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Teacher Targeted Bullying and Harassment by Students and Parents: The East Coast Project

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We would like to thank all the teachers who took time out of their busy schedules to answer the survey and participate in interviews. We are grateful to our research partners for their insight during research and for their help in distributing the survey. Outcomes continue to provide a clearer understanding of the incidence of Teacher Targeted Bullying and Harassment by students and their parents, as well as to demonstrate how we may tackle this important issue. We thank you all as without you, these findings would not have been possible.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

In 2019, our team embarked on an exploratory study of Teacher Targeted Bullying and Harassment (TTBH) by students and their parents in Australian schools. The project found mounting evidence of student and parental TTBH; a paucity of research that explores this complex issue; as well as evidence that TTBH by students and parents has detrimental effects on a teacher's sense of self-efficacy and wellbeing and that this outcome may contribute to an unsafe workplace (Billett, Fogelgarn, Burns 2019). However, what remained largely unexplored was the role that school climate, including school environment, location, general educational dis/advantage, and educational systems, may play in mitigating the incidence and impact of TTBH by students and parents. This report addresses this gap.

BACKGROUND

Please note, this report presents an abridged background of TTBH literature in Australia and overseas produced for the first report published in 2019. For a full report, please go to <http://www.teacher-wellbeing-aus.com/past-projects.html>

Bullying is a difficult concept to define. Language such as teacher bullying, teacher victimisation or staff bullying is ambiguous and is easily misconstrued to present the teachers as the perpetrators of bullying, rather than the victims. In order to clarify the language and its application in the teaching context, we adopted the following final definition of student or parent enacted teacher targeted bullying and harassment:

‘A communication process that involves a real or perceived power imbalance where “a teacher is subjected, by one or more students [or their parents], to interaction that he or she perceives as insulting, upsetting or intimidating” (Kauppi and Pörhölä 2012) this interaction may

be verbal, nonverbal or physical in nature, it may be premeditated or opportunistic, be a single instance or recurring and or be of short or long duration.'

TEACHER BULLYING AND HARASSMENT IN THE GLOBAL AND AUSTRALIAN CONTEXTS

Numerous international researchers have produced disturbing evidence of the incidence of student and parent enacted TTBH and its detrimental impact on teacher wellbeing across varied cultural contexts. This research included studies in New Zealand (Benefield 2004), Luxembourg (Steffgen & Ewen 2007), the United States (Dinkes et al. 2007), Slovakia (Dzuka & Dalbert 2007), Taiwan (Chen & Astor 2008) and South Africa (Woudstra et al. 2018). The research commonly concludes that teacher targeted bullying and harassment by students and their parents is a problem within school systems. Since our last report, further evidence of TTBH from around the globe continues to confirm that TTBH is a consistent predictor of teacher workplace turnover (Currant et al. 2020; Moon & McCluskey 2020).

In the Australian context, academic discussions of TTBH are few. While there is clear evidence of TTBH being a problem for many Australian teachers (Billett, Fogelgarn & Burns 2018) there continues to be a dearth of research into this important area. Since publication of our 2019 report, we have found only one other report addressing the issue of Teacher Targeted Bullying and Harassment in the Australian context. In that study of teachers in Western Australia, Lowe et al. (2020), found that '67.9% of participants had experienced teacher directed violence (TDV), at least once in the past two years' (187).

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

While our 2019 study sought to ascertain the existence of TTBH in Australian Schools, this report set about ascertaining the conditions that may exacerbate the prevalence of TTBH. In order to research this, we turned to school climate theory, which suggests that a positive school climate may not only lower the levels of aggressive behaviours toward teachers but may also help to reduce the impact of TTBH on teacher wellbeing.

Literature on school climate from around the world suggests that a school's climate - its characteristics, norms and values - may be an important component in the prevention of aggressive behaviours in schools (Karcher 2002a, Kosciw & Elizabeth 2006, Attar-Schwartz 2009, Gregory et al. 2010, Zaykowski & Gunter 2012; Klein, Dewey & Cornell 2012; Thapa & Cohen

2013; Bear, Yang, Mantz, & Harris 2017). While most of this research focused on student to student violence, there is a growing body of literature on school climate, which concentrates attention on the role of school climate as a form of prevention. This work explores the possible role climate may play in addressing teacher bullying and harassment by students and their parents. In separate studies, Karcher (2006) and Zaykowski and Gunter (2012) found that a positive school climate helps to lower the incidence of in-school violence including victimisation of teachers by students. Results indicate that teachers who felt supported by the administration and worked with peers who consistently enforced rules, were less likely to be victims of threats of injury or, of physical attacks. This finding was also shared by Berg, Dewey and Cornell (2016) and Huang, Eddy and Camp (2017), whose studies found that an authoritative school climate may well play a role in reducing the likelihood of teacher victimisation. Further to this finding, in their study in Jordanian schools, Alzyoud et al. (2016) found that the school climate, including teacher and management attitudes, were major contributors toward the incidence of student violence against teachers.

DEFINING SCHOOL CLIMATE

There seems to be a lack of conceptual consensus on school climate theory with several competing definitions and taxonomies currently in use (Moritz Rudasill et al. 2017). Unsurprisingly, this has led to a lack of methodological clarity for those researching the benefits of school climate. While defining the complexities of school climate remains outside the scope of this report, we found that after conducting a literature review on the measurement of school climate in relation to teacher victimisation, we needed to clarify that for this report, school climate encompasses a school's physical characteristics (location and relative economic advantage), its culture, organisational structure (including management style), and its student and teacher composition.

As a consequence, four general areas of school climate were selected for closer study;

- Education system (Government, Independent or Catholic)
- Perceived school culture relating to incidence and prevention of TTBH
- A school's relative educational dis/advantage

- A school's geographic location (Metropolitan, Rural or Split – rural/metro) ¹

¹ Classifications of postcode location as per Australian Government department of Agriculture, water and the environment website.

GOVERNMENT, INDEPENDENT AND CATHOLIC SYSTEMS

Review of current literature reveals a dearth of previous research comparing the incidence and nature of TTBH in the Government, Independent and Catholic school sectors. In one such study, Lowe, Picknoll, Farrington, Chivers and Rycroft (2020) investigated the prevalence of Teacher Directed Violence (TDV), including associations between TDV and the education sector in West Australian schools. They found a significant relationship exists between TDV and the education sector, with TDV being more likely to occur in the Government sector than non-government sector schools (Lowe et al. 2020). So too, in a study of 800 Government and non-government sector teachers, Riley, Duncan and Edwards (2011), found that participants working in Government schools were significantly more likely to experience bullying and harassment than their counterparts working in Independent or Catholic schools. Although not in the context of teacher targeted bullying, Riley's (2018) study of over 2000 Australian school principals found that Catholic, Government and Independent school sectors are linked to different categories of principal directed violence and bullying. Threats of verbal/ physical violence and bullying were all higher in the Government sector than the Catholic or Independent sectors (Riley 2018). Government secondary school principals reported experiencing more violence and bullying compared to those in state Government primary schools, or those in Catholic and Independent primary and secondary schools (Riley 2018).

SCHOOL CULTURE

Our previous exploration into the prevalence and impact of TTBH in Australian schools (Billett et al. 2019) found that the negative impacts of TTBH were mitigated if teachers' perceived they were supported by managers, as they believed these resolutions resulted in clear and tangible outcomes that addressed and prevented further incidents. These findings are in line with international studies that found that adequate management of TTBH incidents can mitigate the impact of student and parental TTBH and lower a teacher's anxiety after an incident (Miller, Brownell & Smith 1999; Higgins-D'Alessandro 2002; Fulton, Yoon & Lee 2005; Grayson & Alvarez 2008; Gluschkoff et al. 2017).

The majority of teachers surveyed in our previous study felt that, while most schools responded to incidents of TTBH by students and parents, these responses were largely unsuccessful (Billett et al 2019). In fact, teachers often perceived management allying themselves with students and parents instead of supporting their staff. As a result, action taken by management and other key

bodies to address TTBH was perceived to be largely tokenistic, and often viewed as victim blaming, which led to high levels of teacher dissatisfaction.

RELATIVE SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL ADVANTAGE

It is difficult to find empirical studies addressing the possible relationship between TTBH and relative socio-educational advantage of school populations. A systematic review of research addressing teacher safety and victimisation in the U.S. (from 1988-2016), found that risk factors included the location and socio-economic status of the school (Reddy, Espelage, Anderman, Kanrich, & McMahon 2018). Both these predictors may relate to relative socio-educational disadvantage.

In a 2016 study of over 9000 teachers from almost 400 schools in Virginia, U.S., teachers working in schools with higher numbers of students from low SES backgrounds reported experiencing more victimisation and felt less safe than teachers in higher SES schools (Berg & Cornell 2016). Findings from a recent study of 56 primary and secondary teachers in Western Australia corroborate this outcome. Lowe et.al. (2020) investigated the relationship between schools' socio-economic index and the incidence of teacher-directed violence (TDV), finding that schools in lower ranked SES areas experienced more TDV than schools in areas with a higher SES ranking.

Lowe et.al. (2020) noted a greater incidence of TDV in Government schools than in Independent and Catholic sector schools in Western Australia. This finding may relate to one of the key motivations for this study: to discover if a school's relative socio-educational advantage or disadvantage contributes significantly to the incidence of TTBH in Australian East coast schools.

SCHOOL LOCATION – THE URBAN, REGIONAL AND RURAL CONTEXTS

Reddy et. al. (2018) found that teacher victimisation in the U.S. occurred at all school levels – primary and secondary – and in all geographic locations – rural, urban and suburban. Research suggests that teachers may experience more victimisation in urban rather than suburban or rural schools (Espelage et al. 2013). In a study of 117 teachers in the American Midwest, teachers in urban schools experienced significantly more TDV than teachers in rural and suburban schools (Bounds & Jenkins 2018). Another study of more than 2,300 American teachers found that teachers in rural schools reported less student-generated victimisation than teachers in urban locations (Martinez et al. 2016).

Similar empirical data regarding the relative incidence of TTBH in different geographic locations in Australia have not yet been published. Thus, one of this study's guiding aims was to investigate

the possible differential impact of TTBH on teacher wellbeing relative to a school's geographic location (urban, regional or rural).

ABOUT THE STUDY

This study was undertaken with teachers currently teaching in schools on Australia's East coast. It aimed to build upon data previously collected as part of the exploratory nationwide study into the prevalence of TTBH in Australian Schools and examined the role which location, social economic advantage, and school type might play in the prevalence and impact of TTBH by students and parents. This study gathered evidence through a survey (N = 1213) and subsequent interviews (N = 46) which collected data on teachers' experiences of bullying or harassment by students and/or their parents over a period of twelve months (2018-2019) as well as data on the school's culture, including geographical location, educational system and management responses to reports of TTBH. It received approval from the researchers' institution's Human Ethics Committee (research number HEC-19129). This study was undertaken from August to December 2019.

This project aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What levels and types of TTBH by students and parents are encountered by teachers teaching in Government, Independent, and Catholic schools?
- Is there a correlation between types of TTBH generated by students and their parents and a school's relative social- educational advantage?
- What role does a school's geographical location play in the prevalence and impact of TTBH by students and parents?
- In what ways does management's handling of reports of student and parental TTBH affect teachers' sense of wellbeing and self-efficacy?

The survey was open to teachers working in Government, Independent or Catholic schools in Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Victoria and Tasmania who either held current Australian teaching registration or had held registration within the last two years, and were aged between 21 and 70.

Several social media campaigns were run over a four-month period using one social media platform. An invitation to participate was also sent out by supporting organisations via their email newsletter.

The campaign targeted individuals who identified in their social media profiles as teaching professionals. The list of key words used to recruit included identification as: Secondary School Principal, Principal, Secondary School Assistant Principal, Assistant Principal, Vice-Principal, Deputy Head Teacher, Teacher, Secondary School Teacher, Primary School Teacher, Primary Teacher, Physics Teacher, Social Studies Teacher, Math Teacher, Mathematics Teacher, English Teacher, Chemistry Teacher, History Teacher, Science Teacher, among other variations.

Identified individuals were invited to participate by clicking on the dedicated website link and participating in the survey. Teachers were also able to take part in an additional one-hour semi-structured interview to further explore experiences of TTBH in more depth. Qualitative information for this study was coded and analysed using Nvivo statistical software. Anonymous quantitative data was analysed using SPSS.

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Response to the survey from the east coast of Australia was fairly even for the larger east coast states, with 31.9% of respondents from Victoria, 23.9% from Queensland and 35.4% from New South Wales. Tasmania recorded a response rate of 6.0%, whilst, the ACT recorded a response rate of just 2.1%.

1213 individuals participated in the survey. 54.9% of our respondents came from the secondary sector, 50.6% from primary and 11.4% worked across both the primary and secondary sectors. 66.9% of teachers worked in the Government sector, 21.8% in the Catholic sector and 16.2% in the Independent school sector (some teachers worked in more than one sector). In total 82.9% of respondents identified as teachers, 9.3% as head teachers, 1.3% as deputy principals and 2.9% as principals.

The average participant recorded their age bracket as 41-50 years of age. 46.1% of participants had been registered for ten years or longer and 16.8% had been registered for four years or less, whilst 2.7% of these had been registered for less than one year. 88.0% of our respondents were female while, 11.9% were male, and 0.1% recorded other. Female teachers were relatively evenly distributed across primary (53.3%) and secondary (52.1%). Male participants were predominantly engaged in secondary (75.7%) with only 31.3% in the primary sector. These findings are in line with current gender distributions found more generally in Australian schools across the teaching sector (for example see McKenzie et al. 2014). 7.2% of participating teachers worked at both secondary and primary schools. Most of our participants taught at metropolitan schools (60.5%),

followed by rural (35.7%), and split metro/rural schools (3.8%). Schools located in metropolitan areas were significantly more likely to have a higher ICSEA score than both rural and split metro/rural locations.

INCIDENCE OF TTBH IN AUSTRALIAN EAST COAST SCHOOLS

TTBH is a frequent occurrence with 84.5% of respondents reporting having experienced some form of student or parent enacted TTBH over the last nine to twelve-month period. This is a similar finding to 2018 at which time 80% of respondents recorded having experienced some form of student or parent enacted TTBH in the previous nine to twelve-month period. See Figure 1 'Percentage of participants who have experienced TTBH over the last 9 - 12 month period'

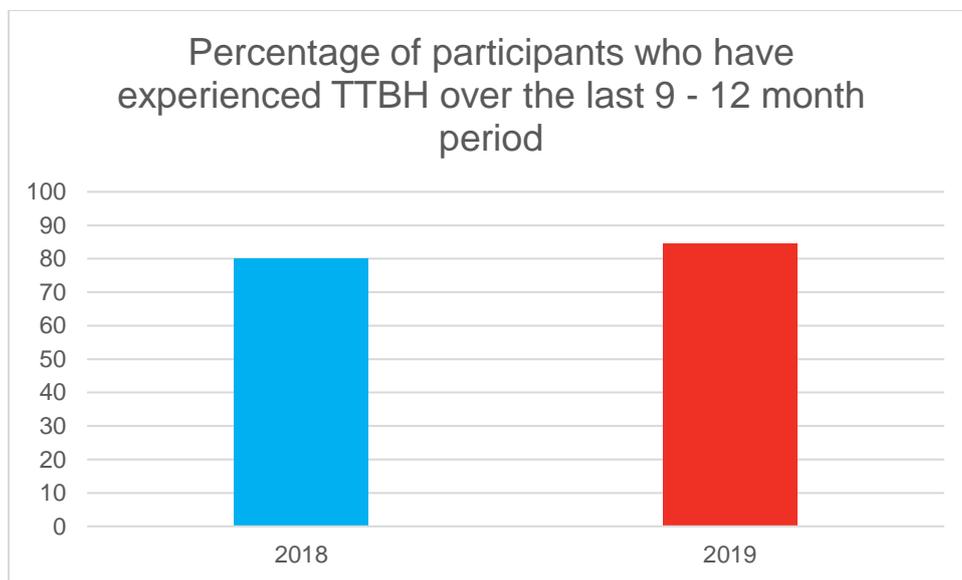


Figure 1 Percentage of participants who have experienced TTBH over the last 9 - 12 month period.

We found an equal likelihood of a teacher experiencing TTBH by student and parents across all geographic areas, with teachers reporting similar levels of TTBH by students and parents in rural (84.3%), metropolitan (84.5%) or split metro/rural schools (90.7%). 50.6% of teachers who participated in this survey felt that TTBH by students and parents was definitely an issue in Australian schools. 28.9% felt that this was probably an issue, 8.2% were unsure this was an issue, with a final 11.3% believing that student and parental TTBH may not be a problem for teachers in Australian schools (10.0% = probably not, 1.3% = definitely not).

When asked about their experiences of TTBH in the previous nine to twelve months, 44.6% of teachers reported experiencing TTBH from both students and parents. 25.3% had experienced student enacted TTBH exclusively and 13.4% reported experiencing solely parental enacted

TTBH. These results are comparable with 2018 data. See Figure 2 'Percentage of TTBH Experiences in previous 9 – 12 months'

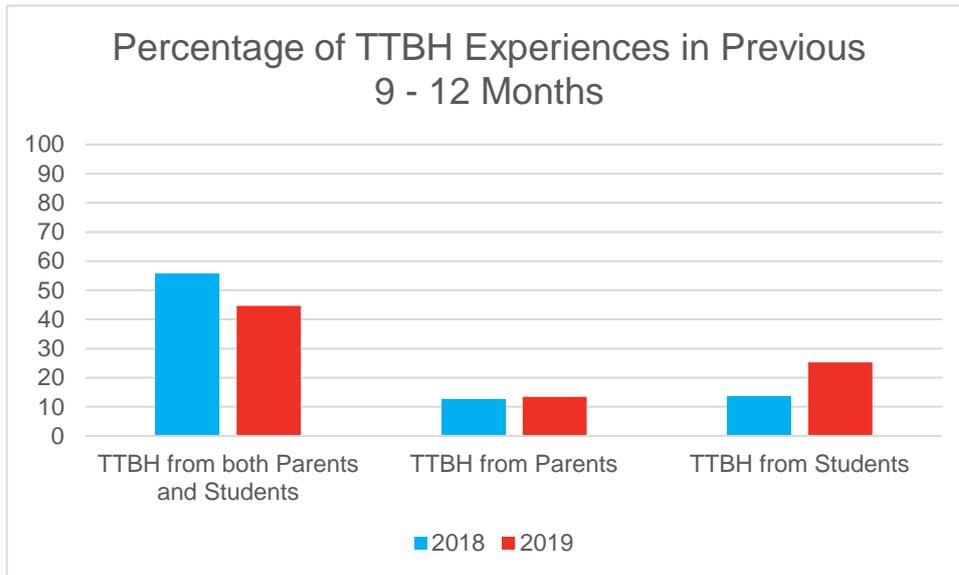


Figure 2 Percentage of TTBH Experiences in Previous 9 - 12 Months.

861 teachers reported suffering TTBH most often at the hands of their students with teachers being statistically more likely to report being bullied or harassed by a student (71%) in the last nine to twelve months in comparison to reporting being bullied or harassed by a parent (58.3%). Student TTBH was more common than parental bullying for teachers working in all sectors (Catholic: 59.0% Independent: 57.3% Government: 60.7%). The sector (Catholic, Independent, Government) did not predict parent bullying.

Teachers who had held registration for less than 1 year reported the lowest incidence of TTBH (6.3%). Similar to the 2018 data, teachers aged 21-30 reported the highest incidence of TTBH of any cohort (92.8%), whilst teachers aged over 70 were found to be much less likely to report incidents of TTBH in the last nine to 12 months (75.0%). See Figure 3 'Percentage of TTBH by Teacher Age' on the following page.

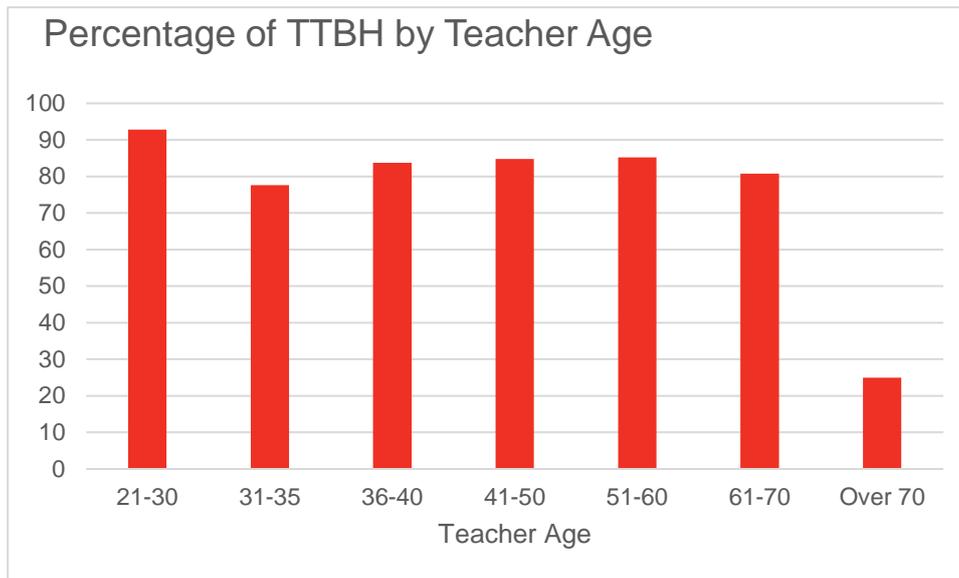


Figure 3 Percentage of TTBH by Teacher Age.

Women reported experiencing TTBH by students (70.5%) and parents (58.7%). Similarly, men reported experiencing TTBH by students (74.3%) and parents (54.6%).

Secondary school teachers were just as likely to experience TTBH (85.8%) as teachers in the primary sector (83.2%). Whereas in 2018, secondary school teachers were more likely to experience TTBH than primary school teachers.

Socio-Educational Advantage was associated with the prevalence of TTBH bullying. Teachers working in schools from lower Socio-Educational Advantage backgrounds were more likely to report instances of bullying by either a student or parent.

TYPES OF TTBH ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS

STUDENT ENACTED TTBH

The survey collected evidence of 12 different forms of teacher targeted bullying and harassment. These included yelling, swearing, hitting or punching, damaging personal property, disparaging remarks (verbal), disparaging remarks (social media), standing over/involving personal space,

organising others against a teacher, lying to get a teacher into trouble, harassing through text and phone calls, discriminatory behaviour and students engaging parents to argue on their behalf.

71.0% of participants reported having been bullied or harassed by a student in the preceding 12-month period. Similar to the 2018 data, verbal aggression was the most commonly encountered form of student enacted TTBH. 56.0% of respondents recorded a student having sworn at them in the last nine to 12 months, while yelling (53.8%) and disparaging verbal comments closely followed (56.6%).

In terms of physical violence, 16.8% of teachers had been hit or punched by a student in the last year, 20.0% had a student damage their personal property and 35.5% had a student stand over them or invade their personal space.

Unlike 2018 data which showed female teachers experience more TTBH than male teachers, the 2019 data showed no significant differences in the likelihood of reporting TTBH between males and females.

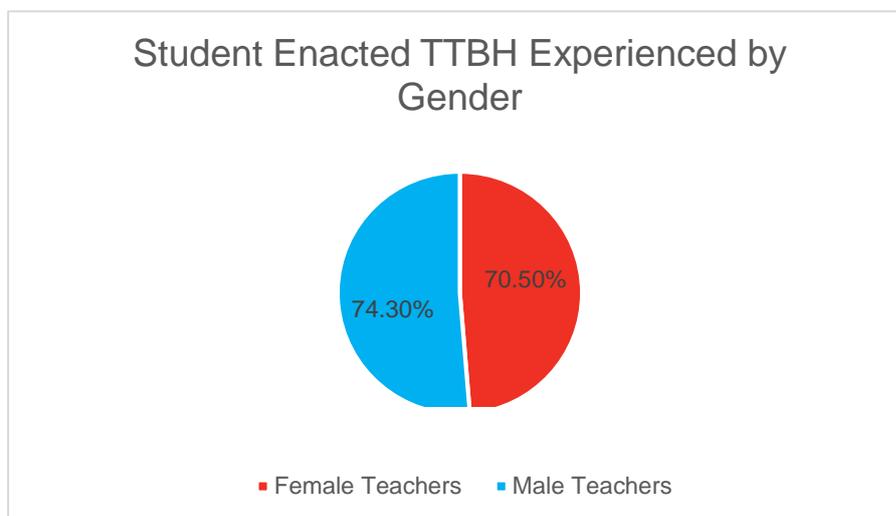


Figure 4 Student Enacted TTBH Experienced by Gender.

Female teachers were just as likely to report student TTBH (70.5%) in comparison to males (74.3%). However, male teachers (16.0%) were more likely than female teachers (9.0%) to experience discriminatory behaviour from a student.

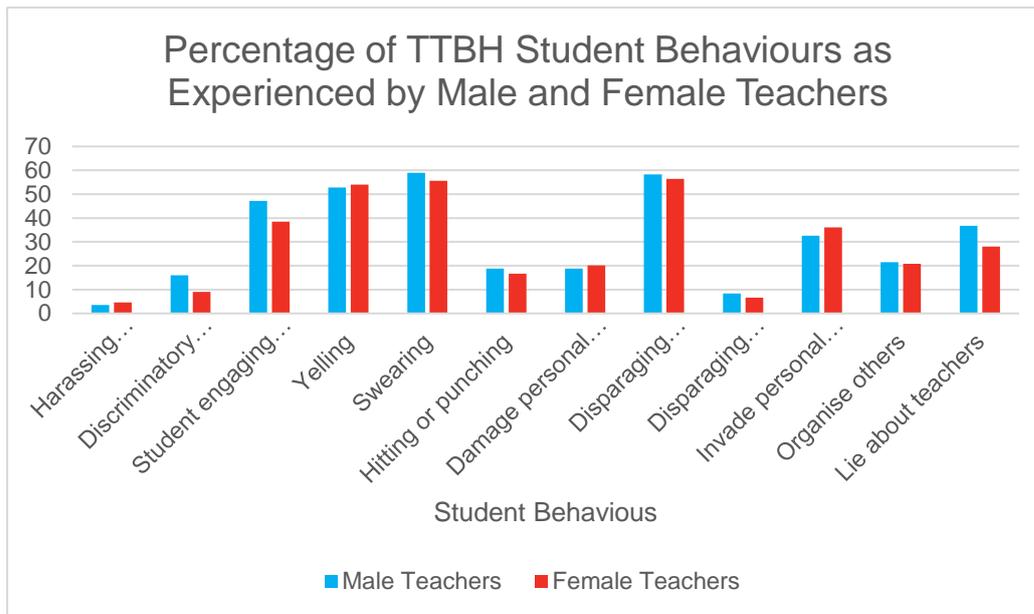


Figure 5 Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours as Experienced by Male and Female Teachers.

Male teachers (47.2%) were also more likely to report that a student engaged a parent to argue on their behalf in comparison to female teachers (38.5%). In addition, male teachers (36.8%) were more likely to report that a student lied about a teacher/principal to get them into trouble than female teachers (28.1%). There were no statistically significant differences in the likelihood of the other student perpetrated behaviours between males and females. See Figure 5 'Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours as Experienced by Male and Female Teachers' The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) takes into consideration factors which can potentially influence student educational outcomes such as parents' occupation and education, as well as school level factors such as school geographical location and proportion of indigenous students (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority 2017). The average school ICSEA value is 1000 (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2017). For the purposes of this study, low ICSEA is considered to be below 1000 and high ICSEA is considered to be above 1000.

Teachers in low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience yelling by a student (69.2%) compared to high ICSEA schools (44.3%). In addition, teachers in low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience swearing (73.8%) than high ICSEA schools (45.7%), hitting and punching (24.6%) than high ICSEA schools (10.3%) and damaged personal property by a student (28.6%) than high ICSEA schools (15.1%).

Also, teachers in low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience disparaging remarks (67.7%) than high ICSEA schools (53.7%), students standing over personal space (46.2%) than teachers

from high ICSEA schools (34.0%), students lying about a teacher or principal to get them in trouble (37.8%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (30.6%), and discriminatory behaviour (13.8%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (7.1%). Teachers from low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience students enabling parents to argue on their behalf (45.8%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (38.9%).

Additionally, low ICSEA schools were just as likely to experience disparaging remarks on social media (8.0%) as high ICSEA schools (7.7%), students organising others against them (22.2%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (24.9%) and harassing phone calls/texts (5.8%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (3.4%).

The most common TTBH student behaviours experienced by teachers working in low ICSEA schools were; swearing (73.8%), yelling (69.2%), and disparaging remarks (67.7%).

In comparison, the most common TTBH student behaviours experienced by teachers working in high ICSEA schools were; disparaging remarks (53.7%), swearing (45.7%), and yelling (44.3%). See Figure 6 ‘Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours Low and High ICSEA Comparison’.

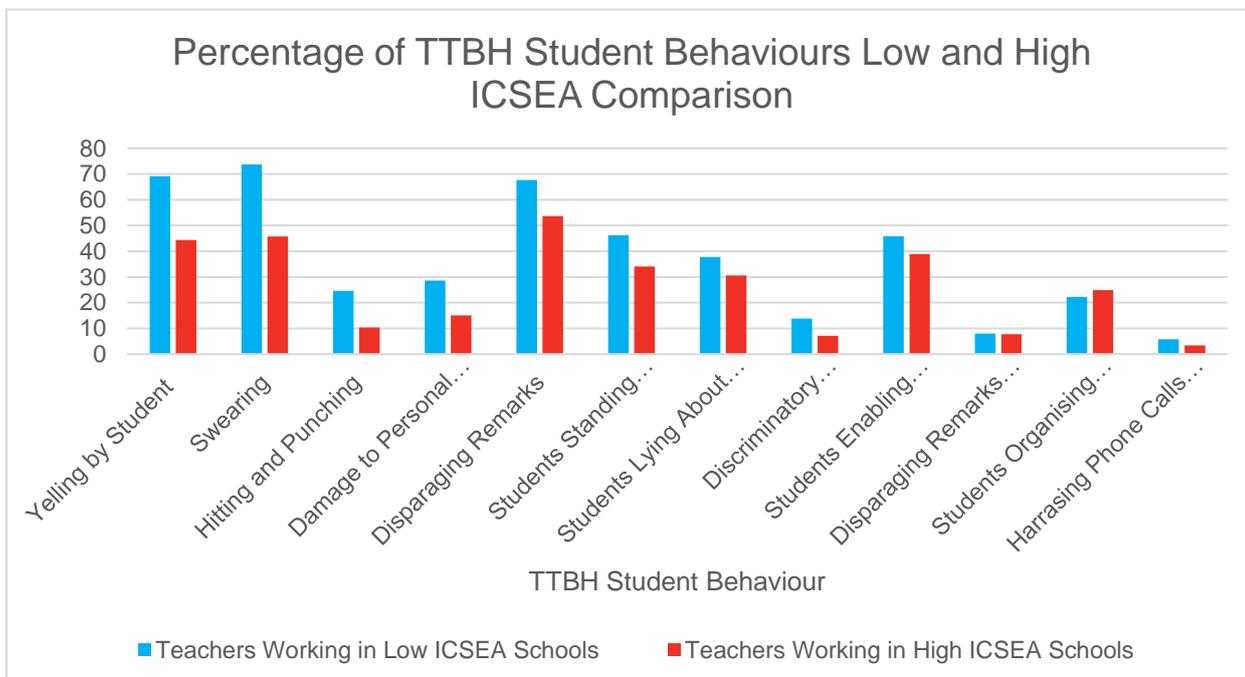


Figure 6 Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours Low and High ICSEA Comparison

The most common TTBH student behaviours in the Catholic sector were hitting or punching (89.4%) and damage to personal property (85.3%). In the Independent sector, the most common TTBH student behaviours were disparaging remarks (49.5%) and students engaging parents to

argue on their behalf (41.3%). In the Government sector, the most common TTBH student behaviours were swearing (64.0%) and yelling (61.0%). See Figure 7 'Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours by Sector'

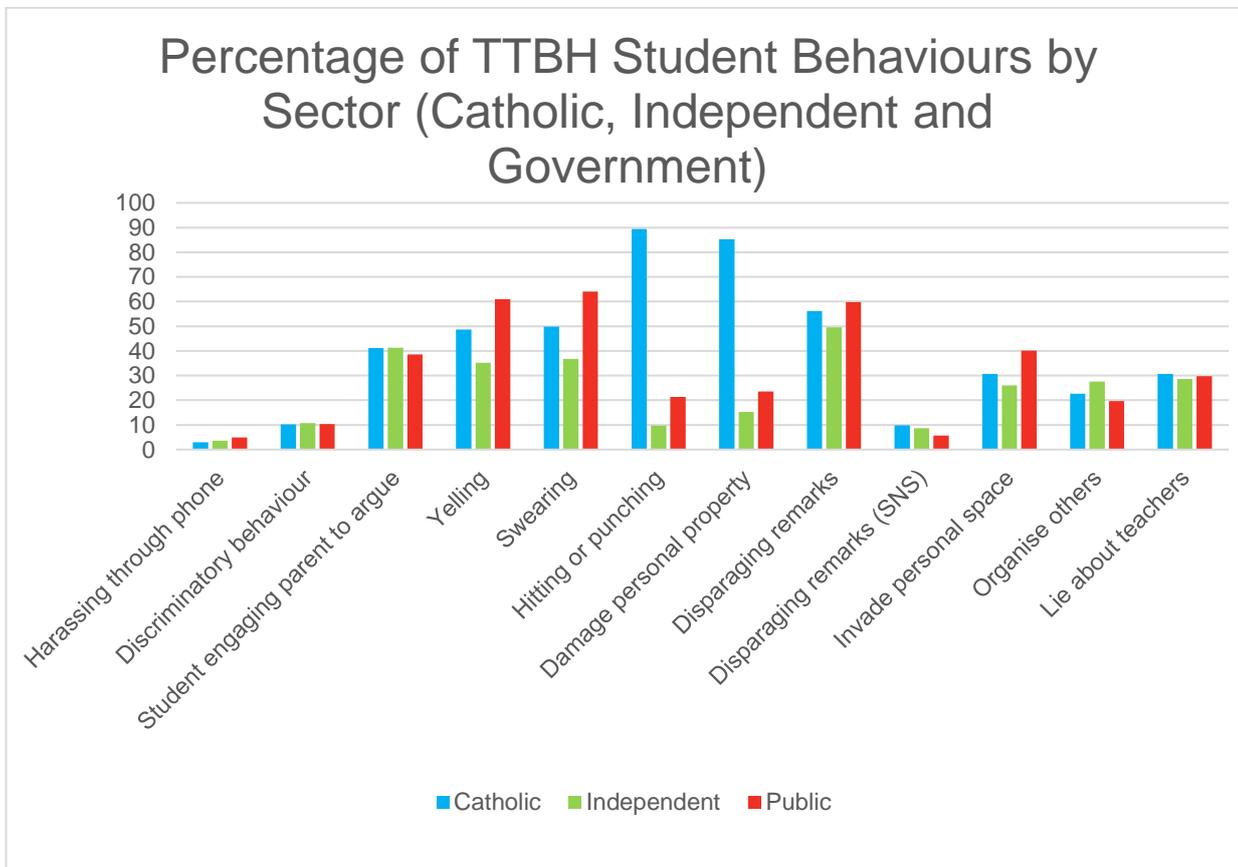


Figure 7 Percentage of TTBH Student Behaviours by Sector (Catholic, Independent and Government).

PARENT ENACTED TTBH

58.3% of teachers reported experiencing at least one incident of parent led TTBH in the last 12 months. This figure is comparable to 2018 (57.8%).

While we found no significant differences in the proportion of teachers who experienced bullying from a student across rural (71.3%), metropolitan (69.7%) or split metro/rural schools (81.8%), geographic area seemed to affect the report of students lying about a teacher/principal to get them into trouble. Metropolitan (28.5%) and rural schools (31.6%) seemed to have a higher incidence of TTBH by lying students compared to split schools (13.6%). Rural schools (57.8%) also reported a greater incidence of students yelling compared to metropolitan schools (49.6%), and this was statistically significant, $\chi^2(1) = 7.053, p = .008$. There was no difference in the proportion of teachers being yelled at by students between metro and split metro/rural schools.

Early and mid-career teachers reported lower rates of parental bullying compared to late career teachers. See Figure 8 'Percentage of Parent Enacted TTBH According to Length of Teacher Registration'.

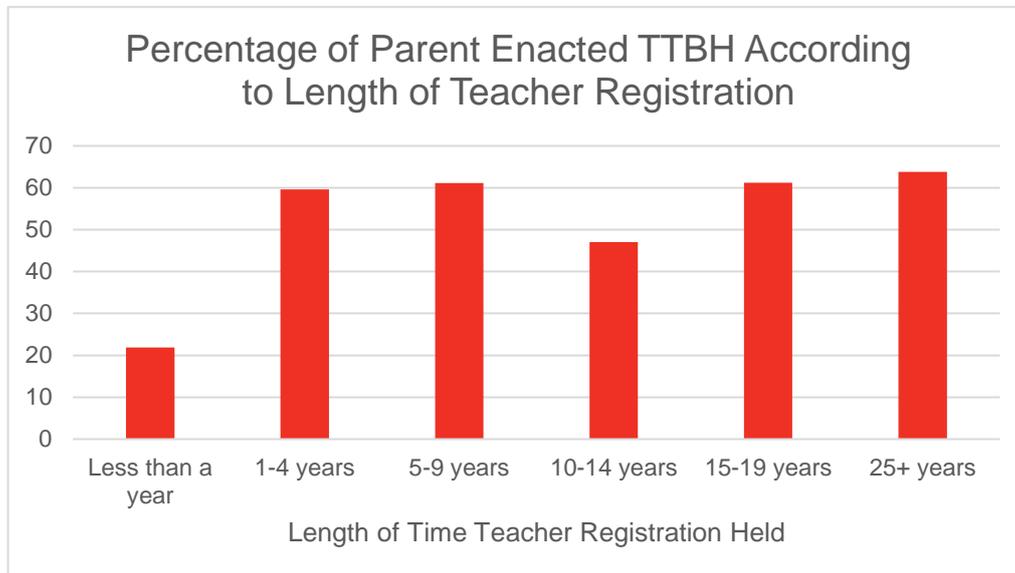


Figure 8 Percentage of Parent Enacted TTBH According to Length of Teacher Registration.

Of the incidents recorded, the most common forms of parent enacted TTBH were parents

- verbally disparaging a teacher (42.1%),
- yelling (26.4%),
- students engaging a parent to argue on their behalf (26.4%) and
- lying about a teacher/principal to get them into trouble (24.4%).

Physical attacks by parents on teachers such as hitting, punching or damaging personal property were rare. In terms of parent enacted TTBH per gender, 54.6% of females and 58.7% of males recorded having been the victim of parental TTBH in the previous 12 months.

There were no statistically significant differences in the type of parent perpetrated behaviour between male and female teachers. See Figure 9 'Percentages of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours as Experienced by Male and Female Teachers'.

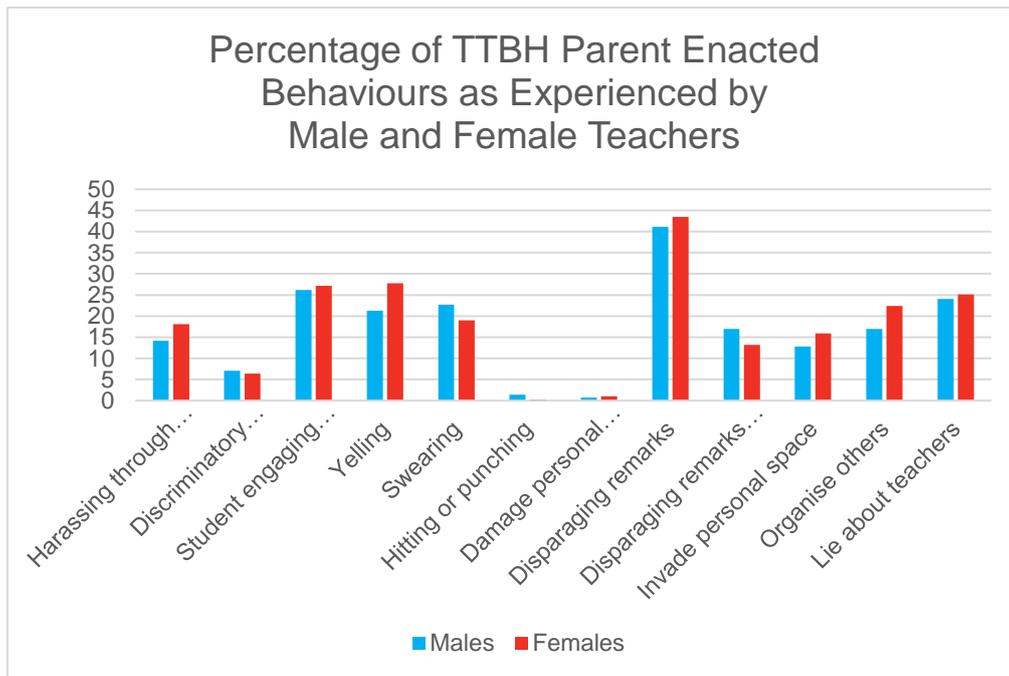


Figure 9 Percentage of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours as Experienced by Male and female Teachers.

Teachers from low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience yelling by parents (36.0%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (23.1%), more likely to experience swearing by a parent (31.4%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (13.4%) and more likely to experience disparaging remarks on social media (18.8%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (13.1%).

Additionally, teachers from low ICSEA schools were more likely to experience discriminatory behaviour by a parent (9.2%) than teachers from high ICSEA schools (4.9%). However, teachers from low ICSEA schools were just as likely to experience hitting and punching from parents (0.9%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (0.3%), just as likely to experience damage to personal property from parents (1.5%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (0.3%) and a little more likely to experience disparaging remarks from parents (51.1%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (45.1%).

In addition, teachers from low ICSEA schools were a little more likely to experience standing over personal space from parents (20.0%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (15.1%), teachers from low ICSEA schools were a little less likely to experience organising others against a teacher/principal from parents (21.8%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (25.7%) and just as likely to experience lying about a teacher/principal to get them in trouble from parents (28.9%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (28.6%).

Teachers from low ICSEA schools were just as likely to experience harassment through phone calls or text messages from parents (19.1%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (20.0%) and

were just as likely to experience students engaging a parent on their behalf (30.2%) as teachers from high ICSEA schools (29.4%).

The most common TTBH parent behaviours experienced by teachers working in low ICSEA schools were; disparaging verbal remarks (51.1%), yelling (36.0%) and swearing (31.4%).

In comparison, the most common TTBH parent behaviours experienced by teachers working in high ICSEA schools were; disparaging verbal remarks (45.1%), students engaging parents to argue on their behalf (29.4%) and lying about teacher/principal to get them in trouble (28.6%). See Figure 10 'Percentage of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours Low and High ICSEA Comparison'

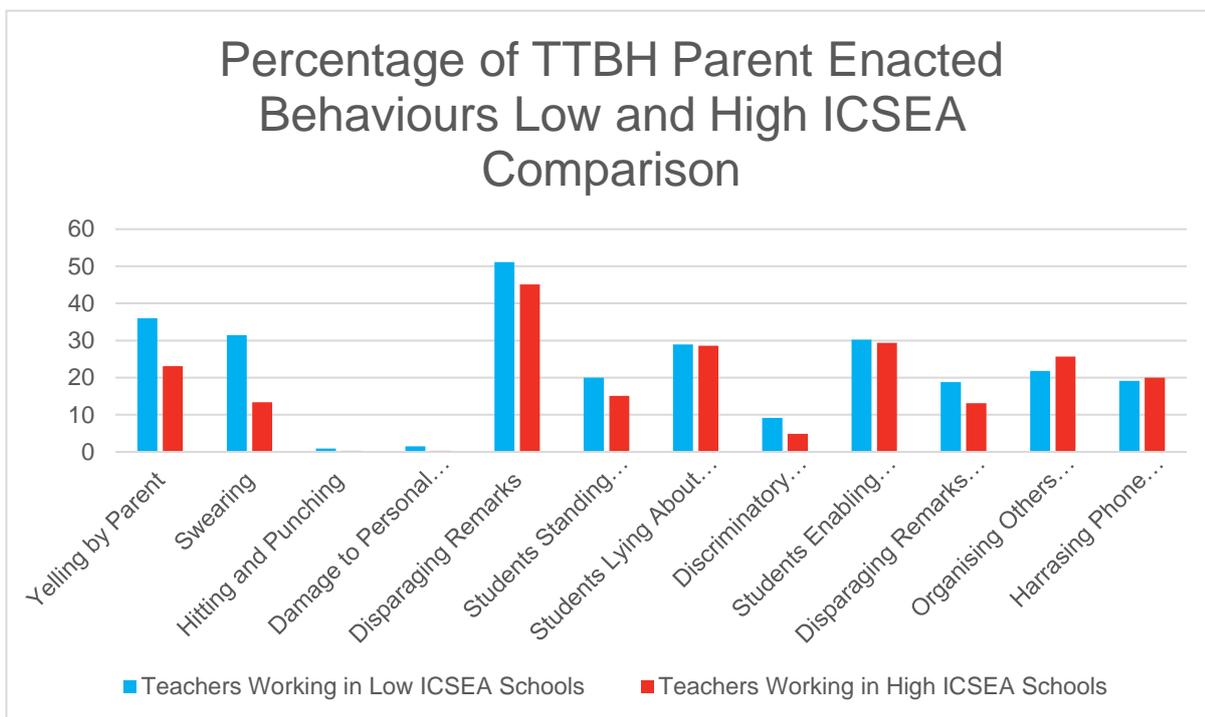


Figure 10 Percentage of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours Low and High ICSEA Comparison.

The most common TTBH parent behaviours in the Catholic sector were disparaging remarks (41.9%) and yelling (29.2%). In the Independent sector, the most common TTBH parent behaviours were disparaging remarks (46.6%) and students engaging parents to argue on their behalf (32.1%). In the Government sector, the most common TTBH parent behaviours were

disparaging remarks (41.9%) and yelling (29.2%). See Figure 11 ‘Percentage of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours by Sector’.

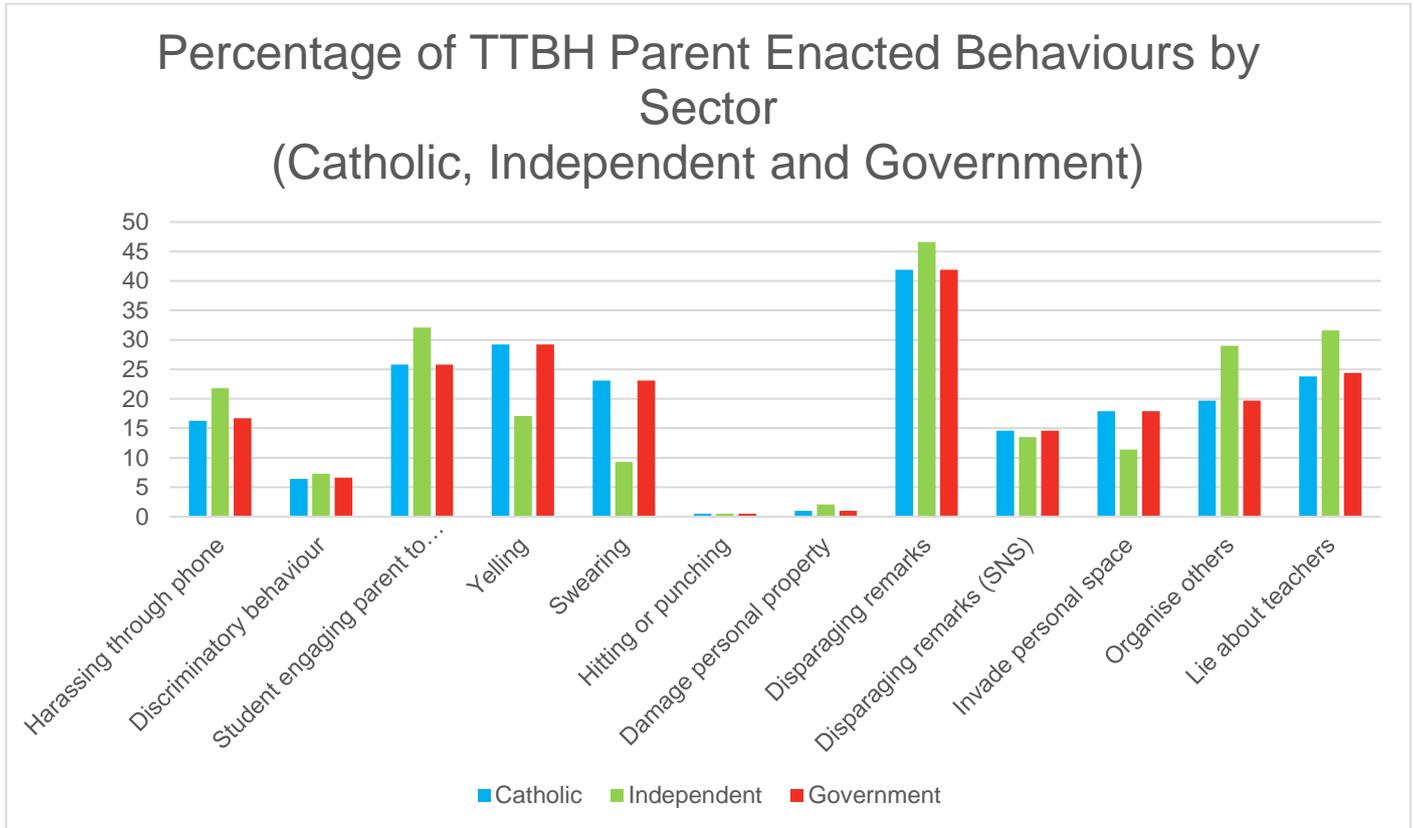


Figure 11 Percentage of TTBH Parent Enacted Behaviours by Sector

TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSE EFFECTIVENESS TO ACTION TAKEN

Teachers from Government schools are more likely to believe that action is generally taken in response to bullying in comparison to those who teach in non-Government schools. Teachers from Government and Catholic schools are more likely to believe that action is generally taken in response to bullying in comparison to those who teach at an Independent school.

When a teacher feels bullied or harassed at your school is any action generally taken?

	Government	Independent	Catholic
Always	14.6	13.2	7.0
Sometimes	45.7	47.1	50.0
Almost never	30.1	30.1	33.5
Never	9.6	9.5	9.5

Table 1 When a teacher feels bullied or harassed at your school is any action generally taken.

There was no significant difference in perceived effectiveness of response taken between Government school teachers and teachers at a non-Government school. So too, there is no

significant difference in perceived effectiveness of response between Independent schoolteachers and teachers Government or Catholic schools. There is no significant difference in effectiveness of perceived bullying responsive action between teachers teaching at Catholic and non-Catholic schools.

Do you feel when action is taken, that the response is effective?

	Government	Independent	Catholic
Always	4.8	4.2	1.9
Sometimes	48.7	51.8	57.7
Almost never	37.1	34.5	29.8
Never	9.5	9.5	10.6

Table 2 When Action Is Taken, Do You Feel That the Response is Effective.

While the majority of teachers felt that bullying and harassment by students and parents was an issue in their school, encouragingly, over half (58.3%) of participants believed that when reporting TTBH, action was taken by management to address instances of TTBH (13.1% always, 45.2% sometimes). This level of confidence was shared by both genders with both males and females reporting action was taken by management to address instances of TTBH in their schools (57.1% and 55.2% respectively).

Was action taken on report of TTBH

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Always	147	13.1
	Sometimes	509	45.2
	Almost Never	357	31.7
	Never	113	10.0
	Total	1126	100.0
Missing	System	87	
Total		1213	

Table 3 Was Action Taken on Report of TTBH.

Over half the participants felt that when action was taken, this was partly effective (4.3% always effective, 51.2% somewhat effective). Males and females perceived attempts to address TTBH by management similarly with 52.1% of males and 51% of females perceiving attempts as somewhat effective and 5.0% of males and 4.2% of females perceiving them as always effective. What is more, the feeling that interventions were only partly effective was similar among individuals

teaching at primary (always 5.1%, sometimes 51.2 %), secondary (always 4.1%, sometimes 51.0%) and those teaching across both primary and secondary (always = 0%, sometimes = 50.0%). Geographic area did not affect perception of effectiveness with the teachers across rural, metro and split metro/rural schools sharing similar perceptions of school effectiveness.

Teachers in Catholic schools were the most likely to feel that action taken from reports of TTBH were effective; always effective (1.9%) or sometimes effective (57.7%), followed by teachers in Government schools (always 4.7%, sometimes 47.7%) and Independent schools (always 4.8% and Sometimes 48.7%). While these figures are cause for optimism, the relatively high number of teachers reporting wanting to leave the profession due to TTBH, points to a need to increase perception of efficacy regarding the measures taken by management in addressing reports of teacher victimisation by students and parents.

Perception of response effectiveness was also relatively positive in most geographical locations, with teachers in urban areas feeling that responses were sometimes effective (39.1%) or always effective (29.1%). This view was largely shared by teachers in rural areas where 49% felt measures were sometimes effective and 4.8% felt measures were always effective.

While geographical area made little difference to teachers' perception of effectiveness in tackling TTBH, interestingly, when measuring for perception of response effectiveness and ICSEA score, teachers working at all ICSEA levels felt that responses were moderately successful at dealing with incidents of TTBH, with respondents believing responses to be sometimes (50%) or always effective (3.9%). This finding is interesting, particularly in light of teachers from low ICSEA schools reporting higher rates of almost all TTBH behaviours than high ICSEA schools and may point to some low ICSEA schools having processes which help them deal with TTBH more effectively than higher ICSE schools.

The qualitative section of this study revealed that teachers felt that there was a lack of clarity around policies and procedures to address student and parental TTBH. In fact, 45.6% believed their school did not have a policy which directly addressed teacher victimisation by students and parents, with a further 25.8% unsure if any policy existed at all. For many, the lack of a policy further exacerbated their feelings of uncertainty and anxiety in making a report due to the absence of clarity as to which steps should be taken, and what consequences, if any, would be incurred by the aggressor.

Encouragingly, of those who were aware of policies existing in their school to tackle TTBH, 60.1% of respondents agreed that the policies currently in place at their school were somewhat effective 53.4% or very effective 6.7% at tackling student and parental TTBH.

91% of those who responded to this question felt that explicit policies to tackle teacher targeted bullying and harassment by students and parents should be upheld in schools. Of these, teachers in Government and Catholic schools felt most strongly that policies should be adopted by their schools (91 percent each) followed by those teaching in independent schools (88%).

THE IMPACT OF TTBH ON TEACHERS

This section of the report explores the data we received to questions pertaining to the impact of TTBH on teachers' consideration of leaving the profession.

Of the total participant sample, 54.4% had considered leaving the profession due to TTBH whilst, 65.2% of teachers who had been bullied considered leaving the profession.

When teachers' responses were analysed by length of registration, 54.5% of early career teachers (those registered for less than 5 years) had considered a different career path. Mid and later career teachers fared little better with 53.8% of mid-career and 54.7% of late career teachers asserting that they had at some stage considered leaving the profession due to TTBH. Stage of career did not determine the likelihood of teachers considering leaving. The percentages of teachers who had considered leaving the profession due to TTBH were lower at all career stages in this data collection round than in the previous 2018 data collection round. See Figure 12, 'Percentage of Teachers Who Considered Leaving the Profession Due to TTBH'.

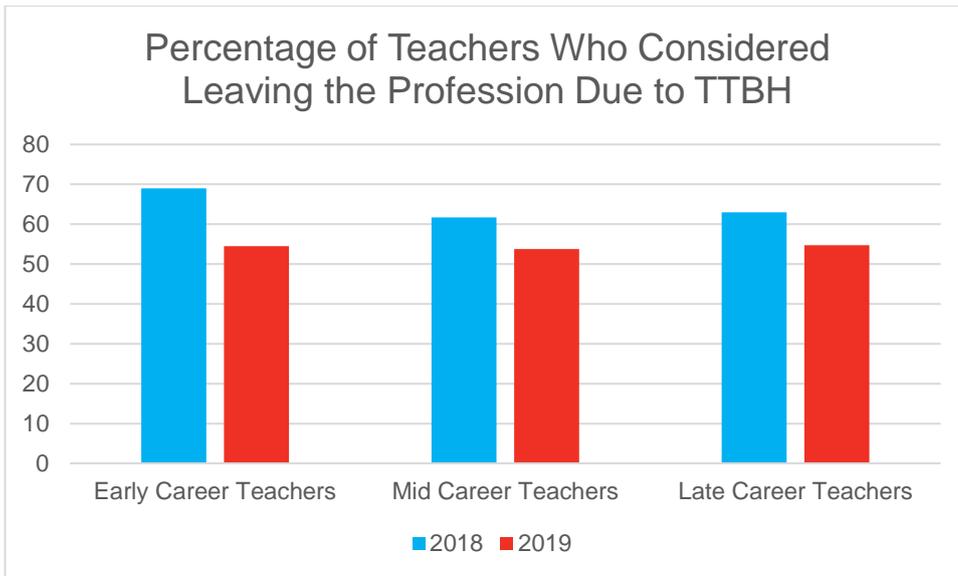


Figure 12 Percentage of Teachers Who Considered Leaving the Profession Due to TTBH

Women (50.5%) were just as likely as men (57.9%) to state that they had contemplated a career change due to TTBH. The percentage of women contemplating a career change due to TTBH was lower in 2019 than in 2018, whilst the percentage of men was slightly higher. See Figure 13 'Percentage by Gender of Teachers who Considered Leaving the Profession Due to TTBH'

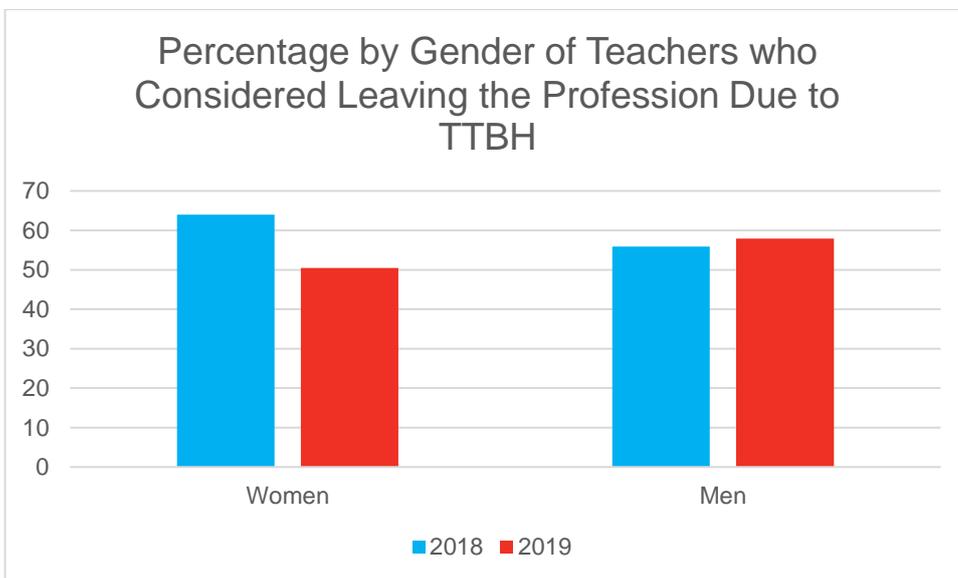


Figure 13 Percentage by Gender of Teachers who Considered Leaving the Profession Due to TTBH.

Teachers who work across both sectors (primary & secondary; 68.2%) were just as likely to express wanting to leave due to TTBH in comparison to teachers working only at either primary

(54.6%) or, secondary (53.5%). These figures have also decreased from 2018 to 2019. See Figure 14 'Teachers by Sector who Considered Leaving the Profession due to TTBH'

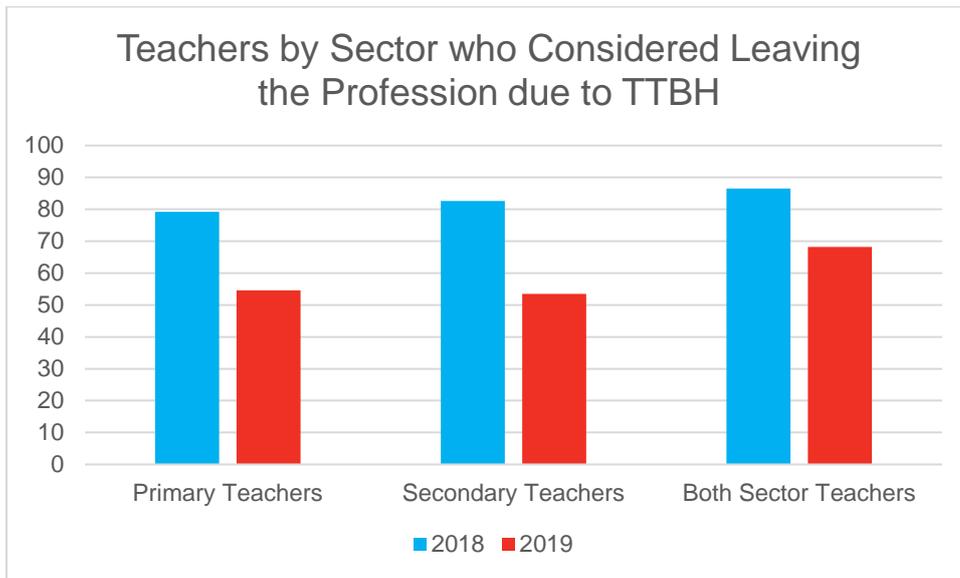


Figure 14 Teachers by Sector who Considered Leaving the Profession due to TTBH.

Harassment through phone calls by a student, swearing by a student, disparaging verbal remarks by students, discriminatory behaviour by a parent and disparaging verbal remarks by parents predicted whether teachers considered leaving the profession significantly more than other behaviours. From this result it seems that forms of verbal aggression may have more of an impact on teachers leaving the profession than physical aggression.

ADDRESSING TTBH – TEACHERS’ SUGGESTIONS

Teachers’ suggestions for addressing TTBH were found to be similar in this study to those made by teachers who took part in 2018. A large proportion of respondents suggested further clarity in existing policies coupled with clear consequences for perpetrators of TTBH. Many of our respondents also called for greater support of teachers by management and peak organisations upon reporting of even minor incidents of TTBH and the inclusion of Zero tolerance policies. As in 2018, teachers also called for stronger measures to be taken to prevent aggressors from stepping back into classrooms or school grounds.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The evidence found in this, and our previous 2018 study, suggests that student and parent teacher targeted bullying and harassment is a problem in Australian schools. The impact of COVID-19 on teacher wellbeing is not yet well understood however, anecdotal evidence from news sources

suggests that it is impacting teachers' stress levels and sense of self efficacy. Due to this, it is believed that now more than ever, it is essential that steps are taken to ensure that teachers are provided with a safe working environment free from TTBH. To this end, we recommend the following;

- That an examination of the most effective strategies which schools in all sectors are using to address TTBH is undertaken to establish best practice protocols.
- That an evidence based best practice protocol is adopted formally by schools and education departments.

In terms of further research, we suggest that;

- Considering the findings relating to ICSEA scores, that an in-depth study with schools with low (<800) ICSEA score is carried out to ascertain to what level school climate (including resource availability, student body, management style and community levels of education) may be a factor contributing to the prevalence of TTBH as well as what strategies may be currently effective in addressing TTBH
- An investigation is constructed into what relationship may exist between curriculum programming and student enacted TTBH
- Finally, that an in-depth study is undertaken to ascertain the relationship (if any) between TTBH and teacher emotional intelligence, teacher wellbeing and teacher stress

APPENDIX - SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your age bracket?
3. How long have you held registration as a teacher?
4. Which educational level are you employed in? Tick all that apply
5. In what role are you currently employed
6. In which state/territory(s) do you currently teach?
7. In which sector do you work? (Tick all that apply)
8. What is your school's postcode?
9. Over the last twelve months, have you experienced bullying or harassing behaviour(s) from a student? (includes definition of bullying as per study below question)
Which of the following behaviour(s) from a student have you experienced and in what frequency? (Tick all relevant)
10. Have your own experiences of bullying and harassment by students ever made you want to leave the teaching profession?
11. Can you tell us a little about how the impact of bullying and harassment by students has affected you?
12. Over the last twelve months, have you experienced bullying or harassing behaviour(s) from a parent/guardian(s)? (includes definition of bullying as per study below question)
13. Which of the following behaviour(s) from a parent/guardian(s) have you experienced and in what frequency? (Tick all relevant)
14. Have your own experiences of bullying and harassment by parents/guardians ever made you want to leave the teaching profession?
15. Can you tell us a little about how the impact of bullying and harassment by parents has affected you?
16. Do you feel that bullying and harassment of teachers by students and their parents is an issue for your school?
17. Are you aware of any policies at your school tackling teacher bullying and harassment by students and parents?
18. Do you think your school should have a policy to tackle teacher targeted bullying and harassment by students and parents?
19. What type of attitudes, behaviours and consequences do you feel should be included in such a policy?

20. How effective is the policy at tackling teacher targeted bullying and harassment by students and parents?
21. When a teacher feels bullied or harassed at your school is any action generally taken?
22. In what way is action taken and by whom?
23. Do you feel when action is taken, that the response is effective?
24. If a Principal, Assistant Principal or Deputy Principal feels bullied/harassed at your school, is any action generally taken?
25. In what way is action taken and by whom?
26. Do you feel when action is taken, that the response is effective?
27. What is the Index of Community Socio- Educational Advantage (ICSEA) score for your school?

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