers reported that aggressive/anti-social behaviours occurred on one or two occasions per week or less.
- Disengaged behaviours were being managed by both male and female teachers on an almost daily, if not daily, basis.

Descriptive findings indicated that female teachers reported slightly higher means than male teachers across all three behaviour categories, namely, low-level disruptive (*M*=21.69, *SD*=6.61, n=932), disengaged (*M*=9.09, *SD*=2.28, n=932), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=16.66, *SD*=5.24, n=932). Males reported low-level disruptive (*M*=21.39, *SD*=6.84, n=441), disengaged (*M*=8.96, *SD*=2.37, n=441), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=16.42, *SD*=5.23, n=441).

However, t-test analysis confirmed no significant differences were evident between male and female teachers in their reporting of managing all three categories of unproductive classroom behaviours.

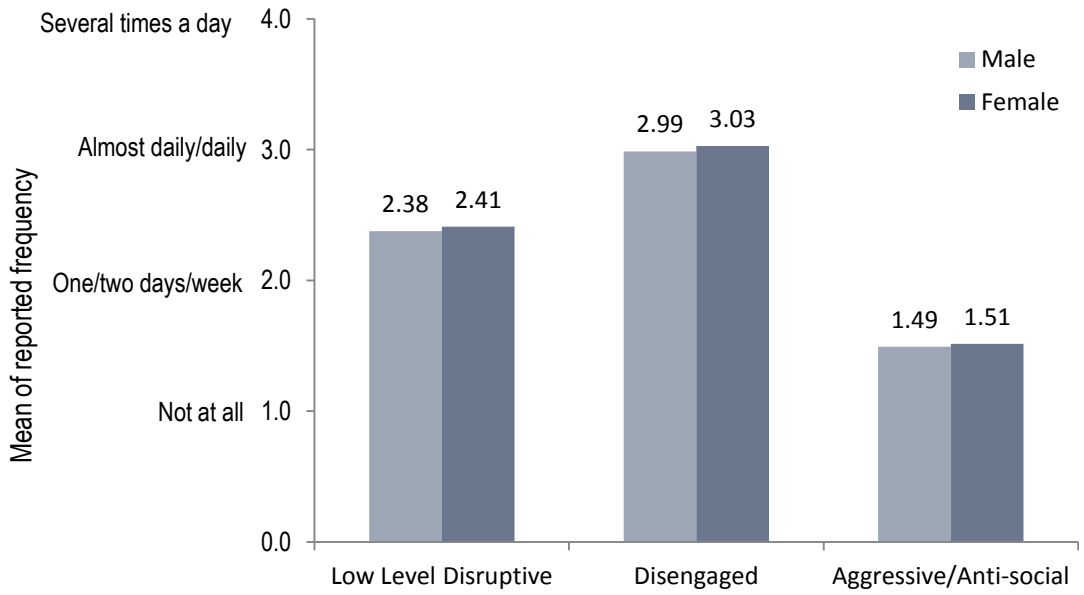


Figure 9 Behaviour Categories by Teachers' Gender

3.8 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Years of Teaching Experience

This section reports the findings related to unproductive classroom behaviours by years of teaching experience.

Key Findings

- Teachers with less than 5 years' teaching experience reported the highest average incidence of all three behaviour categories, while teachers with 15–19 years of teaching experience reported the lowest average incidence across all three behaviour categories.
- Teachers with less than 5 years of experience reported more instances of low-level disruptive behaviours.
- Across all categories of years of experience, disengaged behaviours were the most frequently managed behaviours by teachers, on an almost daily, if not daily, basis.
- Teachers most frequently addressed *disengaging from classroom activities*.
- Over one third of all teachers, regardless of their years of experience, reported that they did not manage behaviours related to students either *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviour* or *verbally abusing other students*.

Investigations into the individual behaviours that were addressed most frequently throughout the school day revealed that, regardless of the years of teaching experience, managing students who were *disengaging from classroom activities* was the behaviour teachers most frequently addressed.

There were however, significant differences between the categories reflecting years of experience in relation to a number of unproductive behaviours. In particular, the findings revealed that a significantly higher percentage of teachers with the most teaching experience, compared with teachers who had the least teaching experience, reported that they did not need to manage low-level disruptive or disengaged behaviours at all during their most recent teaching week. Over two thirds of teachers across all categories of experience reported addressing disengaged behaviours in their classroom setting on an almost daily if not more frequent basis.

Furthermore, of the behaviours for which significant differences were apparent, over one third of all teachers, regardless of their years of experience, reported that they did not manage behaviours related to students either *displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviour* or *verbally abusing other students* at all during their most recent teaching week.

Table 12 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by Years of Teaching Experience

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson *p*<.05				
<5	6	21	38	36
5–9 yrs	15	20	31	34
10–14 yrs	14	25	36	26
15–19 yrs	14	25	32	28
20–24 yrs	14	21	32	33
25+	18	21	27	34
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property *p <.001*				
<5	15	34	30	21
5–9 yrs	30	33	24	13
10–14 yrs	28	38	23	11
15–19yrs	32	32	24	12
20–24 yrs	27	29	30	14
25+	35	30	19	16
Moving around the room unnecessarily *p <.05*				
<5	13	24	29	34
5–9 yrs	22	24	29	26
10–14 yrs	18	34	26	22
15–19 yrs	22	27	27	24
20–24 yrs	19	24	31	26
25+	23	28	23	26
Using a mobile phone inappropriately *p* <.05				
<5	50	17	11	22
5–9 yrs	57	20	11	12
10–14 yrs	50	20	15	15
15–19 yrs	61	19	7	14
20–24 yrs	58	19	12	11
25+	59	20	12	9
Mucking around/being rowdy *p* <.001				
<5	9	32	36	24
5–9 yrs	15	33	31	22
10–14 yrs	24	30	28	19
15–19 yrs	19	41	25	15
20–24 yrs	18	36	31	15
25+	22	33	22	22
Making impertinent remarks *p* <.01				
<5	15	35	28	23
5–9 yrs	26	35	20	19
10–14 yrs	32	33	18	17
15–19 yrs	32	32	19	17
20–24 yrs	27	36	23	15
25+	32	30	19	20

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/daily	Several times daily
Disengaged behaviours				
Disengaging from classroom activities *p<.01*				
<5	3	16	38	43
5–9 yrs	3	20	37	40
10–14 yrs	3	26	38	33
15–19 yrs	5	28	31	36
20–24 yrs	8	18	30	45
25+	6	22	29	44
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours *p* <.05				
<5	46	33	13	8
5–9 yrs	51	33	10	6
10–14 yrs	54	34	7	5
15–19 yrs	44	38	17	1
20–24 yrs	45	36	16	4
25+	42	40	12	6
Verbally abusing other students *p* <.05				
<5	37	31	23	10
5–9 yrs	46	29	19	7
10–14 yrs	44	34	15	8
15–19 yrs	57	24	12	8
20–24 yrs	38	38	15	9
25+	44	28	18	11

Descriptive analysis revealed teachers with less than 5 years teaching experience reported the highest mean across all three behaviour categories, specifically, low-level disruptive (*M*=23.47, *SD*=5.93, n=242), disengaged (*M*=9.41, *SD*=1.97, n=242), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=14.07, *SD*=5.44, n=242), in comparison to any other years of experience category. Teachers with 15–19 years of teaching experience reported the lowest mean across all three behaviour categories, specifically, low-level disruptive (*M*=20.86, *SD*=6.75, n=118), disengaged (*M*=8.67, *SD*=2.46, n=118), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=15.85, *SD*=4.48, n=118).

Regardless of years of experience, teachers reported that aggressive/anti-social behaviours did not occur very often. Conversely, across all categories representing years of experience, teachers reported that disengaged behaviours were the most frequently managed behaviours on an almost daily, if not daily, basis.

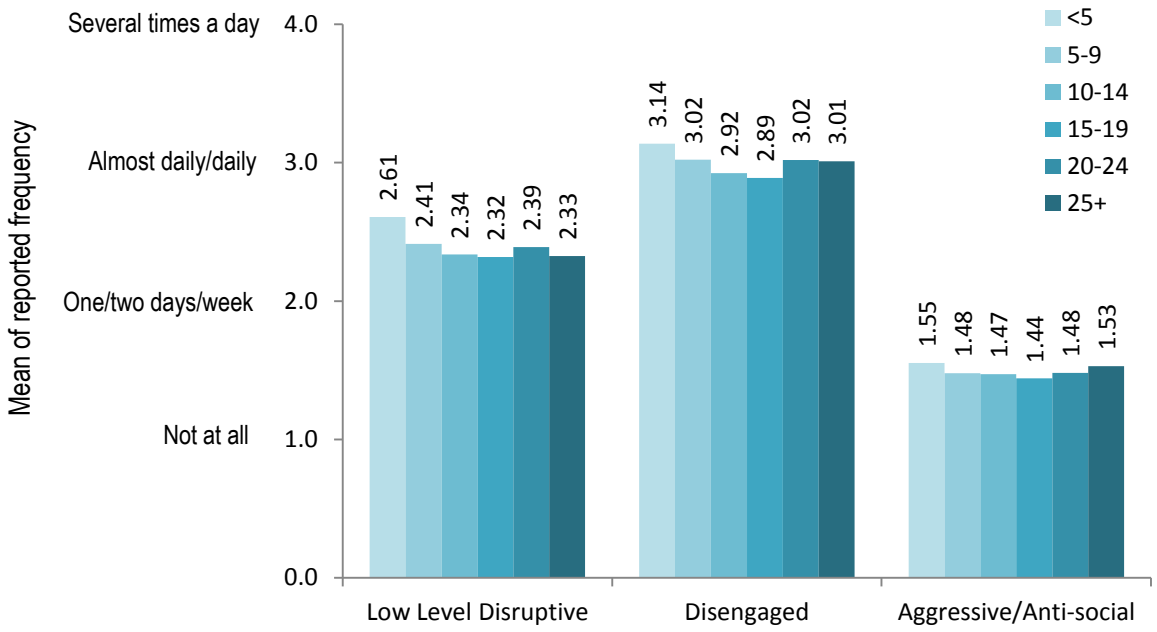


Figure 10 Behaviour Categories by Years of Teaching Experience

ANOVA procedures confirmed:

- significant differences between categories reflecting years of teaching experience in the low-level disruptive behaviours category ($F(5,1374)= 5.38$, $p=.001$), and disengaged behaviours ($F(5,1374)= 227$, $p=.05$)
- no significant differences between categories reflecting years of experience with regard to the reporting of aggressive/anti-social behaviours.

Additionally, post hoc analyses revealed:

- Teachers with less than 5 years' experience reported significantly higher instances of needing to manage low-level disruptive behaviours ($p \leq .05$) than all other categories excluding teachers with 20–24 years of experience, for which the significance levels fell just outside of the required parameters ($p=.052$).
- Teachers with less than 5 years of experience also reported significantly higher instances of addressing disengaged behaviours than the 15–19 category ($p<.05$).

3.9 Unproductive Student Classroom Behaviours by Appointment Status

The following section details findings associated with the management of unproductive classroom behaviours by appointment status, namely, (a) teachers, (b) senior teachers, and (c) principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools.

Key Findings

- *Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson* was the most frequently addressed behaviour throughout the school day, regardless of the teachers' level of appointment.
- Principals/deputy/assistant principals and heads of sub-schools recorded the lowest mean for managing low-level disruptive behaviours.
- Senior teachers had the lowest mean for managing disengaged and aggressive/anti-social behaviours.

Scrutiny of the individual behaviours for which significant differences were apparent (Table 13) showed that, aside from technology-related unproductive behaviours, teachers reported significantly higher instances of managing the remaining low-level disruptive behaviours than principals/deputies/heads of sub-schools and senior teachers. Senior teachers reported higher incidents of managing the *inappropriate use of mobile phones, iPads, laptops, etc.* than teachers or principals/deputies/heads of sub-schools.

Whilst the majority of teachers, senior teachers and principals/deputy/assistant/heads of sub-schools reported that they did not need to manage *being physically aggressive* or v*erbally abusing other students*, it is concerning that over 20% of teachers and principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools reported managing physical aggression or verbal abuse directed towards peers, at least 'almost daily'.

Table 13 Individual Unproductive Classroom Behaviours by Appointment Status

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/ daily	Several times daily
Low-level disruptive behaviours				
Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson p <.001				
Teachers	11	19	32	38
Senior teachers	21	28	32	20
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	22	27	26	26
Making distracting noises intentionally p <.001				
Teachers	22	22	27	28
Senior teachers	35	27	24	14
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	41	22	20	16

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	On one or two days per week	Almost daily/ daily	Several times daily
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property p <.001				
Teachers	24	33	26	17
Senior teachers	37	33	20	10
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	47	24	16	13
Moving around the room unnecessarily p <.001				
Teachers	17	25	29	30
Senior teachers	29	32	22	18
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	31	30	20	19
Using a mobile phone inappropriately p <.001				
Teachers	61	16	10	13
Senior teachers	40	29	15	17
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	58	21	13	7
Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately p <.001				
Teachers	70	17	8	5
Senior teachers	58	25	10	7
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	61	31	4	4
Mucking around/being rowdy p <.001				
Teachers	15	32	30	23
Senior teachers	23	39	24	15
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	34	32	22	12
Making impertinent remarks p <.001				
Teachers	24	33	22	22
Senior teachers	34	34	19	13
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	43	29	18	10
Disengaged behaviours				
Being late for class p <.001				
Teachers	9	24	42	25
Senior teachers	8	22	50	19
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	19	32	24	26
Aggressive and anti-social behaviours				
Being physically aggressive towards other students p <.001				
Teachers	42	37	14	7
Senior teachers	58	28	11	4
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	43	36	15	6
Verbally abusing other students p <.01				
Teachers	41	30	19	10
Senior teachers	51	30	12	8
Principals/deputy/ass. principals/heads of schools	47	25	25	4

While initial analyses indicated significant differences were evident between categories with regard to *talking out of turn*, *being physically destructive*, *disengaging from classroom activities* and *avoiding doing school work*, chi square analysis revealed insufficient cell count for these items. As such, we cannot draw conclusions about the significance of these findings.

Teachers had the highest mean in managing and addressing all three categories of unproductive behaviours, specifically, low-level disruptive (*M*=22.30, *SD*6.41, n=980), disengaged (*M*=9.21, *SD*=2.24, n=980), and aggressive/anti-social (*M*=16.80, *SD*=5.33, n=980). In comparison, principals/deputy/assistant principals and heads of sub-schools had the lowest mean for managing low-level disruptive behaviours (*M*=19.07, *SD*= 7.28, n=98), while senior teachers had the lowest mean for managing disengaged behaviours (*M*=8.81, *SD*=2.26, n=302), and aggressive/anti-social behaviours (*M*=15.77, *SD*=4.88, n=302). Principals were less likely to be involved in low-level disruptive behaviours and more likely to be involved in disengaged or aggressive/anti-social behaviours.

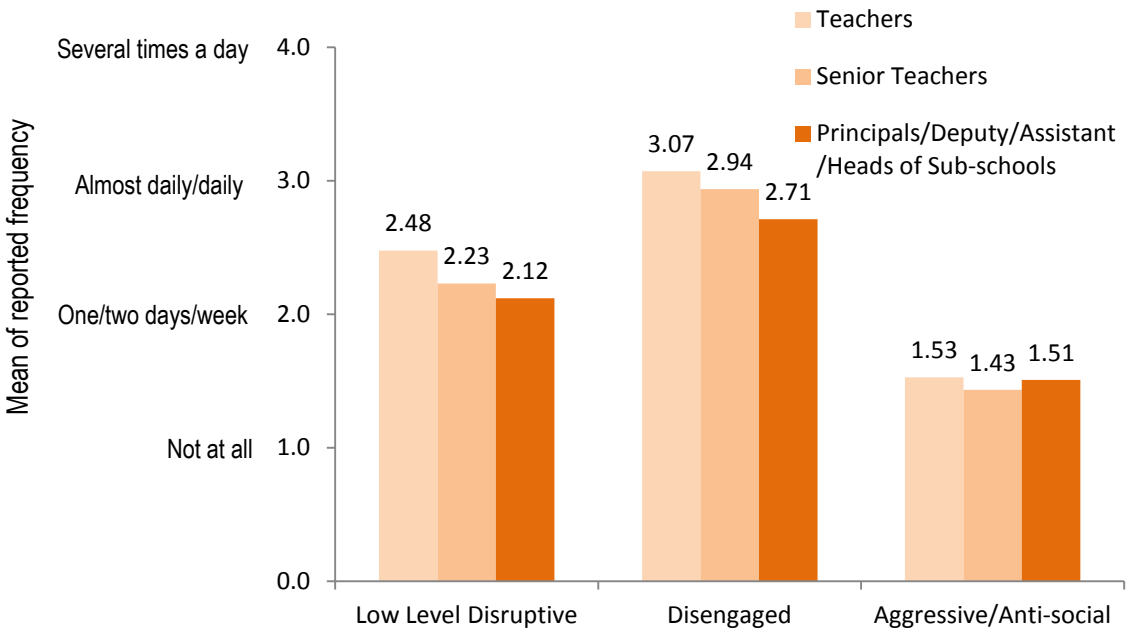


Figure 11 Behaviour Categories by Appointment Status

ANOVA procedures confirmed significant differences between the three groups for all three behaviour categories: low-level disruptive behaviours ($F(2,1377)= 20.96$, $p=.001$), disengaged behaviours ($F(2,1377)= 11.99$, $p=.001$), and aggressive/anti-social behaviours ($F(2,1377)= 4.52$, $p=.05$).

Post hoc analysis showed that teachers reported significantly higher instances of low-level disruptive behaviours ($p\leq.001$) than educators in all other categories, and significantly higher instances of managing disengaged behaviours than senior teachers ($p\leq.05$) and than principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools ($p\leq.001$). Additionally, teachers also reported significantly higher incidents of managing aggressive/anti-social behaviour than senior teachers ($p\leq.01$). Principals/deputies/heads of schools further reported significantly higher instances of managing disengaged behaviours than senior teachers ($p\leq.05$).

4. Teacher Stress Related to Unproductive Student Behaviour

We investigated the extent to which teachers felt stressed as a result of managing unproductive student behaviours.

Key Findings

- 53% of teachers indicated that students' behaviour caused them stress.
- Primary teachers were significantly more stressed about managing unproductive student behaviours than teachers in the middle/secondary years.
- Approximately one third of teachers in the top quartile of the ICSEA scale reported feeling stressed; whereas over 60% of teachers employed in schools in educationally disadvantaged communities reported feeling stressed.
- Teachers under 30 years of age and those between 50 and 59 years of age were significantly more likely to report that they felt stressed than other age groups.
- A significantly higher percentage of teachers reported feeling stressed compared with senior teachers and principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools.

Findings across the total sample (see Tables 14 and 15) revealed that 53% of respondents indicated that students' behaviour caused them to feel stressed. We subsequently conducted investigations across identified categories to establish which groups were more susceptible to stress because of the challenges related to managing unproductive behaviours. Significant differences were apparent in the categories reflecting school level, ICSEA, school size, teachers' age, gender and appointment status *(p*≤.05).

Closer scrutiny of the results showed the following:

- While approximately one third of teachers in the top quartile of the ICSEA reported feeling stressed, over 60% of educators in schools who serve educationally disadvantaged communities reported feeling stressed because of efforts to manage students' unproductive classroom behaviour (*p*≤.001).
- Teachers who were employed in large schools, that is, >1000 student enrolments, were less likely to feel stressed than those in schools of other sizes.
- Primary teachers reported feeling more stressed than secondary teachers (p≤.001).
- Significantly more teachers in the youngest age group reported feeling stressed, compared to teachers in the oldest age bracket.
- Fewer educators in the older age categories, specifically the 40–49 year age group and the 60+ year age group, in contrast to the younger age groups, reported feeling stressed.

- There is an anomaly evident with regard to the 50–59 year age group. The findings show a similar response pattern to those in the younger age group, whereby 55% of educators report feeling stressed. This finding, which indicates that educators under 30 years of age and those between 50–59 years of age are more vulnerable to experiencing stress, also warrants further research. As previously mentioned, sample characteristics associated with these categories are worth considering, particularly given that 11% of respondents in the 50–59 year age bracket were principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools and that 35% of teachers in the <30 year age bracket were employed in remote schools.

We also examined stress levels between the three categories of educators' roles: (a) teachers, (b) senior teachers, and (c) principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of sub-schools. The findings show that a higher percentage of teachers reported stress in comparison to the other categories.

Table 14 Percentage of Teachers feeling Stressed by School and Teacher Characteristics

	% of teachers	
Categories	Yes	No
School level *(p* <.001)		
Primary years (n = 673)	59	41
Secondary (n = 707)	46	54
Geographic location		
Metro (n = 910)	52	48
Rural (n = 330)	54	46
Remote (n = 72)	63	38
Other (n = 68)	46	54
ICSEA *(p* <.001)		
≤900 (n = 78)	64	36
901–1000 (n = 436)	62	38
1001–1100 (n = 451)	47	53
≥1101 (n = 118)	34	66
Unsure (n = 297)	54	47
School size *(p* <.001)		
<100 (n = 63)	49	51
100–199 (n = 85)	58	42
200–299 (n = 137)	66	34
300–399 (n = 195)	52	48
400–499 (n = 137)	61	39
500–599 (n = 115)	48	52
600–699 (n = 151)	60	40
700–799 (n = 66)	52	49
800–1000 (n = 184)	46	54
>1000 (n = 247)	44	56

	% of teachers	
Categories	Yes	No
Teachers' age *(p* <.01)		
<30 yrs (n = 242)	60	41
30–39 yrs (n = 273)	53	47
40–49 yrs (n = 314)	47	54
50–59 yrs (n = 452)	56	44
60+ yrs (n = 99)	42	58
Gender *(p* <.05)		
Male (n = 441)	49	51
Female (n = 932)	54	46
Teachers' years of experience		
<5 (n = 242)	60	40
5–9 yrs (n = 246)	51	49
10–14 yrs (n = 149)	52	48
15–19 yrs (n = 118)	49	51
20–24 yrs (n = 146)	50	50
25+ (n = 479)	52	48
Teachers' appointment status *(p* <.001)		
Teachers (n = 980)	58	42
Senior teachers (n = 302)	41	59
Principals/deputies/ assistant/heads of sub-schools (n = 98)	33	67

We conducted further analyses to investigate the levels of stress across various categories. Findings showed that, of the 53% who provided details about the level of stress they experienced, approximately one quarter (28%) reported feeling either extremely stressed or very stressed as a result of managing student behaviour.

Table 15 Percentage of Teachers by Level of Stress

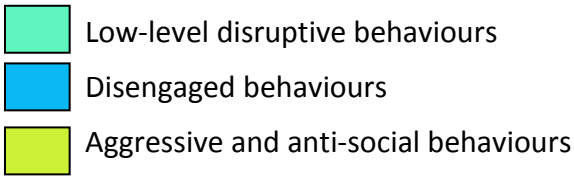
	% of Teachers			
Categories	Extremely stressed	Very stressed	Moderately stressed	Slightly stressed
School level				
Primary years (n = 400)	5	24	47	24
Secondary (n = 328)	4	24	43	30
Geographic location				
Metro (n = 474)	4	25	45	26
Rural (n = 178)	5	20	46	30
Remote (n = 45)	16	24	36	24
Other (n = 31)	0	23	58	19
ICSEA				
≤900 (n = 50)	16	24	40	20
901–1000 (n = 269)	4	28	45	23
1001–1100 (n = 210)	5	21	45	29
≥1101 (n = 40)	0	18	50	33
Unsure (n = 159)	2	22	45	31

	% of Teachers			
Categories	Extremely stressed	Very stressed	Moderately stressed	Slightly stressed
School size				
<100 (n = 31)	10	26	42	23
100–199 (n = 49)	14	20	39	27
200–299 (n = 91)	8	24	43	25
300–399 (n = 101)	2	25	42	32
400–499 (n = 83)	1	27	45	28
500–599 (n = 55)	2	24	38	36
600–699 (n = 91)	2	21	56	21
700–799 (n = 34)	3	12	71	15
800–1000 (n = 85)	2	27	45	26
>1000 (n = 108)	6	26	41	28
Teachers' age				
<30 yrs (n = 144)	3	27	45	25
30–39 yrs (n = 144)	5	21	43	31
40–49 yrs (n = 146)	3	25	45	27
50–59 yrs (n = 252)	6	23	46	25
60+ yrs (n = 42)	0	26	45	29
Gender				
Male (n = 218)	6	23	48	23
Female (n = 507)	4	24	44	28
Teachers' years of experience				
<5 (n = 145)	4	22	46	28
5–9 yrs (n = 125)	5	28	34	33
10–14 yrs (n = 78)	5	14	55	26
15–19 yrs (n = 58)	0	26	45	29
20–24 yrs (n = 73)	4	26	49	21
25+ (n = 249)	5	25	46	24
Teachers' appointment status				
Teachers (n = 571)	4	24	44	28
Senior teachers (n = 125)	6	22	46	26
Principals/deputies/ assistant/heads of sub-schools (n = 32)	6	25	53	16

5. The Most Difficult Behaviours to Manage

We examined response patterns across the total sample to establish which unproductive behaviours educators considered to be the most difficult to manage. We considered the teachers' highest ranked behaviours (see Table 16). Educators identified disengaged behaviours as the most difficult to manage. We will examine factors that might contribute to students' unproductive behaviour more closely in Section 6 of this report.

To facilitate the interpretation of results presented in the following tables, we have colour coded behaviours to reflect the group of behaviours to which they belong.



To gain an overall picture of the findings, we firstly examined the most difficult behaviours in the total sample.

Key Findings

- Across the total sample, teachers reported that disengaged and low-level disruptive behaviours were among the most difficult behaviours to manage.
- The most difficult behaviour to manage was *avoiding doing schoolwork.*
- *Sexual harassment of teachers or other students* ranked as the least difficult behaviour teachers address in a classroom setting.
- Aggressive student behaviours directed towards teachers were among the least difficult behaviours to manage.

The five most difficult to manage behaviours identified by teachers (see Table 16) were:

- *avoiding doing schoolwork*
- *disrupting the flow of a lesson*
- *disengaging from classroom activities*
- *talking out of turn*
- *being late for class.*

These most difficult behaviours to manage are either disengaged or low-level disruptive behaviours.

Table 16 The Most Difficult Behaviours to Manage by Total Sample

Unproductive behaviours	% of all teachers (n = 1380)
Avoiding doing schoolwork	18.0
Disrupting the flow of a lesson	16.7
Disengaging from classroom activities	13.9
Talking out of turn	9.7
Being late for class	6.3
Using a mobile phone inappropriately	4.6
Being physically aggressive towards other students	4.2
Mucking around, being rowdy	4.1
Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours	3.6
Excluding peers	3.6
Spreading rumours	2.2
Being extremely violent towards other students or teachers	2.1
Verbally abusing other students	1.8
Making distracting noises intentionally	1.7
Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately	1.7
Making impertinent remarks	1.3
Moving around the room unnecessarily	1.0
Interfering with other students' or teachers' property	0.8
Being physically aggressive towards teachers	0.7
Verbally abusing teachers	0.7
Being physically destructive	0.6
Sexually harassing other students	0.6
Sexually harassing teachers	0.1

6. Factors that Contribute to Unproductive Student Behaviour

We investigated teachers' perceptions of the reasons for students' unproductive behaviours.

Key Findings

- Teachers were most likely to attribute unproductive student behaviour to individual student factors or out-of-school factors.
- Teachers were less likely to attribute unproductive behaviour to school factors.
- Most teachers commonly reported student unproductive behaviour as being outside the teacher's control. Only approximately one third of teachers saw that *inappropriate curriculum* and *ineffective school student management policies* accounted for unproductive student behaviour to some or a great extent.

Over half of all teachers (see Table 17) reported that the reasons for unproductive student behaviours could be attributed to a great extent to the following individual factors:

- *lack of self-discipline*
- *negative attitudes*
- *a lack of perseverance.*

And the following out-of-school factors:

- *dysfunctional family structures*
- *lack of parental guidance and management.*

Conversely, over half of all teachers reported that many school factors did not contribute at all to unproductive student behaviours:

- *poor quality teachers*
- *low expectations of student performance*
- *unrealistically high expectations of student performance*
- *poor school buildings and amenities*
- *an alienating school culture*.

The findings suggest that the majority of teachers perceived that unproductive behaviour could be accounted for predominately by individual or out-of-school factors. Furthermore, the results indicate that the majority of teachers do not perceive that school factors contribute to unproductive student behaviours.

Table 17 Factors that Contribute to Unproductive Student Behaviour by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)			
	Not at all	A little	Some extent	Great extent
Individual factors				
Lack of self-discipline	1	8	36	55
Impact of a diagnosed disability	30	23	32	16
Poor academic skills	11	19	39	31
Boredom	14	32	38	17
Negative attitudes	3	11	33	53
Violent disposition	36	28	23	13
Lack of empathy	13	28	31	28
Inability to concentrate	4	13	40	44
Lack of perseverance	3	10	36	51
Poor social skills	10	20	32	38
Not able to work at the same level as the class	16	23	36	25
School factors				
Inappropriate curriculum	36	30	26	8
Ineffective teaching methods	35	33	23	9
Class sizes	27	21	27	25
Lack of appropriate learning materials	42	26	23	9
Lack of in-class disability support	35	20	23	22
Ineffective school student management policies	36	24	22	18
Alienating school culture	54	25	14	7
Poor building and amenities	65	21	10	4
Intolerant students who harass each other	36	26	23	16
Low expectations of student performance	51	22	17	11
Unrealistically high expectations of student performance	63	22	11	4
Poor quality teachers	59	21	13	8
Failure to adapt learning content for the student	40	32	18	10
Out-of-school factors				
Poverty	31	24	30	14
Conflicting cultural, religious or racial factors	46	25	20	9
Lack of parental guidance and management	5	12	23	60
Lack of community resources	34	29	26	11
Overcrowded housing	52	25	17	6
Hostile and dangerous neighbourhood	53	20	16	11
High family mobility	41	21	21	17
Abuse and neglect of students at home	32	16	19	33
Poorly educated parents	23	21	27	29
Low parental expectations	14	18	28	40
Few books or learning resources in the home	26	23	27	23
Lack of access to computer and internet resources at home	41	25	22	12
Dysfunctional family structures	13	14	22	51

We examined response patterns to establish which factors educators considered to be the major contributors to unproductive student behaviours (see Tables 18 and 19). Specifically we examined the percentages in the 'Great extent' category and ordered the ten factors with the highest percentage. To facilitate the interpretation of results presented in the following tables, we have colour coded behaviours to reflect the group of factors to which they belong.

Out-of-school factors

School factors

Individual factors

Table 18 10 Factors that Contributed Most to Unproductive Behaviours by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)
Factors	
Lack of parental guidance and management	60
Lack of self-discipline	55
Negative attitudes	53
Lack of perseverance	51
Dysfunctional family structures	51
Inability to concentrate	44
Low parental expectations	40
Poor social skills	38
Abuse and neglect of students at home	33
Poor academic skills	31

Table 19 10 Factors that Contributed Least to Unproductive Behaviours by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)
Factors	
Poor building and amenities	4
Unrealistically high expectations of student performance	4
Overcrowded housing	6
Alienating school culture	7
Inappropriate curriculum	8
Poor quality teachers	8
Conflicting cultural, religious or racial factors	9
Ineffective teaching methods	9
Lack of appropriate learning materials	9
Failure to adapt learning content for the student	10

These findings indicate that the majority of teachers attributed individual student factors and out-of-school factors as the main contributors to unproductive student behaviours. Furthermore, the findings indicate teachers believed that school-related factors, which include teaching, play little or no part in causing unproductive student behaviours.

7. Behaviour Management Strategies and their Effectiveness by Total Sample

We investigated the behaviour management strategies the teachers used in classroom settings (Table 20) and the perceived effectiveness of the strategies (Table 21).

Key Findings

- The most common behaviour management strategy was *reasoning with a student in the classroom setting*.
- The least used behaviour management strategies were *in- or out-of-school suspension*, *initiating a conference involving the student, caregivers and senior staff to discuss the student's behaviour*, *sending the student to the deputy principal, principal, counsellor or other senior teacher* and *referring students to another teacher.*
- 63% of teachers indicated that they never *initiate a conference involving the student, caregivers and senior staff* to discuss a student's behaviour.
- 33.3% of teachers reported *using a 'step' system* as the most effective behaviour management strategy.

Table 20 Behaviour Management Strategies by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)					% of teachers (n = 1353)[9]
	Not at all	Once or twice	Some-times	Often	Very often	Most effective
Using a 'step' system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change	15	24	19	21	21	33.3
Reasoning with a student in the classroom setting	3	21	17	30	30	18.9
Reasoning with a student outside the classroom setting	12	22	26	23	17	12.3
Discussing issues and problems with the whole class	13	27	27	21	12	4
Issuing a strong verbal reprimand	16	27	28	19	11	3.1
Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions or infringements	9	23	27	23	18	6.2
Requiring students to do extra work	49	22	23	5	1	0.6

[9] Note: 2% of the sample did not provide a response for this survey item.

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)					% of teachers (n = 1353)[9]
	Not at all	Once or twice	Some-times	Often	Very often	Most effective
Asking students to withdraw from the class or room (e.g. timeout)	31	29	25	9	6	3.2
Removing privileges (e.g. miss out on free time)	36	27	23	10	3	2.5
Keeping students 'in' (e.g. detention, or making students stay in to complete work)	33	35	21	9	3	3.1
Referring students to another teacher (e.g. in a 'buddy' room)	57	20	15	6	2	0.6
Sending the student to the deputy principal, principal, counsellor or other senior teacher	60	22	11	5	3	2.9
Seeking parental or caregiver involvement	38	31	17	11	3	3.2
Initiating a conference involving the student, caregivers and senior staff to discuss the student's behaviour	63	20	11	5	2	2.1
Requesting a short period of in-school suspension	73	16	8	3	1	0.7
Requesting a short period of out-of-school suspension	89	7	4	.5	.3	0.7

Analyses of individual behaviour strategies revealed significant differences between primary and middle/secondary teachers for 14 of the 16 specified strategies (Table 21). The findings suggest:

- Secondary school teachers are more likely than primary teachers to *issue a strong verbal reprimand* to students who are engaging in unproductive behaviours.
- Primary teachers are more likely to use *a 'step' system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change*, and are also more likely to *reason with a student, both in and outside of classroom settings*, *discuss issues and problems as a whole class* and further more likely to *ignore minor disruptions or infringements* than middle/secondary teachers.

Table 21 Behaviour Management Strategies by School Level

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)				
	Not at all	Once or twice	Some times	Often	Very often
Using a 'step' system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change (p <.001)					
Primary	8	18	21	22	31
Middle/secondary	23	29	18	20	11
Reasoning with a student in the classroom setting (p <.001)					
Primary	2	13	17	30	39
Middle/secondary	4	28	17	29	21
Reasoning with a student outside the classroom setting (p <.001)					
Primary	8	17	26	26	22
Middle/secondary	16	27	25	20	12
Discussing issues and problems with the whole class (p <.001)					
Primary	4	21	26	29	20
Middle/secondary	22	33	28	13	4
Issuing a strong verbal reprimand (p <.001)					
Primary	12	21	30	21	15
Middle/secondary	19	33	25	16	33
Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions or infringements (p <.001)					
Primary	8	18	27	23	24
Middle/secondary	10	28	28	23	11
Requiring students to do extra work (p <.01)					
Primary	47	20	25	7	2
Middle/secondary	52	24	20	4	1
Asking students to withdraw from the class or room (e.g. timeout) (p <.001)					
Primary	18	29	30	13	10
Middle/secondary	43	30	20	6	2
Removing privileges (e.g. miss out on free time) (p <.001)					
Primary	23	28	28	16	4
Middle/secondary	49	26	18	5	1
Keeping students 'in' (e.g. detention, or making students stay in to complete work) (p <.01)					
Primary	29	34	23	11	3
Middle/secondary	37	35	19	7	2
Referring students to another teacher (e.g. in a 'buddy' room) (p <.001)					
Primary	37	27	22	10	4
Middle/secondary	76	13	8	2	1

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)				
	Not at all	Once or twice	Some times	Often	Very often
Sending the student to the deputy principal, principal, counsellor or other senior teacher (p <.001)					
Primary	46	28	16	7	4
Middle/secondary	73	17	6	3	1
Initiating a conference involving the student, caregivers and senior staff to discuss the student's behaviour (p <.05)					
Primary	58	22	12	6	2
Middle/secondary	67	18	10	4	1
Requesting a short period of in-school suspension (p <.01)					
Primary	70	8	10	3	1
Middle/secondary	75	9	5	2	1

Given the inherent differences in the way schooling is structured across primary and middle/secondary settings, we further examined the least and most effective strategies. Regardless of teachers' ranking of the individual strategies, we considered the frequency of each of the items. The findings (see Table 22) revealed:

- Both primary and middle/secondary teachers considered *engaging the student in discussions about their behaviour* to be the most effective strategy.
- *Discussing issues and problems with the whole class* featured as an effective behaviour management strategy for primary teachers.
- *Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions or infringements* featured among the five most effective strategies for both primary and middle/secondary teachers.
- The five least effective behaviours identified by teachers were consistent for both primary and middle/secondary teachers although the order of the behaviours was different.
- Most teachers across both contexts considered that punitive behaviour management strategies were ineffective.

Table 22 Most and Least Effective Behaviour Management Strategies by School Level

	5 most effective behaviour management strategies	%	5 least effective behaviour management strategies	%
Primary (n = 673)	Using a 'step' system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change.	72	Requiring students to do extra work	35
	Reasoning with a student outside the classroom setting	65	Keeping students 'in'	26
	Discussing issues and problems with the whole class	50	Issuing a strong verbal reprimand	24
	Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions or infringements	50	Removing privileges	22
	Reasoning with a student in the classroom setting	43	Referring students to another teacher	19
Secondary (n = 707)	Reasoning with a student in the classroom setting	64	Requiring students to do extra work	34
	Reasoning with a student outside the classroom setting	62	Referring students to another teacher	23
	Using a 'step' system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change.	61	Removing privileges	22
	Deliberately ignoring minor disruptions or infringements	45	Keeping students 'in'	21
	Issuing a strong verbal reprimand	40	Issuing a strong verbal reprimand	19

8. Seriousness of Unproductive Behaviour

This section reports the findings related to the perceived seriousness of unproductive behaviours.

Key Findings

- Two thirds of teachers reported that student behaviours at their school in the last week were not very serious.
- One third of teachers found the student behaviours at their school to be serious or very serious.
- Primary teachers were more likely to identify behaviours as serious or very serious than middle/secondary teachers were.

Analysis showed that 65% of teachers reported that the unproductive behaviours they encountered were at most not very serious (Figure 12).

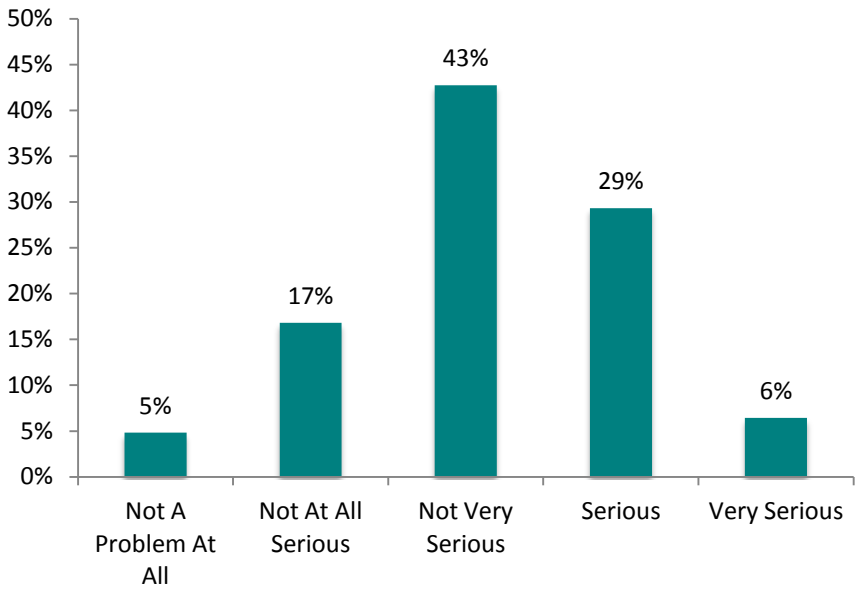


Figure 12 Seriousness of Student Behaviour by Total Sample

Initial analysis (see Figure 13) revealed that a higher percentage of primary school teachers considered the unproductive behaviours to be of a serious or very serious nature, whereas the majority of middle/secondary teachers did not perceive unproductive behaviours to be very serious.

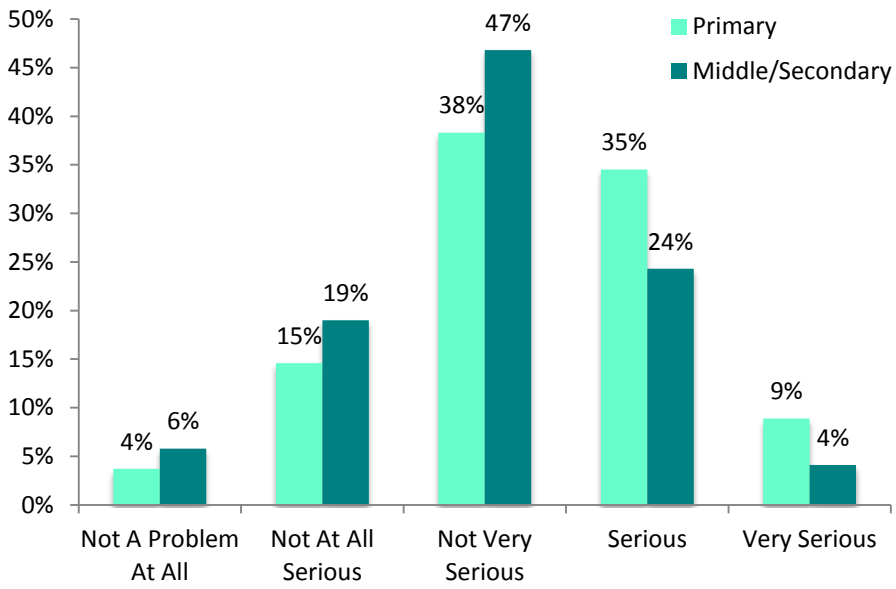


Figure 13 Seriousness of Student Behaviour by School Level

Chi square analyses confirmed that the differences in response patterns between the primary and middle/secondary categories were significant. Specifically, a significantly higher percentage of primary teachers (43%) reported that student behaviour problems were serious or very serious in their school setting, in comparison to 28% of middle/secondary teachers ($p \leq .001$).

9. Suggestions for Improving Student Behaviour

The following section provides insights into teachers' suggestions about ways to improve student behaviour.

Key Findings

- Most teachers agreed that *establishing smaller classes* (87%) and *providing more opportunities for teachers to help each other with student behaviour problems* (86%) would help improve student behaviour.
- 81% of teachers indicated that student behaviour could be improved by *providing more staff training and development on ways to manage student behaviour*.
- 79% of teachers indicated that corporal punishment should not be reintroduced.
- Only 18% of teachers suggested that *improving security in schools* would improve student behaviour.

Data analysis indicates that the most prevalent suggestions for improving student behaviour are school-related factors. These suggestions were:

- *establishing smaller classes* (87%)
- *providing more opportunities for teachers to help each other with student behaviour problems* (86%)
- *providing more staff training and development on ways to manage student behaviour (81%).*

Teachers clearly indicated that more security and severe sanctions would not improve student behaviour in schools.

Table 23 Suggestions to Improve Student Behaviour by Total Sample

	% of all teachers (n = 1380)		
	Disagree/strongly disagree	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree/strongly agree**
Telling students more firmly and clearly what they can and cannot do at school	15	23	62
Changing the way the curriculum is offered to make it more engaging and relevant to students	15	27	58
Applying tougher sanctions for certain student behaviours	11	17	72
Providing more counselling for students with behaviour problems	7	14	79
Reintroducing corporal punishment	79	12	9
Encouraging more parental involvement in behaviour management procedures at school	7	16	76
Introducing legislation banning all weapons from schools	8	23	69
Improving security in schools (e.g. installing barbed wire fences, installing security cameras, employing security guards)	51	32	18
Involving more external professionals in schools (e.g. police, social workers, youth workers)	11	22	68
Establishing smaller classes	4	10	87
Providing more opportunities for teachers to help each other with student behaviour problems	2	11	86
Providing more staff training and development on ways to manage student behaviour	6	13	81

10. Summary

This report has provided the results of a survey of teachers in South Australian primary and middle/secondary schools on the types of behaviours demonstrated by students in the previous week of their teaching.

We have reported data on school characteristics such as school size, level of school (primary, middle/secondary), school location and school ICSEA category. We also collected data on teacher characteristics such as gender, age, length of teaching experience and length of teaching at the current school.

We identified three categories of unproductive behaviour:

- low-level disruptive behaviours
- disengaged behaviours
- aggressive/anti-social behaviours.

While teachers reported managing behaviours in all three categories, most of the student behaviours they encountered were either low-level disruptive or disengaged behaviours. Although there were incidents of aggressive/anti-social behaviours these were infrequent.

The outcomes of these data are summarised in the key findings in each section and at the beginning of the report.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Behaviours Construct Formation

Low-Level Disruptive Behaviours (9 Items)

- Using a mobile phone inappropriately (e.g. sending text messages during class, secretly taking photos or videoing, accessing internet sites)
- Using a laptop or iPad inappropriately (e.g. sending messages during class, secretly taking photos or videoing, accessing internet sites)
- Talking out of turn (e.g. calling out, interrupting others, distracting others by talking)
- Moving around the room unnecessarily (e.g. leaving assigned areas of the classroom without an acceptable reason)
- Making distracting noises intentionally (e.g. moving furniture, banging objects)
- Mucking around, being rowdy (e.g. making excessive noise, pushing and shoving each other)
- Making impertinent remarks (e.g. 'answering back', being argumentative)
- Interfering with other students' or teachers' property (e.g. taking pens, pencils, books)
- Deliberately disrupting the flow of a lesson (e.g. asking irrelevant questions, using delay tactics, procrastinating).

Disengaged Behaviour (3 Items)

- Being late for class
- Avoiding doing schoolwork (e.g. student does not do assigned tasks, gives up quickly, makes minimal effort to do tasks)
- Disengaging from classroom activities (e.g. opting out, daydreaming, withdrawing).

Aggressive/Anti-social Behaviours (11 Items)

- Verbally abusing other students (e.g. swearing at them, insulting them, making threatening comments)
- Being physically aggressive towards other students (e.g. pushing, punching, kicking, striking, pulling hair, wrestling, biting)
- Excluding peers (e.g. deliberately leaving people out of group activities and social interactions)
- Spreading rumours (e.g. telling false or nasty stories about others, talking about others behind their backs)
- Verbally abusing teachers (e.g. swearing at teachers, insulting teachers, making threatening comments)
- Sexually harassing other students (e.g. sexual innuendo and comments, ogling or leering, sexual touching, spreading sexual rumours, commenting on others' sexuality)
- Being physically destructive (e.g. vandalising school property, smashing equipment, throwing furniture, breaking windows, graffiti-ing)
- Being physically aggressive towards teachers (e.g. pushing, punching, kicking, striking, pulling hair, wrestling, biting)
- Being extremely violent towards other students or teachers (e.g. using a weapon such as a knife, sexual assault, bashing)
- Sexually harassing teachers (e.g. sexual innuendo and comments, ogling or leering, sexual touching, spreading sexual rumours, commenting on teacher's sexuality)
- Displaying uncharacteristically erratic behaviours (e.g. mood swings, sudden outbursts of emotion).

Appendix B: Sample Characteristics

We examined characteristics of the sample to help contextualise the findings further. Specifically, we conducted cross tabulations and we present the results in the following tables.

Table C1 School Level by ICSEA Category

ICSEA category	% of all teachers (n = 1380) School level	
	Primary	Middle/secondary
≤900	8	4
901–1000	34	29
1001–1100	30	35
≥1101	6	11
Unsure	22	22

Table C2 Geographic Distribution of Teachers by Age

Teachers' age	% of all teachers (n = 1380) School location			
	Metropolitan	Rural	Remote	Other
<30 years	15	23	35	10
30–39 years	20	21	15	19
40–49 years	24	22	25	15
50–59 years	35	28	18	46
60+ years	7	6	7	10

Table C3 School Location by ICSEA Category

ICSEA category	% of all teachers (n = 1380) School location			
	Metropolitan	Rural	Remote	Other
≤900	4	7	18	3
901–1000	28	44	38	16
1001–1100	37	20	24	50
≥1101	12	1	1	7
Unsure	19	29	19	24

Table C4 School Location by School Size

Size	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Location			
	Metro	Rural	Remote	Other
<100	2	11	10	7
100–199	5	12	3	4
200–299	9	11	22	4
300–399	14	18	8	6
400–499	11	9	7	9
500–599	10	6	6	4
600–699	9	13	29	6
700–799	4	4	14	6
800–1000	16	8	0	16
>1000	21	9	1	36

Table C5 School Size by ICSEA Category

Size	% of all teachers (n = 1380) ICSEA category				
	≤900	901–1000	1001–1100	≥1101	Unsure
<100	5	5	3	2	6
100–199	13	8	3	2	8
200–299	24	12	10	3	7
300–399	22	16	12	12	14
400–499	6	14	7	8	11
500–599	9	10	8	7	7
600–699	8	10	13	10	10
700–799	0	4	5	8	7
800–1000	9	12	16	11	14
>1000	4	9	24	39	17

Table C6 Appointment Status by Teachers' Age

Teachers' age	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Appointment status		
	Teachers	Senior teachers	Principals/deputy/ assistant/heads of sub-schools
<30 years	22	10	0
30–39 years	20	20	13
40–49 years	21	26	29
50–59 years	30	37	52
60+ years	7	8	6

Table C7 School Level by Teachers' Age

Teachers' age	% of all teachers (n = 1380) School level	
	Primary	Middle/secondary
<30 years	17	18
30–39 years	21	18
40–49 years	23	22
50–59 years	33	33
60+ years	6	8

Table C8 Teachers' Gender by School Level

School Level	% of teachers (n = 1373)[10] Gender	
	Male	Female
Primary	28	59
Middle/secondary	72	42

[10] Seven respondents did not indicate their gender, so we excluded them from analyses involving gender.

Table C9 Teachers' Gender by Appointment Status

Appointment status	% of teachers (n = 1373)[11] Gender	
	Male	Female
Teachers	65	74
Senior teachers	25	21
Principals/deputy/assistant principals/heads of schools	11	5

Table C10 Appointment Status by School Level

School level	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Appointment status		
	Teachers	Senior teachers	Principals/ deputy/ assistant/ heads of schools
Primary	55	28	50
Middle/secondary	45	73	50

Table C11 Appointment Status by ICSEA Category

ICSEA category	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Appointment status		
	Teachers	Senior teachers	Principals/ deputy/ assistant/ heads of schools
≤900	6	6	3
901–1000	32	29	32
1001–1100	31	35	45
≥1101	8	12	8
Unsure	24	18	12

Table C12 Years of Teaching Experience by School Location

School location	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Years of teaching experience					
	<5	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25+
Metropolitan	51	68	72	62	66	71
Rural	33	23	22	31	21	20
Remote	12	5	2	3	8	3
Other	4	5	4	4	4	6

[11] Seven respondents did not indicate their gender and were excluded from analyses involving gender.

Table C13 Years of Teaching Experience by Appointment Status

Appointment status	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Years of teaching experience					
	<5	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25+
Teachers	92	77	62	63	64	64
Senior teachers	8	22	32	29	24	24
Principals/deputy/ assistant/heads of schools	0	1	6	9	12	12

Table C14 Years of Teaching Experience by ICSEA Category

ICSEA category	% of all teachers (n = 1380) Years of teaching experience					
	<5	5–9	10–14	15–19	20–24	25+
≤900	7	4	3	9	4	7
901–1000	35	36	33	25	30	29
1001–1100	39	35	28	35	30	30
≥1101	4	10	16	9	8	8
Unsure	15	15	20	23	27	26

Appendix C: Examples of Schools within ICSEA Categories

Table D Examples of Schools within ICSEA Categories

ICSEA	SCHOOL
850–900 (most disadvantaged)	Hackam West Primary School; Ceduna Area School
901–950	Parafield Gardens; Hendon Primary School
951–1000	Whitefriars School; Mt Barker Primary School
1001–1050	Henley Primary School; Christian Brothers College
1051–1100	Blackwood High School; Sacred Heart College
1101–1150	St Peters College; Rose Park Primary School
1151–1200 (most advantaged)	Walford Anglican School for Girls; Burnside Primary School

Note: To facilitate meaningful analyses we combined some ICSEA categories.


Behaviour
at
School
Study