

COLAISTE NAISIUNTA EALAINE IS DEARTHA
NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

Dissertation Abstract

Name: Siobhan Toomey
Title: Bullying at Post-Primary level

This dissertation is an investigation into the forms and the effects of bullying including guidelines on how to counteract bullying behaviour and the implementation of a whole-school policy and a discussion of how it can combat bullying.

Chapter one is a review of the literature and aims to pin down the issues surrounding bullying; defining bullying behaviour, recognising bullies and victims, examining effects of bullying and investigating the level of response currently being offered and what is required to effectively combat the problem.

Chapter two is concerned with the planning and implementation of a whole-school anti-bullying policy. In it I discuss the involvement of various parties and the role each has to play in the successfulness of the policy.

In chapter three I discuss the methodology which underpins the scheme of work undertaken in the teaching practice school, how the work compliments the curriculum guidelines for art, craft and design at Junior Certificate level. I also discuss and evaluate the work which resulted from it.

The final section of the dissertation contains recommendations and observations concerning the issue of bullying and how it is (or isn't) being tackled in our education system, with a particular focus on our second level schools.

This dissertation presents an initial study of Bullying which would warrant further research and development.

M0054420NC

NC 0021276 8



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Bullying at Post-Primary Level

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Education

in

Candidacy for the

B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

by

Siobhan Toomey

June 1998







TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
LIST OF FIGURES	II
INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. BULLYING: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	4
Defining Bullying Behaviour	
The Effects of Bullying Behaviour	
Preventative Measures	
II. ESTABLISHING A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY	22
Devising a whole-school Anti-Bullying Policy	
Implementing the Policy	
Preparation of the draft policy and transition	
from draft to final policy	
III. METHODOLOGY	35
The School	
The Questionnaire	
The Results of the Questionnaire	
The Scheme of Work	
The Junior Certificate Curriculum	
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION	53
APPENDICES	56
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	72



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents and family, without whose constant help and support it would not have been possible.

My thanks also to Professor Iseult McCarthy and to Eileen Doyle for much appreciated guidance and advice during the research and preparation of this work.

Very special thanks also to Paxo for all your love and support and for encouraging me when I needed it.



LIST OF FIGURES

A.1	Visual Aid	.....	67
A.2	Student Work	.....	68
A.3	Student Work	.....	69
A.4	Student Work	.....	70
A.5	Student Work	.....	71

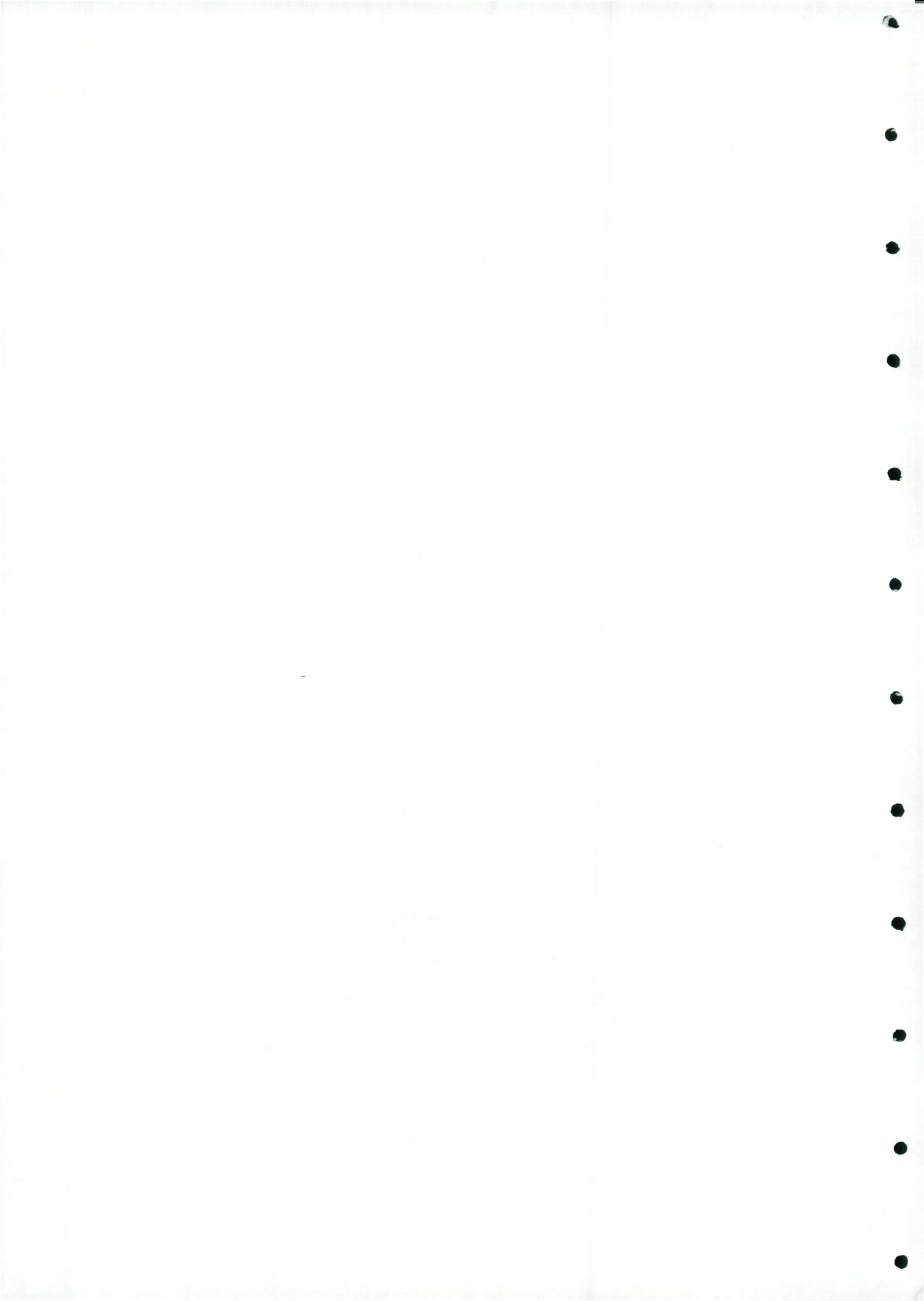


INTRODUCTION

*Sticks and stones may break my bones
But names can also hurt me.
For cuts and bruises heal in time
But words are ghosts that haunt me.*

Bullying takes place in schools more frequently than parents and teachers realise, this is largely because victims generally suffer in silence and many forms of bullying are actually very difficult to detect, for example non-direct forms of bullying where there is little physical evidence that there is something going on. Left unchecked bullying can mean untold misery for months and even years on the part of the victim and can even prove fatal. In more recent times we hear regularly of news reports where bullying has gone too far and has resulted in the victim coming to serious harm. Bullying is an utterly devastating experience for many victims, leaving them mentally, psychologically and/or physically damaged, sometimes for life. In the worst case scenarios victims can end up so despairing that they do themselves serious harm, often resulting in suicide. Bullying is a social problem. It is the problem of schools, parents, employers and the community at large, and so it is all these people who must therefore be involved in taking an active role in combatting bullying behaviour if it is to be successfully beaten.

I chose the subject of bullying for my dissertation because of a personal interest in the area. I find it both a very interesting area of study while at the same time a very frustrating one, that so many children have



to suffer so extensively and in some cases for such a prolonged period of time so unnecessarily, through no fault of their own. My interest also stems from having myself being bullied at various times throughout my education at primary and post-primary level and not even realising at the time that I had the right to consider myself bullied because there was no direct physical contact.

There is a great deal of ignorance surrounding the area of bullying, it's many forms and manifestations. Anyone directly involved with young people will be acutely aware of the extent of the problem, it is at the next level that we need to make radical changes in how it is looked on and the attitudes held towards how it should be tackled. School boards, educational committees, public representatives and others in positions of power and influence must be made more aware of the problem and must begin to take it seriously rather than passing it off as an unfortunate childhood experience. Bullying is not just confined to young people or to the schoolyard, new research by Mona O'Moore suggests that it is now also a substantial problem in the workplace; surely a direct result of such behaviour going unchecked in the young person. Undesirable anti-social behaviour such as bullying must be eliminated in the formative years, during childhood, if we are to hope that this problem can be controlled. This means an active initiative on the part of all concerned, not just individual teachers or parents.



It is crucial that all schools have an anti-bullying policy or document of some kind which establishes where they stand on the subject. Parents and students must be aware of such a policy.



CHAPTER 1

BULLYING:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Defining Bullying Behaviour

All children, regardless of any other factors be they social, racial, religious or economic, have the right to be happy and safe. They therefore have the right not to be bullied or abused in any way. Valerie Besag states that bullying is in fact a form of abuse, child-to child abuse, and that as abuse it can be a very damaging experience, traumatic at the least for a child of any age to cope with. ¹ Unfortunately it is a sad fact that in today's 'modern' society that as many as one in ten schoolchildren at primary level are exposed to frequent bullying and one in three to occasional bullying. There were no statistics (from her nation-wide study on bullying) yet available to Mona O'Moore when she wrote the preface to Vivette O'Donnell's *Bullying*, a resource guide for parents and teachers, but early indications at the time of press were that at post-primary level 92,811 out of 348,927 pupils (27%) were involved in bully/victim problems. ²

Sonia Sharp and Peter Smith define bullying behaviour as follows:

Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour which is usually harmful and deliberate; it is often persistent, sometimes continuing for weeks, months or even years.

Bullying can take many forms, it can be:
physical hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings,
verbal name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks,



indirect spreading nasty rumours, excluding someone from social groups. ³

Dan Olweus identifies the situation of a child being bullied or victimised as 'when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students'. ⁴ Olweus goes on to describe a negative action as being when an individual purposely, either inflicts or tries to inflict, injury or pain on another. He repeats the view of Sharp and Smith that negative actions are not just those acted out, for example if somebody hits, pushes, kicks, pinches or restrains another - by physical contact; they can also be carried out by words, he gives examples such as threatening, taunting, teasing and calling names. Olweus states how negative actions can also be carried out without the use of words or actions, for example making faces or 'throwing looks' or by leaving someone out of a social group. Olweus makes a point of the importance of distinguishing between direct and indirect bullying, direct bullying being where there are relatively open attacks made on the victim and indirect bullying being where the victim is isolated by the bully or bullies, i.e. being left out of the group. This indirect form of bullying is normally less visible than direct bullying, which involves physical contact, the signs of which can usually be identified, and so it is important that teachers be aware of and on the look-out for it. ⁵

Eric Jones, who describes the bully as 'someone who is responsible for premeditated, continuous, malicious and belittling tyranny' and the victim as being 'on the receiving end, repeatedly, defencelessly and



typically without a champion, ⁶ suggests that in some cases bullying might be avoided if the opportunity were not there for it to occur.

He advises that teachers should be patrolling school grounds and corridors, keeping a vigilant eye out for any problems on a small scale lest they ignore or miss a situation and have to pay a price in hours later on, trying to sort out what happened 'when bullies stalked the quiet corners of the playground'. ⁷ Unfortunately it is the victim who pays the highest price in the majority of situations; loss of self worth, self esteem and self confidence; the ultimate price to pay for an education. Jones warns one to allow 'no-go areas' in the school grounds to develop at ones peril. Linda Frost lists slightly different examples to the others as to what she would consider involve bullying behaviour - which she describes as being 'not only physical but verbal, or conveyed purely through body language, or by isolating a victim by influencing the rest of the peer group'.

- following someone, or giving menacing stares
- swearing, bearing malice and 'getting even'
- rubbishing other children's work
- wilful destruction of someone else's work or property
- stealing .. valued possessions, packed lunches etc.
- intimidation and extortion
- physical violence
- mental cruelty ⁸

The problem of bullying has only quite recently, as in over the last few years, been recognised as such (a problem). Andrew Mellor found that the report written on Scottish Schools in 1977 (The Pack Report on Truancy & Indiscipline) referred to bullying as a form of indiscipline and made no further comment on the subject. There was some, though not much, progress made regarding the situation of recognising the problem

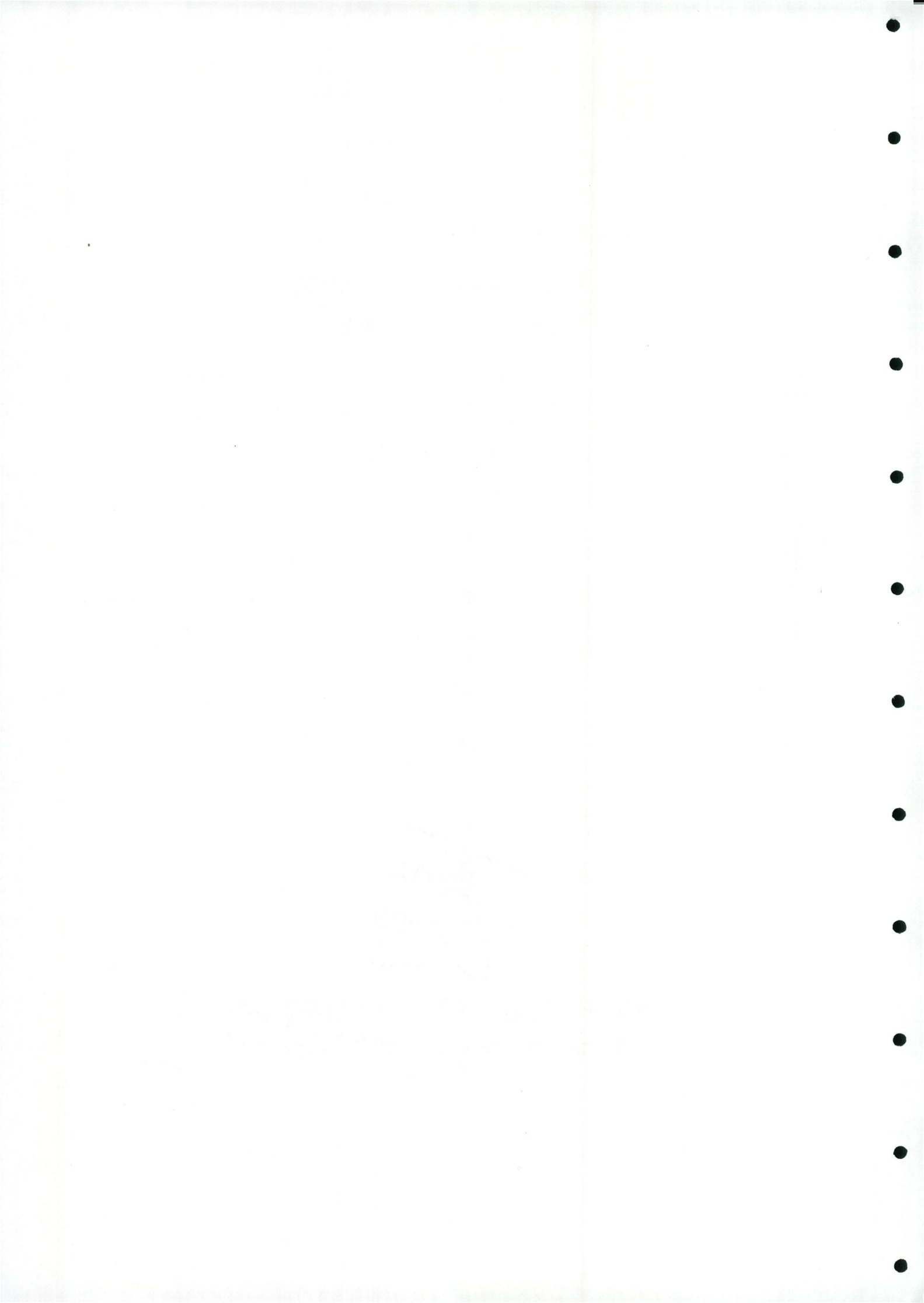


by the time the Elton Report on discipline in schools in England & Wales was published in 1989; in this case three paragraphs were devoted to the matter, 'not much progress in twelve years' writes Mellor. ⁹

The situation of recognising the problem and dealing with it is much more advanced in Scandinavia. The Norwegians began to be concerned about the issue of bullying in the early 1970's and there has been a strong, government-funded anti-bullying campaign since that time, including extensive research, studies and an educative programme providing information for parents and teachers to help combat the problem. Contrast this level of concern to the situation here at home or even to that of our neighbours in Britain, Scotland and Wales.

The situation however has improved somewhat and there have been a number of anti-bullying initiatives developed in more recent times, and there is a generally higher level of awareness of the problem among parents and teachers. A number of source books written exclusively for the Irish situation have been published in the past few years, authors such as Vivette O' Donnell and Brendan Byrne being to the forefront of these.

John Pearce writes with more optimism than other writers on the subject, his view is that the situation is not beyond repair, that there is much we can do , perhaps not to alleviate the problem altogether but to at least prevent some cases from happening and help those caught in bullying situations. 'Although bullying is a serious matter with a poor prognosis, there is a lot that can be done to stop it provided that it is taken seriously and that there is agreed and concentrated action involving parents, teachers and children'. ¹⁰ It is vital that we do not adopt the



outlook of previous generations, when it was a generally accepted fact that there would always be bullies and victims and that it was inevitable that some children would have to go through it, for them it would be part of growing up. This passive reaction simply facilitates the situation, allowing it to escalate further.

Bullying is just one of the many ways in which aggression manifests itself. The attitude we hold towards bullying sets a standard for a certain level of aggression which is generally considered acceptable in our society. Bullies share many issues with other forms of violence such as vandalism and hooliganism. There are, as I have illustrated from quoting various writers on the subject, many different definitions of what bullying behaviour is, but we can establish a number of common elements which present themselves in some form or other in almost all cases of bullying: the deliberate use of aggression, an unequal power relationship between bully and victim and the causing of physical pain and /or emotional distress.

The Effects of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can affect pupils in a number of ways. When pupils are being bullied their lives are made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem.

This unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning. Some children may experience stress-related symptoms: stomach aches and headaches; nightmares or anxiety attacks.



Some children will avoid being bullied by not going to school. Some children may even become afraid to leave the safety of their own home. In secondary schools, pupils may be making subject choices because they want to avoid particular individuals rather than being interested in or successful at that subject.

In the long term, persistently bullied pupils are more likely to become depressed adults.

Pupils who are persistently involved in bullying others are much more likely as young adults to be convicted of anti-social behaviour offences. ¹¹

For most pupils bullying occurs in and around the school, the playground being the most common location. Olweus also shares this view, stating that he disagrees with the assumption that bullying takes place chiefly on the way to/from school. His studies carried out in Norway and Sweden disprove this notion; 'there were almost twice (in secondary, three times) as many students who were bullied at school as on the way to and from school. The school is without doubt where most of the bullying occurs'. ¹² Girls tend to use indirect bullying more than direct bullying, they also tend to bully in groups. 'Girls often use more subtle and indirect ways of harassment such as slandering, spreading of rumours and manipulation of friends'. ¹³ Boys are more likely to use more direct, physical forms of bullying. 'Harassment with non-physical means (words, gestures, etc.) is the most common form of bullying among both boys and girls'. ¹⁴ Usually the pupil or pupils involved in bullying are in the same class or year as the pupil being bullied. Most pupils will experience some sort of bullying during their school lives but some pupils are more at risk of being bullied, for example children who don't have close friends in school and are often on their own. 'Bullying can be carried out by a single individual - the bully - or by a group. In the



context of school bullying, the target has usually been a single student'.¹⁵

Michele Elliot gives the following list as possible signs that a child is being bullied:

- be frightened of walking to or from school
- be unwilling to go to school and make continual excuses to avoid going
- beg to be driven to school
- change their route to school every day
- begin doing poorly in their schoolwork
- regularly have clothes or books or schoolwork torn or destroyed
- come home starving (because dinner money was taken)
- become withdrawn
- start stammering
- start acting out or hitting other children (as a reaction to being bullied by those children or others)
- stop eating or become obsessively clean (as a reaction to being called 'fatty' or 'dirty')
- develop stomach and headaches due to stress
- attempt suicide
- cry themselves to sleep
- begin wetting the bed
- have nightmares and call out things like, 'leave me alone'
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- have their possessions 'go missing'
- ask for money or begin stealing money (to pay the bully)
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to say what's wrong
- give improbable excuses to explain any of the above¹⁶

Linda Frost had carried out extensive research in the school where she was working at the time years before writing the article in *Bullying* edited by Michele Elliot (chapter 4; A Primary School Approach - what can be done about the bully?). The information was gathered during the first two weeks after the new students (first years) had started school.

Only 5% felt that they had never been bullied. Over half felt that they had

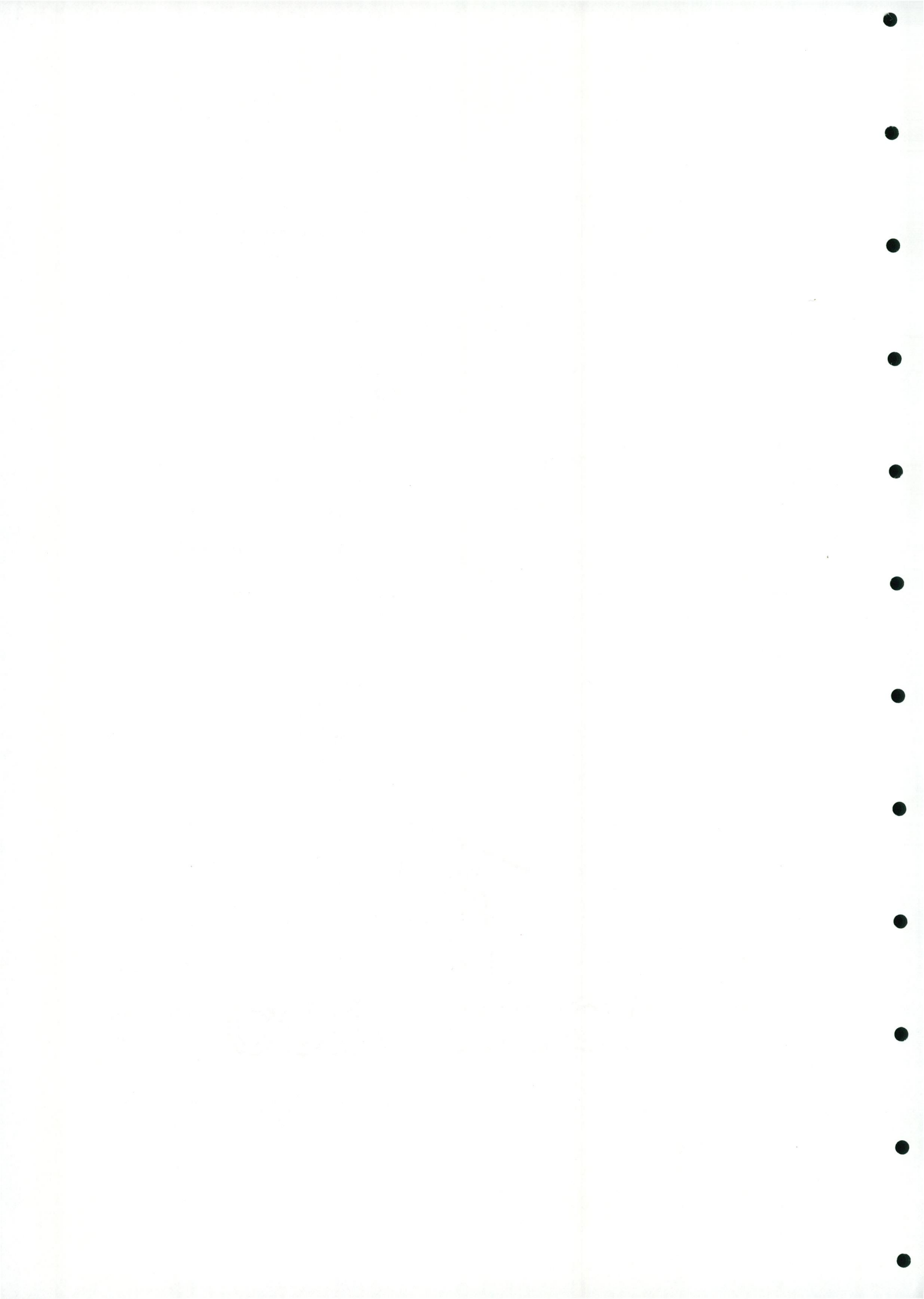


been bullied in their first two weeks. The children were also asked to identify, in confidence, children they believed to be very bad bullies.

Though it may seem a sexist generalisation, it was the finding of the author that girl bullies often resort to mental cruelty, whereas boy bullies are more often more physical. This correlates to the findings of others regarding the use of direct and in-direct forms of bullying by both sexes. She found it interesting that there was a small number of children who claimed they had never been bullied. The author states that these children were not bullies and describes them thus; children whose demeanour, behaviour and attitude exempted them from this kind of interaction. The author nicknamed this group the 'sages', because she found they were usually intelligent, non-contentious, seen as fair and generally held in high respect by their peer group.

Another group she called the 'outsiders'. These children had some common traits with the sages, but were mainly children who 'didn't need anyone', and they mostly remained uninvolved in the group dynamics, they tended to do their own thing, quite independently of others and had little effect on their peers, either positively or negatively.

Another group she named the 'victims'. Often these were children of low prestige (little value) in the group. They were often seen as misfits, either for reasons of appearance, lack of friends or other trivial reasons. The basic problem identified by the author was one of body language, she says that these children seemed to almost invite bullying. They had low self-esteem, and didn't tell if bullied.



The next group to emerge were the bullies. The author writes of how it was often physically impossible to pick them out - they weren't necessarily the biggest or strongest. They had no clearly defined ranking in the peer group order. Some were respected but feared, some had physical or other skills which were admired. One group were outcasts who only managed to keep friends by threats and were socially isolated. Often, like their victims, they suffered from low self-esteem. Frost was surprised at one of the groups of children identified as bullies; the behaviour they showed to adults was totally the opposite of that they showed to peers. They gave the impression of being class leaders - the most popular child in the class. In effect their dominance was accepted and the response of the other pupils was to appease or 'keep on the right side of them'.¹⁷

All of the work I have read on the subject of bullying identifies different factors and symptoms associated with bullying, but all authors are of one voice regarding the role of the school in the campaign against bullying. The school has an important part to play in matters of prevention and awareness raising. All stress the importance of school involvement and the importance of each school having a clear, well-publicised anti-bullying policy. All members of staff, teaching and non-teaching positions, the students and parents should be fully aware of the school's position on bullying behaviour, what steps are taken in the event of bullying taking place, what happens to the bully and the victim and what preventative measures are taken within the school. Such attitudes should be an integral part of the school ethos and teachers and pupils



should strive to perpetrate this attitude in their behaviour and that which they will either accept or deem unacceptable from others.

Preventative Measures

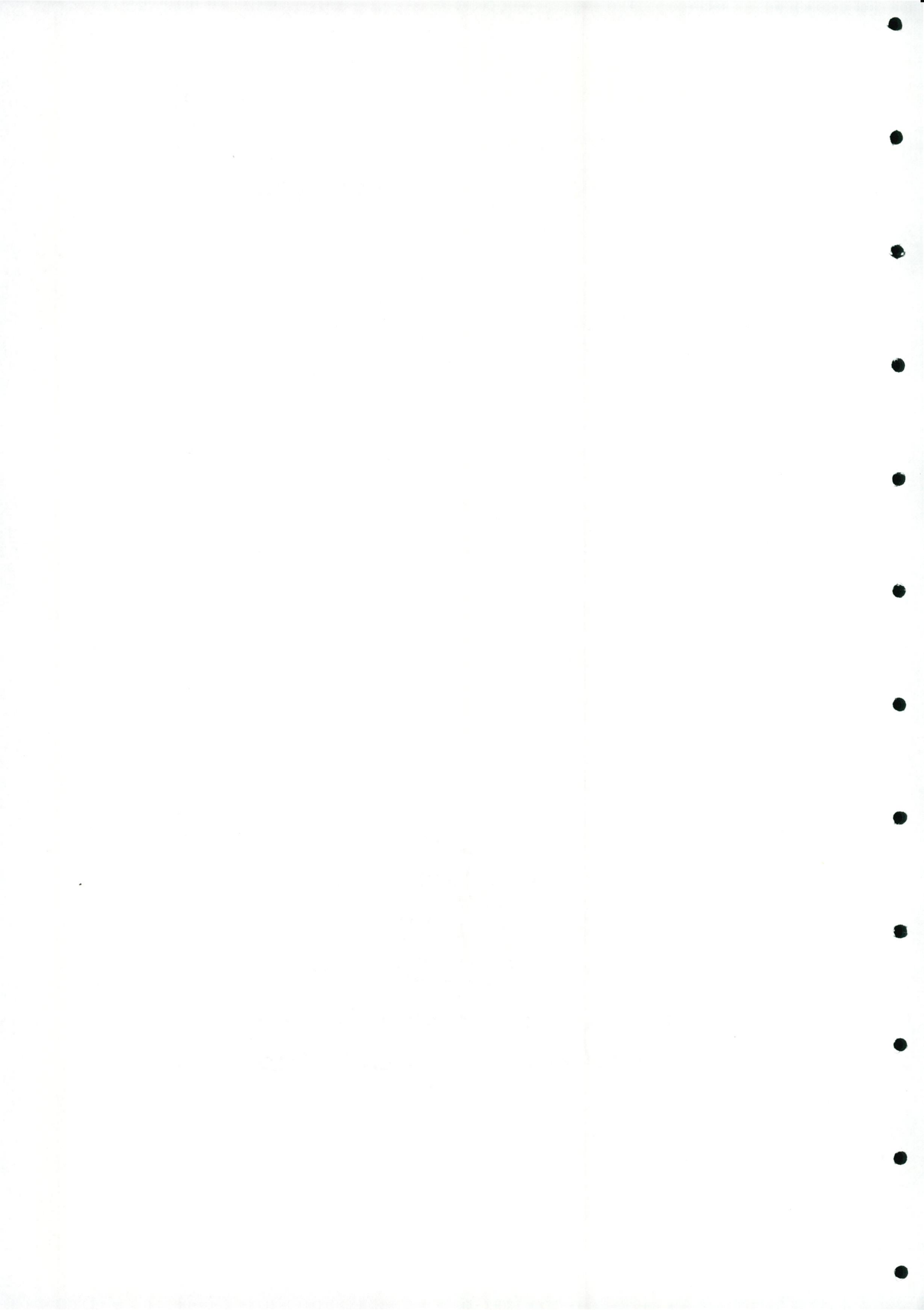
In chapter two I will discuss in detail the development and implementation of a whole school policy and examine what schools can do about the problem of bullying. In order to develop a whole-school policy on bullying, it is necessary to research the subject thoroughly, to look into the myths and establish (if they can be established) the facts concerning why some children become bullies, and indeed why some become victims of bullying behaviour. A school policy should be a positive approach against bullying, addressing issues of both prevention and reaction. Pupils should receive their education in a safe, caring environment, free from fear and intimidation.

Before establishing an anti-bullying policy (a school atmosphere of zero tolerance) in the school we need to first look at what we know about the bully and the victim; psychologically and physically there isn't a 'type' of person who is a bully or likewise who is a victim.

As I have already stated, the problem of bullying has only recently been acknowledged as a problem and so because of this, apart from that carried out by the Scandinavians, little research has been carried out and therefore we actually know very little concerning the 'causes' or even if any concrete ones can be identified. Dan Olweus addresses the issue of where bullying behaviour originates; why do some children become bullies? Olweus poses the question: is bullying a result of competition at



school? It is not an uncommon belief that bullying behaviour is a consequence of competition for good marks at school, and I would like to voice my views regarding what I consider to be a grave mis-conception. I vehemently, on the grounds of my own personal experience (as I have not undertaken any studies in this area myself), oppose this view and would be more inclined to agree with those of the opinion that aggressive behaviour on the part of the bully towards his/her peers is a reaction to frustrations and failures either at school or in some other aspect of their life. Even though research presented by Olweus in 1978 disproves this notion, I find this explanation of such unwarranted, unprovoked, cruel and extremely damaging behaviour easier to accept than other possible explanations because it was something I went through on and off at various times in my school years, and as a victim I think the hardest thing to understand is why this person/these people are subjecting you to this torturous ordeal. In any case we are still no nearer to a concrete reason for explaining bullying behaviour as possible explanations and theories that have been put forward do not hold true for all cases of bullying, each case having it's own factors, every situation being different. According to research carried out by Olweus, both bullies and victims appear to earn lower-than-average marks, ¹⁸ another point upon which I disagree with Olweus, proven by research though it may be, it does not hold true for my case, nor other cases I know of, on this point I believe Olweus' research is dated as there is no support for the claim that lower grades are a cause of aggressive behaviour. Vivette O'Donnell also addresses the issue of bullies and achievement and writes of 'a common belief that all bullies are low



achievers' with which she disagrees, acknowledging that of course some bullies are low achievers but that there are also those who are 'top of their class, admired and successful'.¹⁹ O'Donnell relates achievement and bullying quite closely, she believes that 'achievement can affect the form which bullying can take, and the effects of bullying can be associated with levels of achievement'.²⁰ Olweus poses the question of what condition(s) create aggressive children. He suggests that child-rearing methods and other conditions during childhood affect behaviour. Olweus identifies four factors; based mostly on research carried out on boys.²¹

1. The basic emotional attitude of the parents (in particular that of the 'primary care-taker' usually, though not always, the mother), towards the boy is important, especially the emotional attitude when the child is young.

A negative basic attitude on the part of the parents, characterised by lack of warmth and involvement, increases the chances of the boy becoming aggressive/hostile towards others later on.

2. How permissive the primary care-taker has been, i.e. if they have allowed aggressive behaviour on the part of the child, not correcting him, 'letting him away with bad behaviour'.

3. The child's level of aggression can be raised by the parent's use of 'power-assertive' child-rearing methods such as physical punishment and violent outbursts. Olweus comments on the phrase 'violence begets violence'. He also warns that physical punishment should not be used, but that clear limits and certain rules should be set down.

4. The natural temperament of the child. Some children are more placid than others, likewise some are more domineering and this affects their development of an aggressive reaction pattern.²²

Linda Frost observes that we all develop quite haphazardly and that chance has a lot to do with who our role-models are and therefore in determining how we turn out. Ideally we would all develop the traits, qualities and personalities of the aforementioned sages! According to Frost, everyone can choose which qualities to develop, although she does



recognise that some people are blessed with particular traits, such as greater intelligence or a more robust physical strength than others. ²³ Vivette O'Donnell identifies that bullying is also related to the child's perceptions of what is due to him/her, his/her feelings about being, for example, deprived, hurt, humiliated, resentful, jealous or angry. These feelings can result in bullying behaviour and victim behaviour. What the child thinks or believes also contributes to under-achieving. To achieve you need to have confidence and motivation; motivation comes from interest and incentives. O'Donnell believes, and I agree with her on this point, that high-achievers and low achievers and those in the middle can be bullies or victims. ²⁴

As well as developing a whole-school policy which incorporates educating the students, holding drama and role-play sessions and discussions etc. to address the issue of bullying we also need to address the problem between the individuals involved in a particular case of bullying. 'Victims need to be reassured that they are not alone and that it could happen to anyone. Also bullying can not be cured just by treating the victims'. ²⁵ Victims of bullying need to be made to feel strong, even if initially that strength is coming from others who are supporting them. The problems of the bullies themselves also need to be addressed. Eric Jones advises teachers to talk with their students and discuss the issue of bullying with them when they arrive at school. ²⁶ Not every student is happy at school, their individual reasons for their unhappiness vary, for some the reason can be either a major or minor event which has happened to them, for others it may be that school is not working for



them. Effective teaching is of major importance to the child feeling comfortable in school; in other words, how appropriate the curriculum is and how that curriculum is delivered to the student(s) is very influential in terms of how the child feels about school.

As well as a well-planned and well taught curriculum, school rules and expectations should be clearly set out and also schools should be consistent concerning these areas as they all combine to provide a coherent education. Pupils need to know what is expected of them, both academically and in terms of their behaviour. Uncertainty is an important factor among the many causes of stress. Levels of stress among our school-going population is a serious problem, and so it needs to be taken seriously. As a society we are experiencing higher levels of stress, in all roles and all walks of life, than in previous generations. So, generally stress levels are up, but it is the extent to which they are up among our youngsters which is alarming, suicide rates among fifteen to twenty year-olds are rocketing. It is a known fact that bullying causes stress and also that prolonged stress causes considerable damage. A detailed study on stress carried out by Sharp and Thompson in 1992 revealed that what teachers think student find stressful and what the students actually identified as stressful differed greatly. Among the list of aspects which they found stressful, students mentioned (in no particular order):

- death of a close family member
- illness of a family member
- personal illness or injury
- poor relationship with a teacher
- arguments within the family
- uninteresting lessons



- arguing with friends
- examinations
- being told off by the teacher/being in trouble
- difficulty with schoolwork ²⁷

As you can see more than half of these factors are directly related to school. Bullies themselves often experience stress at home or failure at home, they sometimes suffer from emotional problems and 'feel a need to assert themselves in some way over their peers'. ²⁸ So, one can see the importance of raising an awareness about the subject of bullying, studies indicate that pupils seem to respond well to discussions and basically being involved in the issues concerning the school.

Curriculum work on bullying can:

- raise the student's awareness of bullying behaviour
- challenge their attitudes, question their opinions and ideas about bullying behaviour
- encourage support for and understanding towards those students among them who are victims of bullying

On the topic of rights and responsibility, we all have basic rights; the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Some children remain 'in the pursuit' of that happiness for a lot of their school-days because of the actions of another (or other) individuals.



In terms of bullying, responsibility and apportioning blame , we must take preventative measures in the hope of avoiding such upsetting conditions for some of our children. We must try not to allow the 'bully' to develop into just that. We must try to combat the effects of poor upbringing and bad self-esteem which we know can lead to bullying. Perhaps there will always be those who bully and likewise those who are bullied and little can be done to change this, but we owe it to our children to try until there is nothing left to try and resist in the same way we valiantly fight off all of today's evils; for their sake, and give them their right to a safe and happy childhood, free from fear, worry, pain and many unnecessary tears.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 1

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- 2 Mona O'Moore, Bullying At School (Attic Press, Dublin, 1995), preface, p.ix
- 3 Sonia Sharp & Peter K. Smith, Tackling Bullying In Your School (Routledge, London, 1994), p.1
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- 16 Michele Elliot, Bullying (Longman Group UK Ltd., Essex, 1991), p.9
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- 25 Andrew Mellor, Bullying, p.90
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CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

The school plays a very important part in helping children involved in bullying. The primary concern of a school, in the education of students, must be for their general well-being and happiness. In order to ensure this they must take the necessary steps to make sure that there is little or no opportunity for bullying to occur in their school. I have already established the adverse effects of bullying on both the academic and emotional aspects of the child's development and in this chapter I will discuss how an anti-bullying policy can aid schools in the provision of the safe environment required by students; safe from the emotional and physical distress caused by bullying.

The anti-bullying policy operates on reducing incidents of bullying by removing the opportunity for bullying to occur in the first instance and by providing support for those involved. The idea behind the policy being that prevention is always better than cure, the policy aims to tackle the problem at its roots, questioning current attitudes held and behaviour which is considered acceptable. It sets out to challenge and to change our outlook on the issue of bullying and to develop a zero-tolerance for bullying behaviour. Bullying is not a fact of life or something children have to go through. It doesn't make them more resilient to life experiences, nor make them 'better people'. It is time to throw away long-held misconceptions such as these and to face the facts; bullying



does happen, but it does not have to happen.

Schools must take a stand and take an active part in the prevention of bullying, if we are not involved in preventing the problem then we are part of the problem.

Devising a whole-school anti-bullying policy.

As previously mentioned, a whole-school policy must be central to any efforts to tackle the problem of bullying in schools. The anti-bullying policy provides a framework for intervention and prevention. The policy is a document which states clearly the intention of the school authorities, so that all involved from staff (both teaching and administrative) to students and parents are aware of the attitude held in relation to bullying, i.e. that it is behaviour which will not be tolerated. It should also include guidelines as to how it will be discouraged and in the event of its occurrence how it should best be dealt with. In other words the policy is a statement of intent which guides action and organisation within the school. 'It establishes a clear and defined set of agreed aims which provide pupils, staff and parents with a sense of direction and an understanding of the commitment of the school to do something about bullying behaviour.'¹

The anti-bullying policy of a school should be an extension of existing school policies, for example behaviour and equal opportunities policy. The policy and the attitudes which lie behind it play an active part



in aiding staff to be consistent in their approach to bullying behaviour, which in turn promotes anti-bullying values within the school.

The most effective preventative measure a school can employ is perhaps for all staff members and the local education authority to establish clearly that bullying in school, in any form, will not be tolerated and, indeed, will be dealt with firmly. 2

Implementing the policy

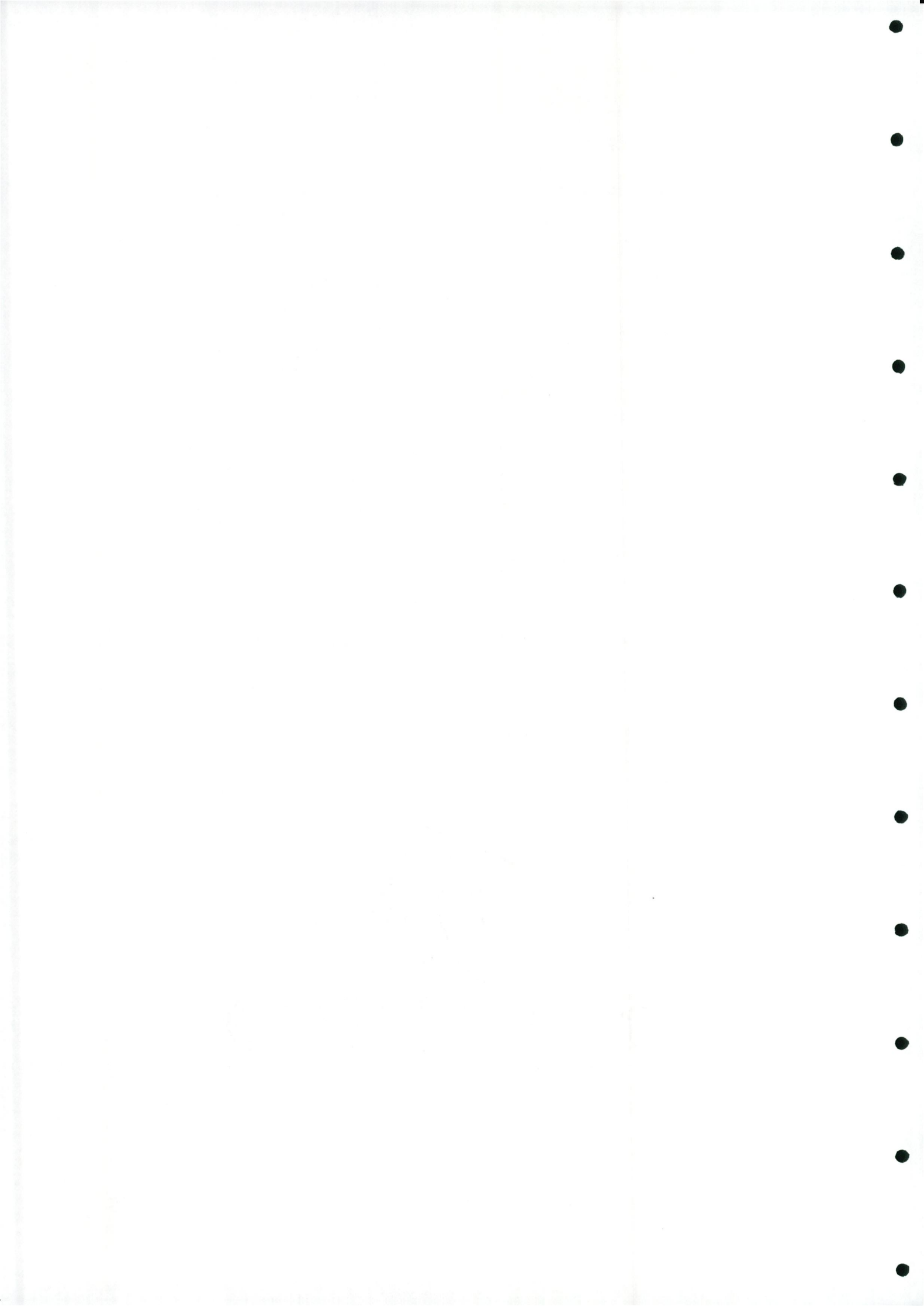
The policy can be implemented in a number of ways, and at a number of levels. Indeed if attitudes and behaviour are to be changed successfully it is vital that the problem is addressed in all areas of the school system. There has to be an all encompassing and concentrated effort made by all involved. The strong commitment to tackling bullying must come from the highest levels in the school administration; the principal, the board of managers, governing body. Policy and attitudes are filtered down through the teaching staff, other school staff and parents, these people have the role of spreading and implementing the policy on the ground. The students are the individuals who are targeted by the policy, and in successful situations, those who benefit greatest.

Once the policy has been implemented should almost immediately begin to affect the situation, though the changes may be slow at first and not overly obvious, before long there should be a marketable change in school culture and in the behaviour and the attitudes of staff, pupils and parents. The implementation of a whole-school anti-bullying policy should achieve a higher level of vigilance on the part of teaching staff, both in the classroom and when supervising play. Staff should be more



aware of the problem, its many manifestations and varied tell-tale signs. Incidents which may involve bullying behaviour should be monitored and followed up, those involving definite cases of bullying should be dealt with immediately and suitably. In bullying situations staff should employ a direct, clear and firm approach which focuses on solving the problem, involving the students in finding a solution rather than humiliating or intimidating them. Students often benefit greatly from being involved in finding a solution to their own problem or conflict. Such involvement can in some cases do much more to alleviate the problem because the students play an active role in what happens to them, rather than simply being disciplined or punished in some way, active involvement helps them to face, discuss and understand the problem, and so they are in a better position to help themselves and correct their undesirable behaviour. Students are encouraged to try to resolve conflicts constructively and to develop positive relationship-building skills.

The curriculum places emphasis on creating a caring community, where all individuals are valued equally. Pupils learn to work together in a co-operative manner. Aggressive and destructive behaviour is discouraged and students learn to respect and appreciate differences and similarities and to understand how prejudice works. Pupils should feel more confident to tell a member of staff if they or anyone they know is being bullied. The policy should aim to develop a zero-tolerance of bullying among the peer group, so that it is something that they will not tolerate or allow to happen in their group. Peer approval will be given for non-aggressive behaviour and unacceptable behaviour such as bullying



will be met with rejection or challenge. Such unacceptable behaviour may be rejected in a passive manner, for example by excluding peers when they behave aggressively; by including pupils being bullied in their social group; by refusing to partake in bullying behaviour, or pupils make take a more active part in rejecting bullying behaviour by telling an adult, by telling the bully to leave the other person alone, by trying to help the bullied person away from the situation etc. Whatever action is taken the message sent to the bully is one of disapproval. Pupils who are in a zero-tolerance atmosphere will generally feel more confident and it will be more difficult for the bully who is made to feel uncomfortable because they are breaking group norms. Those pupils who are victims of bullying are more likely to seek help as they are aware that they will be supported. Through involvement in the planning and implementation of the policy parents are aware of the school's attitude to bullying and can support the school's approach by encouraging co-operative behaviour in the home while discouraging aggressive behaviour.

A great deal of planning and preparation goes into the development and implementation of a whole-school anti-bullying policy. Materials and resources about bullying are required for the first stage, the planning and preparation of the policy. Practical considerations such as fitting training sessions and consultation meetings into the school calendar require planning. These initial planning meetings take place between all those involved; many groups need to be consulted: the school principal, members of the board of management, representatives of the parents council, members of staff and other individuals from outside the school,



for example representatives from youth groups, anti-bullying organisations such as Kidscape etc. who provide invaluable help and knowledge relating to the problem. The needs and concerns of all involved are then considered and noted, this establishes the purpose of the policy and what it intends to tackle. The next step is to consolidate these ideas, to draft and redraft the policy. While the policy is still in its early stages it may require further changes and fine tuning. The policy should be reviewed regularly, about once a year, and any necessary adjustments made.

The process of policy development may be devised in terms of five distinct stages:

- awareness raising
- consultation
- preparation of draft and transition to final policy
- communication and implementation
- maintenance and review 3

The aim of the first stage of the process is to inform people about bullying and engage them in discussion in order to provide them with current information relating to bullying, enabling them to make informed decisions, also to dispel some of the mis-held notions about bullying and to provide a level of common understanding about what bullying is. An information pack containing current information on bullying including data from the school is useful for this stage as the problem is often dismissed by people who think that it is a problem that 'other schools'



have. This is a grave misconception, as bullying is a problem in all schools to some degree, however small.

Areas to be highlighted during awareness training:

- reasons why bullying should be tackled and benefits for school effectiveness in reducing bullying;
- the effects of bullying behaviour on children's emotional, physical and psychological health as well as on learning;
- statistics which show general levels of bullying likely in most schools;
- statistics which show the extent of bullying found in your own school;
- information about the general nature of bullying, e.g. gender differences and similarities, types of bullying behaviour, locations which are high risk, school factors, home factors, contexts which encourage/discourage bullying behaviour;
- details of the range of preventative and response strategies available;
- information about what other schools have done. 4

Sharp and Smith promote the employment of 'high-quality' training sessions to inform people about bullying and to motivate them to take action. During the consultation stage of the procedure various community groups should be invited to offer their ideas and opinions about the policy. All school staff, pupils and their parents should also be involved during this stage. When developing a policy it is beneficial to consult a wide variety of groups and individuals as the more that are involved the more support there is for the policy and the more successful its implementation. A wide variety of groups and individuals provide a wide and broad range of views, perspectives and requirements. The establishment of a working party to oversee and co-ordinate the development of the policy is worth considering, however this working-party should not replace the broader consultation, it is paramount that a



strong two-way communication link between the working party and the wider community exist for the implementation of the policy to be most effective.

There are various methods and mediums which may be employed to make local community groups aware of the school's intention to take action against bullying, for example the use of the school's council, newsletters etc. can be used to encourage the wider community to get involved. It should be a priority to get as much support from outside the school as possible, as only controlling what goes on inside the school environment cannot have as much impact as a whole community initiative to challenge behaviour and attitudes can.

It is very important to involve the students as their seal of approval will very often make or break the policy, they need to be aware of and understand the measures being taken by the school and be made to feel that they have an important role in what is happening. The policy will be much more effective if the students are actively involved; peer pressure is an extremely powerful force in the fight against bullying. Students will see so much more than even the most vigilant adult when it comes to bullying in all its many forms, and as we have already established there are some very subtle forms of bullying being employed, some forms of bullying are very difficult to detect and only those involved, the victim and perhaps a few classmates even know it is happening. Students should be consulted and kept informed, this can easily be done during tutorials with year heads. During lessons students can be given time to discuss the issue, to define what constitutes bullying behaviour and what they think



the school should do about it. Any such discussion or group work, e.g. worksheets, questionnaires etc. should place emphasis on the importance of each individual in relation to reducing bullying.

Preparation of the draft policy and transition from draft to final policy.

Any points which have been raised during the consultation must be laid out in the form of a draft document. This document is then given to all those involved during the consultation stage, who in turn comment on and suggest changes, additions etc. where necessary. As during the consultation, parents, pupils, non-teaching staff, members of the schools committees and the teaching staff play an important part and it is vital that they continue to be involved.

Considerations to bear in mind when devising the policy:

1 The aims of the policy

- What do you want to achieve?
- When do you want to achieve this by?
- Are your aims realistic?

2 A clear definition of bullying behaviour

- What is bullying?
- Are some kinds of bullying worse than others?
- How is bullying different from other kinds of aggressive behaviour?
- Is there a difference between adults bullying each other and children bullying each other?
- How do children bully adults? How do adults bully children?

3 Strategies for prevention of bullying

- How can we teach children not to bully?



- How can we encourage co-operative behaviour?
- How can we make sure that particularly 'at risk' groups of pupils have access to this teaching (e.g. pupils with learning difficulties; pupils who do not speak or understand English fluently)?
- What kinds of anti-bullying attitudes and what values do we want to promote within the school? How shall we achieve this?
- How can teachers and other staff show pupils non-bullying ways of resolving conflict?

4 Reporting bullying

- How should pupils report bullying (to whom, when, how)?
- How can we make sure this system is manageable by staff?
- What should we record?
- Who is responsible for co-ordinating the recording system?
- How will this information be used?
- What action will follow a report of bullying?
- How can we check for false allegations?

5 Responding to bullying

- Who should respond (adults, pupils)?
- How should they respond immediately?
- What follow-up action is required?
- Do we need different responses for different kinds of bullying?
- How can we support the bullied pupils in a way which will help them feel strong and powerful?
- How should we differentiate between responses to name-calling or teasing, and bullying which leads to physical assault?
- How shall we know whether or not the bully has stopped?
- What shall we do if the bullying persists?
- At what stage should we involve parents? How shall we do this?
- What should we record? How will this information be used?

6 Roles and responsibilities of teachers, non teaching staff, pupils, parents and governors in implementing the policy

- What will this policy look like in practice?
- What changes will we have to make to our classroom practice; to our break and lunch-time management systems; to our own behaviour?
- How much time and which resources are necessary for this policy to work? Where shall we find them?



- Which staff already have specific skills which will help with the implementation of this policy?
- What specific training needs do other staff and pupils have?

7 Monitoring and evaluating the policy

- How shall we know whether the policy is working?
- What information do we need?
- How shall we collect it?
- Who will be involved in doing this?
- Who will co-ordinate this process?
- What will we do if it is not working? 5

Those writing the policy will need to consider how it is worded, the language used must be suitable for its audience. All members of the school community need to be able to fully understand the key messages of the policy. It is rare for the first draft of a policy to meet all the needs and requirements and it may take several revisions and redrafts before the policy is finalised. The finished policy must then be communicated and implemented. This may involve changes in the manner in which the school is organised, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to how and when these changes take place. Another factor which should not be overlooked are the specific training requirements of the staff, these must be addressed before the policy can be put into practice, without proper training the staff will be unable to deal with situations which may arise and the problems which may come to light following the implementation of the policy. Areas in which staff often require training include behaviour management skills; counselling skills; assertiveness techniques.

The policy can be communicated in any number of ways, some schools opt for some kind of launch which involves the whole school



community as well as other groups which were involved in the earlier stages of planning and development, this is an effective way to show all involved the fruits of their labour, and to ensure maximum impact, everyone will know a policy exists and that the school is taking an active role in the prevention of bullying. Such high profile launches also display the importance the school places on the anti-bullying policy.

Once the policy has been implemented, there must be close monitoring of bullying behaviour. Regardless of the existence of a policy, without careful monitoring; recording of incidents, how they are responded to and followed up, bullying will not be tackled effectively. Through the monitoring of incidents, recording what action is taken and the results of such action, more will be learned about bullying in the school. There may arise a need to re-examine the policy and how it is put to practice; some responses may prove more effective than others but over time, with all school staff actively involved, the system which works best for the school and its students will evolve.



FOOTNOTES CHAPTER 2

- 1 Sharp & Smith, Tackling Bullying in your school, p.23
- 2 Valerie E. Besag, Bullies and Victims in Schools (Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1989), p.103
- 3 Sharp & Smith, Tackling Bullying in your school, p.27
- 4 Ibid, p.28
- 5 Ibid., pp. 35-7

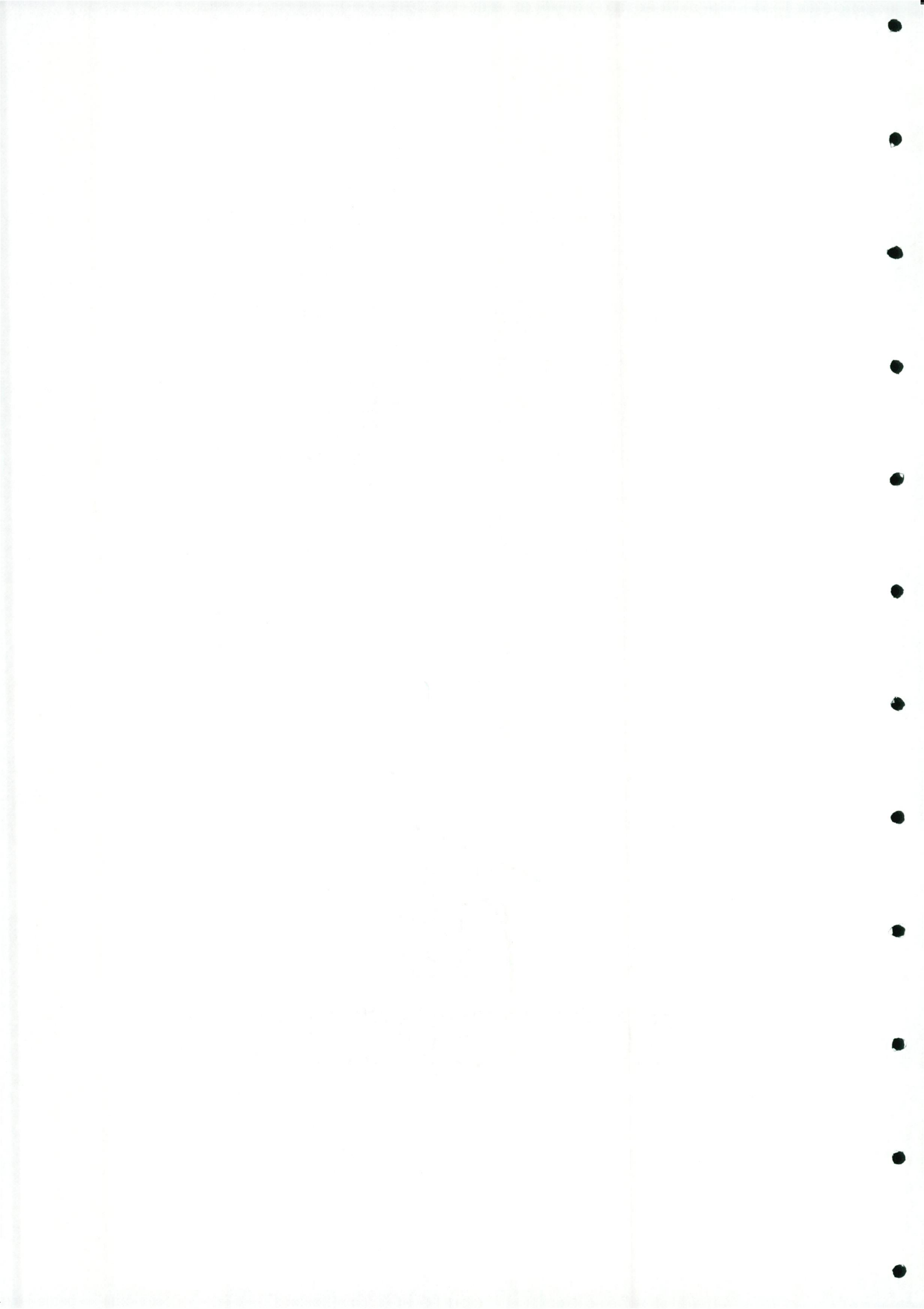


CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology underpinning the scheme of work undertaken in the teaching practice school involved research, planning, implementation and evaluation. Research included visits to the ABC Trinity College, making contact with agencies whose function is to raise awareness about bullying, ongoing discussions with the school Principal, Vice-Principal and year head in relation to the code of behaviour for students. As a result of the research I planned a programme of art, craft and design work with the 2nd year group; I ensured that this programme was integrated with the National Programme for art, craft and design work for Junior Certificate. Aims and objectives therefore related to the National Curriculum and to the specific focus of the topic which is bullying.

The scheme of work proposes the use of art, craft and design as a means of raising awareness of bullying at a class level. It was my aim to increase the student's empathy with victims of bullying and to present their opinions and understanding of the emotional aspects of bullying through a self-portrait. The work in the art room involved exploring the proportions of the face, self-portraiture, basic colour theory and the employment of specific colour combinations and facial expression to convey mood. A visit to IMMA to see the exhibition *Once Is Too Much* (a collaboration of a number of women and artists displaying opinions



and attitudes towards domestic violence and especially violence against women) also formed part of the scheme of lessons. Evaluation of the project included interaction and discussion with students, the use of a questionnaire and worksheet. Further discussion involving the Principal, Vice-Principal, year head and art teacher were also part of the evaluation.

The School

The case study was undertaken at Hartstown Community School which is in its sixth year - the first group of leaving certificate students having sat state exams in June 1997. Hartstown Community School is a co-educational second level school located in West-Dublin, an area of high population growth. The school building is situated on ample grounds incorporating playing pitches, sports facilities and car park. Hartstown C.S. provides Department of Education courses leading to Junior and Leaving Certificate examinations. The school also provides Leaving Certificate Applied, Transition Year (optional) and Community Education programmes. The following subjects are offered:

Junior Cycle:

A. Core Subjects -

Irish, English, Maths, History, Geography, Science, French, Religious Education, Physical Education, Pastoral Care/CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education).

B. Optional Subjects -

Wood Technology, Technical Graphics, Art, Technology, Metal Technology, Music, Home Economics, Business Studies, German.



Senior Cycle:

A. Core Subjects -

Irish, English, Maths, R.E., P.E., Guidance/Pastoral Care.

B. Optional Subjects -

History, Geography, French, German, Home Economics, Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Technical Graphics, Construction Studies, Engineering, Art, Music, Accountancy, Business, Economics.

There are approximately nine hundred students attending the school at present with an average number of thirty students per class. The year groups are divided into the following classes:

1st Year -	Bronte, Hardy, Eliot, Dickens, Austen, Conrad, James
2nd Year -	Conn, Sheelin, Erne, Allen, Mask, Derg, Gara
3rd Year -	Boyne, Corrib, Moy, Shannon, Foyle, Avoca, Lagan
Transition Year -	Rathlin, Blasket
5th Year -	Aran, Tory, Valentia, Lambay, Gola
L.C.A. -	Clare
L.C.A. year 2 -	Lavin
6th Year -	Yeats, Gregory, Beckett, Synge

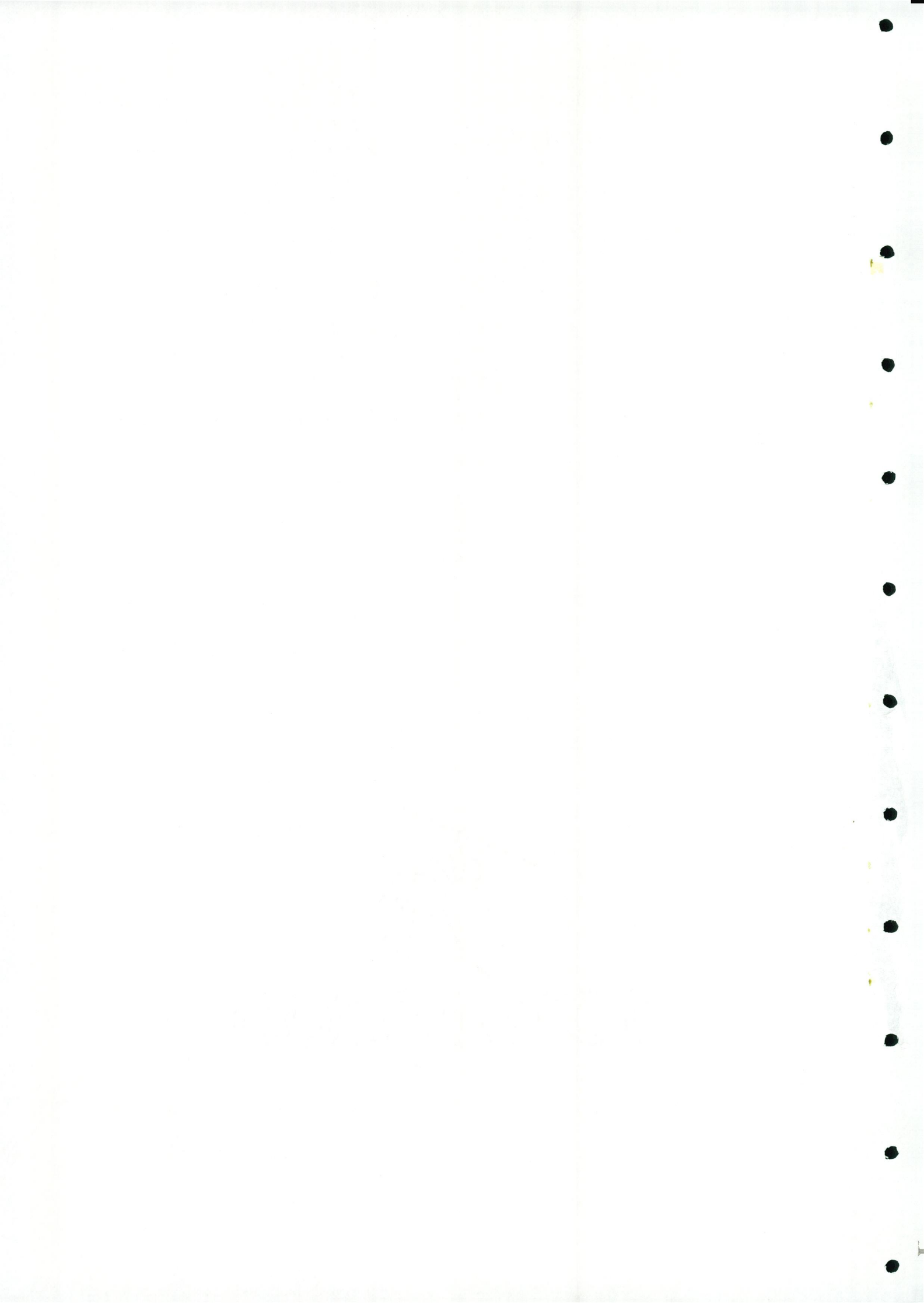
The school has a permanent guidance counsellor and there is also a remedial teacher for those students who require such classes. As Hartstown is a Community School, there is no entrance exam, but new students sit an exam to determine which class they will be put into (streaming is done by ability). The school uniform which is obligatory at all times consists of:

Grey Skirt (girls) or Trousers (boys)
 Grey Shirt
 Petrol Jumper with school crest
 School Tie
 Plain sole black shoes
 Grey socks



There are at present forty-seven full-time teachers and nine part-time (EPT) teachers at Hartstown CS. There is one permanent art teacher in the school. For the past two academic years there has also been a part-time art teacher taking classes in the annex, which is an improvised art room in a prefabricated building off the main school building. The main art room is bright and spacious, with good storage facilities for equipment, materials and student work.

The art room has facilities for drawing, painting, clay, screen printing, papier mache, calligraphy, embroidery, graphic design, packaging, modelling and weaving. The room has windows down one wall and also in the ceiling which means it is a very bright room and a good atmosphere for producing artwork. There are three sinks and a row of cupboards and shelves along the back wall. The student's desks take up the bulk of the classroom space leaving the teacher's desk, cupboards for student's work, books and small materials at the top of the room. All cupboards and shelves are clearly labelled. Larger materials and equipment are stored in the stockroom off the classroom. In the top right-hand corner, behind the teacher's desk is a tiled area for clay work including the kiln, potter's wheels and shelving for work which is either drying and in progress or is waiting to be fired. The tiled area and the storage cupboards are no-go areas for students. Although the teacher's desk is located at the top of the room, it is mainly used for holding teacher's materials, notes and other requirements rather than a location from which the teacher operates. In general I find I teach the class from various areas of the room, depending on the class activity.



I would generally address the whole class from the top area of the room as it is the easiest position from which to gain attention, standing in front of the teacher's desk rather than behind it.

Art is seen relatively well in the school, there is plenty of visual stimulation around the school building, and teachers are encouraged to place student work in the corridors and outside the classroom. The art teacher herself does a lot to promote art within the school. Art is not a compulsory subject, it is an option at both junior and senior level except for transition year in which a short module of art, craft and design forms part of the course.

The Questionnaire

Because by its very nature bullying is a secretive and intimidating activity, it can easily go undetected by adults. Through a scheme of work I aimed to increase students awareness of the problem and to develop in them an attitude of zero-tolerance, in order to do this I first had to establish the level of their awareness and understanding of bullying. I devised a questionnaire to gather this information from the group of students involved. The questionnaire was followed by a focused class discussion in which I used written sources such as excerpts from magazines and newspapers, poems and stories to explore the issues surrounding bullying and to explore the various forms of bullying, which having reviewed the questionnaires I found the students to be unaware of. The questionnaire was therefore used to introduce a sequence of lessons which use bullying as a theme. For research purposes the questionnaire



served as an educational exercise to assess the students understanding of bullying, what to them constitutes bullying behaviour and whether they see it as a problem.

Twenty students filled in the questionnaire, they ranged in age from 13 to 14yrs. The class are a mixed group of twelve girls and eight boys. The anonymity of the questionnaire was stressed to all involved before students were given time to answer the questions, also I had discussed the content of the questionnaire with the year head and class teachers beforehand to ensure that it was suitable for the group and that there were no sensitive parties in the group to the knowledge of the teachers. Students were reminded of the importance of answering the questions honestly and accurately, in relation to their own experiences, giving all the information required. Students were instructed not to converse with others and to answer their own questionnaires.

There were eighteen questions on the questionnaire in total. I wish to stress that the questionnaire was in no way attempting to identify bullies or victims, nor indeed to establish facts about bullying in the school. It was not an attempt to tackle bullying or to establish it's nature or extent in the entire school, it was my intention to raise the students awareness and to find out the extent of their understanding of the term bullying and what they would consider to be bullying behaviour. The questionnaire in full is included in the appendix.



The results of the questionnaire

In response to Question 2 'Have you ever been bullied?' 14 out of the 20 students admitted to being bullied at some stage in their life. Of these 14, 9 were girls and 5 were boys.

Students were asked in Question 3 to identify when the bullying took place. Of the students who admitted to being bullied, 10 (7 girls and 3 boys) identified the primary school as being the setting for the bullying. 3 (2 girls and 1 boy) students admitted to being bullied while at Hartstown CS and 1 (boy) student admitted to being bullied both in primary school and also at second level.

Question 4 was concerned with the frequency of the bullying incidents, 7 (4 girls and 3 boys) students answered that they had been bullied only once. 4 (3 girls and 1 boy) students had been bullied more than once and 3 (2 girls and 1 boy) students said that they were bullied regularly.

In Question 5 students were asked to name the areas where bullying takes place. Overall the school grounds were highlighted as the most frequent venue for bullying behaviour, however, it was highlighted mainly by girls (5) with only 2 of the boys identifying it as an area for bullying to take place. The next most 'popular' area for bullying to take place was the classroom, which is in one sense surprising as it is the one area of the school where students are always in the company of a teacher. This would suggest that non-physical types of bullying are taking place in the classroom, such as verbal bullying (name-calling, teasing, insulting,



whispered comments) or mental bullying (social exclusion, for example when pairing up for group work, or for seating arrangements in the classroom). Again the classroom was identified as a bullying area by more girls (5) than boys (1). Students named the journey either to or from school as the third most common time for bullying to occur, 2 girls and 1 boy identified it as a time for bullying to occur. The school toilets, moving between classrooms, during break times and outside of school times were each identified by one pupil as a time for bullying to occur. I found in particular the low instances of bullying in the toilets quite surprising, as it is a time when students are unsupervised and would be an easy target area for the bully.

Question 6 was concerned with identifying the sex of the bully and whether the student was bullied by a single student or a group of students. As one would expect, none of the boys were bullied by another girl, 3 were bullied by another boy, while 2 were bullied by a group of boys. Of the girls who were bullied, 2 were bullied by a boy, 1 was bullied by a girl, 4 were bullied by a group of boys, 1 was bullied by a group of girls and 1 was bullied by a mixed group of boys and girls. The 4 girls who identified their bullies as a group of boys had answered to question three that they had been bullied in primary school and not in secondary school. From the research I have read concerning bullying and incidences of same sex and group bullies I would have expected that the girls would have identified a group of girls as being the bullies more than an individual girl as research has shown that girls tend to bully in groups and also tend to use non-physical types of bullying behaviour.



Question 7 dealt with the age group of the bully. The majority of students who admitted to being bullied were bullied by someone in their own year. 8 girls and 3 boys identified the bullies involved as being their own age group. No student was bullied by someone who was either a year ahead or below them. 3 students (1 girl and 2 boys) were bullied by someone from another school.

Question 8 asked whether the students had reported the bullying. Of the fourteen students who were bullied, exactly half of them reported the bullying to someone (5 girls and 2 boys) while the other half (4 girls and 3 boys) did not.

In Question 10 students were asked to name who they told. Of those students who reported the bullying, 3 girls told their parents, 2 told a friend (1 boy and 1 girl), 1 told a sibling and 1 told a teacher. The fact that only one out of seven students felt that they could tell a teacher that they had been or were being bullied is a serious problem for schools. If we are to even consider that we will make an earnest effort to combat bullying behaviour it must be one of the first things we tackle, that students don't feel confident about telling a teacher, it may be because they think it won't be handled properly and that telling will only serve to aggravate the problem, or that they won't be taken seriously or that the teachers aren't approachable. Whatever the reason it must be addressed promptly.

Question 13 was concerned with whether students had ever witnessed another student being bullied. 16 (9 girls and 7 boys) out of the 20 students answered yes.



Question 14 asked students how they reacted. Of the 16 students who had seen someone else being bullied, 6 (2 girls and 4 boys) ignored it, 9 (6 girls and 3 boys) students approached the bully and 1 (girl) student reported it.

In Question 15 students were asked why they didn't report the bullying. Most answered that it was none of their business. Other students did nothing because they didn't want the bully to pick on them. None of the boys gave an answer to this particular question.

Students were asked in Question 16 what steps could be taken in the school to prevent bullying. Again the boys made no suggestions. Some of the girls also made no suggestions, but of those who did the suggestions included that the victim should tell a teacher; that we install cameras in the school; that the bully be suspended; that the punishment for bullying be stricter; that a fine be imposed on the bully; that the bully be suspended.

Question 17 asked the students to identify behaviour which they would consider to be bullying. 13 students (9 girls and 4 boys) identified name calling as bullying behaviour. 12 students (8 girls and 4 boys) identified punching someone as bullying. 11 (8 girls and 3 boys) students identified kicking as bullying. 8 (7 girls and 1 boy) students identifies pushing and shoving as bullying. 7 (5 girls and 2 boys) students identified damaging someone else's things as bullying. 6 (5 girls and 1 boy) students identified teasing as bullying. Pinching was considered bullying behaviour by 3 students (only the girls) as was stealing (2 girls and 1 boy). No student identified ignoring someone as bullying



behaviour. As I had suspected very few people know that social exclusion can be considered bullying. It is a common misconception that unless you are physically harmed by the person, you aren't being bullied. Altogether the girls had a better concept of the various forms of bullying than the boys who tended to identify acts of physical violence as bullying behaviour.

Again to question 18, in which students were invited to make any other comments concerning bullying, the boys in the group gave no opinion. About two-thirds of the girls made a comment of some sort.

The results of the questionnaire serve to affirm many of the findings of researchers on the subject of bullying. The fact that social exclusion was not identified by any of the students echoes the fact that most people can only identify direct forms of bullying such as physical violence and verbal abuse calls for a need for more information on the subject.

Awareness of the problem is the first step to its prevention. It is also an area of concern for us as teachers as the indirect forms of bullying are by their very nature the most difficult to detect and so teachers need to be made even more aware and be even more alert to possible signs that it is going on. The answers given in the questionnaire also confirm findings concerning where bullying takes place (the school grounds and the classrooms being the areas most frequently identified by the students surveyed). Although this questionnaire used a small sample of students, the results reflect a generally held opinion that bullying, for the most part, takes place in and around the school. Many of the answers given by the



students are very much in keeping with the findings of Dan Olweus based on research undertaken in Scandinavia which I referred to earlier in chapter 1.

I would have to say that the students did not have a complete understanding of bullying behaviour, they were especially unaware of the various forms that bullying can take and I felt that these issues would best be tackled through classroom discussion and the use of written sources, worksheets and audio/video material.

During such discussions which followed the questionnaire and formed part of subsequent lessons, students explored the subject of bullying and its various forms. Students were made aware of bullies and victims, what we can do to help those involved by being active participants in combating bullying. Making it clear that we do not accept this sort of behaviour, students acquired an understanding of the need to be against the problem, because by not being against it you are essentially for it. This was helped and enforced by a visit to IMMA to the exhibition *Once Is Too Much* which is concerned with the issue of violence against women.

The Scheme of Work

The sequence of lessons ran as follows;

Lesson 1

Use of the questionnaire, followed by class discussion of the subject of bullying, raising students awareness of the issues and formulating



ideas/opinions. Students were introduced to the project and what steps it would involve. Generating interest etc.

Lesson 2

Drawing the face. Students were introduced to the basic proportions of the face and position of the features. Attention was also drawn to how facial expression can be used to convey emotion. Students discussed which emotions they associate with bullying.

Lesson 3

In this lesson students used tone to show the form of the face and also explored how exaggerated light and shade can be used to achieve mood in a piece.

Lesson 4

The visit to IMMA. Use of a worksheet to draw out students reactions and opinion of the work and the ideas presented.

Lesson 5

Students used a worksheet to explore basic colour theory and also the media, trying out various techniques to blend and apply colour.

Lesson 6

Formulating the composition for the final piece, working from secondary source materials (photocopies & photographs).

Lesson 7

Begin the final self-portrait.

Lesson 8

Finish and present the self-portrait. Discuss and evaluate the whole project.

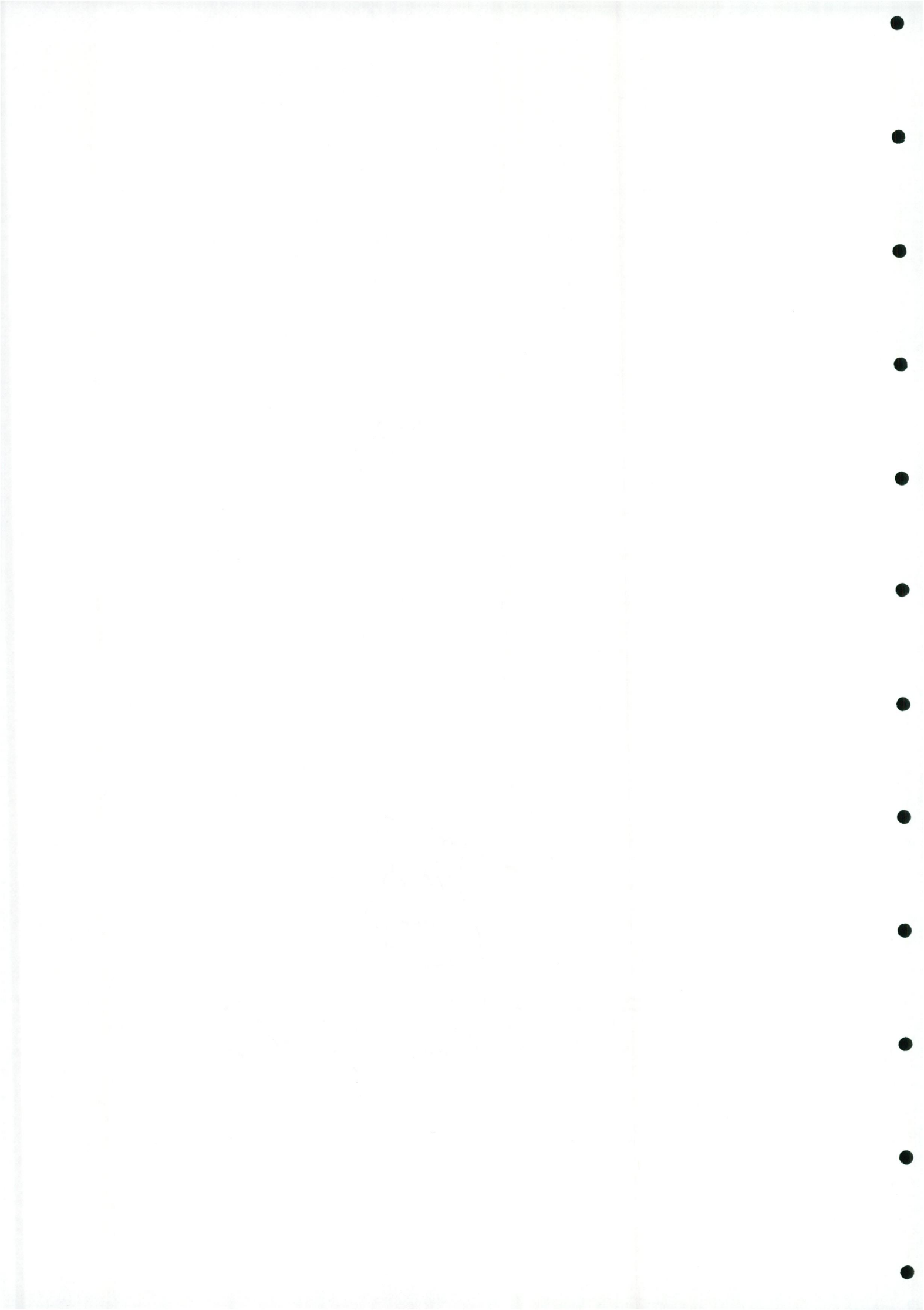


As mentioned earlier, the aim of undertaking this programme of lessons was to raise the student's awareness of bullying, and to develop an anti-bullying attitude within the group, it was evident from speaking to the students about their work that this had been achieved. The emotional aspects of bullying were displayed in the self-portraits, with the students not necessarily portraying the emotions of the victim, but rather how they themselves feel about the subject. Because of the nature of the work, the face featured prominently in the composition. A wide range of emotions were displayed in the finished pieces, ranging from indifference to hate, despair, sadness

A wide range of relevant support studies were used during the scheme of work, both to motivate the students towards an end product, to demonstrate certain effects and uses of colour, light and shade and to show how art, craft and design can be used as a means of expression. Students were shown work by the German Expressionists, Kirchner, Muntz, Nolde by artists who use colour expressively such as Van Gogh, Matisse, Delaunay. The students got across the feelings and emotions associated with bullying effectively in the finished self-portraits. They used colour in an expressive way, using certain colours to express an emotion in some cases.

The Junior Certificate Curriculum

In undertaking a sequence of art, craft and design work, I endeavoured increase students awareness of bullying and to develop an



atmosphere of zero-tolerance. The practical aim of the scheme was to produce a self-portrait which reflects the emotional aspects of bullying. The scheme of work was devised to compliment the curriculum guidelines for art, craft and design at Junior Certificate level. The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the student. This programme of lessons works towards developing student's creative skills and awareness, through the work produced, students develop emotional, moral and social awareness for personal life and socially in school and in the community. In developing the young person's awareness, social and interpersonal skills we also contribute to their moral development; helping them to develop a tolerance and respect for others.

The Junior Certificate is based on the following principles:

- breadth and balance
- relevance
- quality

The school fulfils the requirements of the curriculum, it provides a supportive and formative environment. The scheme of work undertaken in the school (practical artwork) promotes skills, concepts, ideas/attitudes relating to the subject of bullying.

General aims for this scheme of work:

- To produce a self-portrait in oil pastels relating to the theme bullying.



- To provide within the production of the self-portrait an outlet/a means with which to express views/opinions/ideas on this particular subject.
- To promote in the student an informed, inquiring and discriminating attitude to his/her environment. (Not to unquestionably accept norms of behaviour).
- To develop a sense of personal identity and self-esteem through practical achievement in art, craft and design.
- To develop in the students an understanding of art, craft and design in a variety of contexts, especially social and personal and an awareness of art, craft and design as a means of expression.
- Develop students ability to apply evaluative criteria to his/her own work (the selection of one solution over another, developing critical skills and the ability to be selective).
- Promote students practical understanding of and competence in relating skills - use of media, idea generation and planning/composition.
- To promote art, craft and design as a means of expression.
- To create an awareness of the work of other artists and how they have used their work as a means of expressing views/opinions.

Research:

Deciding on the content, for example the pose, facial expression, composition. The message to be conveyed: emotion/mood of the piece. Explore through drawing how this can best be expressed and by what means - use of colour, composition, gesture etc.



Collecting information/imagery. Life drawing, self-portraits. Exploring media, knowledge of colour theory and colour effects, use of colour and facial expression to convey mood/emotion. Information on the theme. Examples of relevant artists work, work which shares the same or similar theme, the same approach as regards use of colour and expression to show mood.

Learning outcomes:

Students will -

- Create a piece of artwork to the highest standard that each particular student is capable of.
- Give their own personal response to the theme.
- Work from observation.
- Use drawing as a means of recording and observing and also to communicate views/ideas.
- Learn to use media competently/satisfactorily.
- Learn and use relevant vocabulary.
- Develop awareness and knowledge of the work of other artists.
- Carry the project through from initial idea to end product.
- Develop awareness of the place and value of art, craft and design.
- Co-operate with others, exchange comments and ideas within the group.



Guidelines for the teacher:

The particular group of students with whom the scheme of work was undertaken were of a mixed ability ranging from weak to fair. They had quite a low concentration span and I experienced difficulties in planning a scheme of work for them, my initial ideas being beyond their comprehension or artistic ability. The students required a great deal of motivation throughout the scheme especially during the initial stages which were quite conceptual - coming up with ideas and discussing the issue, the students find it difficult to relate to things they have no direct experience of. As the teacher I was required to promote a high standard of workmanship - within the capabilities of each student and to promote in the students a sense of achievement and pride in the work produced. It was also essential to provide new ideas and direction to students who were weak when it came to ideas generation. Students needed a lot of encouragement and individual attention, discussing their work, where it was going, what was needed and generally directing the student's learning experience.

Links with other areas include subjects such as social studies, health education and religious education. Resources included questionnaires, focused class discussion, written source work such as news excerpts, stories and poems. Many information packs also included a video for use in the classroom.



CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Bullying behaviour may be viewed as a form of aggression. Aggression covers a very wide range of activity. 1

It is painfully obvious that Bullying is a very real problem in our society, not just in our schools. It should be a matter of increasing concern to us that the incidents of child-suicide or attempts thereof are on the increase, and that bullying is responsible for quite a number of these. We know this from newspaper reports, from our own personal experiences and from being involved with young people, either by being directly involved in their education as teachers or by being in contact with them as parents.

Bullying poses distinct problems for the school in terms of behaviour and discipline, and so it is essential that all schools adopt a policy aimed at countering the problem. In the Republic of Ireland, every school and public library has received the Department of Education *Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (1993). Every school should therefore be making it standard policy to actively tackle bullying. I have already outlined the preparation and implementation of an anti-bullying policy in chapter two and stressed the importance of active involvement from all concerned.

The full support of the staff (administrative, domestic and teaching staff), members of the School Board, Parents council and the students



themselves, is of paramount importance for the successful planning and implementation of a whole-school policy. All these people need to be involved and consulted because the policy is in effect a contract with them concerning what behaviour they will allow in the school. Students will see more, regardless of how good a patrolling system you have implemented in the school, so if they do not condone a certain type of behaviour it is more helpful than any other measure you can undertake if the students are agreed that they will support the policy by reporting such behaviour and support others who report the behaviour, in this way the bully will be aware that he/she does not have the support nor acceptance of the peer group. The victim is supported by the peer group. Such involvement on the part of the student body combats the intimidator 'tale-telling' ethos that pressures bullied students into silence. They should not be afraid to expose the bully, knowing that they have the full support and backing of both their fellow students and school staff.

The key strategies therefore which I have outlined are: that tackling bullying be a priority within the school. I have also stressed the need for a clear commitment from the Principal, Board of Management, parents association and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching. That the school ethos reject bullying behaviour and promote co-operative behaviour. That the curriculum be used to raise awareness of bullying. Finally, the involvement of the whole school community and their commitment to the development and implementation of the anti-bullying policy and, once developed, the effective implementation and monitoring of the policy. The inclusion of a course dealing with bullying and the issues involved in



teacher training colleges should also be a consideration when planning how best to tackle the problem of bullying on a national level. Such a course or module would prove very beneficial and act as a preventative measure in countering bullying behaviour in schools and in our society in general. It could serve to alert teachers to possible bullying situations and how best to deal with them, also to train teachers to develop anti-bullying strategies in the classroom which would help to cut down on actual incidents of bullying behaviour. Also, there could be more support given to teachers already in the workplace, in the form of in-service training, seminars and more discussion of the problem within staff-rooms/school setting.

1 Brendan Byrne, Coping with Bullying in Schools, The Columba Press, Dublin, 1993.



APPENDIX I

DISCIPLINE CODE

Introduction:

- (a) Hartstown Community School will provide for its pupils an atmosphere of security and belonging with its primary concern the full development of the social, moral, cultural and cognitive young person. It will be a focus for the community and we would aspire to develop in our pupils, initiative, self-reliance, the capacity to communicate, co-operation, perseverance, self-confidence and the ability to develop their unique personality, and to achieve their academic goals.
- (b) Our pupils are here to benefit to the maximum extent and by adhering to our Discipline Code this environment can be created and maintained.
- (c) To achieve these hopes and aspirations Hartstown Community School expects each family to support the Board of Management and its staff in implementing our Discipline Code. We expect our students to adhere to the basic principles of tolerance and consideration for others and to recognise their right to learn and be taught without disruption.
- (d) We ask of students that they show respect for themselves, for others and for the property and surroundings in which they find themselves.
- (e) Rules are made and agreed upon, not to annoy and frustrate students, but to ensure that the main task of the school, which is learning, proceeds in an orderly manner for all concerned.

Discipline Code:

- (1) **Attendance/Absences**
Attendance is of the utmost importance. Any absences even for part of the day must be explained by a letter (in the school journal) from the parents or an appointment card for the doctor/dentist etc.
- (2) **Punctuality**
If students are not punctual to class, then tuition time is effectively lost. Students should be in the school building at 8.55 a.m. and again after lunch at 1.30 p.m. The tuition school day will finish at 3.30 p.m. except for Monday 4.00 p.m.
- (3) **Classwork/Homework/Study**
Students should present themselves in class with all the books, copies, pencils/pens, instruments required for that subject. Homework should be complete and neat. Work for the following day both written and study should be entered in the homework journal. Re-inforcing work done in class each day is vital for each student to achieve his/her potential academically.
- (4) **Behaviour**
Our students are expected to display good manners and to treat all adults and other fellow students with respect and consideration both in school and on the way to and from the school. Roughness, bad language, bullying etc. Will not be tolerated. Students must walk at all times within the school building.
- (5) **Uniform**
Full uniform is compulsory during school hours and school outings to theatre, museum etc. Except on occasions (e.g. some field trips etc.) where students will be told by their teacher that other more appropriate attire is required.



- (6) **Property**
Deliberate or careless damage to any property or equipment by a student must be paid for by the student or his/her family. Sanctions for such behaviour will also be imposed. Theft of school or other person's belongings is considered a serious offence.
Personal belongings should be clearly marked with pupils name.
- (7) **Smoking**
Smoking is considered anti-social behaviour and by Department of Health Laws is totally forbidden both inside the school and in the school grounds. Students in school uniform on their way to and from school are also forbidden to smoke.
- (8) **Cleanliness/Hygiene**
Each student is expected to be neat and clean and to help maintain their school in a similar condition. Personal hygiene is of the utmost importance in caring for one's health and in consideration for others.

Sanctions:

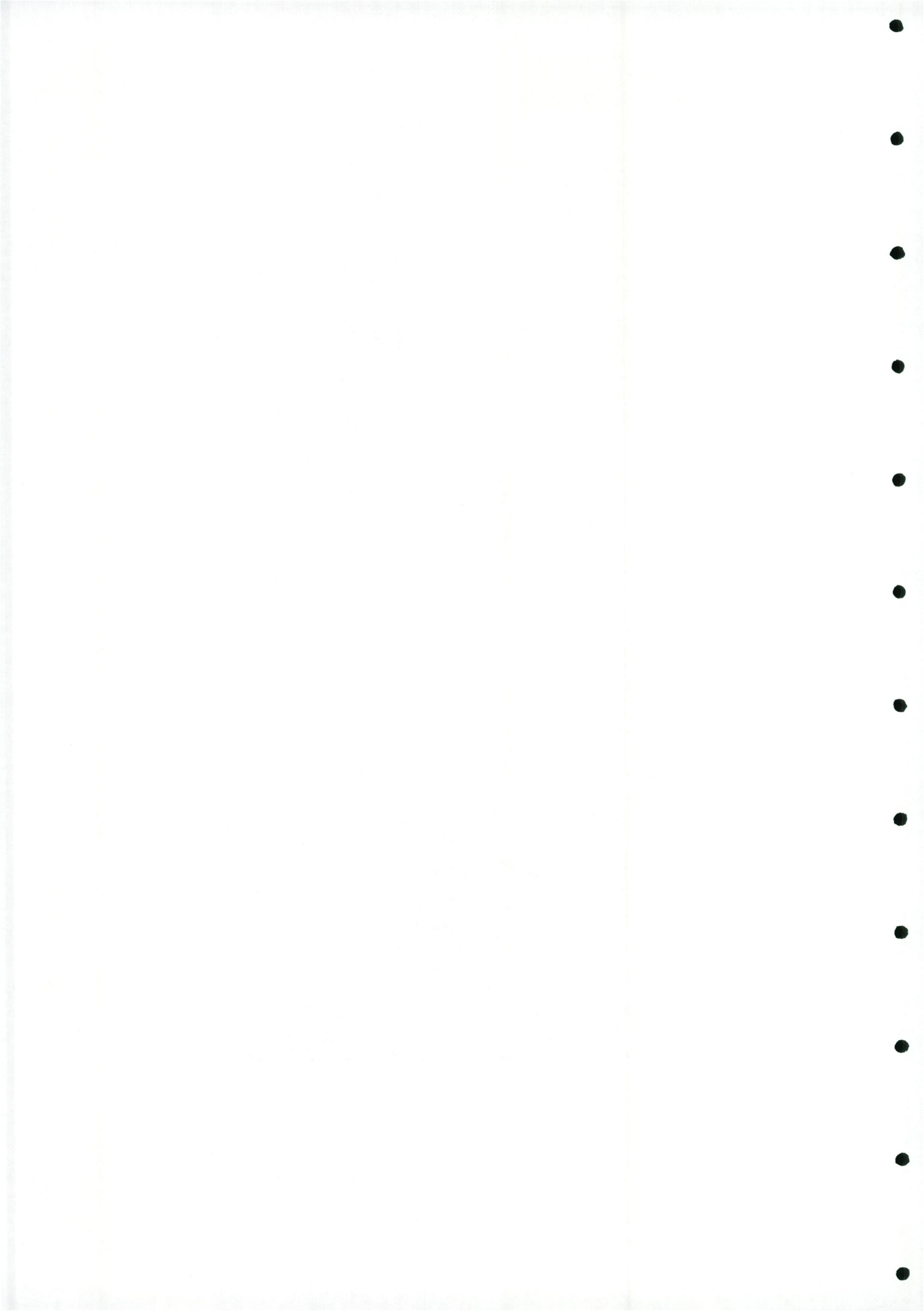
Depending on the severity of the offence sanctions will include the following:-

- warning/reprimand by teacher
- note in class journal to be signed by parents
- note in class report book by class teacher to be given to class tutor
- detention, extra work and/or punishment may be given by class tutor
- student placed on REPORT CARD by year head for day/week to be signed each night by parents
- student to be brought for interview to Principal or Vice-Principal
- interview with parents
- suspension
- expulsion

Major violations may be punished by immediate suspension by Principal or Vice-Principal. In the event of a student being suspended parents are reminded that they have the right of appeal to the Board of Management.

N.B. It is impossible to cover all possibilities and possible infringement of behaviour. The Board therefore reserves the right to make the final decision in interpretation of the above rules and to impose penalties/sanctions as it sees fit.

Attendance at Hartstown Community School is conditional on the pupils/parents accepting the above Discipline Code.



APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER

This questionnaire is totally confidential
Do not put your name on the sheet

AGE:
CLASS:
YEAR:

Q1. ARE YOU
A BOY
A GIRL

Q2. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN BULLIED?
YES
NO

Q3. IF YES, WAS IT?

IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?
IN THIS SCHOOL?

Q4. HOW OFTEN WERE YOU BULLIED?

I HAVEN'T BEEN BULLIED
ONCE
MORE THAN ONCE
REGULARLY

Q5. WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

ON THE WAY TO/FROM SCHOOL
SCHOOL GROUNDS
SCHOOL TOILETS
CLASSROOM
MOVING BETWEEN CLASSES
DURING BREAK TIMES
OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL TIMES, PLEASE SPECIFY



Q6. WERE YOU BULLIED BY?

- A BOY
- A GIRL
- A GROUP OF BOYS
- A GROUP OF GIRLS
- A MIXED GROUP OF BOYS AND GIRLS

Q7. WERE THE BULLIES?

- IN YOUR YEAR
- IN ONE OR MORE YEARS BEHIND YOU
- IN ONE OR MORE YEARS AHEAD OF YOU
- FROM ANOTHER SCHOOL

Q8. DID YOU TELL ANYONE?

- YES
- NO

Q9. IF NO, WHY NOT?

Q10. IF YES, WHO?

- FRIEND/CLASSMATE
- BROTHER/SISTER
- PARENT
- TEACHER

Q11. WHAT HAPPENED?

Q12. WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WERE BULLIED?

Q13. HAVE YOU EVER WITNESSED SOMEONE ELSE BEING BULLIED?

- YES
- NO



Q14. WHAT DID YOU DO?
IGNORED IT
TOLD THE BULLIES TO STOP
TOLD SOMEONE

Q15. IF YOU DIDN'T REPORT IT, WHY DIDN'T YOU?

Q16. WHAT COULD BE DONE ABOUT BULLYING IN THE SCHOOL?

Q17. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

TEASING
NAME CALLING
PUSHING/SHOVING
PINCHING
PUNCHING
KICKING
IGNORING SOMEONE
STEALING SOMEONE'S PROPERTY
DAMAGING SOMEONE'S BELONGINGS

18. PLEASE WRITE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU HAVE ABOUT BULLYING.



APPENDIX III

RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

There are many organisations which provide information packs or other resource materials and support for parents, teachers and anyone involved in the education or care of young people. Some organisations deal specifically with those who wish to take an active part in raising awareness about the subject of bullying and in tackling the issue itself. Below I have listed the names, and where possible the addresses, of a small sample of such groups both here in Ireland and abroad. Various groups/organisations provide different services/materials ranging from information packs and resources such as video and audio material to theatre groups which provide a framework for introducing discussion of the issue. I have also included the names and addresses of more general groups involved with the general well-being of children.

The Sticks and Stones Theatre Company can be booked to perform for a student audience or an adult (parents) group. They have specific programmes for both Primary and Secondary school level which include school visit by the facilitator, a teacher's handbook, actual performance and follow-up classroom discussion. The group can also in most cases vary the material to suit the needs of particular groups. The company are contactable at (01) 2807065

The National Association for Parents Support (NAPS),
Capoley,
Portlaoise,
Co. Laois
(0502) 20598

Hold seminars and provide a drop-in centre for parents. Also publish leaflets, newsletters and other information relating to education offering particular support and advice for bullying problems.

Barnardo's National Children's Resource Centre,
Christchurch Square,
Dublin 8.
(01) 4530355

The Campaign Against Bullying,
72 Lakelands Avenue,
Stillorgan,
Co. Dublin.

Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC)
Resource and Research Unit
Department of Teacher Education,
Room 3125,
Arts Building,
Trinity College,
Dublin.
(01) 6082573
Fax. 6777238

National Youth Council,
3 Montague Street,
Dublin 2.
(01) 4784122



Education Matters,
47 Watson Avenue,
Killiney,
Co. Dublin.
(01) 2851696

A magazine and radio programme for parents, students and teachers.

The Child Abuse Prevention Programme (CAPP),
Stay Safe Unit,
The Lodge,
Cherry Orchard Hospital,
Ballyfermot,
Dublin 10.
(01) 6232358

Parents Alone Resource Centre,
Bunratty Drive,
Coolock,
Dublin 17.
(01) 8481872

Unicef,
4 St. Andrew's Street,
Dublin 2.
(01) 6770843

Health and Safety Authority,
10 Hogan Place,
Dublin 2.
(01) 6620400

Department of Education
(01) 8734700
Press office: 8742372

Education and Library Board,
40 Academy Street,
Belfast,
BT12 NQ.

The Scottish Council for Research in Education,
15 St. John's Street,
Edinburgh,
EH8 8JR.
Strathclyde Region Education Department,
Clyde House,
170 Kilbourne Road, Clydebank, Glasgow G81.

Moray House Institute of Education,
Heriot-Watt University,
Cramond Road North,
Edinburgh
EH4 6JD.



Supporting Schools against Bullying: (1993), Scottish Council for Research in Education

&

Action Against Bullying : A Support Pack for Schools

both available from:

Book sales,
SCRE,
15 St. John Street,
Edinburgh,
EH8 8JR.

The No Blame Approach (1992), Barbara Maines and George Robinson

available from:

Lame Duck Publishing,
10 South Terrace,
Redland,
Bristol,
BS6 6TG.

Promoting Positive Relationships: Bully-Proofing Our School (1992), Alan McLean

available from:

Alan McLean,
Strathclyde Region Education Department,
Clyde House,
170 Kibourne Rd.,
Clydebank,
Glasgow,
G81.

Sticks and Stones

available from:

External Affairs,
Central Television,
Broad Street,
Birmingham,
B1 2JP.

Bullying in Schools

available from:

Australian Council for Educational Research,
Radford House,
9 Frederick St.,
Hawthorn,
Victoria 3122,
Australia.

We don't have Bullies here, Valerie Besag

available from:

V.E. Besag,
51 Manor House Rd.,
Jesmond,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
NE2 2LY.



A Positive Approach to Bullying (1992), Eve Brock

available from:

Longman Group,

P.O. Box 88,

Fourth Avenue,

Harlow,

Essex,

CM19 99R.



APPENDIX IV

POEMS USED DURING CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Back in the playground blues

I dreamed I was back in the playground, I was about four feet high
Yes dreamed I was back in the playground, standing about four feet high
Well, the playground was three miles long and the playground was five miles wide.

It was broken black tarmac with a high wire fence all round
Broken black dusty tarmac with a high fence running all round
And they had a special name to it, they called it The Killing Ground.

Got a mother and father, they're one thousand years away
The Rulers of The Killing Ground are coming out to play
Everybody thinking: 'Who they going to play with today?'

Well you get it for being Jewish
And you get it for being black
Get it for being chicken
And you get it for fighting back
You get it for being big and fat
Get it for being small
O those who get it get it and get it
For any damn thing at all

Sometimes they take a beetle, tear off its six legs one by one
Beetle on its black back, rocking in the lunchtime sun
But a beetle can't beg for mercy, a beetle's not half the fun.

Heard a deep voice talking, it had that iceberg sound
'It prepares them for Life' - but I never found
Any place in my life worse than The Killing Ground.

Adrian Mitchell

That Long Road

Walking on that road to school
I consider turning back.
I consider running to that special point,
my own special point.
I consider going to their houses
And telling their Mums.
I consider ruining their lives somehow,
to make them feel scared.
Then suddenly I am in school,
they take my bag, ruffle my hair.
Maybe some other day.

Kate Hartoch



Four O'clock Friday

Four o'clock, Friday, I'm home at last.
Time to forget the week that's passed.

On Monday, at break, they stole my ball
And threw it over the playground wall.

On Tuesday morning, I came in late,
But they were waiting behind the gate.

On Wednesday afternoon, in games,
They threw mud at me and called mw names.

Yesterday, they laughed after the test
'Cause my marks were lower than the rest.

Today, they trampled my books on the floor
And I was kept in because I swore.

Four o'clock, Friday, at last I'm free.
For two whole days they can't get at me.

John Foster

Pocket Money

'I can't explain what happens to my cash.'
I can, but can't - not to my Mum and Dad.
'Give us ten pee or get another bash' -

That's where it goes. And though their questions crash
Like blows, and though they're getting mad,
I can't explain what happens to my cash;

How can I tell the truth? I just rehash
Old lies. The others have and I'm the had:
'Give us ten pee or get another bash.'

'For dinner Dad?...just sausages and mash.'
'That shouldn't make you broke by Wednesday, lad.'
I can't explain. What happens to my cash -

My friends all help themselves. I get the ash
Of fags I buy and give, get none. 'Too bad.
Give us ten pee or get another bash.

For being You.' And still I feel the thrash
Of stronger, firmer hands than mine. The sad
Disgust of lining like a piece of trash.

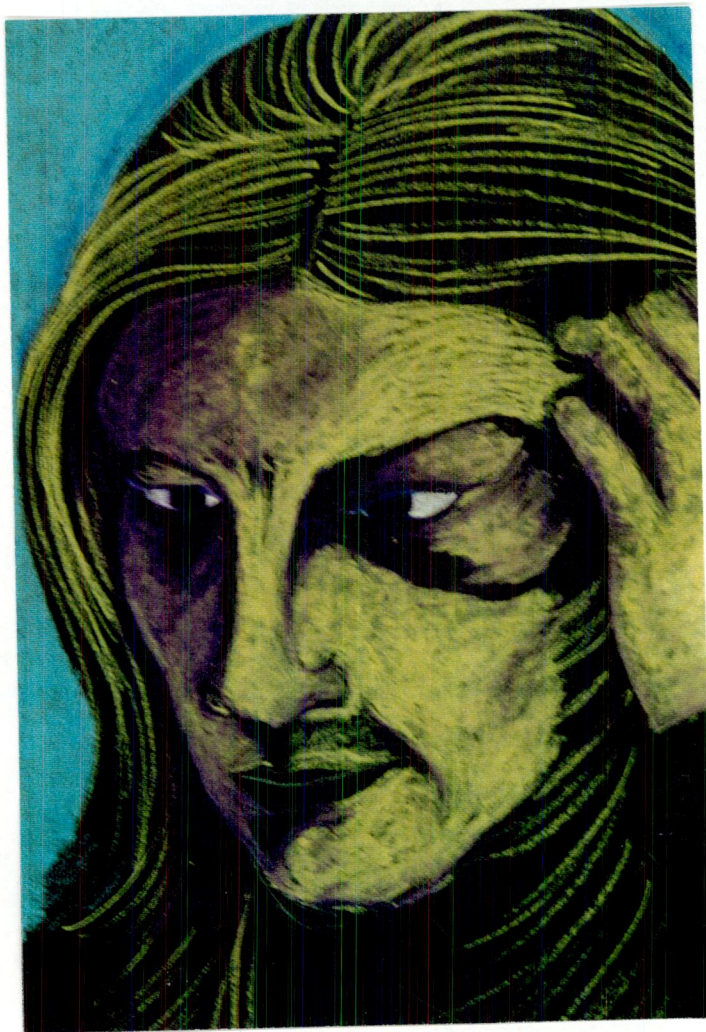
I can't explain what happens to my cash.
'Give us ten pee or get another bash.'

Mick Gowar



APPENDIX V

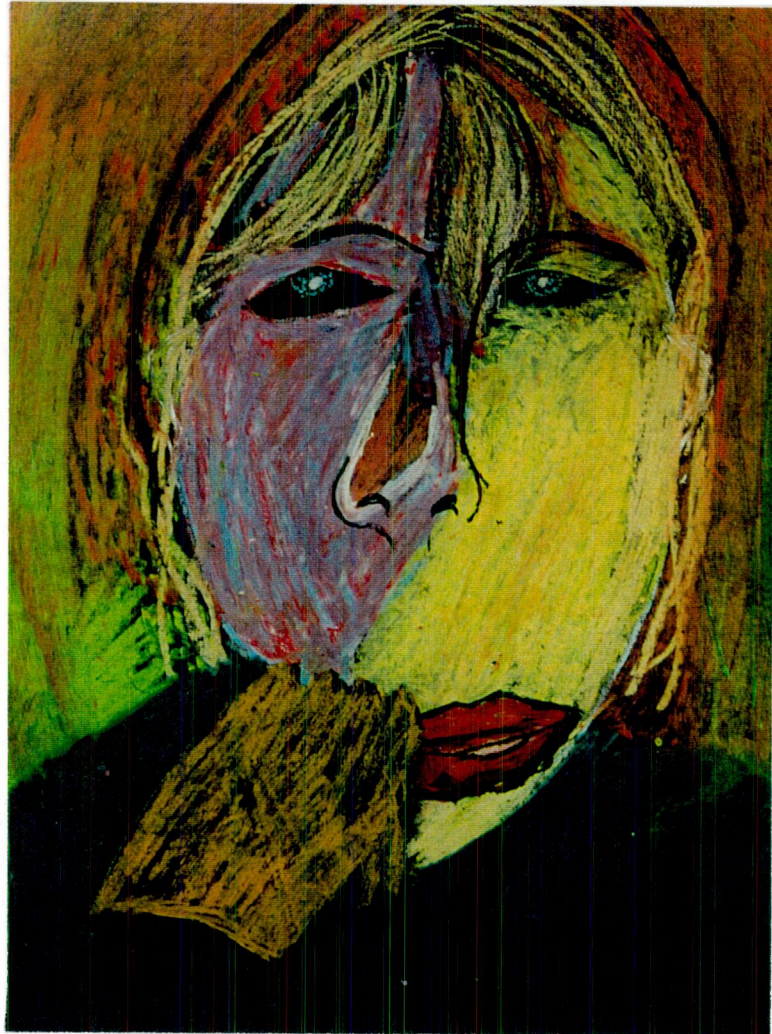
Visual Aid





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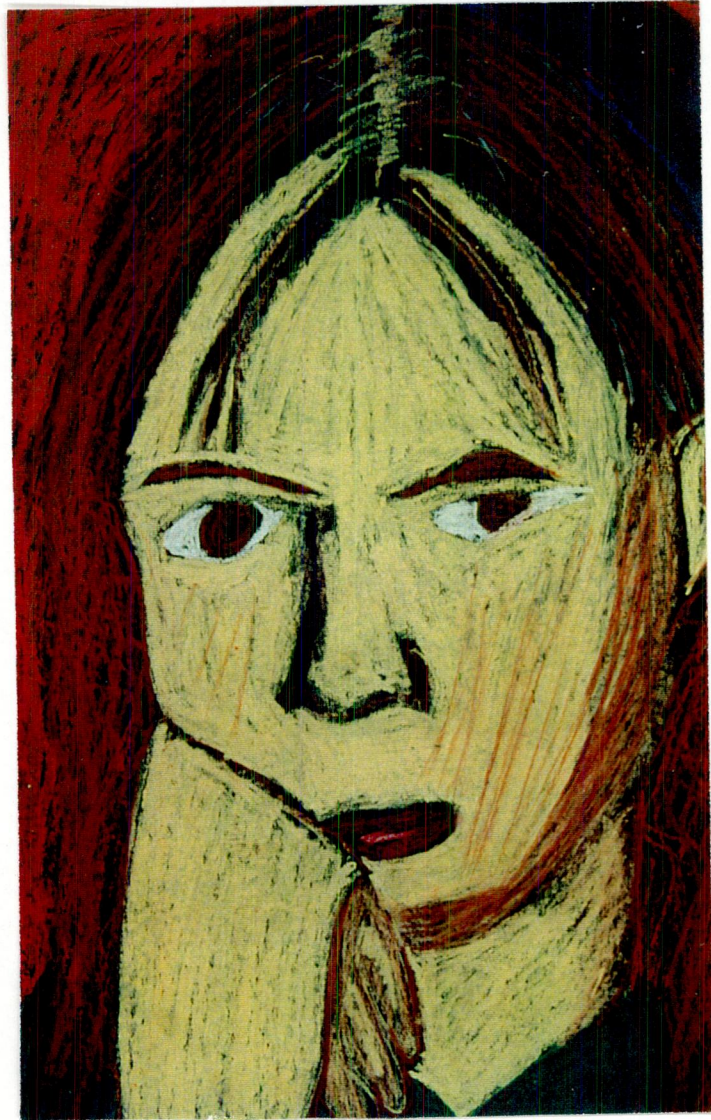
Student Work





conqueror

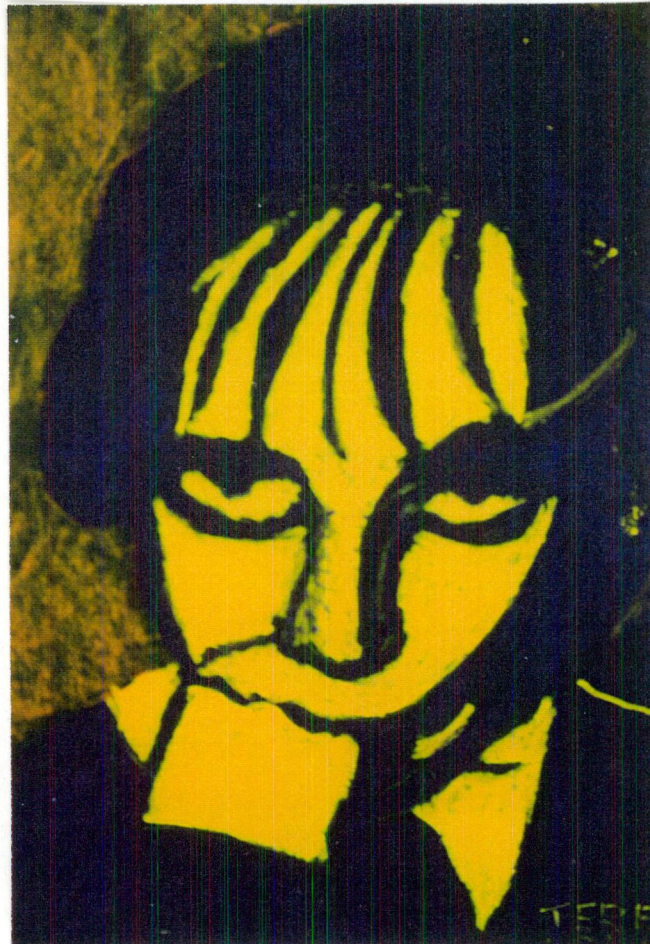
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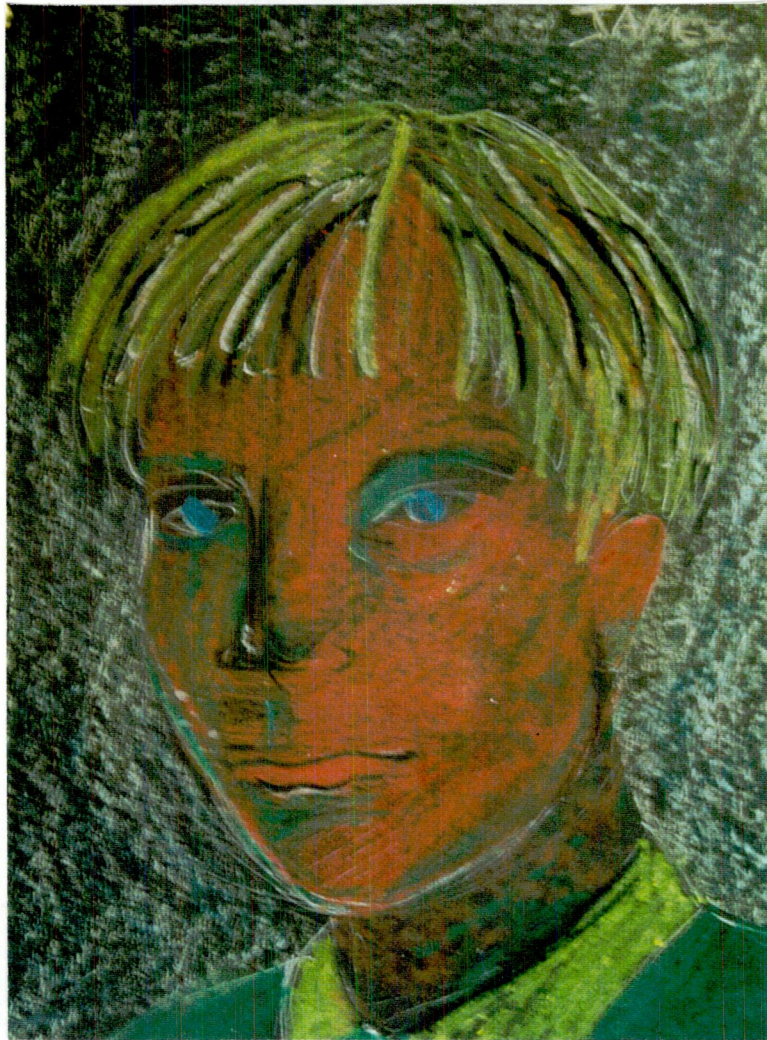
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Student Work





Student Work





CONQUEROR

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