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Stand-downs, Suspensions and Exclusions: A Dilemma for Primary School Principals

**A Thesis Presented In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For
The Degree Of Master Of Educational Administration**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate how a selection of primary school principals managed and viewed the process of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions. The researcher saw the need for such research because of the recent legislation that has changed the procedures for principals to follow, the growing public concern over the national statistics for disciplinary exclusions and the lack of research on disciplinary exclusions of primary age pupils or for principals' perspectives of the disciplinary exclusion process.

The research involved two main research methods (survey and case-study) which included a postal questionnaire distributed to all primary school principals in a localised area, a review of their Education Review Office Reports, structured interviews of five primary school principals and a review of their Behaviour Management Plans. These data were analysed with the aid of computer software packages: MICROSOFT EXCEL for the quantitative data and QSR NU*DIST for the qualitative data; and techniques of thematic induction and dilemma analysis were used.

The characteristics and behaviours of the primary age pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions in this study are an accentuated version of the trends of gender and ethnicity factors already identified for all New Zealand school pupils in the national database. This study also isolated other characteristics - the final year of school (either at primary or intermediate) and the transference of these pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusions from school to school. Disciplinary exclusions can be attributed to many interacting complex factors related to individuals, families, schools and the direct impact of changing economic and educational government policies and legislation.

It was evident that principals worked hard at maintaining and providing an education for extremely difficult pupils but these pupils presented a dilemma for principals. On the one hand, principals' comments showed that caring principals and hardworking teaching staff went out of their way to support and educate these seriously misbehaving pupils in their schools, but, on the other hand, principals perceived that they had no other choice but to use the disciplinary exclusion process. The concept of 'dilemma' was developed further in this study with implications for principals' future practice and professional development and further research.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannise their teachers.

(Socrates, 469-399 B.C.)

If what Socrates had to say 22 centuries ago was true, then children have changed little through the years and there is nothing new about disruptive or violent behaviour at school. What has changed, however, is the way in which misbehaviour is defined and disciplined.

Disciplinary exclusions in the form of stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions are the ultimate disciplinary actions that school principals in New Zealand can take in response to pupil misbehaviour deemed to be seriously detrimental to the physical and emotional safety of pupils and staff and to the educational well-being of other pupils.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of disciplinary exclusions occurring in New Zealand schools. A reported 11,972 cases of stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions occurred in the first six months of the 2001 school year, of which primary and intermediate school pupils made up approximately 18% (Ministry of Education, 2001b). Of special concern has been the growing proportion of primary and intermediate pupils who are being stood-down, suspended and excluded at a young age, when educational needs are perhaps the greatest. These trends have attracted much media attention and public comment.

This concern has also been mirrored at parliamentary level by recent legislative changes and policy developments for the management of disruptive behaviour and the use of disciplinary exclusions. In New Zealand, the principal's authority to use disciplinary exclusions has recently been redefined in the Education Amendment (No.2) Act (1998).

1.1 Background to the study

It is important to understand the legislative context of the right of every child to an education and for the disciplinary sanctions of stand-down, suspension and exclusion. In New Zealand, the Education Act (1989) gives all pupils aged 5 to 19 years, the right to a free education. Schooling is compulsory for pupils aged from 6 to 16 years and there is a general obligation on the part of all Crown-funded schools in New Zealand to meet the learning needs of all young New Zealanders. Schools are required to ensure that all enrolled pupils are attending school. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their children are enrolled and regularly attending school.

The regulatory framework, which gives schools the right to stand-down, suspend, exclude or expel pupils for gross misconduct or continual disobedience, is the Education Amendment (No.2) Act (1998). The terms 'stand-down', 'suspension' and 'exclusion' are formally defined in this legislation. As disciplinary measures used in primary and intermediate schools, they mean the following:

- Stand-down is the formal removal of a pupil from school by the principal for a specified period. Stand-downs of a pupil can total no more than five school days in any term or 10 days in a school year. Following a stand-down, the pupil automatically returns to school.
- Suspension is the formal removal of a student from school by the principal, until the Board of Trustees decides the outcome at a suspension meeting. Following a suspension, the Board may decide to lift the suspension, with or without conditions, to extend the suspension or to exclude the pupil.
- Exclusion is the formal removal of a pupil under 16 years of age from the school by the Board of Trustees, with the requirement that the pupil enrol elsewhere. (The term expulsion now refers to pupils over the age of 16, as they do not have the requirement of being enrolled elsewhere.)

For the purpose of clarity, when referring to all three of the above types of disciplinary sanctions for primary and intermediate school pupils, the researcher has used the term 'disciplinary exclusions'. The researcher also uses the term 'primary schools' to include all primary school institutions as defined in the Ministry of Education's statistics; that is, contributing primary schools, full primary schools and intermediate schools.

In the ten years prior to the new Education Amendment (No. 2) Act (1998), there were significant reported increases in the number of pupils affected by disciplinary exclusions in New Zealand (Casey, 1993; Ministry of Education, 1996; Overton, 1995; Prochnow, 1998). There was criticism about the way in which principals had carried out disciplinary exclusions (Munro & Jeffery, 1987; Casey, 1993; Ludbrook, 1990). Indeed, an indefinite suspension was commonly referred to as the 'kiwi suspension' or the 'kiwi heave-ho', as parents were sometimes asked to voluntarily withdraw their child from the school.

The Education Amendment (No. 2) Act (1998) included amendments to the disciplinary exclusion legislation to make the process fairer, more flexible, and to decrease the number of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions. The changes to the legislation provided a range of responses for cases of varying degrees of seriousness, ensured that individual cases were dealt with in accordance to the principles of natural justice and gave the Secretary of Education the power to make and publish procedural rules for principals and boards to follow. As a Ministry of Education spokesperson said at the time:

It is hoped that the new rules and procedures for school principals to follow in suspending students will see the trends reflected in this report reversed. The system gives schools greater flexibility to respond to cases, depending on how serious it is.

(Sturm, cited in Ministry of Education, 1999c, p. 1)

With the introduction of the new legislation, the Ministry of Education also set up a baseline database in July 1999 to monitor the number and trends of disciplinary exclusions. Therefore, with the definitions changing for suspension and expulsion, the introduction of the new categories of exclusion and stand-down and the establishment of a national database, statistical analysis of disciplinary exclusions, as they are now defined, has only been possible since 2000.

A recent Ministry of Education (2001b) report showed that 8565 pupils were stood-down and 2626 pupils were suspended in the first six months of 2001. The proportion of the primary and intermediate school stand-downs and suspensions to secondary school stand-downs and suspensions has increased. In the first half of 2000, 13% of stand-downs and 14% of suspensions occurred in primary and intermediate schools, compared with the same six month period of 2001, when 17% of stand-downs and 18% of suspensions occurred in primary and intermediate schools (Ministry of Education, 2001b). The time period, for which data have been collected in this national database, is too short to identify trends from these statistics but it will be important to see if the trend continues of an increasing proportion of disciplinary exclusions by primary school pupils.

This statistical information does not, however, inform us of how principals carry out the process of disciplinary exclusions within their schools. The researcher targeted the study at primary school principals because the new legislation for disciplinary exclusions placed more emphasis on the procedures that principals use in the disciplinary exclusion process and because of the growing proportion of disciplinary exclusions occurring at this age level.

The principal is faced with a basic dilemma in his or her decision to initiate the disciplinary exclusion process. On the one hand, the principal has the responsibility to ensure that the school is a safe physical and emotional environment for pupils and teachers, conducive to teaching and learning, but, on the other hand, the principal has the responsibility to ensure that every pupil (even the seriously misbehaving pupil) receives an education. It is a situation where the principal has to decide on the responsibilities of the school towards the individual pupil or to the 'common good'. Balancing these two basic responsibilities presents a dilemma to principals when

standing-down, suspending or excluding a pupil. The way in which primary school principals resolved this dilemma was the focus of this study.

1.2 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate how a selection of primary school principals managed and viewed the process of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions of pupils in their schools.

The following research questions were formulated to achieve this aim:

1. What incidents resulted in the use of stand-downs, suspensions or exclusions, by local primary school principals? Associated research questions were:

- a. What kinds of pupils were being stood-down, suspended or excluded and did they have any common characteristics?
- b. Why were the pupils being stood-down, suspended or excluded?
- c. What were the events leading up to the stand-down, suspension or exclusion?

2. How did principals manage the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process?

Associated research questions were:

- a. What were the procedures used by the principal during this process?
- b. How were principals meeting these pupils' educational (and other) needs?
- c. What happened to these pupils after the stand-down, suspension or exclusion incident?
- d. How did the principal deal with everyone involved in the process?

3. How did principals view the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process?

The associated research question was:

- a. How did principals perceive the new legislation for the stand-down, suspension and exclusion process?

1.3 The researcher's interest

This study was a response to a perceived need for more research to be conducted into the general area of educational leadership and the legal framework in which New Zealand school principals operate. Of specific interest to the researcher were:

- The way in which principals integrated the dual roles of educational leadership and of management in their schools,
- The area of disciplinary exclusion, which lies at the interface of principals providing an education for every child in their school (educational leadership) and acting according to legal procedures (educational management),
- The recent introduction of the new legislation in New Zealand for disciplinary exclusion,
- The annual publication of statistics which show that disciplinary exclusion is an area of concern,
- The attention in the media to disciplinary exclusion statistics and to incidents of disciplinary exclusion which result in legal action and
- The call by principals for research into this issue (Denny, 1993; Prochnow, 1998).

1.4 Significance and justification for the study

Since the introduction of Tomorrow's Schools, there has been a growing concern about discipline in schools and the resources available to schools for the management of disruptive behaviour. This concern reached parliamentary level in the mid-1990s, when the Education and Science Select Committee conducted an inquiry into children in education at risk through truancy and behavioural problems, resulting in the Revell Report (New Zealand Parliament: Education and Science Committee, 1995).

However, there has been little recent research into disciplinary exclusions of school pupils in New Zealand. The few New Zealand studies that have been conducted either examined disciplinary exclusions at secondary school level or analysed

national statistics, legislation, judicial aspects and pupil or family perspectives (Casey, 1993; Galloway & Barrett, 1984; Ludbrook, 1990; Munro & Jeffery, 1987; Overton, 1995).

The only New Zealand study to focus on the principal's viewpoint of the disciplinary exclusion process at primary school level was conducted by a group of Massey University staff in 1997, reported in Prochnow (1998) and also in Fitchett (1999). This research documented and analysed the reflective narrative accounts of suspensions written by a group of local primary school principals across the central North Island of New Zealand. This study alluded to the dilemma that principals face when making the decision about a disciplinary exclusion, because:

Suspension from school is a severe disciplinary action which principals hesitate to take because of the impact on the child suspended. The child's education is disrupted in the present and the immediate future, and potentially for the duration of their school career. This is particularly true when the child is in primary school. For this reason the decision to suspend a child from primary school can be extremely trying and soul searching for the principal and the Board of Trustees.

(Prochnow, 1998, p. 13)

This Massey study was conducted prior to the introduction of the new legislation for disciplinary exclusions in 1998. The researcher intends to proceed beyond this study by investigating how primary school principals managed and viewed the process of disciplinary exclusions in their schools under the new legislation. Therefore, this study will contribute to the knowledge of this process.

1.5 Limitations identified in the study

It was recognised by the researcher that disciplinary exclusions were a sensitive issue for schools and that issues of individual privacy were also involved. While the response rate (74%) for postal questionnaires was considered to be good, no speculation was entered into about the 26% of schools not responding.

The study was based on primary schools in a provincial area of the North Island of New Zealand. The area was chosen because it was manageable, in scope and within access, by the researcher. For this reason, the researcher recognised that the study would not be representative of all New Zealand primary schools.

1.6 The structure of the study

Chapter One, the Introduction, has presented the focus of the study. The problem is stated as – How do primary school principals manage and view the process of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions in their schools? Key research questions were identified. Reasons were given for the researcher selecting this topic and the need for such research – the recent legislation which has changed the procedures for principals to follow for disciplinary exclusions, the growing concern over the national statistics for stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions and the call for research on this topic by principals themselves. Finally, the limitations to the study were identified.

Chapter Two, the Literature Review, provides an overview of the theoretical debates on disciplinary exclusion, reviews the New Zealand and overseas statistics and empirical research and elaborates on the leadership dilemma that disciplinary exclusions create for principals.

Chapter Three, the Research Methodology, describes the research process. The research involved two main research methods (survey research and case-study research) and several research techniques with a triangulation strategy. There are four phases to the research process. In phase one, a postal questionnaire was distributed to all primary school principals in a localised area to identify which principals had used disciplinary exclusions and to make a preliminary foray into the topic. Phase two followed with a review of documentary evidence provided in the Education Review Office Reports of those schools identified in phase one as having used disciplinary exclusions. In phase three, case studies of five primary school principals were then undertaken, using structured interviews. Finally, in phase four, a review was made of documentary evidence provided in the Behaviour Management Plans of those five schools.

In Chapter Four, the results are presented and analysed. The data from each of the research techniques used - the questionnaire, the documentary evidence and the interviews - generated a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were inputted into a computer spreadsheet MICROSOFT EXCEL format. As the quantitative data were derived from a small group of schools, only simple frequency statistics were used. For the qualitative data, a computer program, called QSR NU*DIST, was used. The qualitative data were initially analysed for recurring themes and finally a 'Dilemma Analysis' was performed.

In Chapter Five, the Discussion, the dilemmas are used to structure the discussion of the findings.

Chapter Six, the Conclusions, reports the main conclusions, the implications for principals' practice and for future research, the limitations and contributions of this research and a clear set of recommendations based on this study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In our view, every child has a right to the best possible education. For this to occur, attention must be paid to the contextual causes of failure that lie outside the remit of the school as well as what occurs within it.

(Stoll & Myers, 1998, p. 9)

This chapter seeks to describe and critique what is known about how school principals carry out the process of disciplinary exclusions. The first section describes the central leadership role of the school principal in the disciplinary exclusion process and the leadership dilemma that the process creates. The next section describes statistical data of the phenomenon in New Zealand and the final section provides an overview of the theoretical debates of the process of disciplinary exclusions and the research knowledge that has accumulated.

2.1 The principal's role in the disciplinary exclusion process

In New Zealand, school principals perform a dual role. They are managers of the day-to-day operations in their schools and they are professional leaders of the teaching and learning in their schools. Their responsibilities extend from the management of teaching and learning in the school to leadership functions at the core of the school community.

In New Zealand, a raft of legislation provides the legal authority of school principals. Specifically,

a. Section 76 of the Education Act (1989) states that:

A school's principal is the Board's chief executive in relation to the school's control and management. Except to the extent that any enactment, or the general law of New Zealand, provides otherwise, the principal –

- (i) *Shall comply with the Board's general policy directions,*
- (ii) *And subject to paragraph (i) of this subsection, has complete discretion to manage as the principal sees fit the school's day-to-day administration.*

(The Education Act, 1989)

b. The National Administration Guidelines (No. 1) state that:

In order to ensure that the National Education Goals are met, Boards of Trustees and Principals respectively, are also required to follow sound governance and management practices involving curriculum, employment, financial and property matters applying to schools.

(Ministry of Education, 2000a)

c. The Education Act (1989) and the Education Amendment (No. 2) Act (1998) specify the principal's responsibilities with respect to:

- Consultation over the delivery of health education (Section 105),
- Suspensions (Sections 13-18),
- Guidance and counselling (Section 77),
- Release from attendance (Sections 25A-25B), and
- Advising parents of matters affecting student progress (Section 77).

d. The Education (School Attendance) Regulations (1951) also holds the principal responsible for ensuring that registers of student attendance are kept.

e. Article 28, of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992), of which New Zealand is a signatory, specifically requires that parties shall make 'primary education' compulsory and available free to all and the New Zealand Education Act (1989) provides for this compulsory education for children from the ages of 6 to 16 years.

Therefore, the principal must comply with the school Board of Trustees' general policy direction and has complete discretion in day-to-day administration or management of the school.

As professional leaders, however, principals are responsible for the development of teaching and learning of skills and of understanding to all pupils in their schools. Sergiovanni (1994) stressed the importance of effective leaders in being able to build learner-centred communities. In each school community, there are sub-communities, with differing characteristics and behaviours, which affect the entire community. Schools, which are learning communities, try to address the nature and extent to which community exists in classrooms and embrace a vision of 'democratic classrooms'. The school as a 'community of learners' or 'learning community' differs from the traditional view of school as an hierarchical organisation, in that shared values reflect democratic principles rather than authoritarian rules, where behaviour results from widespread commitment to a shared vision and set of goals rather than from control and where all individuals are respected for their unique talents and abilities (Senge, 1990; Barth, 1990).

Sergiovanni (1995) described the need for principal leadership to be a 'moral craft' based on values and ideas rather than on the bureaucratic processes of management. He described the concept of the 'Heart, Head and Hand' of leadership. The 'heart' of leadership is what the principal believes and values. The 'head' of leadership involves the theories of practice that principals have developed with experience and reflection. The 'hand' of leadership involves the actions that principals take in the leadership and management of their schools.

Recent leadership studies (Connors & Sharpe, 1996; Cuban, 1996; Dimmock, 1996, 1999, 2000; Glatter, 1996; Grace, 1995; Lam, 1996; Walker & Quong, 1998) have introduced the concept of leadership dilemmas within the cognitive dimension of educational administration. Leithwood was also interested in the contextual influences of cognition in how leaders, as problem finders and problem solvers, arrive at decisions and the underlying values held by the leaders; that is, "... *how the mind works in terms of hypothetical structures and relationships explaining why*

people attend to some aspects of information available to them in their environments” (Hallinger, Leithwood & Murphy, 1993, p. 118).

The recent study of effective headteachers (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000) found that effective leaders are surrounded by a matrix of expectations and demands within which they are constantly and consistently managing several simultaneously competing sets of tensions and they have to make the right ‘tough decisions’ about the resulting leadership dilemmas. The leaders in the study were people-centred and expert at being able to manage several competing tensions and dilemmas. Grace (1995) has commented on the dilemmas created by the values conflicts in the work of principals.

There will be major dilemmas for those headteachers whose conceptions of educational leadership have involved giving priority to moral and spiritual values or to professional, cultural and human values.

(Grace, 1995, p. 43)

These leadership dilemma studies have shown principals being torn in opposite and contradictory directions because of societal change and the rapidly changing reform of the educational environment. Therefore, although the dilemmas are grounded in the values of the principals, they are the result of the institutional structures and practices, resources and relationships and interactions between these. Dimmock (1996) advocates the analysis of dilemmas as a way of probing principals’ own cognition of how they make sense of, conceptualise and approach the actual problems they encounter in the dynamic real world; that is, principals’ *“perceptions of the social and political context which frames their work, the problems within this work context and their problem-solving strategies in order to overcome difficulties”* (Dimmock, 1996, p. 140).

In New Zealand, although approximately three percent of pupils in the New Zealand education are at risk of disciplinary exclusions, it is important to remember that the other 97% of students are not receiving disciplinary exclusions and principals have to provide a safe environment for all students (Overton, 1995, p. 58). On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil but, on the other

hand, the principal has the needs of the remaining pupils and staff. When making decisions about disciplinary exclusions, principals have to balance the needs of an individual pupil against the needs of the other pupils and the staff. This situation creates a dilemma for principals. What is a dilemma? Grace (1995) in his English study of headteachers, defined moral and professional dilemmas in school leadership as “...situations where two sets of value judgements conflict and where a resolution of the conflict must be made in the interests of the pupils, the teachers and the school” (Grace, 1995, p. 7).

For this purpose of this study, the definition of a leadership dilemma is a conflictual situation, which requires irreconcilable choices because of competing, deeply rooted values. Principals have to balance the leadership and management dimensions of their principalship. The principal has a professional and moral responsibility to provide an education for all pupils in their school, even the misbehaving pupils. On the one hand, principals recognise that misbehaving pupils have special needs arising from a variety of sources both internal to the school, such as learning difficulties, and those external to the school, such as the pupil’s family background. On the other hand, these misbehaving pupils disturb the teaching of the staff and the learning of the other pupils. Staff, pupils and parents expect the principal to provide leadership in dealing with the disruptive pupils. Principals may believe that the purpose of schools is to educate all pupils, even the seriously misbehaving pupils, but, as managers, they are also concerned with the management of discipline and the perception of the school’s discipline from the wider school community. Grace (1995) explains this situation in England, which is also of relevance to New Zealand after recent educational reforms,

In the heightened market conditions for schooling following the Education Reform Act 1988, the question of pupil exclusions had become a much more difficult issue for headteachers. On the one hand, excluding pupils seen to be disruptive could enhance a school’s reputation for maintaining standards of discipline and ultimately on its league table ranking of examination and test results. On the other hand, too many exclusions might begin to construct a community image of a difficult, and possibly failing school. These dilemmas,

involving as they did the school governors, the parents and social service agencies, were becoming sharper for some headteachers.

(Grace, 1995, p. 152)

Exercising careful judgement, understanding the complex nature of disciplinary exclusions and making the difficult and principled choices is the leadership dilemma of principals. There are knowledge, skill and ethical dimensions to the dilemma. This is the dilemma that principals have when reconciling their own values and those they share with their school community while reacting to external market competition. The needs and interests of individual students have to be balanced against the needs and interests of other students and the wider school community. The way in which principals balance these needs and resolve the dilemma will be reflected in the way they manage and view the process of disciplinary exclusions.

2.2 New Zealand statistics of disciplinary exclusion

The aggregate effect of principals' decisions in the disciplinary exclusion process has been reflected in the recent statistics for stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions. Because the definitions for suspension and expulsion changed with the Education Amendment (No. 2) Act (1998), the data after 1998 cannot be compared with that prior to 1998 and it should be viewed separately.

Prior to 1998, principals acting within the Education Act (1989) were only legally required to advise the Ministry of Education of a student's suspension and their name, the grounds for suspension, the type of suspension and the duration of the suspension. Therefore, national statistics of the characteristics of the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions, such as pupil age, gender and ethnicity, have only been available since 1998.

Under the old legislation for suspensions and expulsions, the number of suspensions increased by nearly 100% in the four year period 1992-1996; increasing steadily from 5082 suspensions in 1992 to 10,016 suspensions in 1996, as shown in Figure 1.

	Specified Suspensions (1-3 days)	Unspecified Suspensions	Total Suspensions	Expulsions (Indicative Only *)	Total Disciplinary. Exclusions
1991	3051	1246	4297	-	-
1992	3487	1595	5082	120	5202
1993	4351	2033	6384	48	6432
1994	5031	2460	7491	50	7541
1995	5931	2919	8850	77	8927
1996	6545	3471	10016	117	10033
1997	7335	4104	11439	152	11591
1998	7973	4090	12063	154	12217

Figure 1 New Zealand suspensions and expulsions, 1991-1998.

(Note: * Schools were not required to notify the Ministry of Education when a student is expelled, therefore expulsion statistics are indicative only)

(Source: Ministry of Education, 1992-1999b)

Figure 2 shows the number of disciplinary exclusions under the new definitions for stand-down, suspension, exclusion and expulsion (for those over the age of 16). The stand-down rate was 24 per 1000 students and the suspension rate was 7 per 1000 students. Stand-downs increased by six percent and suspensions increased by five percent in the 12 month period up to December 2000, as compared to the same 12 month period up to June 2000 (Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 1).

	Stand- Downs	Suspensions	Exclusions	Expulsions*	Total Disciplinary Exclusions
12/07/1999- 16/07/2000	16042	4891	1458	185	22576
17/07/2000- 16/07/2001	17003	4948	1448	192	23591

Figure 2 New Zealand stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions, 1999-2001.

(Note: * Expulsion figures comprise 'continuing' expulsions and 'finished' expulsions as at the mid-year date)

(Source: Ministry of Education, 2001c, written correspondence)

Although, the peak age for pupils receiving stand-downs and suspensions is 14, the proportion of younger children who are affected by disciplinary exclusions has been increasing. In 2001, 44% of all stand-downs were for pupils aged 9 to 13 years, up from 40% the previous year. The percentage of suspensions and stand-downs for primary and intermediate pupils (as compared to secondary pupils) has increased from 13% in the first six months of 2000 to 17% for the same period of 2001. This increased rate has occurred in spite of a primary roll decrease and a secondary roll increase over this period of time (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 2 -5).

Maori pupils constituted 21% of the total school roll but they have been disproportionately represented in the stand-down and suspension statistics, where they comprised 42% of stand-downs and 49% of suspensions. Pacific Islanders were also over-represented (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 5 - 9). Boys have also been over-represented in the stand-down and suspension data, comprising 73% of all stand-downs and also 73% of all suspensions (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 4 - 9). Of particular relevance to this current study, boys aged 6 to 11 years, as opposed to girls in the same age range, accounted for 93% of the suspension cases (Ministry of Education, 2000b, p. 4).

The most common reported behaviours resulting in disciplinary exclusions were for assault on another student (25%) and continual disobedience (25%). The most common reason for suspension was for drugs and substance abuse (40%), followed by continual disobedience (20%) and physical violence (14%) (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 2 - 9).

There were significant regional differences in the stand-down and suspension rates. The average rates per 1000 for all New Zealand for stand-down was 12 and for suspensions was four for the first six months of 2001. Hawkes Bay, for example, was almost on the national average for stand-downs (14 per 1000) and suspensions (4 per 1000). However, regional variations were extreme, with the West Coast of the South Island having the highest stand-down rate (29 per 1000) and suspension rate (9 per 1000), compared to Nelson, which had the lowest stand-down rate (8 per 1000) and also the lowest suspension rate (1 per 1000) (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 7 - 10).

There were significant school decile differences in the stand-down and suspension rates. In 1998, there were 6.3 suspensions per 1000 pupils in primary schools drawing on lower socio-economic catchments; in schools with middle socio-economic catchments, 4.1 per 1000; and, in schools with higher socio-economic catchments, 1.4 per 1000. The comparable secondary figures were 68.3 per 1000, 43.8 per 1000 and 23 per 1000, respectively (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 36). Similarly, in the first six months of 2001, pupils in schools of deciles one to six were most at risk of stand-downs and pupils in schools of deciles two to five for suspensions (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 6 - 10).

Following a suspension by the principal, there is a Board of Trustees' suspension meeting. The Board receives a report from the principal and listens to the pupil, the pupil's family or whanau and support people. The Board then decides on the future of the pupil's continued attendance at the school. In the first six months of 2001, of the 2626 suspensions, in 1717 cases (66%), the pupils returned to their suspending school, either with or without special conditions; in 691 cases (26%), the pupils remained suspended and continued to receive an education programme organised by the principal, outside the school, pending further decision by the Board; in 715 cases (27%), the Boards of Trustees decided to exclude (pupils under the age of 16) and, in 66 cases (2.5%), the Boards of Trustees decided to expel (pupils over the age of 16) (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 11). Therefore, in 34% of cases the pupil who had received the disciplinary exclusion was no longer able to attend classes at their current school.

To summarise, the national statistics identified some areas of focus for this study as being the increasing number of disciplinary exclusions and particularly the increasing proportion of disciplinary exclusions occurring at primary school level, the high proportion of male and Maori pupils being stood-down and suspended, the regional and school decile differences in disciplinary exclusion rates and violence and continual disobedience being the main causes for a disciplinary exclusion. About a third of the pupils who received a disciplinary exclusion were no longer able to attend their school. This necessitates a change in schooling that has serious ramifications for a young primary age pupil at a stage when they are developing early social and learning skills. The implications for this study will be whether these

national trends will be also identified in the data generated by this study at primary school level and the implications these trends have for how principals deal with this increasing phenomenon.

2.3 The theoretical debates and research of disciplinary exclusion

The statistical information from the national database, however, provides little indication as to how principals carry out the process of disciplinary exclusions in their schools. This section provides a synthesis of the theoretical debates and the research conducted into disciplinary exclusions. There have been very few research studies conducted within New Zealand on this topic and they were all conducted prior to the introduction of the present legislation for disciplinary exclusions. The new legislation has changed the definitions for the various disciplinary exclusions and the procedures that principals must follow in the disciplinary exclusion process.

Looking overseas for research on disciplinary exclusions also presented challenges to the researcher. The definitions and procedures for disciplinary exclusions vary from country to country and, with the exception of research by Hayden (1996a, 1997a, 1997b) and Parsons (1997, 1999), there is a lack of research that focuses specifically upon primary age children. The countries of greatest similarity to New Zealand, for disciplinary exclusions, were those of Great Britain and, therefore, research from these countries was of most relevance to this study.

Individual factors and disciplinary exclusions

The behaviourist perspective has linked school exclusions to individual features of the misbehaving student, focusing primarily on medical or psychiatric theories of behaviour, whereby children are labelled 'disturbed' if they do not act within a predetermined range. Specifically, there has been criticism of the increasing number of disciplinary exclusions of pupils diagnosed with the Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome (ADDS) and whether this disorder is a biological disorder or a socially constructed mental health disorder (Hayden, 1997a; Slee, 1995). Slee (1995) explains the point,

The growing professional interest in identification, diagnosis and treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome (ADDS) and in transferring students considered to be 'maladjusted' and 'socially-emotionally disturbed' to off-site behaviour units is indicative of contemporary manifestations of the disciplinary gaze in school.

(Slee, 1995, p. 7)

The use of the various labels given to these pupils, such as 'disruptive', 'deviant' and 'maladjusted', has been criticised in that it leads to a victim-blaming approach (Blyth & Milner, 1993). This is of particular significance to schools and principals, as Coulby and Harper (1985) explain,

If we perceive a situation to be disruptive, then this is a temporary state of affairs, and one which involves several participants. If we perceive behaviour to be disruptive, then this is something which can change into other more appropriate behaviours. But if we perceive a pupil to be disruptive, this is somehow something to do with his/her personality or nature. This means that we are more likely to regard it as permanent and difficult to change. We will probably then see any incident in which a 'disruptive pupil' is involved as caused by him/her than as a clash between various participants within a specific context.

(Coulby & Harper, 1985, pp. 3-4)

Galloway and Barrett (1984) commented on the individual factors common to suspended pupils. In their early New Zealand study, they found that the suspended pupils had health issues, serious literacy problems and behavioural problems. Hayden (2001a) reported that statistics in England showed that pupils with statements for Special Educational Needs (SEN) were over-represented in exclusion cases and comprised about 17% of all exclusions (Hayden, 2001a, p. 3). In New Zealand, a study of Canterbury primary school pupils showed that 4.5% of the pupils met the clinical definition of 'conduct disordered' (Church, 1994, p. 3). However, it is not known what percentage of primary school pupils with 'conduct disorders' are receiving disciplinary exclusions and, therefore, it is not known if there is a similar over-representation of pupils with 'conduct disorders' in the New Zealand

disciplinary exclusion statistics. In New Zealand, through the 'Special Education 2000' initiative, schools can acquire extra government funding to meet the needs of pupils who have been identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. This recent government initiative places strong emphasis on providing support for behaviourally disordered students through early intervention, by providing teachers with strategies to cope and by providing individualised support for students. However, this is where the issue of the categorisation and number of pupils who can be clinically defined as 'conduct disordered' becomes pertinent because:

The increasing referral rate reflects a variation on 'Parkinson's Law' where the number of problem children referred to psychologists for special education has increased in direct proportion to the availability of resources.

(Galloway, cited in Slee, 1988, p. 17)

Also, although remedial programs within schools can be successful with pupils with Attention Deficit Disorders, schools that operate rigid disciplinary systems in market-led educational systems may not accommodate the needs of these children, as commented upon by Hayden (1997a),

There has been a great deal of commentary about the vulnerability of children with special needs in a more market-led system, as well as an acknowledgement that there is an overrepresentation of children with special educational needs in the available exclusion statistics.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 18)

Race and gender factors of disciplinary exclusion

National statistics have revealed the differential rates of exclusion between ethnic groups. Some of the most recent research on disciplinary exclusions overseas has focused on the 'racialisation' of school exclusion (Majors, Gillborn & Sewell, 1998; Mehra, 1998; Osler & Hill, 1999; Pomeroy, 2000; Wright, Weekes & McGlaughlin, 2000). These studies unearthed the complex and conflictual relationships between white teachers and black male pupils.

In England, pupils from ethnic minority groups have also been over-represented in the statistics for exclusions, with estimates of African-Caribbean pupils being excluded at almost six times the rate of white pupils (Hayden, 2001b, p. 3; Blyth & Milner, 1994, p. 294). Others have also examined this association between ethnicity and exclusion and they question why issues of race and ethnicity, and possible racial discrimination, have been overlooked in the public debate (Osler & Hill, 1999; Parsons, 1999; Wright et al, 2000). A recent English research study (Wright et al, 2000), into the school processes that resulted in the exclusion of black pupils, compared internal school processes of five schools within a sociological theoretical framework, with concerns for equity and disadvantage. The researchers concluded from in-depth interviews, conducted with 62 pupils, that the headteacher's philosophy of the role of punishment is crucial when considering whether it is the rights of the well-behaved majority or the troublesome minority that should be protected. They found that, when black pupils responded to racist insults or bullying from white pupils, the teachers blamed the black pupils and punished them rather than the white pupils. Of significance to this present study, Pettitt and Flatley (1998) found the relationship between ethnicity and number of disciplinary exclusions was even more pronounced for primary school pupils.

In England, statistics have shown that boys were more likely to be excluded than girls. The ratio is about 4:1 at the secondary age and about 10:1 at primary age (Hayden, 2001a, p. 3). In Scotland, 1998-1999, males accounted for 93% of all exclusions from primary school (Scottish Executive, 2000, p. 1).

Similar findings have been made in New Zealand in three early surveys of disciplinary exclusions of New Zealand pupils, which focused on the prevalence of suspensions from secondary schools and the ethnic and gender characteristics of suspended secondary school pupils (Galloway & Barrett, 1982, 1984; Ludbrook, 1990; Overton, 1995). The following findings achieved statistical significance. Galloway and Barrett (1982), in their study of 140 Wellington secondary pupils, and Ludbrook (1990), in a study of 553 Auckland secondary pupils, reported that Maori pupils were over-represented in suspensions. Ludbrook indicated that Maori pupils represented about 20% of the school population but comprised 26% of the suspensions. Pacific Island pupils were also over-represented, relative to their

percentage of the total population. Boys made up 69% of the suspensions and 77% of the expulsions (Ludbrook, 1990, p. 3). The Overton (1995) study of 213 suspended and expelled Christchurch secondary pupils found the same gender and ethnic imbalances for suspensions and expulsions. A further New Zealand study by Casey (1993), a statistical analysis of the national suspension data available at that time, also identified some of the alarming trends of disciplinary exclusions – the gender imbalance and the preponderance of Maori and Pacific Island pupils in the suspension statistics. This analysis of the available state primary school suspension figures revealed that, in 1992, the ratio of boys to girls being suspended was 8:1 (Casey, 1993, p. 269).

Family and social factors of disciplinary exclusion

There has been much theoretical debate over family-based factors contributing to school exclusions. In today's busy world where both parents work, children may experience time-poverty. The notion of 'quality time' versus 'quantity of time' is an important concept for analysing family life across the entire socio-economic spectrum (Hayden, 1997a). Children from families with considerable material wealth may suffer equally from the effect of time-poverty, as do children from poor socio-economic families. With the acquisition of early social skills, learning and modelling taking place within the home, a child is primarily socialised within his or her family. However, many children live in what has been termed as the 'chaotic family' where the functioning of the family and the style of control can be described as varying between laissez-faire and rigid, and is, therefore, unpredictable for the child (Hayden, 1997a).

As Barker describes,

Children growing up in such families are at risk in many ways. Secure emotional attachments to their parents may not develop, their learning of social skills may be impaired and they may not learn to trust the adult world, and they may grow up with feelings of doubt about their worth.

(Barker, cited in Hayden, 1997a, p. 12)

When these children begin school, the problems caused by lack of socialisation in the family are transferred into their school world. In New Zealand studies, Galloway and Barrett (1982, 1984) and Overton (1995) found evidence of family background as a causal factor for suspensions, in that:

They were also students whose families were experiencing multiple difficulties and who had been experiencing these problems for a number of years. In fact, the family background data (in so far as this was known to the school) suggested that the number of difficulties, problems and crises being experienced by the family tended to be highly predictive of the problem behaviours and attitudes which the student brought to the school.

(Overton, 1995, p. 53)

Family changes and difficult family relationships were found to be related to the likelihood of exclusion, with excluded children coming more often from households with reconstituted families and single parents than from households with the traditional two parents (Hayden, 1997a; Parsons, Godfrey, Howlett, Hayden & Martin, 2001b). Hayden and Parsons have both described the households from which suspended or excluded pupils come, as 'chaotic' (Parsons et al, 2001b) or under a great deal of 'stress' (Hayden, 1997a).

Institutional factors and disciplinary exclusions

An explanation of school exclusions caused by institution-based factors, centres on an interactionist belief that 'problem' behaviour originates from the way the subject interacts with their environment, and the question of whether schools act as agencies of transformation or reproduction. Rutter and colleagues (1979), in their early study of "*whether schools were as they were because of the children they admitted or rather whether children behaved in the way they did because of school influences*" (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore & Ouston, 1979, p. 181), concluded that school ethos primarily explained many differences in academic achievement between schools. A disciplinary exclusion, whereby a principal removes a pupil from the school is, by definition, a school-driven process. An overseas study of the association between disciplinary exclusions of high school pupils and school variables had a tentative

conclusion that *“suspensions are the unintended consequence of some of the procedures some schools employ”* (McManus, 1987, p. 63). A great deal of research in the area of school effectiveness and school improvement has been generated about how to improve the management of schools, including behaviour management (Hargreaves, Hestor & Mellor, 1975; Reynolds, 1982; Galloway & Barrett 1982; Lawrence, Steed & Young, 1984). More recent research studies, however, have contradicted Rutter’s findings and have instead found that school outcomes are mainly determined by school mix rather than school type. A New Zealand ethnographic study of working class, predominantly Polynesian schools, hypothesised that ‘successful’ schools, through much modified curriculum content, changed pedagogical techniques and alternative organisational styles could effect some transformation (Ramsay, Sneddon, Grenfell, & Ford, 1983). However, this study concluded that *“...while some so-called ‘successful’ working class schools have made a difference when compared with structurally similar schools, in terms of the accreditation system of the society as a whole their performance fell below the national norm”* and *“...on national criteria even the most successful working class schools were not doing well”* (Ramsay et al, 1983, p. 300).

Ramsay was critical of Rutter’s (1979) work because of the *“failure to treat curriculum content as problematical”* (Ramsay et al, 1983, p. 272), a sentiment later echoed by Knight:

... school curriculum must recognise the diversity of their interests – both social and intellectual. Knowledge about the self and the general culture is the key ingredient and this has to be built inside the curriculum aims of the school.

(Knight, cited in Slee, 1988, p. 336)

Another New Zealand study, a mathematical Hierarchical Linear Modelling study of 5393 students throughout New Zealand, based on School Certificate English, Science and Mathematics marks, established that *“... it is the difference in the pupil*

populations that is the greatest factor in determining the academic outcomes of schools” (Harker & Nash, 1996, p. 165).

Thrupp (1999), in a further New Zealand study, asserted that the message that ‘schools can make a difference’ has been overplayed because:

... many school processes which have been identified as contributing to student achievement may be less independent of school mix than researchers have typically allowed. Instead, aspects of schooling such as student relations, classroom instruction and school organization and management may be powerfully influenced by school mix.

(Thrupp, 1999, p. 5)

Stoll and Myers (1998) and Slee, Weiner and Tomlinson (1998) focused on the social and political ramifications of the school effectiveness movement and criticised school effectiveness by asking the question - “*Effective for what?*” (Slee, Weiner & Tomlinson, 1998, p. 97)

There has been evidence of principals’ attitudes, school status, school policies and practices having a greater effect on the probability of exclusion than actual pupil misbehaviour ((Galloway, Ball, Blomfield & Seyd, 1982; Imich, 1994). Galloway and Barrett (1984) found wide variations in the extent to which schools used suspensions. The percentage of pupils on the school roll who had been suspended varied from 1.63% to 0.39% in their study (Galloway & Barrett, 1984, p. 279). Galloway (1985) later concluded that: “*The cause of the exclusion, if not the disruption itself, lies to some extent in the attitudes, policies, and practices of the school*” (Galloway, 1985, p. 60).

The Ludbrook (1990) study of Auckland secondary schools also showed widely different patterns in the use of suspensions and expulsions between schools which suggested that the use of disciplinary exclusions in particular schools had more to do with the individual school’s discipline policy than with the behaviour standards or catchment areas of the pupils. Ludbrook (1990) suggested that:

Our survey gives little support to the thesis that schools in disadvantaged areas have greater discipline problems and therefore need to use harsher disciplinary measures. The two Auckland schools that expel the most students are in settled middle class areas. A school with a high rate of suspensions/expulsions may be situated alongside another that does not suspend or expel any students.

(Ludbrook, 1990, p. 3)

While some secondary schools in the study had used indefinite suspensions as a routine disciplinary measure for certain types of behaviour, such as swearing at teachers, other schools had used the suspension only as a last resort when other disciplinary measures had been tried and failed and the pupil was considered a risk to other pupils or the teaching staff. Both Galloway and Barrett (1984) and Overton (1995) concluded that the use of suspensions and expulsions was dependent on the school's disciplinary system and the widely differing attitudes of the staff towards the role of suspensions and expulsions in the school's disciplinary system.

These New Zealand findings were similar to those found in research conducted overseas. Cullen (1997) found that the staff attitudes, especially those of the senior management and the headteacher, was the most important factor in explaining differences in the use of disciplinary exclusions from different schools. Similarly, Imich (1994) also suggested that school factors might be a more significant predictor of exclusion than the actual behaviour of the pupils.

Political factors and disciplinary exclusions

The noticeable increase in disciplinary exclusions began in the 1990s, which coincided with a period of radical reforms of the education system in New Zealand. The Education Act (1989) introduced market-oriented practices into the state education system, decentralised the management of schools to local school Boards of Trustees, and introduced a formula funding of schools. The size of the school roll affected the school's budget, so, if a school's roll decreased, then so would the school's budget. It became important for a school to present an attractive image to the public in order to retain roll numbers and to maximise income to the school.

In 1991, the abolition of school zones further increased competitiveness between schools and led to the development of an education market. Prior to 1991, the Secretary of Education had set a maximum school roll for every school, an enrolment scheme was implemented for a home zone and a ballot for out of zone enrolments. In 1991, schools were given the responsibility for managing their own enrolment scheme and there was no longer a requirement for a home zone. Schools, therefore, became competitors for their pupils and parents became 'customers' with choice. Schools compete for the pupils who will achieve academically, thereby contributing to the 'cultural capital' of the school and enhancing the school's image when academic results are published. Therefore, it has been suggested that some schools may use suspension as a "*tool for pupil selection*" (Ward, 1997, p. 15). In the United Kingdom, the Education Reform Act 1988 has also created a state system for "*schools which can afford to turn away certain clients and other schools that must take any they can get*" (Ball, 1993, p. 8).

Other social policies have also affected the context of school exclusions; namely, the integration of all pupils into mainstream education and the reduction in institutions for residential care for children with special needs. As Hayden (1997a) explains, this has led to a group of vulnerable, less 'marketable' pupils who have become marginalised by the recent educational legislation because:

This competition is occurring at a time when schools are expected to integrate children with a wide range of special educational needs, ranging from physical disability, specific learning difficulties, sensory impairment, to emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some of these children will make major demands on the resources of a school and particular groups of children may be viewed as more 'deserving' of these resources than others.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 7)

These trends have implications for schools and principals when considering misbehaving pupils facing disciplinary exclusion. Schools may be less tolerant of pupils who are perceived to be 'trouble-makers' or 'non-achievers' and they may use the disciplinary exclusion procedures to remove such pupils in order to improve overall student quality and achievement. As Parffrey (1994) says,

'Naughty' children are bad news in a market economy. No one wants them. They are bad for the image of the school, they are bad for league tables, they are difficult and time-consuming, they upset and stress teachers.

(Parffrey, 1994, p. 108)

The recent changes in disciplinary exclusion legislation in New Zealand have meant that pupils can no longer be suspended from school indefinitely, a practice in the past referred to as the 'kiwi suspension'. The practice of 'unofficial' exclusions and 'cooling off' days has been widely documented in England and has been blamed for underestimates of the actual number of pupils excluded from school (Vuillamy & Webb, 2001; Stirling, 1996; Blyth & Milner, 1996).

Similarly, some schools may also use disciplinary exclusions to promote the image to the community that the school offers a drug-free environment and strict disciplinary standards. Ludbrook (1990) predicted that, in New Zealand, with new government policies stressing parental choice, greater competitiveness and user pays,

There will be greater pressures on schools to 'unload' students seen as troublesome, time consuming or lacking fluency in English language. Principals may fear support for Maori and Pacific Island students may result in 'white flight' with middle class, pakeha parents exercising their choice and enrolling their son or daughter at another school.

(Ludbrook, 1990, p. 5)

One research study looked at the effect of the actual legislation on disciplinary exclusion rates between different countries (Barr, Kilpatrick & Lundy, 2000). They found that there were fewer school exclusions in Wales than in England. They identified that the Northern Ireland legislation provided a more pupil-centred approach to the disciplinary exclusion process and they concluded that it was the actual differences in the statutory legislation that caused the different exclusion rates.

Types of misbehaviour

Overton (1995) found that the most common misbehaviour, for which the pupils have been suspended or expelled as secondary pupils, was for acts of violence at school (33%). Most of the remaining suspensions and expulsions were for defiant or disruptive behaviour, verbal abuse or drugs at school (Overton, 1995, p. 51). Overseas studies have found the most common causes of exclusion were violence to other pupils, followed by disruptive or 'unacceptable' behaviour then verbal abuse to staff and other pupils, and criminal offences such as theft or substance abuse (Hayden, 1997a; Imich, 1994). However, there has been criticism that too many exclusions were for minor incidents which were never meant to be grounds for exclusion (Pettitt & Flatley, 1998). Similarly, Hayden (1997a) suggested that the final incident, which caused the exclusion, was the 'tip of the iceberg'; in other words, exclusion had only occurred after a long culmination of events.

Views about the disciplinary exclusion process

The success of the use of suspensions and expulsions as a sanction by schools has been questioned. In New Zealand, Overton (1995) observed that:

... in a high proportion of cases, the suspension of students with a history of behaviour problems is of no educational benefit to the student concerned and may, in fact, have a deleterious effect by moving the student closer to a permanent exit from the school system.

(Overton, 1995, p. 54)

Doubt has been raised as to whether the use of exclusions as a sanction has had any positive effects on pupils' behaviour. An English longitudinal study of 726 excluded primary school pupils found that:

Nearly half (46%) had received further primary school exclusions and over a third (36%) had received exclusions in their secondary schooling; less than half (43%) of the excluded pupils were still in mainstream education six years later; problems had intensified for 50% of the children, stayed the

same for 18% of the children and there had been improvements for 32% of the children, and 30% of the children had evidence of offending within the five year period.

(Parsons et al, 2001b, p. 1)

Similarly, Imich (1994) suggested that there is a reduction in the impact of exclusion as a punishment, the more often it is used, with the possibility that exclusion may even be regarded as a rewarding experience by some children, in that they gain attention from their peers, a point also made by Blyth and Milner (1996).

Apart from the lack of effectiveness as a sanction, disciplinary exclusions have also been found to be negative and damaging in the short-term to pupils. Overton (1995) found that exclusion was 'an extremely stressful experience' with sometimes serious family repercussions. Six of the 35 pupils in the study had been hit or 'given a hiding' by a family member and one had been 'kicked out of home' as a result of the exclusion. A number of excluded students had felt 'picked out', victimised or 'put down' (Overton, 1995, p. 46). Of special note to the present study was the finding by Overton that the majority of secondary pupils, who had been suspended or expelled, had been engaging in inappropriate behaviours since their primary school years. Their misbehaviour had continued at secondary school until they were finally suspended or expelled.

In the long-term, disciplinary exclusions can also have an impact on the pupil's adult life. The longitudinal study (Parsons et al, 2001b) conducted on pupils who had had disciplinary exclusions at primary school level found that the outcomes of these pupils at secondary level were moderately poor, with problems intensifying for half of the 726 pupils in the sample. Forty six percent had had further primary school exclusions and 36% received further exclusions at secondary level (Parsons et al, 2001b, p. 4). There is now a substantial body of research, reviewed in Church (1994), Martin, Hayden, Turner & Ramsell (1999) and Gordon (2001), which suggests that children who engage in antisocial behaviour at school tend to grow up to become adults who engage in antisocial behaviour, delinquency and crime and become further 'excluded' from society by prison sentences. On the positive side, however, Cullingford (1999) found that there was widespread evidence, from

research in Britain, that early home-school based interventions could make a difference in preventing exclusion and later involvement in criminality.

Disciplinary exclusions of primary age pupils

Of relevance to this present study, Casey (1993) noted that, although there were fewer suspensions in primary and intermediate schools than in secondary schools, the number of suspensions of primary and intermediate pupils was increasing at an alarming rate. Casey called for further research into primary school suspensions to answer the question: “*What effect does the suspension of a primary or intermediate school student have on his or her future education?*” (Casey, 1993, p. 265)

Hayden (1996a, 1997a, 1997b, 2001a, 2001b) and Parsons (1997, 1999) have carried out the majority of research into disciplinary exclusions at the primary school level. It is interesting to note that, in England, Parsons (1999) also found that the rate for primary school exclusions was accelerating while the rate of increase for secondary school exclusions was decreasing (Parsons, 1999, p. 24). Their research showed that primary school children excluded from school tended to be an accentuated version of some of the national trends of disciplinary exclusion, such as the common characteristics of gender and ethnicity. Brodie (1996), in a survey of the research in England on disciplinary exclusions of primary school pupils, noted that:

Exclusion from school is typically associated with behavioural difficulties. On a behaviour rating scale high levels of conduct disorder, hyperactivity and restlessness and disorganised behaviour have been identified among this group. Significantly, the wide range of needs presented by these children was recognised by teachers and they were rarely seen as ‘plain naughty’. However, where reasons were recorded for a child’s exclusion, physical aggression appeared to be especially prominent among the younger group.

(Brodie, 1996, pp. 6-7)

It has also been found that primary school children were most often excluded after long periods of difficult and disruptive behaviour that was described as ‘violent’ in many instances (Parsons et al, 2001b). Hayden (1997a) warned that disciplinary exclusion for primary age pupils is especially damaging because:

Children excluded from primary school should be viewed primarily as children with special educational needs and/or children 'in need' and are therefore entitled to support and protection from legislation which recognizes these needs, rather than viewed as a discipline problem which requires appropriate sanctions, one of which is exclusion from school.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 36)

There has been little research about the way in which principals manage and view the process of disciplinary exclusions. Furthermore, few studies have collected and compared the perspectives of principals. The call for such research into primary school exclusions was made by one of the most prolific researchers overseas,

Available research to date on primary school exclusions does not analyze the perspectives of both class and head teachers, yet these individuals have very different roles and responsibilities in respect of exclusion.

(Hayden, 1997a, pp. 30-31)

The most recent New Zealand study of disciplinary exclusions reported in Prochnow (1998) and Fitchett (1999) was of particular relevance in serving as a pilot to this present study as it involved the perspectives of the principals themselves, specifically at primary level. This action research project used a case study approach to analyse the stories of 15 primary school principals, from the central North Island of New Zealand, who reflected on students they had recently suspended or who were at-risk of being suspended from their schools. Fitchett (1999) explained the need for such research,

The most significant aspect of this research is that it was not only developed in response to a need expressed by a group of primary school principals but was (and indeed still is) "owned" by the principals themselves throughout.

(Fitchett, 1999, p. 5)

Important factors emerged which described the circumstances of the pupils. Family structure was an important factor with the majority of pupils living in homes with solo parents. Peer relationships were poor with over half the reported pupils having either no or few friends. The types of behaviours, which led to the suspension, were

described as violent, aggressive, destructive and noncompliant. However, the researchers found that principals were reluctant to suspend pupils because of the impact on the child suspended and the suspension had only occurred after numerous attempts at behaviour modification by the school had failed.

The proforma used in the Fitchett (1999) and Prochnow (1998) study referred to suspension as 'unsuccessful' and non-suspension as 'successful' but the researchers found that this concept was not so simplistic and they illustrated the fact with a comment from a principal who said,

At the end of this exercise [the suspension] I felt that I hadn't supported my staff, children and parents, as I should have. Sometimes the needs of the majority need to be considered more. Suspensions would not have helped Peter but then neither did we.

(Fitchett, 1999, p. 8)

Fitchett concluded,

It seems at times suspension has been a positive experience or ... could have been the 'lesser of two evils'. Each case has to be considered on its own merit and we learned that the words 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' are not synonymous with suspension and non-suspension.

(Fitchett, 1999, p. 8)

Fitchett described the situation in which the principals found themselves,

The principals felt helpless themselves and that the situation was hopeless for all concerned – the child, the family, the teachers and the principal. This is intensified in the primary school setting by the fact that primary school personnel tend to form close relationships with families and also that primary schools are run more as a unit with teachers very much part of the school team. This increases the pressure on the principal to support staff and to do all that can be done for the child and his/her family.

(Fitchett, 1999, p.5)

The idea of a dilemma, discussed earlier in the first section of this chapter, emerged in the Prochnow and Fitchett study. Prochnow (1998) concluded with the dilemma that principals faced:

A problem which schools and principals face is the apparent dichotomy between suspension and keeping the child who is exhibiting unacceptable behaviour in school.

(Prochnow, 1998, p. 13)

2.4 Conclusion

The review of the literature has described the theoretical debates for the macro-framework of disciplinary exclusions within which principals operate and the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the disciplinary exclusion process. The research supports the trends evident in the statistics available for disciplinary exclusions in New Zealand, which also mirrors the trends found in overseas research. The statistics and research, in New Zealand and overseas, have confirmed that a number of levels of explanation must be considered to understand disciplinary exclusions. There is wide-ranging evidence about the increase in the phenomenon and there is broad agreement about the characteristics of the pupils who are most vulnerable of disciplinary exclusions. It is a 'joined-up problem' in which primary pupils are particularly vulnerable. Such is the dilemma for the primary school principal. In particular, the concepts of dilemma and dilemma analysis are the focusing analytical framework for the analysis and interpretation for this study, in order to answer the research questions on how primary school principals manage and view the disciplinary exclusion process.

The aim of this present study is to expand on the statistics and research reviewed to reveal the principals' perspective in the disciplinary exclusion process, a perspective that has been lacking in previous research. With the exception of one recent study, reported in Prochnow (1998) and Fitchett (1999), all research into disciplinary exclusions at primary school level has been carried out overseas. The next chapter, Chapter Three, outlines the research methodology to determine how primary school principals manage and view the process of disciplinary exclusions.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*I keep six honest serving men
Who taught me all I knew.
Their names are What and Why and When,
And How and Where and Who.*

(Rudyard Kipling, The Elephant's Child, 1865-1936)

Having reviewed the literature, it is now appropriate to describe the methodology used in this study to provide the perspective of the primary school principal – the person who makes the decisions in this process of disciplinary exclusions. The chapter begins by describing the selection and justification of the research design and explaining how the present design will add to knowledge on the subject. Next, the sample will be described and the rationale for selecting the sample will be given. The instrumentation is explained and justified along with a discussion of the administration of the instruments. The methods of data analysis are described. Finally, the limitations of this research design are outlined.

3.1 The interpretive research process

The study is an interpretive account of the way in which principals manage and view the process of disciplinary exclusions in primary schools. The aim of the study within this interpretive paradigm is to describe, interpret and understand the “*complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it*” with the basic underlying assumption that “*knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process*” (Mertens, 1998, p. 11).

This study is also based within a ‘symbolic interactionist’ framework, in which participants act within their world based upon the meanings that their world has for them (Blumer, 1969). The meanings are socially constructed through the participant’s interactions with members of their community, which, in turn, are interpreted by the participants over and over again. Whereas quantitative approaches

control the influence of context on the findings of a study, in a symbolic interactionist approach the context and the actual incidents that lead to further interaction are vital components of the study. The emphasis is on the actions of the participants and the meanings attached to these actions by the participants.

‘Paradigm wars’ between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms have been waged for years in educational research, according to Gage (1989). The important focus is which paradigm can best answer the research problem and the associated research questions because, as Clark (1998) explains,

Debate about ‘discipline’ almost invariably takes the form of empirical inquiry about which methods are most effective in securing it. This is to neglect a substantial part of the problem – the prior moral issue about the proper way to educate children.

(Clark, 1998, p. 289)

An interpretive inquiry best answers questions of a qualitative nature involving the choices, actions and perspectives of the participants and it does not preclude the use of quantitative methods, as recognised by Guba and Lincoln (1989),

Guba and Lincoln identify qualitative methods as the preferred methods for researchers working within the interpretive/constructivist paradigm; however, they also recognize that quantitative methods can be used within this paradigm when it is appropriate to do so.

(Guba & Lincoln, cited in Mertens, 1998, p. 161)

Therefore, the decision to use the interpretive paradigm for this study is based on the researcher’s belief that interpretivist research could give ‘voice’ to the primary school principal who makes the choices that may lead to disciplinary exclusions; that is, the person whose perspectives have frequently been overlooked in research about the process of disciplinary exclusions.

Specific methodological strategies used by the researcher included:

- Several data collection strategies, which provided mainly qualitative data,
- The development of interview questions as they arose from the results of the questionnaire and
- The description of disciplinary exclusion incidents from the participant's own point of view; thus, allowing the "*concepts of importance in the study to emerge as they had been constructed by the participants*" (Mertens, 1998, p. 13).

The majority of past studies of disciplinary exclusions, in New Zealand and overseas, had a primary focus on the pupils who received the disciplinary exclusions. However, the focus of interpretive inquiry is the process that takes place and the meanings of the actions of the participants. The present study emphasises the process of disciplinary exclusions by studying particular exclusionary incidents and the meanings that these incidents had for the principals. Thus, the study attempts to answer the question "How do primary school principals manage and view the process of disciplinary exclusions?"

The research questions, formulated to achieve this aim, are restated again from Chapter One:

1. What incidents resulted in the use of stand-downs, suspensions or exclusions, by local primary school principals? Associated research questions are:
 - a. What kinds of pupils were being stood-down, suspended or excluded and did they have any common characteristics?
 - b. Why were the pupils being stood-down, suspended or excluded?
 - c. What were the events leading up to the stand-down, suspension or exclusion?
2. How did principals manage the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process? Associated research questions are:

- a. What were the procedures used by the principal during this process?
- b. How were principals meeting these pupils' educational (and other) needs?
- c. What happened to these pupils after the stand-down, suspension or exclusion incident?
- d. How did the principal deal with everyone involved in the process?

3. How did principals view the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process?

The associated research question is:

- a. How did principals perceive the new legislation for the stand-down, suspension and exclusion process?

3.2 The sample

The conceptual framework and the research questions determine the data collection procedures. The initial stage of the research was to decide whom to include in the study and how to approach potential participants. Primary schools, as defined by the Ministry of Education in their publication of school statistics, that is full primary, contributing primary, and intermediate schools, have been chosen by the researcher. Private primary schools, however, have been excluded from this study because they are not bound by the same newly introduced government legislation for disciplinary exclusion.

The study area is based on primary schools in a provincial area of the North Island of New Zealand. The area was chosen because it was manageable, in scope and within access, by the researcher. Schools in the target population vary from large urban intermediates and primary schools to small country schools. For this reason, the researcher recognises that the study is not representative of all New Zealand primary schools. A complete and up-to-date list of all primary schools in the defined area was obtained from the Ministry of Education. The Ministry list included principal contact information and other relevant details. Fifty-one schools and their principals were identified in this manner.

A previous study of disciplinary exclusions (Ludbrook, 1990) identified a problem in the poor return of questionnaires, which was caused by the sensitivity of the topic. This was not a problem in a more recent study reported in Prochnow (1998) and Fitchett (1999) because, as the researchers suggested, the principals had found that, by undertaking a reflective narrative of the critical event, they took ownership of the study. Therefore, given the sensitive nature of the research topic and the related privacy issues for schools, principals, staff, pupils and their parents, and because it was not public knowledge which primary schools had used the disciplinary exclusions since the introduction of the new legislation, the researcher decided to send an exploratory questionnaire to all primary state school principals in the study area.

The researcher had prior knowledge that one of the 51 school principals had not used the disciplinary exclusion process since the introduction of the new legislation. For this reason, the principal and deputy principal of this school were chosen to pilot the instrumentation used in the study. Their professional expertise and knowledge of the legislation and the phenomenon would provide for expert piloting. Therefore, they were not included in the later mail-out of questionnaires or in the final interviews.

Fifty questionnaires were distributed and 37 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 74%. Of the 37 returned questionnaires, however, 13 were not used for the following reasons: 10 of the principals had not used the disciplinary exclusion process since the introduction of the new legislation, one principal completed the questionnaire for an 'in-school suspension' which is not formally defined by the legislation and two principals returned the questionnaire unanswered. Therefore, completed responses from 23 principals were used.

The demographics of the final 23 schools closely approximated the demographics of the 50 schools to which questionnaires were sent, with respect to the proportions of types of primary school (primary or intermediate) and of school deciles, as shown in Figures 3 and 4.

	Total mail-out of questionnaires (%)	Questionnaire Group (%)	Interview Group (%)
Primary	86	86	80
Intermediate	14	14	20
Total	100	100	100

Figure 3 Representation of schools in this study, by school type.

	Total mail-out of questionnaires (%)	Questionnaire Group (%)	Interview Group (%)
Decile 1-5	74	78	80
Decile 6-10	26	22	20
Total	100	100	100

Figure 4 Representation of schools in this study, by school decile.

In the interview sample, there was a degree of self-selection for the principals who took part in the interviews. During the questionnaire phase, principals were asked to indicate if they were willing to take part in an interview at a later stage. Of the 23 principals in the original group, 14 principals agreed to take part in an interview at a later stage. Drever (1995) explains the problem that arises from asking people to volunteer for interviews,

Bias becomes an issue if you ask people to volunteer to be interviewed. This should ensure that you have co-operative interviewees who have something to say, but the danger is that you meet only the enthusiasts or the entrenched opposition.

(Drever, 1995, p. 37)

The researcher took every care to ensure that this bias was minimised, in ways described by Seidman (1998),

There are two criteria for enough. The first is sufficiency. Are there sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants and sites that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect with the experiences of those in it? The other criteria is saturation of information... a point in the study when the interviewer begins to hear the same information reported.

(Seidman, 1998, pp. 47-48)

The researcher therefore selected five principals to take part in the final in-depth interview on the basis that they represented a cross-section of the original group of 23 primary school principals from the questionnaire phase in terms of type of school (primary or intermediate) and school decile, as shown in Figures 3 and 4. This form of purposive sampling to identify the final group of principals to be interviewed was deemed appropriate for the interpretive research design (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.3 The instrumentation

This study used three research instruments – an exploratory questionnaire, in-depth one-to-one interviews and documentary evidence in the form of the schools' Education Review Office Reports and Behaviour Management Plans.

The Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire was developed for this study after a review of the current literature on disciplinary exclusions and, more specifically, the findings of Prochnow (1998). Little research had been conducted into the principal's perspective or at primary school level on this topic. The questionnaire was chosen, therefore, for the exploratory stage of the study because it is a versatile tool that is not restricted to a single research method and is suitable for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

Questionnaire items have been grouped thematically according to the guiding research questions that require both quantitative and qualitative results. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A. The first part of the questionnaire had a quantitative focus in that the data could be converted to simple frequency counts; for example, characteristics such as age, gender and type of misbehaviour resulting in disciplinary exclusions. These questions were designed to answer Question One of the research questions for the study. The second part of the questionnaire had a qualitative focus, designed to investigate Questions Two and Three, which require the participants to describe their actions, views and feelings, just as Johnson and Christensen (2000) explain,

Researchers use questionnaires so that they can obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions and behavioural intentions of the research participants.

(Johnson & Christensen, 2000, p. 127)

A strength of the questionnaire as an instrument is that it allows questions to be asked about the present, the past and the future. As the research questions require the participants to reflect on disciplinary exclusion incidents, which had happened in the immediate past, the self-reporting nature of the questionnaire allowed the participants time to consider and respond to the questions. For this reason, and because of the exploratory purpose of the questionnaire, several open-ended questions were also included at the end of the questionnaire, allowing principals to explain and enlarge upon their answers. As a result of piloting the questionnaire, several questions were changed for clarity and focus. The questionnaire was designed to take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

The choice of a postal delivery method was made for practical reasons. The questionnaires were sent to principals during mid-August, 2001. Accompanying each questionnaire was a cover letter, Information Sheets and Consent Forms for the principal and for the Board of Trustees. These explained the purpose of the study, issues of privacy of information and contact details. Refer to appendices C, D and E to view these letters and forms. A stamped envelope was also provided for the return of each questionnaire. It was addressed with the supervisor's university address for the purpose of retaining the researcher's privacy. One principal sought further clarification of a privacy issue. Although the first mail-out resulted in a good return of questionnaires, a second copy of the questionnaire was sent to all non-responding principals three weeks later.

The Interview

As the aim of the study was to investigate disciplinary exclusions from the principal's perspective, the case study interview was also selected as a most important data-collecting instrument because, as Patton explains,

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. We cannot observe feeling, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe situations that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.

(Patton, cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 72)

The main focus of the interviews with the five principals was to investigate the second and third research questions. The interview schedule was finalised only after completion of the analysis of the questionnaires so that the interviews provided an opportunity to pursue the themes that emerged from the questionnaire because, as Mertens (1998) describes,

The methodological implication of having multiple realities is that the research questions cannot be definitively established before the study begins; rather they will evolve and change as the study progresses.

(Mertens, 1998, p. 14)

A structured interview schedule was chosen as the interview style. There have been various debates over the use of a structured interview schedule in qualitative research, as Bryman and Burgess (1999) explain,

... structured interviews have been criticised because we cannot generalise from what is said in them to what is said and done elsewhere. However, while there is some truth in these arguments, they by no means render the results of research using 'artificial' methods of no value. Much depends on whether the reactivity affects the results in ways that are relevant to the research topic and in ways that cannot be allowed for. All research is subject to error of one kind or another.

(Bryman & Burgess, 1999, p. 74)

Therefore, to enable the participants to respond freely not only about what they considered significant, but also to ensure that the topics considered important to the research were not ignored, the interview was structured with standardised questions so that all participants were asked the same questions in the same format. The strength of this form of interviewing is that it allows for increased comparability of responses and provides complete data for each participant. On the other hand, the weaknesses of this form of interviewing are in less flexibility, relevance and naturalness of the questions and answers. To overcome these problems, completely open-ended questions were constructed and the final question was designed to encourage the participants to bring up any issues of importance to them, which had not been already covered. The interview schedule was also piloted with the same principal and deputy principal who had piloted the questionnaire, with these issues in mind. Refer to Appendix B for full interview schedule.

Using the in-depth interviews also allowed for triangulation of data from the interview with the earlier questionnaire. For this reason, some items in the interview schedule are similar to questions in the questionnaire, such as Interview Question 10. This question was prompted by the early results of the questionnaire. Analysis of the 23 questionnaires had revealed certain common characteristics for pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions, such as gender, ethnicity and pupils with special educational needs. Interview Question 10, therefore, was included in the interview schedule as a form of crosschecking to discover if the five principals made similar conclusions from their experience with the disciplinary exclusion process. Other questions delve more into early findings of the questionnaire in order to discover deeper meanings such as Interview Question One.

Although the five principals chosen for the interviews agreed to the interview during the questionnaire stage, the researcher contacted them by telephone to confirm that this was still acceptable and to reiterate the protection of privacy. The interviews took place in November 2001 and were held in the offices of the principals. Each interview ranged from 20 to 45 minutes. They were recorded on a micro-recorder with the prior permission of the participants and were then transcribed verbatim by the researcher. The aspect of trust, which evolved in the three-quarter hour time allocation, was reflected in the open and forthright comments from the participants

during the interview. In order to check the transcription, each participant was mailed a copy of their transcribed interview and asked to approve their interview transcript.

The documentary evidence

Documentary evidence was obtained from secondary sources – the Education Review Office Reports and the Behaviour Management Plans. They were both publicly available documents and therefore, their authenticity and accuracy was not disputed. The information, provided in these public documents, was deemed necessary to contextualise the data obtained from the questionnaires and the interviews, because as Merriam (1998) explains,

... documentary data are particularly good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Analysis of this data source, 'lends contextual richness and helps ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 234).

(Merriam, 1998, p. 126)

A weakness of the documentary evidence, however, is that it was written for other purposes and not specifically designed to answer the research questions. The data provided is, therefore, incomplete from the research perspective. However, Merriam (1998) concludes that this is not a major problem, because:

If documents are used as part of the process of inductively building categories and theoretical constructs as in qualitative case studies, then their "fit" with preestablished concepts or models is less of a concern.

(Merriam, 1998, p. 124)

a. The Education Review Office Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) Reports are the result of regular Accountability Reviews of schools by a professional team of evaluators. Prior to the Review, schools are required to provide information to ERO in a Self-Review Questionnaire. Schools are specifically asked about disciplinary exclusions (Question 23 a, b and c). This is an area of focus for the Review Team when they are in the schools and it is reported under the broad area of “Safety” in the final Report. The ERO Reports of the 23 schools were analysed after the questionnaire stage and were invaluable in providing background contextual information to the researcher prior to the interview stage.

b. The Behaviour Management Plans

Every school is required to have a Behaviour Management Plan that describes the behaviour the school expects from pupils enrolled in the school. The Plan may also include information about sanctions and rewards. The Behaviour Management Plans were collected from the five principals participating in the interview. These documents were analysed for content regarding the way in which misbehaviour was handled in the school. Since the ERO Reports and the Behaviour Management Plans were produced for reasons other than this research, the evidence elicited for this study is fragmentary yet valuable for contextual information.

3.4 Methods of data analysis

The aim of the study is to give a ‘voice’ to the principals’ perspectives of the disciplinary process through interpretive research because, as Hamilton explains,

There is a deep-seated (and largely uninvestigated) disjunction between the common-sense knowledge held by the educational community and the operational framework used by educational research.

(Hamilton, cited in Winter, 1982, p. 161)

Not only did the methods of data collection need to capture this rich data but also the method of data analysis had to be appropriate in order to give meaning to this data. Some quantitative data was produced to answer the first research question about the characteristics of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions. But the greater part of the study related to second and third research questions, with the focus on the principals' perspectives about the disciplinary exclusion process and this focus resulted in qualitative data. For this reason, several levels of data analysis were required, from simple description to high-level abstraction in the construction of the concept of dilemmas for principals in the disciplinary exclusion process. In addition, two computer programs for data analysis were used – MICROSOFT EXCEL for the quantitative data and QSR NU*DIST for the qualitative data.

Analysis of qualitative data analysis, the process of constructing meaning out of the data “*by moving back and forward between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts, between deductive and inductive reasoning, between description and interpretation*”, (Merriam, 1998, p. 178) has been criticised because of the lack of an audit trail, because:

... themes and patterns emerge from the data as they read their fieldnotes over and over again, somewhat as hikers emerge from the mist on a foggy beach. Unfortunately, how these themes and patterns emerge, and what causes them to emerge, is left unclear.

(Le Compte & Schensul, 1999, pp. 45-46)

However, the use of quantitative data analysis and two forms of qualitative data analysis, thematic induction and dilemma analysis, in this study, provided the researcher with a clear audit trail, as ideas or themes, which emerged initially in the questionnaire, evolved during the study.

Simple descriptive statistics of quantitative data

The researcher used a MICROSOFT EXCEL spreadsheet to record all the responses to Questions 1, 2 and 4 (a-f) of the questionnaire as the population number was small (n=23) and the program's simple frequency counts and graph-making facilities were

suitable for this amount of data. Because of the small number (less than 30) of questionnaires, a database or more sophisticated statistical analysis has not been used. Results are sometimes reported as actual numbers and sometimes as percentages when there is more than one response expected from the answer. A printout of the spreadsheet has been used to check back on the original questionnaires for any errors in the transmission of data.

Thematic induction of qualitative data

Moving to the next level of analysis, thematic induction has been selected as the initial method for the analysis of qualitative data produced from the principals' responses to Questions 3 and 4g of the questionnaire, in order for one set of ideas to be used as a basis for structuring further fieldwork (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Winter, 1982). The principals' responses have been categorised for similarity of idea but otherwise left in their entirety to preserve their owner's words and meanings. Using the process that Bogdan and Biklen (1982) suggested, the principals' responses were read several times to allow concepts or ideas to emerge from the data. Responses to the 23 principals' responses were coded according to themes. The common theme passages were grouped together with the 'cut-and-paste' technique in MICROSOFT WORD. This questionnaire coding allowed for analysis of the qualitative data and for fine-tuning the content and wording of questions for the in-depth interviews. The MICROSOFT WORD documents could then be stored in the document system of the computer program QSR NU*DIST for further cross-analysis with themes emerging from data analysis of the documents and the interviews.

Use of the computer program QSR NU*DIST for qualitative data analysis

A Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) program called QSR NU*DIST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching, and Theorising) was also used for the qualitative data analysis. The ideas for coding were developed iteratively by working through responses to each qualitative question. QSR NU*DIST facilitated fast and precise searching for words, strings of text or coded text passages.

The program consists of two linked halves: the document system which manages all the data in the form of questionnaire responses for Question 3 and 4g, interview transcripts and documentary evidence from the ERO reports and the schools' Behaviour Management Plans; and the ideas or index system which manages all the researcher's ideas or categories. The index system contains all the categories, their definitions and ideas in the form of memos. This information is stored at nodes, which are like simple lists, or they can be organised into 'index trees', which are hierarchies of categories. Analysis tools allowed the researcher to quickly search either the text of the documents or the patterns of indexing at the nodes. A screen printout of both the document system and the index system, which can be displayed simultaneously on the computer screen for referring back and forth, is included in Appendix F. The example of the node being searched for is 'competing needs'. Appendix G shows the full printout of data for 'competing needs'.

Dilemma Analysis

During the study, interest in how the disciplinary exclusion process created a series of dilemmas arose from several sources – responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire, the case study interviews, very recent literature on educational leadership (Grace, 1995; Day, Hall & Whitaker, 1998; Day, Harris & Hadfield, 2001; Leithwood, Chapman, Corson, Hallinger & Hart, 1996; Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999) and literature on qualitative analysis of interview data (Winter, 1982, 1989; Holmes, 1981; Elliott, 1987).

For example, the early study of Prochnow (1998) and the early analysis of the questionnaire identified the theme of 'competing needs' of the different parties in the disciplinary exclusion process. The process of suspensions, stand-downs and exclusions involves interaction between many different groups, including the pupil involved, the parents of the pupil, the other pupils, the wider parent community, the staff, the Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Education, all of which have different aims, priorities and definitions of reality because of their different roles in the situation. This situation presents dilemmas to the principal.

Dilemmas are often articulated as: “On the one hand, ... But, on the other hand, ...” Powney and Watts (1987) define a dilemma for the purpose of dilemma analysis as:

... a situation which appears to require two equally desirable but mutually exclusive courses of action. The equal desirability stems from the perception that each course of action would fulfil certain ethical requirements in the situation, and the inconsistency stems from the perception that each requirement can only be met by denying the other. Dilemmas are essentially moral problems and as such can be confronted with technical solutions.

(Powney & Watts, 1987, p. 168)

This is similar to Grace’s (1995) definition of a dilemma for school principals mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, whereby dilemmas are: “... situations where two sets of value judgements conflict and where a resolution of the conflict must be made in the interests of the pupils, the teachers and the school” (Grace, 1995, p. 7).

Therefore, dilemma analysis was chosen as the final level of qualitative data analysis. This methodology was used in school leadership studies examining dilemmas (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley, & Beresford, 2000; Dimmock, 1996, 1999, 2000; Elliott, 1987; Grace, 1995; Winter, 1982, 1989) which found that principals perceived some of their work in terms of dilemmas.

Winter (1982) developed a method of dilemma analysis as an interpretive method of analysing qualitative verbal data in interview transcripts. He based this method on the premise that:

... social organizations at all levels (from the classroom to the State) are constellations of (actual or potential) conflicts of interest; that personality structures are split and convoluted; that the individual’s conceptualization is systematically ambivalent or dislocated; that the motives are mixed, purposes are contradictory, and relationships are ambiguous; and that the formulation of practical action is unendingly beset by dilemmas. Hence a statement of an opinion in an interview is taken to be a marginal option which conceals a larger awareness of the potential appeal and validity of different and even

opposed points of view. On this basis, then, it became intelligible to analyze the interview transcripts not in terms of particular opinions, but in terms of the issues about which various opinions were held. The method is called 'Dilemma Analysis' precisely to emphasize the systematic complexity of the situation within which those concerned have to adopt (provisionally at least) a strategy.

(Winter, 1982, pp. 167-168)

Winter distinguished between three levels of abstraction for the dilemmas; the first of which are ambiguities. Ambiguities are “background awarenesses of inevitable and deep-seated complexities of the situation, which are tolerable because they are not directly linked with any required courses of action.” (Winter, 1982, p. 169) The second level is that of professional judgements which are “courses of action which are rendered complex, but, as it were, ‘interesting’ by the tensions and ambiguities in the situation; that is, the complexity is not seen in negative terms – it is not ‘wrong’, but merely a requisite skilfulness” (Winter, 1982, p. 169). Thus, making a decision in this situation requires problem solving because the reasons for making either choice would have been compelling either way. The third level is that of problems, which are situations for which solutions are very difficult to find, such as “...those courses of action where the tensions and ambiguities actually seem to undermine the validity, the rationality of the action required” (Winter, 1982, p. 169). Using the method of Dilemma Analysis, formulated by Winter, involved describing the dilemmas at the same level of abstraction in which they were originally presented in the first interview transcript, beginning with the most involved of the dilemmas and finally formulating each dilemma so that it was evenly balanced. Thus, the analysis was similar to a process of watching light pass through a prism and seeing the whole light separated into different colours.

The researcher highlighted one section of the interview script and extracted any dilemmas. They were expressed as – ‘On the one hand, ... But on the other hand, ...’ These dilemmas determined the criterion of ‘relevance for inclusion and formulation of ideas from the script’, so important to Winter. The interview transcript was read over and over again. This procedure was then repeated for the other four interview

transcripts to provide a cross-case analysis based around the theme of dilemmas. The total list of dilemmas was sorted and the three-fold division of dilemmas, into Ambiguities, Judgements, and Problems, was introduced.

However, a problem arose with Winter's typology or classification of dilemmas into discrete categories because some of the dilemmas could belong to more than one category, which did not allow for the interrelated, interactive nature of the dilemmas and also caused a verification problem. Also, like Dimmock (1996, 1999), the researcher found that, although Winter's method of dilemma analysis identified the dilemmas, that was as far the method went. It does not reveal the actual nature of the dilemmas, or more importantly, the ways in which principals manage and cope with these situations. Dimmock (1999) comments:

While there is growing interest in studying principals' perceptions of their work lives in terms of dilemmas, relatively few studies have gone beyond this to investigate how leaders manage and cope with such 'intractable' situations and the consequential effects and outcomes.

(Dimmock, 1999, p. 97)

Elliott (1987) had made a similar comparison between practical educational theory and pure theory,

The function of a practical educational theory is to justify principles for the rational determination of educational practices. The function of purely theoretical knowledge is to explain phenomena. Educational theory aims to provide a basis for rational action rather than simply rational understanding. Nevertheless, the practical principles it specifies must be justified in terms of rational understanding.

(Elliott, 1987, p. 149)

To overcome these problems, Dimmock (1996) recommended using Holmes' (1981) classification of dilemmas, based on the works of Karl Popper and John Dewey, because dilemmas occur because of "*asynchronous change within or between the three configuration – norms and values, institutional practices and structures, and*

resources" (Dimmock, 1996, p. 144). Bolman and Deal (1991, 1993) also provided a similar framework for how principals managed and dealt with dilemmas, which included structural, human resource, political and symbolic frames. The Holmes schema of classification was identified as being of most use in the final classification of the dilemmas of disciplinary exclusions. The dilemmas in this study were classified as:

1. Normative-based with respect to values, beliefs, ideologies and norms,
2. Institutional-based structures, processes, practices and programs with respect to how people operate and perform tasks in institutional settings, and
3. Resource-based with respect to financial resources, material resources such as buildings and equipment, time and human resources.

The total list of dilemmas obtained from the interview transcripts was then sorted according to Holmes' classification of dilemmas. For the final presentation of the results of dilemma analysis, Winter (1989) advised interspersing the dilemmas with extracts from the interview transcripts. By including the extracts, particular points could be illustrated, adding to the analysis by:

... 'giving a flavour' of the whole field and providing examples of the tone and language of the interviews. As 'bald' print on the page, they may allow for many differing interpretations by the reader, but the analysis has to be based on the total input of data, that is, the recording, the transcript, the shared experience of the interview, the shared knowledge of the area being focused upon, and the interviewer's examination of self-bias. These elements combine to enable the researcher to assess the dilemmas as underlying expressions of meaning.

(Winter, 1989, p. 98)

The final practical steps to presenting the findings of a dilemma analysis are to describe and explain the responses that were made to the dilemmas and to examine the implications of the responses, for future practice and research.

Various researchers using dilemma analysis have made little mention of how they performed a verification of their dilemma analysis in their studies (Berlak & Berlak, 1983; Holmes, 1981; Winter, 1982, 1989). Winter (1982) simply said:

My argument has been that this method produces an analysis which is fully responsive to the concerns and definitions of the interviewees. It retains something of the structural complexity of the original statements, and produces a thematic ordering whose coherence does not depend on academics' theories of practitioners' behaviour, or simply on researchers' hunches and prior commitments.

(Winter, 1982, p. 173)

However, Dimmock (1999) used Yin's (1994) member checking procedure as a verification method, whereby analysis was sent back to the participants to check for accuracy. This method was used to check the transcription of the interviews from tape during an earlier stage of this study, but it was not possible to use this method with the dilemma analysis because the final dilemmas related to the group of participants as a whole. Each participant had experienced parts of each dilemma but not every principal had experienced every dilemma in its entirety. If the dilemma analysis had been sent back to each individual participant, then they may have been able to confirm only parts of the analysis but not the entire analysis. Furthermore, if the participants had been brought together as a group to discuss the analysis, their privacy would have been compromised and this was an important issue with the principals, given the sensitivity of the topic.

Winter (1982) suggested undertaking more than one type of analysis on the interview data and any other data arising from the study as a method of verification. In line with this suggestion, and because this present study had generated a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data, the researcher used several methods of analysis to develop deeper levels of meaning as the study progressed.

3.5 Verification of the study

Credibility

Credibility has been identified as the criterion in qualitative research that represents validity or the accuracy with which a research instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Mertens, 1998), because:

In qualitative research, the credibility test asks is there is a correspondence between the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs and the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints.

(Mertens, 1998, p. 181)

In this study, the test for credibility was carried out by 'member checks' whereby:

- Interview questions were designed to check on results from the previous questionnaire,
- Transcripts of the interviews were sent back to the interviewees for comment and to check for accuracy and
- Summary reports of the research were sent to participants who requested them.

Credibility was also tested by triangulation, whereby the information collected from multiple data collection methods - the questionnaire, the interview and the documentary evidence - was checked for consistency of the factual data.

Generalisability

In line with the sampling procedure and methodology used, this study does not claim to be typical or representative of the disciplinary process experienced by all primary school principals. Generalisability (external validity), or the extent to which conclusions about a sample are true about the entire population, was limited by the study being conducted in a provincial area with a mix of large and small urban-rural schools.

Large metropolitan schools were not included in the study, nor were remote rural schools. Private primary schools were also not included, as they are not bound by the recent legislation for disciplinary exclusions, upon which this study was based.

Dependability

Dependability was the criterion identified in qualitative research by Guba and Lincoln (1989) to represent reliability of the precision or consistency of data collection instruments.

In this study, the test for dependability was carried out by:

- Using multiple and varied methods of data collection – the exploratory questionnaires, the in-depth interviews and the documentary evidence,
- Using the funnel effect of a large target population for the questionnaire, narrowing down to a small group of participants for the in-depth interviews and
- Transparency of the trail of evidence.

Confirmability

Confirmability was the criterion, identified in Guba and Lincoln (1989), whereby it can be confirmed that the data and their interpretation, are not figments of the researcher's imagination. Each item of data can be traced to its original source. A chain of evidence must link the data to the final conclusions. This was an unexpected advantage of QSR*NUDIST, the computer program for qualitative data analysis, used by the researcher, because:

Computer programs for analysing qualitative data require the researcher to be more explicit in the procedures and analytical processes they went through to produce their data and their interpretations.

(Burgess, 1995, p. 31)

3.6 Ethical issues

Prior approval for this study was received from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, (Protocol Reference No. 01/56). Participation was voluntary with the informed consent of all principals. Covering letters and an Information Sheet, detailing the purpose of the research, the participant's role in the research, protection from identification, how the information would be used and contact details about the researcher and her supervision, were sent to all the schools with additional copies for the Boards of Trustees. The participants were asked to not name any pupils in the questionnaire or during the interview. However, where any names of people or schools were mentioned, the researcher deleted these when transcribing the data. Accompanying the Cover Letter and the Information Sheet were consent forms for the principals to sign and return with the questionnaire. These are included in Appendices C, D and E.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time from the study. Schools were identified with a numerical code, with a private master list linking these numbers to the schools, only to enable any necessary follow-up to be made and to link data collected in the different research instruments. All questionnaires and interview transcripts were confidential between the participant principal and the researcher. Interviews were conducted in each principal's office and recorded with the prior written permission of the participants, for accuracy of transcription by the researcher. The written questionnaires, tapes of the interviews and the interview transcripts were securely stored during the research period, to be disposed one year after examination of the study.

The participants were treated with respect and courtesy and the researcher was sensitive to the time commitment required by the participants to take part in this study. The researcher ensured the principle of justice, as recommended by Mertens (1998), whereby those who bore the risk in the research (the principals), were the ones to benefit from it, by having their 'voice' heard. The procedures were reasonable, non-exploitative, carefully considered and, at a later date, principals were sent copies of the research report, included in Appendix H.

3.7 Limitations of the study

The researcher was cognisant of the importance of the ‘researcher as an instrument’ in qualitative research because, as Merriam (1998) explains,

... the researcher is responsive to the context; he or she can adapt techniques to the circumstances; the total context can be considered; what is known about the situation can be expanded through sensitivity to nonverbal aspects; the researcher can process data immediately, can clarify and summarize as the study evolves, and can explore anomalous responses.

(Merriam, 1998, p. 7)

As the researcher was trained as a secondary school teacher and had taught in local secondary schools in the study area, several of the participants knew her personally and professionally. In addition, this topic was a sensitive issue to schools and there were issues of privacy to all involved. It was essential to the success of the research to acquire trust and rapport with the participants. All participants were fully informed, prior to taking part in the study, of the reasons for conducting the study. The researcher analysed what biases she may have had and acknowledged that they would have evolved from the public exposure that suspensions and expulsions receive in the media, knowledge previously gained in an academic course on law in schools and her own experience as a teacher. In fact, her interest in researching this topic had arisen from the previous masterate course on ‘Law in Schools’. Having reflected upon this problem, there was increased consciousness of the need to remain unbiased and objective during all phases of the research, from the time of designing the research instruments to writing the final conclusions.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the research methodology used in the study. It set the study within an interpretive, qualitative framework. It described how the participants were selected for the study, examined the instrumentation used and how the resulting data were analysed. Finally, the limitations to the study were discussed. Chapter Four presents the results of the data collection phase.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This one child is slowly but surely draining the life-blood out of our school.

(School # 46)

The aim of this study was to investigate how a selection of primary school principals managed and viewed the process of disciplinary exclusions. The first section of this chapter provides the results from the exploratory questionnaire. The questionnaire was primarily designed to answer the first two research questions. These questions focused on a recent disciplinary exclusion incident and what had led up to the disciplinary exclusion, how the principals had carried out the procedure, what had happened afterwards, the characteristics of the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions, their educational needs and how the principals had dealt with everyone involved.

The second section presents the documentary evidence provided in the 23 schools' Education Review Reports. These reports provided mainly background contextual support for the interview phase of the study.

The third section reports the findings from interviews with five principals and also incorporates the findings from the schools' Behaviour Management Plans which were provided by these principals during the interviews. The interviews were designed to delve in more depth into the second research question of the principals' management of the disciplinary exclusion process without the specific focus of the one disciplinary exclusion incident they had reported in the questionnaire and to answer the third research question which related to how principals' views about the disciplinary exclusion process under the new legislation.

The fourth section presents the leadership dilemmas experienced by the principals in the disciplinary exclusion process and the responses they made to these dilemmas, and finally, the fifth section provides a brief summary of the results.

4.1 The questionnaires

Principals were asked to base their responses to the questionnaire on their experience with one pupil that they had suspended, stood-down or excluded from school since the introduction of the new legislation. Participants may have suspended one or more pupils but the answers related to only one case.

Types of disciplinary exclusion (Question 1a)

Principals were asked to indicate which form of disciplinary exclusion they had used; that is, the stand-down, suspension or exclusion. Figure 5 shows that the stand-down, the least serious sanction, was most often used, in 13 of the 23 cases. The stand-down was introduced in the new legislation to provide another form of early official warning and sanction, as an intermediary step before the use of the more serious sanctions of suspension and exclusion. The stand-down is also the only sanction, which permits the principal to act immediately and with sole discretion, without recourse to the Board of Trustees. Suspensions were the least common, used for three of the 23 pupils. Principals used exclusions, the most severe sanction, for seven of the 23 pupils.

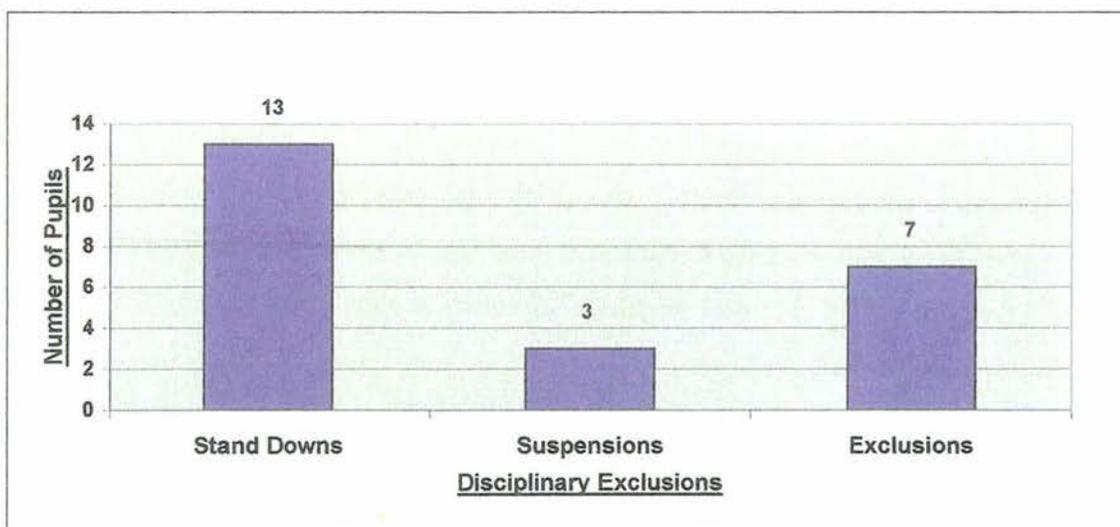


Figure 5 Types of disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (1a), n=23

Types of misbehaviour causing disciplinary exclusion (Question 1b)

The reason(s) for the disciplinary exclusion were categorised into the following groups:

- Physical assaults on students,
- Physical assaults on staff,
- Damage to school property,
- Continual disobedience,
- Verbal assault on staff,
- Alcohol,
- Drugs, and
- Theft.

For 13 of the 23 pupils, more than one reason was given for the stand-down, suspension or exclusion, so there were 44 reasons given in total for the group of 23 pupils. Therefore, the results in Figure 6 were presented as percentages. In the first three categories above, which relate to the more serious behaviours of physical violence, there were 12 cases of physical assaults on other students, one assault on staff and one case of damage to property. About a third of the misbehaviours had involved physical violence to people or property.

In the fourth and fifth categories, which included more low-level misbehaviour, there were 16 cases of continual disobedience (such as ongoing misbehaviour, disruption, defiance and failure to follow teacher instructions) and 10 cases of verbal assault. In the last two categories, which involved illegal substances, there was one alcohol offence and three drug offences.

Physical assault on other students (25%) is exactly the same proportion as that occurring in the national statistics, as reported in Chapter Two, but continual disobedience (37%) of pupils in the study was greater than the national statistic of 25% (Ministry of Education, 2001b, pp. 2-9). Drug and alcohol offences were less common for pupils in the study than occurring in the national statistics.

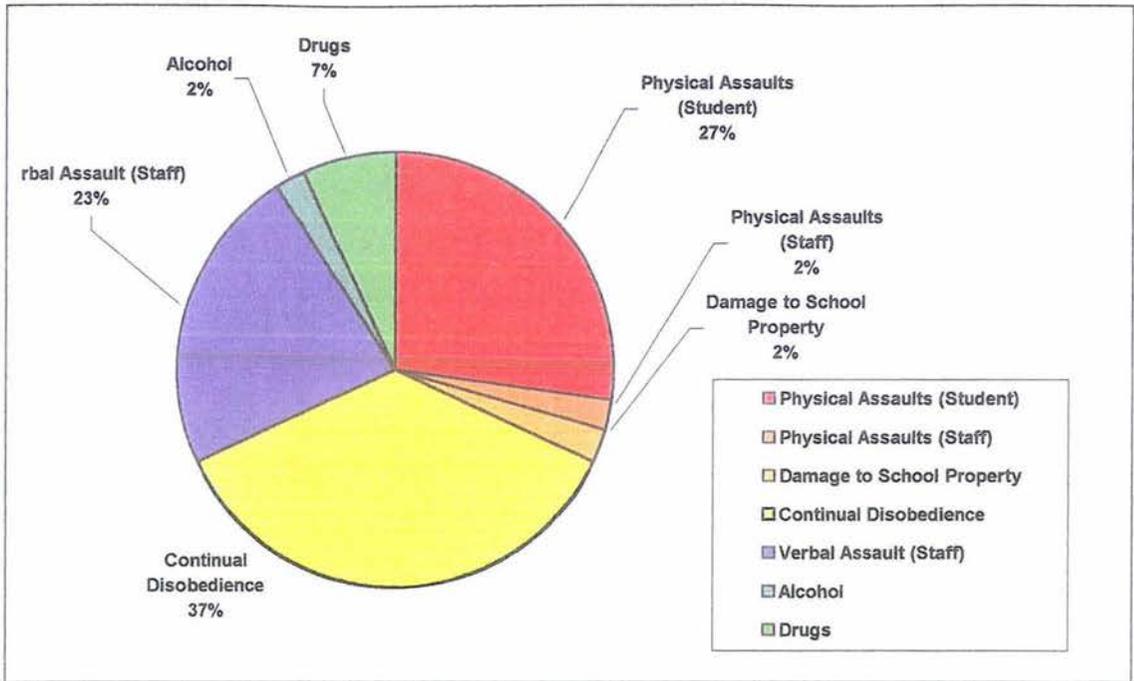


Figure 6 Types of misbehaviour causing disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (1b)

Age of pupils (Question 1c)

The most common ages of the students receiving disciplinary exclusions were 10 (n=6) and 12 (n=7), which generally correspond to the ages for pupils' final years at primary or intermediate school. Figure 7 also shows that five pupils received disciplinary exclusions as young as six and eight years. Also, the age was not given for one pupil.

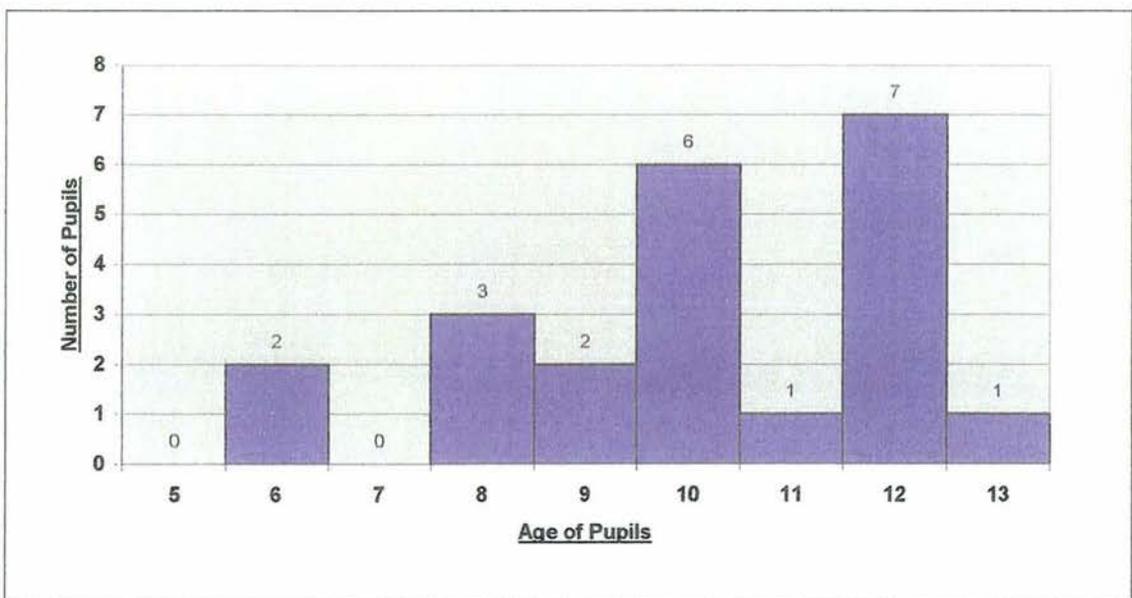


Figure 7 Age of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1c), n=22

Gender of pupils (Question 1d)

The breakdown of disciplinary exclusions by gender is illustrated in Figure 8. Male pupils represented the majority (87%) of disciplinary exclusions with 20 male and three female pupils, which is greater than the national statistic of 73% for all boys incurring stand-downs and suspensions, as reported in the literature review in Chapter Two (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p. 4).

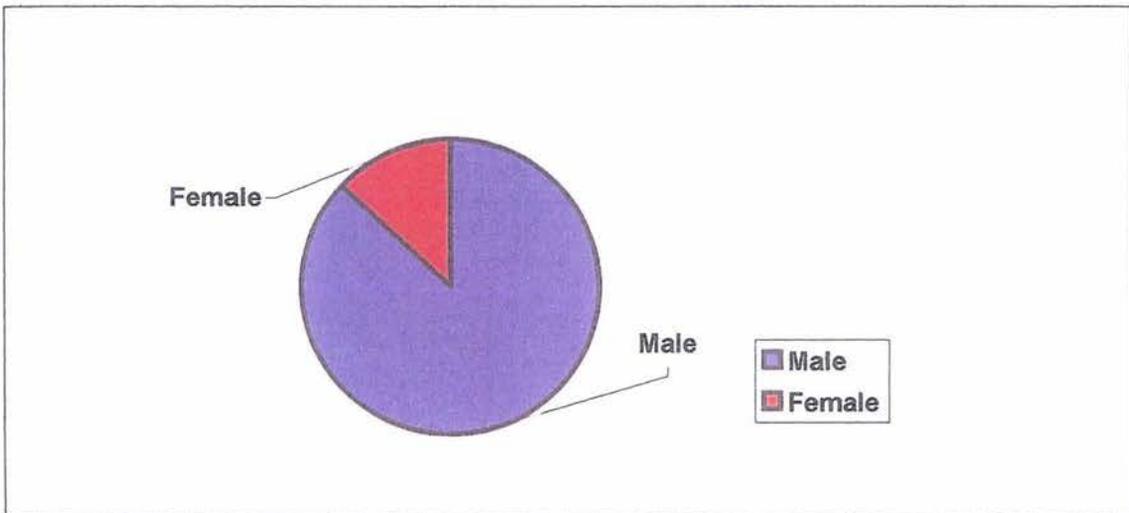


Figure 8 Gender of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1d), n=23

Ethnicity of pupils (Question 1e)

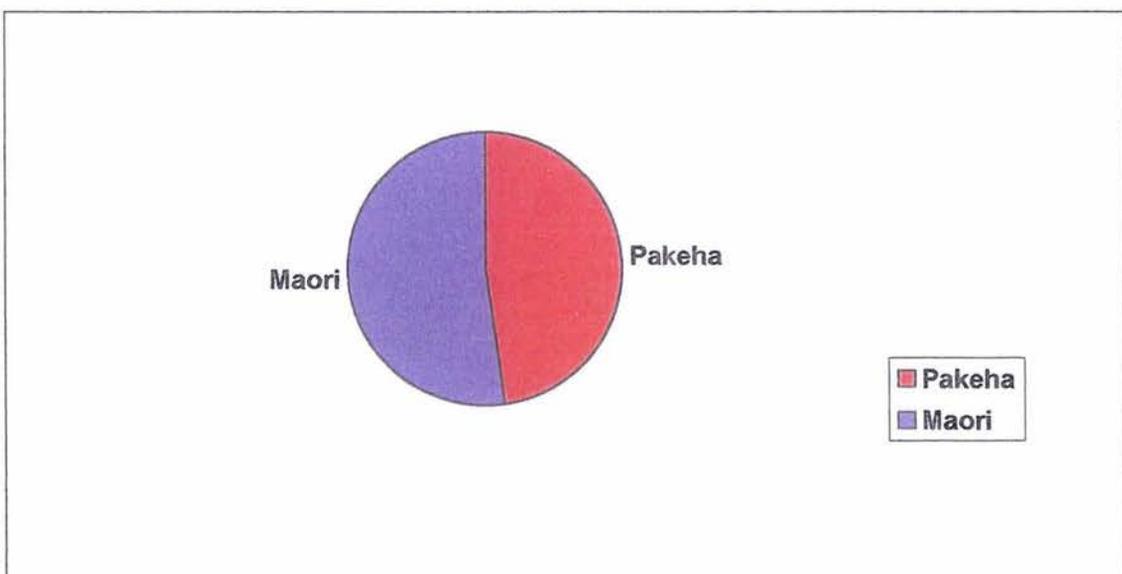


Figure 9 Ethnicity of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1e), n=23

Principals also provided information on ethnicity of the pupil indicating that 12 pupils were Maori and 11 were Pakeha, Figure 9. No pupils from other ethnic groups were reported. This study's percentage was greater than the national statistics for all Maori pupils receiving stand-downs (42%) and suspensions (49%), as reported in Chapter Two (Ministry of Education, 2001b, p.4).

Pupil's family background (Question 1f)

Eleven pupils came from a single parent family, eight pupils came from a two-parent family and three pupils came from extended families. In one case, the principal did not know the family background. These results are shown in Figure 10.

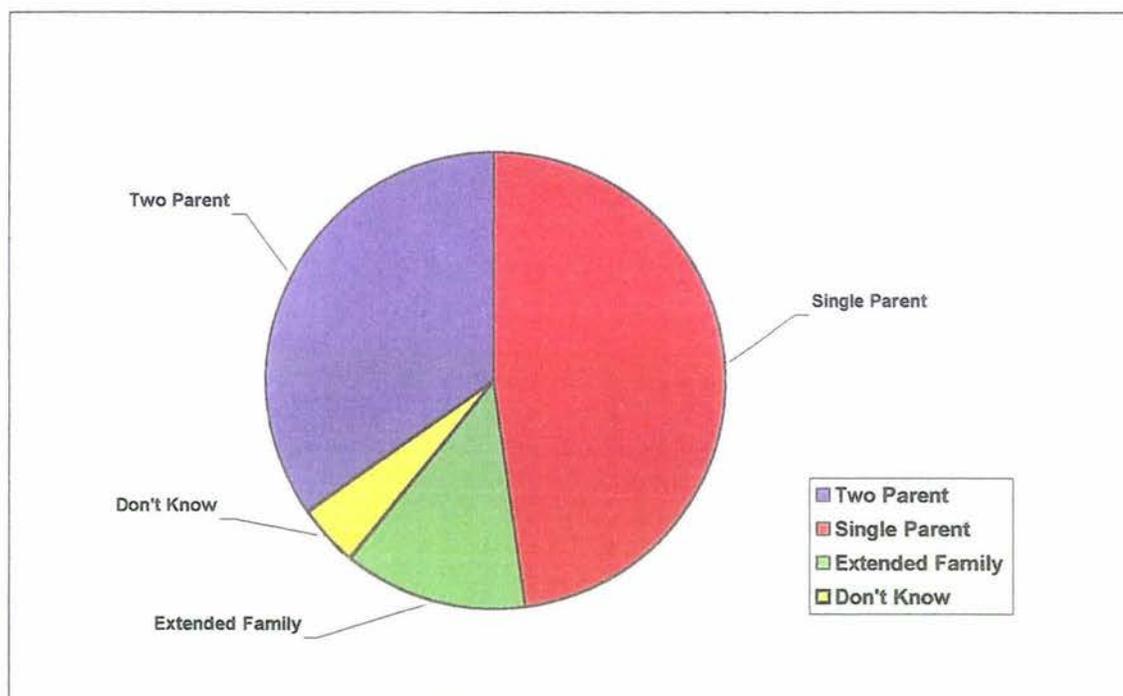


Figure 10 Family backgrounds of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1f), n=23

Special educational needs (Question 1g)

The factor of special educational needs was chosen, because research in New Zealand and the United Kingdom had suggested that there might be a connection between special educational needs and school exclusions. Principals were asked if they perceived the pupil as having special educational needs. Figure 11 gives the

breakdown of the information concerning special educational needs. Almost half (n=10) of the pupils were identified by the principal as having special educational needs, another 11 pupils did not have special educational needs and, for two pupils, it was not known if they had special educational needs.

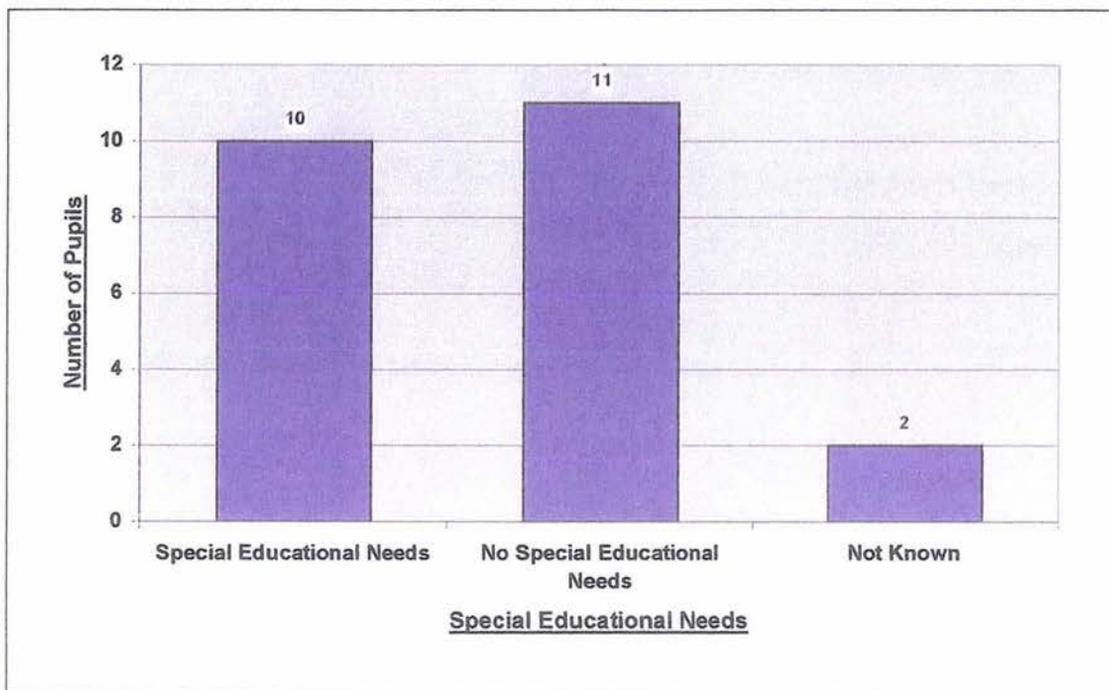


Figure 11 Special educational needs of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1g), n=23

Attendance of pupils (Question 1h)

Principals were asked about the pupil's attendance. It was not required for the principal to give specific attendance details but simply an indication as to whether the pupil practised good or poor attendance. The attendance rates are shown in Figure 12. Twenty-one of the 23 pupils were described as having good attendance with only two pupils described as having poor attendance. Overseas research (Blyth & Milner, 1996), primarily of secondary pupils, had found that truancy and poor attendance was a common characteristic of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions. However, this was not the case in this study of primary age pupils.

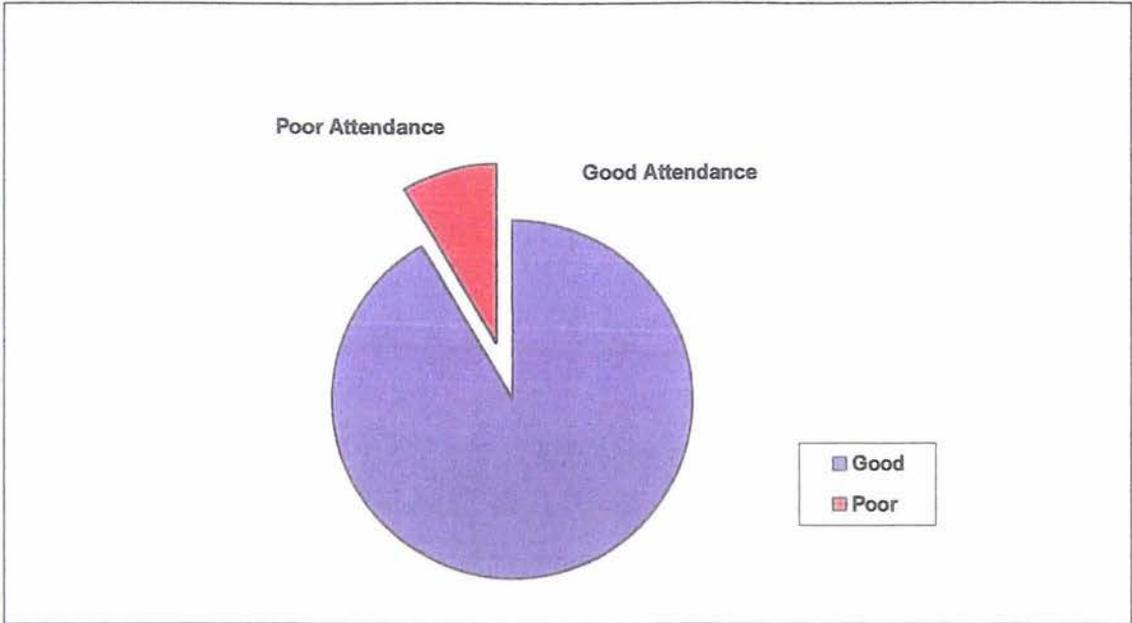


Figure 12 Attendance of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (1h), n=23

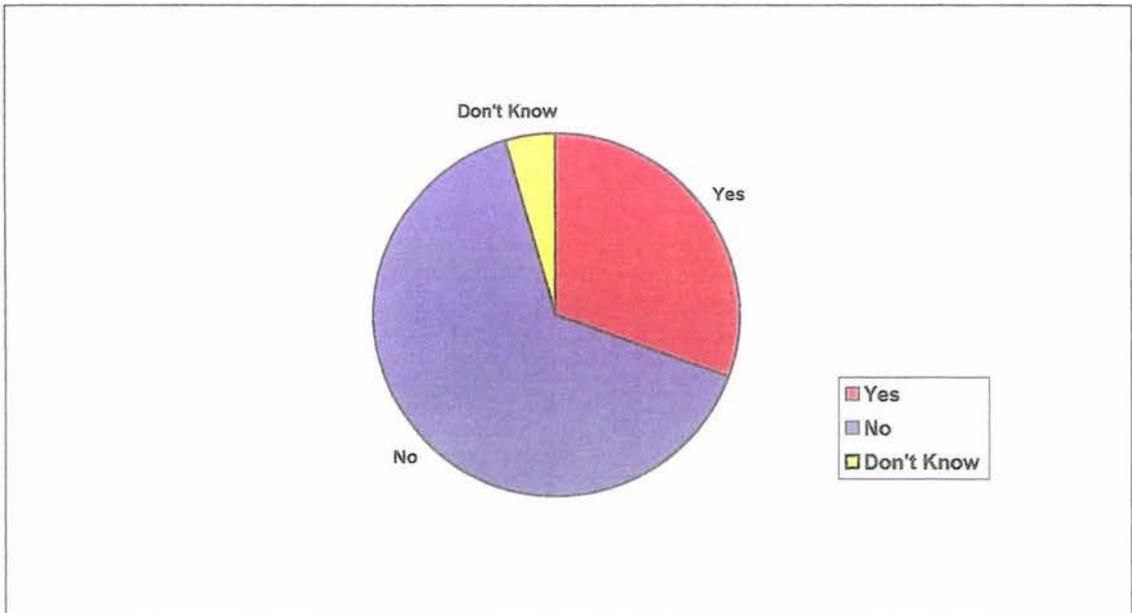


Figure 13 Transference from previous school as a result of disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (2a), n=23

Previous transference of pupil (Question 2a)

Over a third (n=7) of the 23 pupils had been transferred to the present school as a result of disciplinary exclusions elsewhere. This detail was not known for one pupil (Figure 13). At a young age, pupils were having their schooling disrupted by a transfer to another school, with all the ramifications of establishing new relationships with teachers and friends.

Previous disciplinary actions (Question 2b)

Principals were questioned about the previous disciplinary actions they had carried out with the pupil. This was categorised as ‘formal’ disciplinary actions, defined as the pupil having a formal written record, ‘informal only’ actions, defined as previous detentions or litter duty and ‘none’, where there was no formal written record of any prior misbehaviours. Figure 14 shows that 18 of the 23 pupils had already received formal disciplinary actions, two pupils had had informal disciplinary actions only and three pupils had had no previous disciplinary actions. Almost all pupils already had a history of misbehaving and being disciplined and the incident had not been a one-off situation resulting in a disciplinary exclusion.

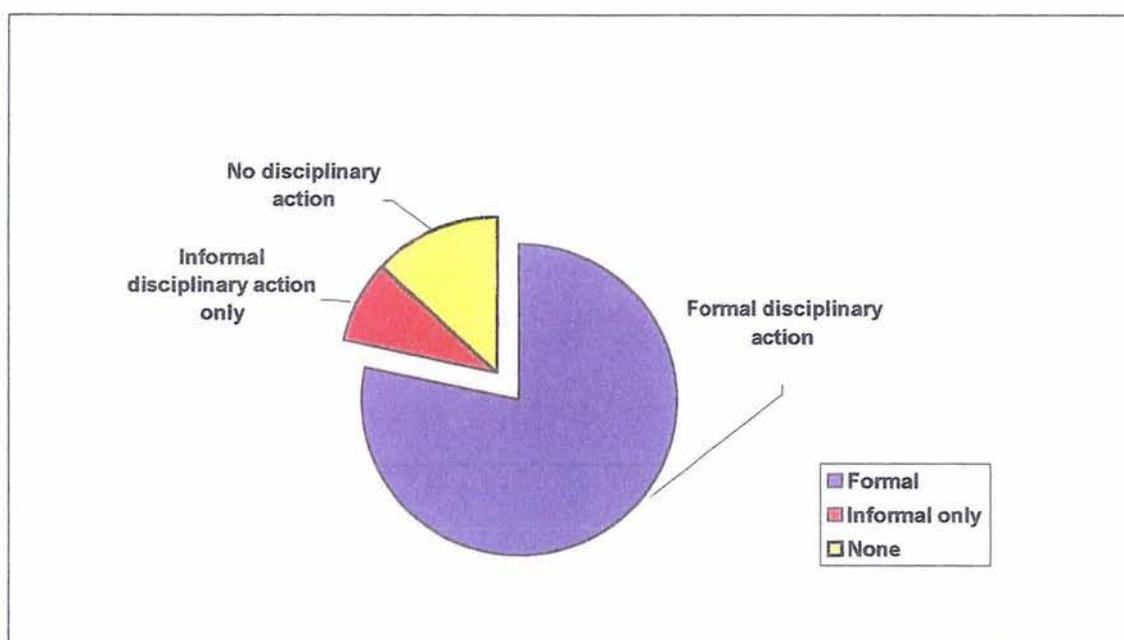


Figure 14 Previous disciplinary actions for pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Source: Questionnaire (2b), n=23

Prior contact with pupil's family (Question 2c)

Principals were asked about the prior contact that the school had had with the family of the pupil over their behaviour. This contact was categorised as ‘a lot’, ‘some’ or ‘none’. These terms were not formally defined by the researcher and were left for the principal to decide for his or her own situation. The actual figures such as number of hours were not required because the number of hours was unlikely to be have been quantified by the principal and because other variables arise in relation to

this question, such as availability of the family to be contacted and whether the calls are returned. The school had had a lot of previous contact with the pupil's family for 19 of the 23 pupils, only some family contact for one pupil, and no previous family contact for three pupils as shown in Figure 15.

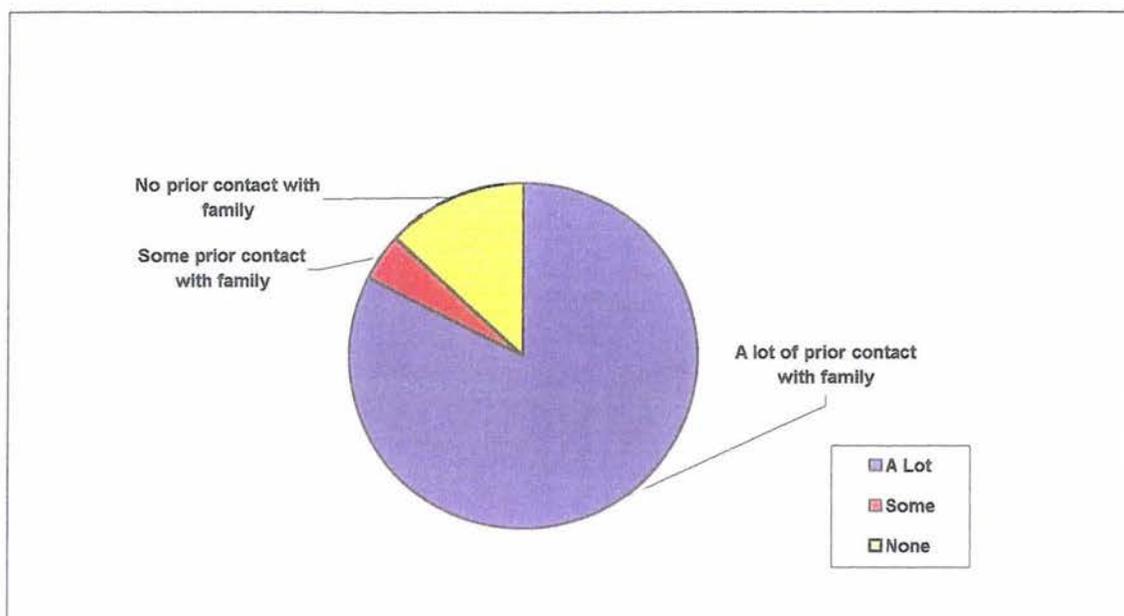


Figure 15 Prior contact with family of pupil receiving disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (2c), n=23

School's prior involvement with pupil (Question 2d)

Principals were asked what help the school had been able to provide, in the past, to try to improve the pupil's behaviour. This was categorised as 'in school help' involving implementation within the school of the government's new schemes for Resource Teachers in Reading and Learning Behaviour (RTLB) and Social Workers in Schools; 'outside school help' including police, the Child, Youth and Family Service (CYFs) or community agencies; and 'no help so far'.

For 13 pupils, both 'in school help' and 'outside school help' had been provided. Twenty of the 23 pupils were receiving 'in school help', 14 of the pupils were receiving 'outside school help', and for two pupils, no help had been provided (Figure 16).

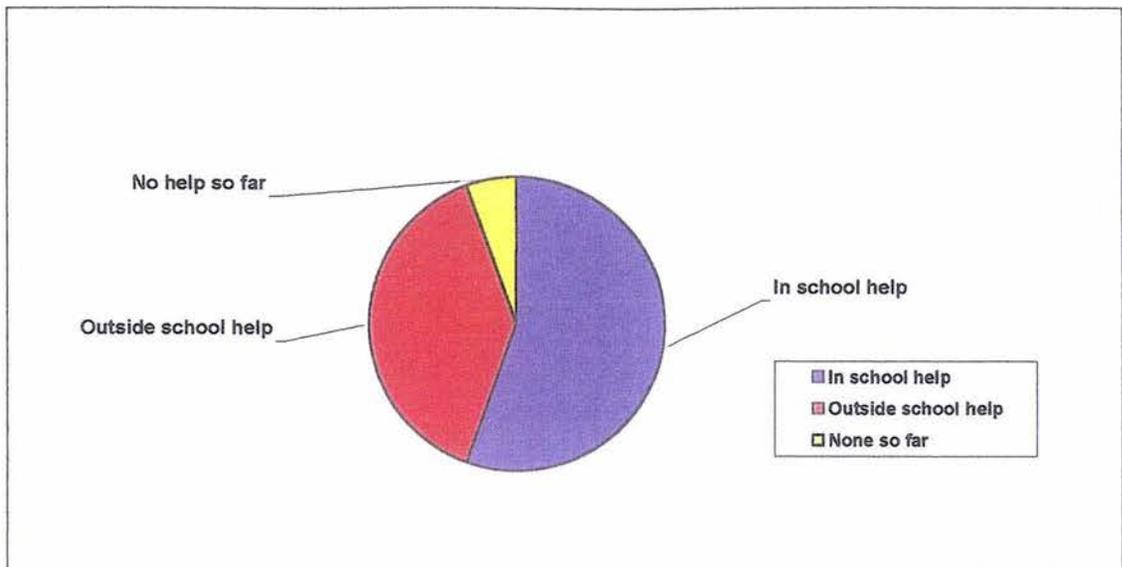


Figure 16 Types of help given to the pupil receiving disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (2d)

Resources used on pupil (Question 2e)

Principals were asked if the disciplinary exclusion had followed a period of the school devoting hard work, time and emotional energy to the pupil. This was categorised as 'yes, considerable' contact, 'some' contact, and 'no' contact. These terms were not formally defined by the researcher and left for the principal to decide for their own situation as actual quantitative figures such as number of hours were not required and were unlikely to have been quantified and because other variables arise in relation to this question; such as, whether the principal is a teaching principal with limited time for pastoral work with misbehaving pupils.

Eighteen of the 23 principals responded that 'yes, considerable' resources had been already been used on the pupil, two principals responded that 'some' resources had already been used on the pupil, and three principals responded that 'none' of these resources had been used on the pupil (Figure 17).

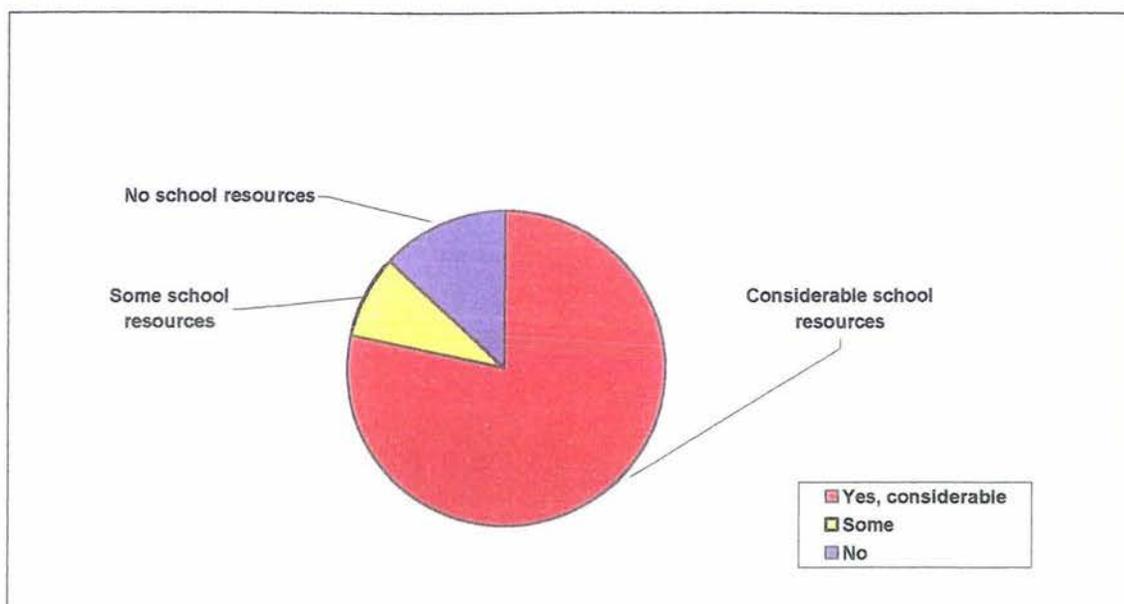


Figure 17 School resources used on pupil receiving disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (2e), n=23

The actual disciplinary incident (Question 3a)

The principals chronicled a descriptive account of the disciplinary exclusion incident, in which they described what had actually happened, the official steps they had followed during the process, their feelings and those of the parents or caregivers of the pupil and finally, the reactions and feedback from their staff. Thirteen of the 23 principals described the disciplinary exclusion as the result of build-up of ongoing disobedience over a period of time finally culminating in a major event of physical aggression, as described in the following sample excerpts:

*He has also been stood down from school on numerous occasions because of violence toward staff and children. I feel that [****] school has given this student a huge amount of its time and energy and unfortunately time and again it has been put into a situation where we are left to pick up the pieces. When the full file of [****] is laid out many would say that we should not have gone so far. I do however believe that, in the context of the support and follow-up, the right decisions have been made. However, no school should have to continually deal with a child like this.*

(School #29)

Gross physical aggression threw a small boy (a new pupil to our school) to the ground. Bullying repeated from a similar incident a week before.

(School #2)

The final incident was firing a gun stapler into a girl's leg. This was the last straw.

(School #12)

Three principals described the disciplinary exclusion for illegal substances being brought to school, such as,

Pupil brought a potpourri of pills/tablets to school and handed them out to 6 other children, 2 of whom were 6 years old.

(School #36)

Two principals described the pupil initiating sexual incidents, which resulted in disciplinary exclusions:

We thought it [pupil's behaviour] was on the improve until the beginning of T3 2001. Since then the whole matter has worsened considerably. Incident 1. Threw a toy at the teacher and hit her on the face. Incident 2. Gave another child a 'Hopocate' [named after the rugby league player John Hopocate for the indecent sexual offence he committed in a recent televised game] on the Junior Adventure playground.

(School #34)

One of [a] group of senior boys sexually violated 2 younger boys by pulling their shorts and underwear down – and whilst holding them down, a third youngster was forced to interact in a sexual manner – 'bum screwing'.

(School #35)

The remaining five principals related various other incidents resulting in disciplinary exclusions such as continued disobedience and defiance, as described by this principal:

The suspension and consequent exclusion were actions taken after 18 months of other containing actions taken by the school. The trigger point for suspension was when we realised that there was nothing more we could do. We were not going to get home support (consistent). The student had no intention of making any change.

(School #33)

Location of incident

When the principals described the incident, they usually mentioned where it had taken place. In 11 cases, it had occurred out of class, in four cases it had occurred in class, in one case it had occurred on a school trip, and in seven cases the location was not described. Figure 18 portrays these findings.

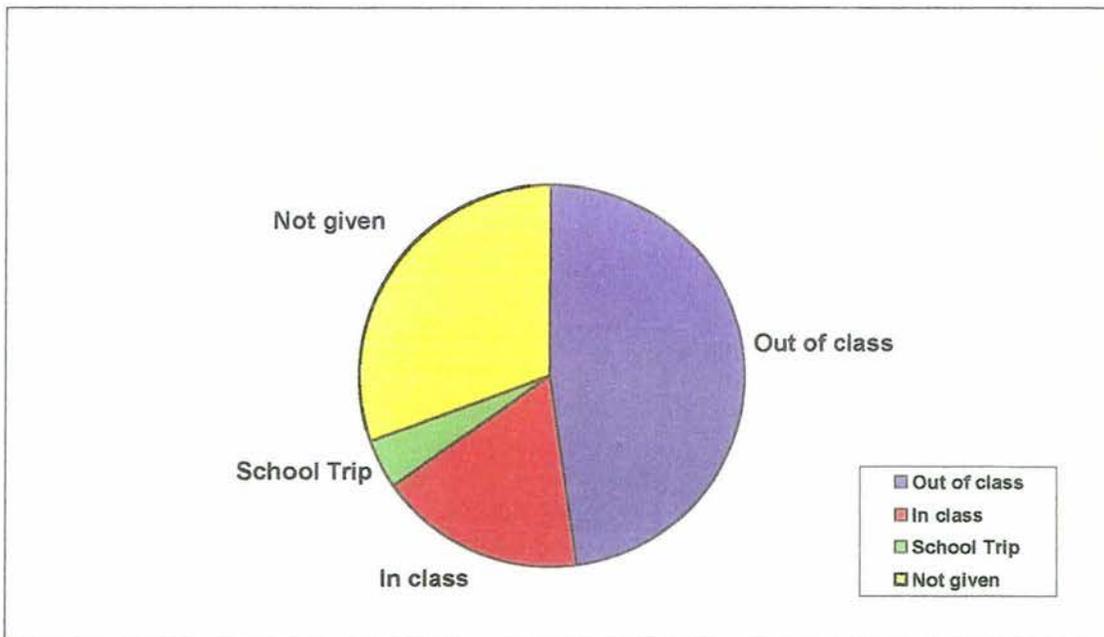


Figure 18 Location of incident resulting in disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (3a), n=23

The official disciplinary exclusion process (Question 3b)

Eleven of the 23 principals described in exact detail the official steps in the process they had gone through. Eight of the 23 principals specifically mentioned following

the 1999 Ministry of Education “Guidance for Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions” with comments such as,

Ministry of Education guidelines and requirements were followed ‘to the letter’.

(School #24)

The instructions/guidelines in the Ministerial publication relating to suspensions, stand-downs, exclusions were followed to the letter.

(School #36)

An interesting finding from the descriptions of the official process was that two principals could not find an alternative school to take the pupil they were excluding.

Steps: Day 1. Suspended pupil 16:00 on the day 1 of process. Parents collected him from school. Wrote letter to parents. Completed SOS 1. Day 2. Contacted parents again and provided full written report. Organised meeting with BOT (school 4 days later). Contacted parents to attend meeting. Contacted SES and CYPS and informed them, as they were involved. Day 3 (4 days later). Meeting with parents – took 2 ½ hours. BOT excluded pupil. Day 4. Completed SOS. Contacted other schools. Day 5/6/7. Received replies from other schools. Informed MOE, no takers.

(School #25)

Parents notified in writing – delivered personally. Child suspended. BOT notified. Meeting BOT - Pupil – Parents. Pupil excluded. MOE notified. Principal tried to arrange another school for pupil. Non-acceptance of pupil. MOE notified. Pupil put on correspondence.

(School #40)

The principals’ feelings (Question 3c)

The principals described a wide range of feelings and emotions towards the final incident including disappointment, stress, anger, concern, frustration, resignation,

despair, hurt, disgust, sadness and a sense of failure. Frustration and disappointment were most frequently mentioned, followed by anger, a sense of failure, resignation and stress, as depicted in the following passages,

I felt very frustrated – we had put in 18 months of hard yards with this student. I was aware of a high level of staff frustration contending with the behaviour. Students found her a threatening and disruptive influence – everyone had a need – many of them (the needs) were in conflict.

(School #33)

Disappointed but resigned to the fact it was best for all concerned.

(School #28)

My feelings, well you get this feeling in your gut which is not nice but it was the correct management decision to make.

(School #12)

I felt terrible about this, considering that myself and our systems had failed. Seeing how relieved the staff were, after this result, the stand-down, I consider that perhaps we had waited too long. “To be kind – Be Strong” is a good thought I now carry.

(School #50)

*Totally frustrated. This was the end of the year and we could have said ‘let it go’ as [****] was off to intermediate. After all we had put up with and put in we felt obliged to go through with the process. This also sent messages to the child, the family and allowed other schools some options. We made sure that the system acted. We had gone through the anger, despair, hurt, frustration stages before. This childish behaviour was incredibly difficult – he was “ smart”, manipulative and very knowing. He was violent, self-centred and aggressive – always when it suited him. We often referred to the ‘light switch’ – on/off. He could hit, hurt and the next second be nice as and make no connection to the previous incident. ‘Black’ was another word that came to mind. His teacher associate put up with horrible things but stuck at*

– amazing really as most people would have walked away. (She still works with us!!)

(School #29)

Reaction of parents or caregivers (Question 3d)

The reactions of the parents or caregivers to the disciplinary exclusion ranged from understanding, appreciation and support of the school's action with concern for the pupil to anger with the child and opposition of the school's actions. Support for the school's actions, resignation and acceptance were the most common reactions as told by the following principals,

Parents when contacted, re stand-down, almost knew it was coming and supported the school's actions.

(School #12)

Understanding - aware of what class and teacher was having to go through – supported the move.

(School #28)

Attitude of the parents who blamed me for “making a big deal out of nothing” – absolutely no concern for the other children – who had to be seen by a doctor to ensure that the pills they had ingested were not dangerous.

(School #36)

Caregivers blame school – claim we should make allowances for ADD/ Mental/Health violence problems.

(School #46)

The family of the student showed some interest – too little too late. The suspension was an aggravation to them as the student was now their problem.

(School #33)

Staff reaction and feedback (Question 3e)

The principals commented on their staff's reactions and feedback to the disciplinary exclusion. The most common staff reaction was relief, mentioned by seven of the 23 principals, followed by support of the principal's stance. Other reactions such as concern for the pupil, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and exhaustion were also mentioned:

Again, a range of feelings reactions – in a word 'relief' and the question "Why did it take so long?"

(School #24)

*Several times his class teacher and myself needed to talk to the staff about [****]. We needed their support and they needed support to manage playground duty and incidents. Many wanted him excluded – like a year before he was!! They felt it wasn't fair on other kids – it wasn't safe.*

(School #29)

Staff saddened that our comprehensive and extensive support initiatives did not succeed in helping this pupil. The negative attitudes and influences in the home were too great for us to overcome. However they frequently comment on how supported they feel by a principal who is prepared to make the hard calls.

(School #36)

School placement after the disciplinary exclusion (Question 4a)

After the stand-down, suspension or exclusion, 12 pupils returned to their school and 10 pupils transferred to another school. One principal did not answer this question. These results are shown in Figure 19.

Results from question 2a showed that more than a third of the pupils had already been transferred to the current school because of a disciplinary exclusion at their previous school and the results of this question show further transference of pupils because of disciplinary exclusion. Both sets of results show the early rejection from

school and the transient nature of schooling for these young pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

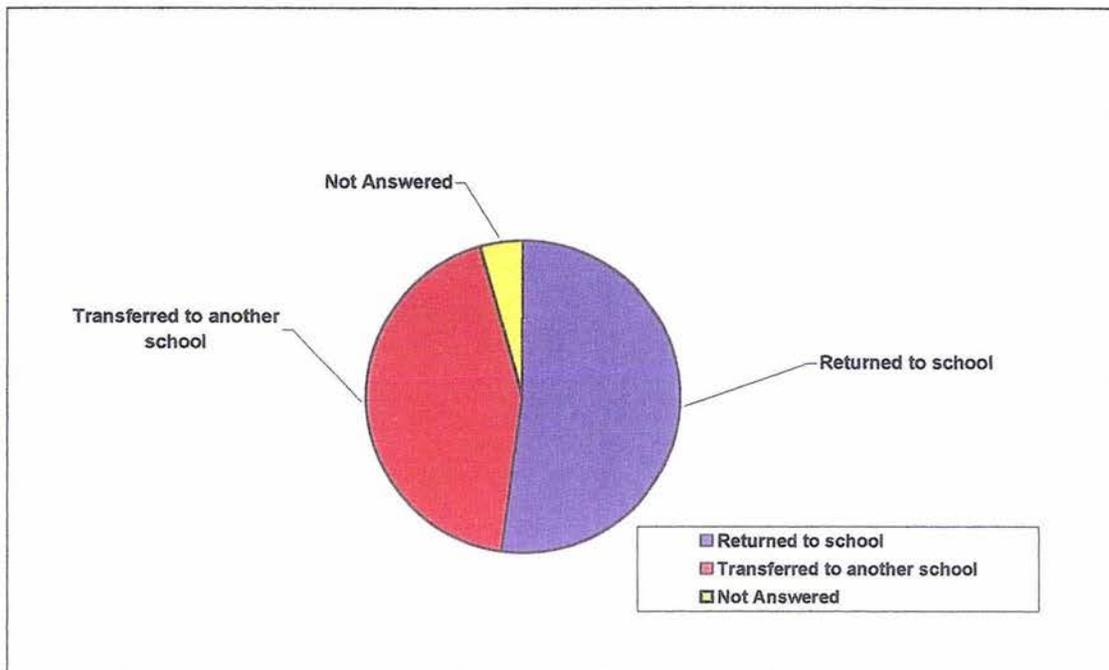


Figure 19 School placement of pupil after disciplinary exclusion.

Source: Questionnaire (4a), n=23

Consequences of the disciplinary exclusion (Questions 4b and 4c)

To delve further into the findings from Fitchett (1999) as to whether principals perceived disciplinary exclusions to be successful or unsuccessful for the pupil and the school and whether they would have preferred to take another course of action, principals were asked Questions 4 b-e. Because of the comments by Fitchett (1999), about the way principals had used the terms 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' in relation to disciplinary exclusion, as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two, the researcher did not define the qualitative terms successful or unsuccessful for the principal and left this to the principal's own perceptions and interpretation.

Question 4b required the principals to answer if the disciplinary exclusion had proved to be a positive experience for the pupil in that it provided a catalyst for change. Their answers were almost evenly divided. Eleven principals agreed that it had been a positive experience for the pupil, nine principals did not think that it had

been positive, one principal did not know and two principals did not answer, as shown in Figure 20.

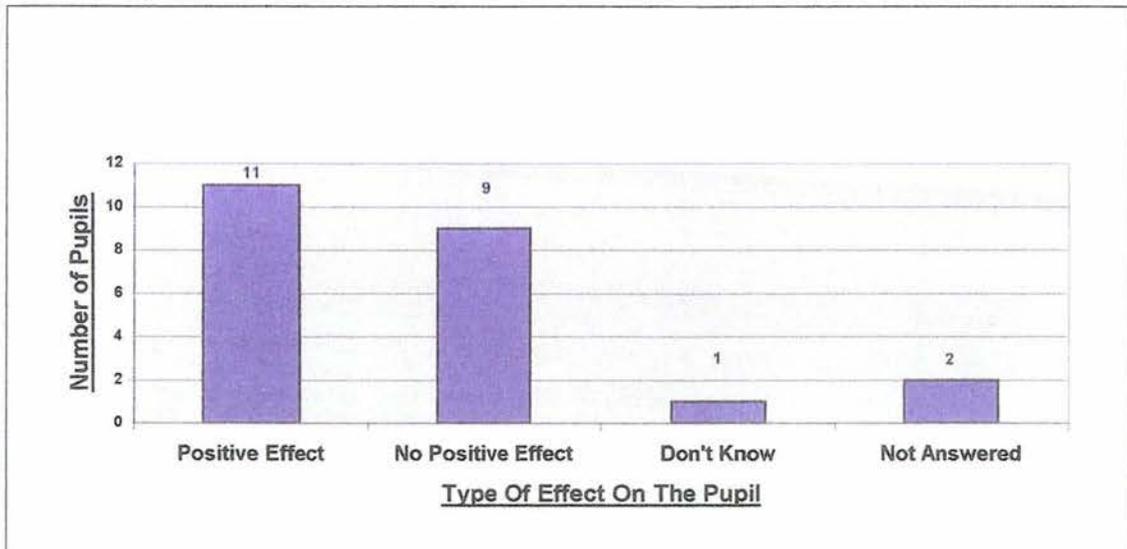


Figure 20 Pupils for whom the disciplinary exclusion had a positive effect.

Source: Questionnaire (4b), n=23

Because questions asking for positive and negative effects can sometimes be ambiguous, principals were also asked if the disciplinary exclusion had proved to be a negative experience for the pupil. Two principals thought it had been a negative experience because the pupil's behaviour had not changed, 16 principals responded that it had not been a negative experience, four principals did not know and one principal did not answer. See Figure 21.

Result of the disciplinary exclusion for the school (Question 4d)

Principals were questioned about the result of the disciplinary exclusion as being either successful or unsuccessful for the school. Eighteen principals replied that it was successful for the school, one principal thought that it had been unsuccessful, one principal did not know, one principal did not answer this question and two principals thought that it had been both successful and unsuccessful for the school. See Figure 22.

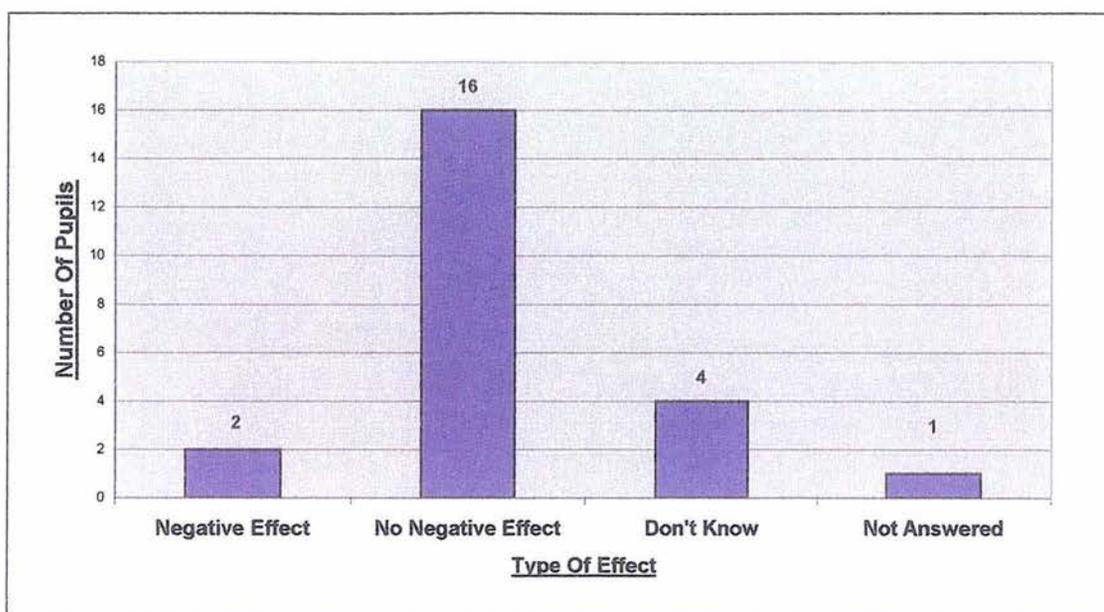


Figure 21 Pupils for whom the disciplinary exclusion had a negative effect.

Source: Questionnaire (4c), n=23

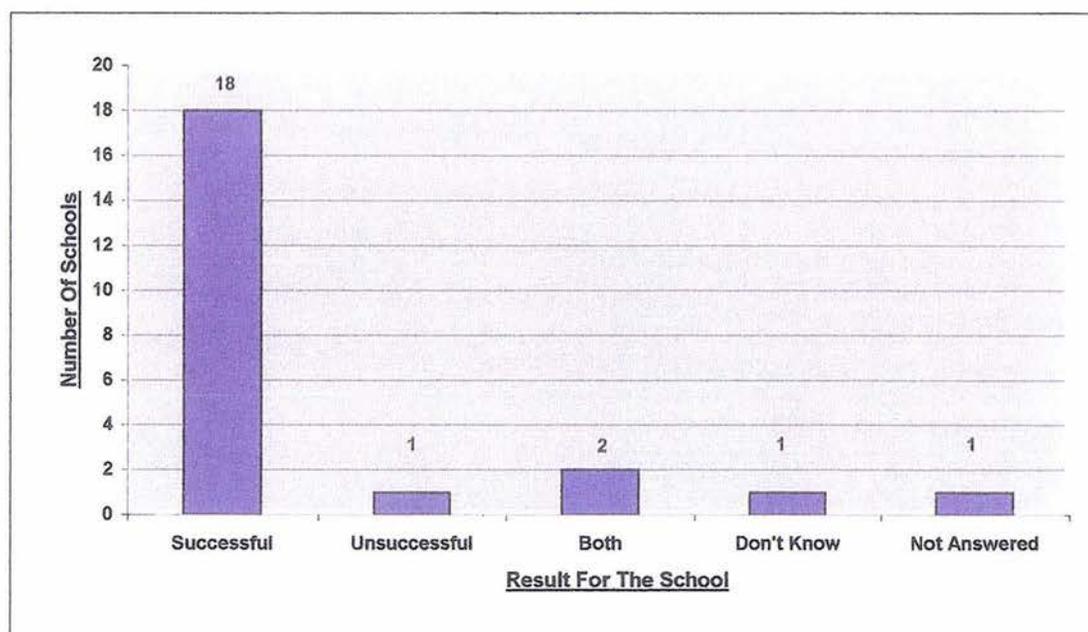


Figure 22 Result of the pupil's disciplinary exclusion for the school.

Source: Questionnaire (4 d), n=23

Preferred course of action (Question 4e)

Figure 23 shows the principal's preferred choice of action for the disciplinary exclusion. Seven principals would have preferred to take another course of action, 13 principals did not prefer any other course of action and three principals did not answer this question.

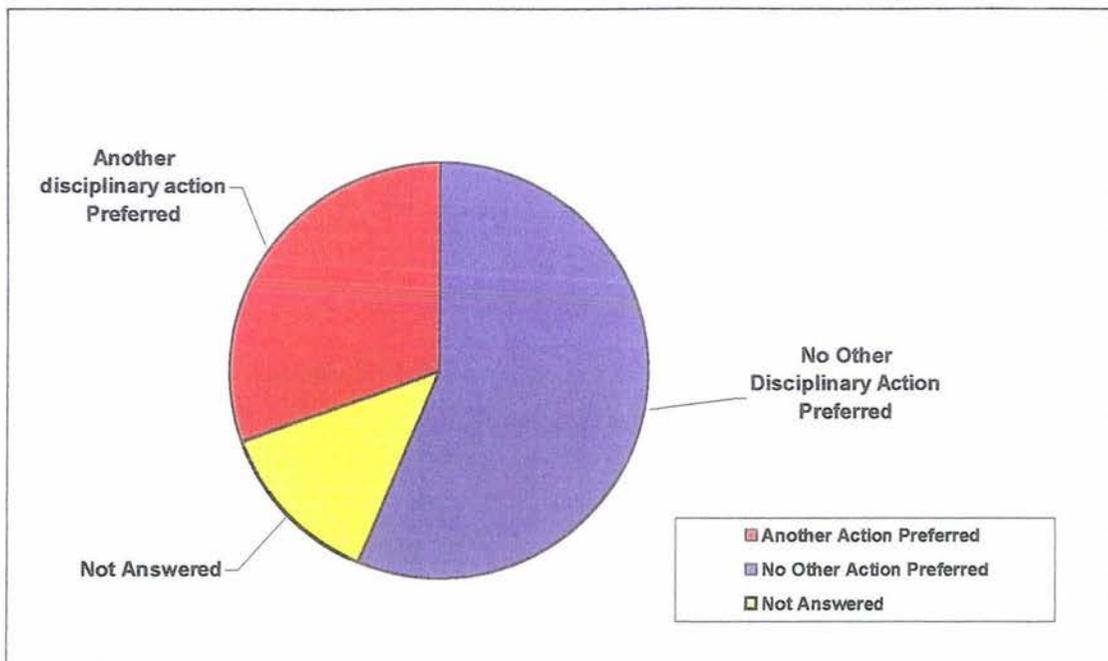


Figure 23 Disciplinary action preferred by the school.

Source: Questionnaire (4 e), n=23

Principals' views of their role in the disciplinary exclusion process (Question 4f)

The findings of a previous study (Prochnow, 1998) suggested three ways in which principals might describe their role in the process. The principals were presented with these descriptions and asked to choose whether they described how they felt. All 23 principals agreed with the description “The principal bears the brunt of the task in the disciplinary exclusion”. Twenty-one principals agreed, “The principal acts as the disturbance handler”. Finally, 21 principals identified with the description that “The principal does a juggling act to balance the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils”. These results affirmed the findings of Prochnow (1998).

Principals' other comments (Question 4g)

In the final open-ended question, (Questions 4g) principals were asked to add further comments if they wished. Fourteen principals chose to do so. The following ideas categorised their comments:

- Competing needs – the principal balancing the needs of the individual pupil against those of the other pupils and the staff,
- Huge investment of school resources into the pupil,
- Need for more funding and support (from the family, outside agencies and the Ministry) for schools to deal with the problem,
- Bureaucracy of the new regulations,
- Need for alternative schooling/outside-school services for extreme cases and
- The message that stand-downs, suspensions, and exclusions send to other pupils and the school community, that serious misbehaviour will not be tolerated.

Four principals added extra comments regarding the needs of different people in their school and school community. One of these principals said,

None – except that as a Principal I will never allow one child to consistently deny others their right to learn in a safe environment and teachers also have the right to teach. Parents must be held more accountable for their contributions to the behavioural problems of their children and must support the school initiatives. Had the parents of this child supported our initial strategies we may not have arrived at the exclusion stage. The refusal of the parents to entertain our suggestions resulted in the eventual exclusion.

(School #36)

Two principals outlined the huge investment in resources their schools had used on the pupil, as illustrated in the following excerpt,

Huge resources need to be poured into parenting and dysfunctional families. School is the best part of this child's life. His behaviour is only a small reflection of what is going on around him. The amount of time/cost being spent on one child is considerable. Schools need to be able to tap into additional resourcing in these situations.

(School #34)

Nine principals commented on the need for more funding and support from the family, outside agencies and the Ministry of Education and the inability of schools to solve the problem alone, as expressed in the following excerpts:

The lack of real support to the school by the Ministry of Education. The unnecessary “red tape” and protracted procedural requirements. The lack of any “time out” institution for temporary placement to implement behavioural modification etc and assess the “child at risk”.

(School #24)

The child was an ‘ADD’ child. She spent 6 months at Health Camp and they were not able to help. She was referred to a paediatrician who referred her on to a psychiatrist who prescribed ‘Ritalin’. On the support of a Family Group conference she was transferred to a school with a full-time social worker. In this case the family group conference helped solve the problems.

(School #28)

SES [Special Education Service] now involved – still waiting, 2 weeks, for SES report regarding the child. SES have assured me they will take the child on as a BEST case. What support/help don’t know.

(School #38)

Alternative placement in specialised units must be available for these extreme cases. This one child is slowly but surely draining the life-blood out of our school.

(School #46)

Three principals mentioned the new changes to the legislation for disciplinary exclusions and the ensuing bureaucracy, illustrated by the following excerpts:

Recent legal changes and requirements have served only to change data output to suit political agenda. They haven’t done anything to assist parents or schools practically. A bureaucratic paper barrier has been set up to ensure that “nothing happens” if at all possible.

(School #14)

Comments for suspension/exclusion: The newly adjusted model where BOT adjudicate in an adversarial process between Principal and pupil and their advocates, places greater burden on Principal (so much for the partnership). In the case of this stand-down: As stated in the return to the MOE the stand-down was, in the end, the only way that the school could force a change in the pupil's and pupil's siblings circumstances. Pupil now in a special school, parent has been required to accept support and guidance, younger siblings safer, happier and making school progress.

(School #26)

Six principals called for alternative schooling structures for these seriously misbehaving pupils, as explained by this principal:

This suspension was 'typical' of many with regard to adolescent students. The foundations for the inevitable had been laid down before the student arrived with us. We went to great lengths over 18 months to contain the student within the education system. There was no partnership with the student's home – there was no consistency between school expectations/standards and out-of-school expectations. Home fluctuated between overkill and disinterest. This student could not remain in this school for a range of obvious reasons but I believe there should be alternative structures – funding to do something for these kids – at an early age. 11-13 is too late.

(School #33)

Two principals felt that by standing-down, suspending or excluding a pupil, a message would be sent to the community that serious misbehaviour would not be tolerated in their school.

The stand-down process is a strength – it allows schools to send a clear message.

(School #29)

Had the good effect in that other troublesome pupils who saw the result pulled their horns in a little. The staff felt that they were being supported. The whole school community saw that action would be taken and that it would be effective.

(School #50)

4.2 Documentary evidence – Education Review Office Reports

The Education Review Office (ERO) is a government department that reports to the government and the public on the schools and early childhood centres in New Zealand. ERO is empowered to inspect and report on the performance of education institutions under the legislation of Part 28, sections 325-328 of the Education Act (1989). Prior to 2002, ERO reported the findings from each individual school review in a publicly available document called an Accountability Review (recently superseded by an Education Review based on the principle of “assess and assist”). The Accountability Review was usually carried out in a school every three to four years, based on evaluation criteria derived from published ERO guidelines (Education Review Office, 2000a), ERO’s education evaluation reports and ERO’s own findings about good practice. The National Administration Guidelines (2000) (NAGs) require that each Board of Trustees “provide a safe physical and emotional environment for students” (NAG 5). With respect to the present study, evaluation criteria number 4, ‘Safety’ relates to discipline and behaviour management in the school:

The principal and staff:

- *promote a healthy and safe environment through teaching programmes and example;*
- *have and use systems to provide effective guidance, support and direction to students when needed;*
- *have and use systems to effectively identify bullying;*
- *have and use systems to effectively eliminate bullying;*
- *follow established procedures in dealing with the possession of alcohol, drugs and weapons and,*

The board of trustees

- *has developed and implemented explicit and comprehensive policies for student welfare and behaviour;*
- *has developed and implemented effective policies dealing with the possession and use of alcohol and drugs;*
- *does not discriminate against students, staff and other members of the school community on the basis of characteristics such as:*
 - ethnicity*
 - gender*
 - disability*
 - religion*
 - sexual orientation*
 - physical appearance*
- *reinforces, through documented and implemented practices and procedures, commonly held values of individual and collective responsibility which underpin New Zealand's democratic society. These values include:*
 - honesty*
 - reliability*
 - respect for others (which includes such notions as cultural safety)*
 - respect for the law*
 - tolerance (rangimarie)*
 - fairness*
 - caring or compassion (aroha)*
 - non-sexism*
 - non-racism.*

(Education Review Office, 2000a)

During the review process, the school is notified and asked for certain documentation. One of the documents which ERO asks schools to complete is a self-review questionnaire in which questions are asked about stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions. After looking at the range of documentation, the

reviewing team of ERO officers then decides upon the scope and focus of the review. An on-site investigation takes place that includes classroom observations, interviews and discussions with staff, the principal and the Board of Trustees. Based on the findings of the on-site review, a report is written and then sent to the school for their input to specifically identify any incorrect information. Once this process is complete, the reports are confirmed and published. Because these reports are publicly available on the Internet and in print, the researcher did not use any direct quotations in the following section. This was done in order to preserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants as direct quotations would allow schools and principals in the study to be identified.

Although the evidence in the reports was unique to each school and fragmented across schools, several common themes emerged from the reports:

- The 'safe physical and emotional environment' of the school (mentioned in 18 of the 23 reports),
- The use of in-school programmes for behaviour management (mentioned in eight reports),
- The use of outside-school programmes for behaviour management (mentioned in nine reports),
- The use of outside agencies to help with behaviour management (mentioned in six reports),
- The implementation of Behaviour Management policies, now required for all schools (mentioned in 14 reports),
- The positive parental involvement/contact for behaviour management (mentioned in seven reports), with the exception of one report which mentioned parental criticism of the lack of opportunity for parental involvement, and
- The appropriate use of either rewards or sanctions (mentioned in seven reports). One report, however, mentioned an imbalance of the award of sanctions or rewards and an inappropriate use of detentions.

None of the reports made any mention of disciplinary exclusions. This was surprising, in light of the specific requirement of the ERO self-review questionnaire for schools which specifically asks questions about disciplinary exclusions. These reports were of limited value in describing the role of the principal in the process of disciplinary exclusions. They were of use to the researcher, however, in providing background information about the schools and discipline, in general, before the next phase of interviews.

4.3 The interviews

The interviews with five principals began with questions relating to the disciplinary exclusion incident they had previously described in the questionnaires and ended with questions of a more general nature. The interview transcripts were read over and over again to identify the common themes by thematic induction and then dilemma analysis was used to tease out the underlying dilemmas in each of the interview questions, according to the method mentioned in Chapter Three. The dilemmas were presented for each interview question with specific extracts interspersed freely, as advised by Winter (1989). The dilemmas have been categorised and explained according to Holmes' (1981) classification. The final practical steps to presenting these dilemmas were to describe and explain the leadership responses which were made to the dilemmas.

The disciplinary exclusion incident and how the principal dealt with everyone (Interview Question 1)

Principals were asked about the stand-down, suspension or exclusion incident and how they, as principals, dealt with the differing needs of everyone involved - the offending pupil, the other pupils and the staff. This question was asked because it had emerged from the principals' own comments in the questionnaire (Question 4g), and related to the research aim of finding out how principals manage the process. Common themes to emerge from the principals' comments were:

- Pupil's long history of misbehaviour,
- School providing measures of support for the pupil's needs,

- Major incident of extreme misbehaviour,
- Needs of others had to be considered, over those of the individual pupil and
- Resulting disciplinary exclusion.

Principals described a history of serious misbehaviour, during which the school had spent a lot of time and resources putting into place various measures to deal with the needs of the misbehaving pupil. One principal described the timeframe of the support they had given the pupil.

The process, prior to exclusion in our school, is often between 10 and 18 months. That's when we do all of our hard yards. We do a lot of student support. We put a lot of steps into the school student support.

(School #33)

Another principal spoke of the financial outlay for special teacher aide time for the pupil.

And for a long time before the suspension, we'd called in the BEST team, so they'd been involved. And he actually had a teacher aide, who they funded for half of his time and we funded for half of his time.

(School #34)

And another principal explained the special programme the school had put in place for the pupil.

And for a large part of that year, we'd had an alternative programme running for him. This was under the SES [Special Education Service] and CYFs [Child, Youth and Family Service]. CYFs met with us probably once a fortnight - so a great amount of contact and outside agencies and so on with the one child. So he actually was enrolled here at school, but had an alternative programme in the afternoon, and so he was educated away under Section 78, I think it was, of the Act. He was educated off-site. The alternative programme was funded by CYFs. Basically, the bottom line, he had a minder for the afternoon and left here about quarter past 12, because a

lot of his problems were at lunchtime and in the afternoon, so he went to an alternative programme for the afternoon. And so that had been running for a long time. There had been a lot of support, a lot of meetings, a lot of contact with family, and family were supposed to be helping out here, but basically they all gave up in the end, I think. He was really in the hard basket.

(School #29)

Finally, the pupil had crossed the line with an extreme incident. One principal summed this up as, “... *all of a sudden, it all just got too much*” (School #34) and another principal echoed this saying, “*But in the end, when he violently attacked a child, the parents wanted action, and we said, “Yes, we agree entirely with you.” That was the final act.*” (School #29)

The final incident was the point at which the pendulum swung from supporting the pupil and dealing with his or her needs to supporting the rest of the school community. One principal stated:

My answer to you would be, I wasn't trying to meet the needs of the student and the family. That had been the preceding 18 months in this student's case. But I was looking at the interests of her classmates, the teaching staff and the school and its position in the community and that if we were to keep that student in our school, there was no more, honestly, that we could have done. The behaviours were such that it was not an option to keep her here.

(School #33)

One principal spoke of how he had supported his teaching staff during this time.

As far as the staff were concerned, we'd spoken to them about how to deal with this particular child, about what his needs were, and we had a system set up where the moment they put his name on a piece of paper and said for a child to bring the red card to the office - I would go over and intervene and bring him back, so that was their back-up.

(School # 34)

Principals spoke of how they perceived the concerns of the other pupils' parents. "We certainly had pressures from other parents in relation to his management," said one principal (School #29), while another said: "I thought our parents were excellent - they had a lot of patience with him, because it was their children who were getting..." (School #34).

Dilemma analysis identified the dilemma the principals had of balancing everyone's needs and of doing what was 'fair' in the situation. This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Competing needs

On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil to consider.

But, on the other hand, the principal has the needs of the other pupils, the staff and the school community to consider.

Any other choice? (Interview Question 2)

Principals were asked if they had had any other choices available to them, other than to stand-down, suspend or exclude. Analysis of the responses revealed one common theme of there being no other choice for the school but that of disciplinary exclusion. Principals expressed the belief that there was no other choice available for their school.

Nothing really. No. Nothing. One of the things was giving a boy a "Hopocate" [named after the rugby league player John Hopocate for the indecent sexual offence he committed in a recent televised game] in the Junior Playground, for no reason at all, completely unprovoked. Well, you've just got to make a stand – in fact, it should have almost been a straight suspension. That's what it should have been. So I think that he got the lesser end of the deal.

(School #34)

Zero. I'm talking about our school now.

(School #33)

Principals thought that they had done everything that they could for the pupils and that it was time for them to make a decision. One principal who typified this group said:

One of the factors that I bring to bear on getting to the point is there anything else that we as a school can do or that we haven't done that may be the magic ingredient needed to change behaviours. And when the answer is no, that's the point we're at.

(School #33)

One principal saw the disciplinary exclusion in a positive light as providing the next step in being able to get the necessary help for the pupil.

*Well until the time the stand-down happened, no choices. Well I didn't think there were, there may have been, but we had explored and received a minimum amount of support funding from the Ministry to support the boy at school. There had been a series of visits to the home to discuss the child's needs, as well as two meetings at school with the Mum, who was herself a little helpless or felt that she was helpless to do much more. And she was also resistant to the approaches that had been made by CYFs and other welfare agencies, including the hospital team called the CAF (Child and Family) team that are based at the [****] Hospital. They are on a health-funded basis. And so at that stage, there really needed to be a next step in order to get something done.*

(School #26)

Another principal echoed this view saying,

Do nothing and he would have then been enrolled at an Intermediate of his choice. But we felt, no, there has been too much that's gone on here. What would we have done in normal circumstances? We would have excluded this child to give other schools the opportunity to say no or to put pressure back onto the Ministry to make some decisions, such as a directed enrolment or correspondence. We believed that this child was unsafe in a school

environment and we knew because we'd had him for a year and a half, two years basically.

(School #29)

One principal explained how he saw his moral responsibility of supporting these at-risk pupils within his school.

*I believe that we are a school that wears our social conscience very clearly on our chest, and I've just actually had that told to me by a member of the CAF team, who I was on the phone with a few minutes ago, when you arrived. We do not exclude students lightly. We are a Decile * School. A number of our kids come from some pretty questionable backgrounds and we understand that we have a responsibility to modify behaviour, to work on attitude, to model, and we've spent four years putting bricks into place in the wall i.e. the right sort of staff, the right sort of learning environment and I perhaps mention these as an illustration of the holistic approach that I have towards student behaviour management and the whole suspension/exclusion. But we've done a huge amount, at a lot of cost to us by the time we get to that point.*

(School #33)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: The discipline continuum

On the one hand, the principal had been in the role of providing support and help for the pupil, who had been committing serious misbehaviours over a long period of time.

But, on the other hand, when was it time for the principal to step into the role of disciplinarian and sanction the pupil under the formal disciplinary exclusion process?

The costs of staffing, time and effort (Interview Question 3)

The principals were asked what costs (with respect to staffing, funding, time, and effort) they had already expended on the pupil. Common themes identified in the principals' responses were:

- Huge financial costs of funding teacher aides,
- Lots of time and effort,
- A decrease in the time and energy available for other pupils,
- Emotional stress,
- Effect on the management of the whole class and
- The effect on the school's public image.

The financial cost to the schools was the considerable funding of teacher aide hours for the pupil. One principal worked out the financial cost of providing the pupil with a teacher aide.

So as far as teacher aide support, that was twelve hours a week for all of this year. So we're talking about 12 hours at say \$13 an hour, so that's \$150 a week. So that's the financial cost of it all."

(School #34)

Sometimes teacher aide hours were paid, in part, by outside agencies with schools paying for the remainder, as the following excerpt describes:

We were employing a teacher aide. We got an hour's support a week and at that stage we were teacher-aiding him another 4 hours, and that was coming out of SEG, the Special Education Grant, from the Operations Grant. He was being withdrawn from the classroom quite regularly, probably from the time when he first came which was in March until he went at Queen's Birthday weekend. In that 3 month period, he was having to be removed from the classroom about once a fortnight on average – for a start quite often and in some instances, physically removed.

(School #26)

In the previous cases, the teacher aide had worked with the pupils for a few hours a week. In the following case, however, a teacher aide cared for the pupil the entire time he was at school.

To quantify the costs would be very difficult but if you brought it down to real time, the meetings we went to after school, evenings, the time I spent in meetings with outsiders, the time I had to get the Deputy principal out of his class, to cover him in some way. All of those things were happening quite regularly. We put in extra teacher aide. He got some teacher aide funding, but we built it up. I think that we might have been putting 5-10 hours extra a week, I can't actually remember now. But it was made up so that we had him fully covered basically.

(School #29)

One principal described the tremendous effort, stress and personal sacrifice of the teacher aide who had looked after the pupil.

...the stress on the teacher aide was cruel. He threatened her children, he threatened her, but then again, he also turned to her for help on weekends and things. She's still here. Amazing how she coped with it. Amazing. That child could manipulate. It was really quite personal and pointed and niggled away. He was really quite an intelligent boy, but oh, the stuff she had to put up with and we tried strategies all the time dealing with him. And part of it, he was excluded once for threatening her children, he said he would get her children sorry, he was stood-down for threatening her children one time. But we stuck at it. That teacher stuck at it and that teacher aide stuck at it. They had that same pupil for whole time that he was here.

(School #29)

One principal described the effect on the teacher who had the pupil in their class in terms of how they had organised their lessons and managed their class.

It also took a strain on the teacher. They were constantly on their guard. They had no relaxation time that you can have with a class and they were

reluctant to give their class any fun when he was around because you used to know what was going to happen. So you could actually see the physical strain on the teachers. There was actually a sigh of relief on a day when he wasn't there.

(School #34)

Another principal explained how they managed the pupil's behaviour and how they balanced the needs of the other pupils in the class.

In that 3 month period, he was having to be removed from the classroom about once a fortnight on average – for a start quite often and in some instances, physically removed. The advice that we were getting from the SES, from the behaviour person at SES, was that when these children blow up and have a physical incident or feel that they are being challenged or something like that, then the advice from SES was that we remove the other children from the classroom. Before this child arrived and with other children we have had who have been similar, we decided as a staff that we wouldn't do that, and while it mightn't be P.C. our decision was that the needs of the others came before the needs of that individual. And so we would not empty a classroom for one child. So we remove the child rather than removing all the kids.

(School #26)

Dilemma analysis revealed a dilemma over the use of time and resources. The tremendous amount of time, effort and resources being expended on one pupil meant less for the other pupils. The time and effort being committed to the one pupil that could not be devoted to other pupils was significant. One principal summed up this dilemma saying:

Huge. I can't quantify it for you. But huge. A lot of hours of Deputy Principal/Team Leader involvement. A lessening of quality of a learning environment for thirty pupils as this particular student went through her disruptive behaviours. There had been stand-downs. I can't honestly quantify that for you in terms of hours, but huge effort. Huge, in that if the

school had not put that time into that pupil we could have been doing other things for more positive outcomes – with extension groups or whatever. You've got so much energy, you've got so much time and every bit of both of those that a misbehaving student takes off, they're taking off effort that you could have put into positive things for other kids that are not misbehaving. So there is a price that we all pay.

(School #33)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Competing use of resources

On the one hand, a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources was being expended on one pupil.

But, on the other hand, this meant less time and resources for the other pupils.

Again, the earlier dilemma of balancing everyone's needs was mentioned by another principal who defined the cost of having that pupil in the school in terms of how other parents perceived the school and how he or she, as the principal, had to balance everyone's needs by seeing the 'big picture'.

*The other cost of it also that you get within schools, is that you're always considered to have a bully. So that word passes out - "Oh, there's a bully at [****] School!" And people don't really understand all the support mechanisms that are in there for the child. And parents don't understand that this child probably needs more support than what they did, so they look at the little picture, they don't look at the big picture at what's best for this child. And I think schools need to hang in there for as long as they can. We had two irate parents, really irate parents, who wanted the child physically thrown out and couldn't see rhyme or reason and these were in the early stages with minor incidents. They basically took the attitude that they didn't want their children mixing with children like this.*

(School #34)

Outside school support (parental and other agencies) (Interview Question 4)

Principals were asked what outside school support (parental and outside agency) they would have found helpful in the incident. The principals' comments revealed two common themes:

- Widespread use of outside agencies with mixed success, and
- Lack of parental support for the school's efforts.

The five principals interviewed had all used various outside agencies in dealing with the pupil, such as the Child Youth and Family Service (CYFs), the Special Education Service (SES), Resource Teachers in Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), psychologists and the police, with varying degrees of success. It was obvious, in the following case, that much time and effort was also spent in meetings with outside agencies to put in place ways of dealing with the pupil.

CYFs have been really good. Once we'd said what had happened, they said yes, that's the exclusion time. We've worked pretty closely with CYFs – weekly contact basically and meetings and they organised that alternative programme with SES and BEST, their Behaviour Support team. The teacher worked closely with us. That was peer support for the teacher associate because she needed it – professional support apart from just us. The psychologist was involved - a SES psychologist. He started to make a difference because he challenged us - the way we were dealing with him and so on. We agreed on some things and agreed to differ on some other things, but we felt his contact was good. And he always thought that the kid, and he must have been and he probably is too, saveable. But it got pretty hard to see that.

(School #29)

One principal, however, did not find the outside agencies useful. It was interesting that this principal described the resulting disciplinary exclusion as a failure of the outside agency and of the school.

I didn't find any of them helpful, but we used a number. Maori Mental Health had been involved, RTLB, Youth Aid of the Police had been involved, the school counsellor had been involved. There had been a number of meetings with school staff. There were some attempts at getting parental involvement that had not been successful until it got to the really critical end of things. But I have to say that none of them were particularly useful. And that's not a criticism of any of them, because we failed too, despite what we all did.

(School #33)

Two principals described the lack of parental support for what the school and outside agencies were trying to do for the pupil.

Mum went through the stage of being quite supportive and she knew that this child needed support and then she became very defensive and wouldn't and then she came back to being supportive again. So you never knew how you were going to find Mum, and that was probably based on what had happened in her own life.

(School #34)

The other principal said:

Well they were helpful – the SES was helpful, the CAF [Mental Health Team from the hospital] people were helpful and CYFs were helpful. But the thing that came home to me, is that if a parent is resistant to outside agencies intervening, things can go a long way (and compared with what happens with some kids, I don't know if you saw the TV3 programme last night, it was quite interesting), but things can go a long way before outside agencies can impose themselves on a home situation. Things could have gone further for this kiddie too, and for this kiddie's family before outside agencies could actually push open the door, go in and sort it. So I actually find that when I use the outside agencies, that they are very responsive and helpful and supportive and willing, if not a little pressed but a problem for them is the

extent to which they are allowed [by the family] to provide the support that they sometimes or often need to give.

(School #26)

Dilemma analysis revealed the dilemma existing between the huge amount of effort by the school, the positive support being given by the outside agencies but the perceived lack of support by the pupils' parents. This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Parental support

On the one hand, the school can put in place various types of support (in-school and outside-school agency) at considerable effort to help the misbehaving pupil.

But, on the other hand, if the pupil's family does not support the school in what it is trying to do for the pupil, the school's efforts will have little effect in helping the misbehaving pupil.

Implications of the recent disciplinary exclusion for the principal (Interview Question 5)

Principals were asked what implications the incident had for them in terms of how they would deal with the stand-down, suspension and exclusion process in the future. Common themes of the principals' replies were:

- Bureaucracy of the new legislation in terms of paperwork and
- They would do the same again.

Three principals mentioned the need to follow the 1999 Ministry of Education "Guidance for Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions" correctly. One principal expressed this requirement as: "*As long as you cross all the t's and have got all the documentation in order.*" (School #34) Another principal also mentioned the bureaucracy of the new legislation, saying:

I think that all principals are aware of the procedures that we are required to follow. Very aware of that, and the lengthiness and the paperwork involved in that may deter some. I think it guarantees principals put off a suspension process as long as they can in the interests of the child.

(School #24)

And another principal said:

Well it was the first stand-down our school did. So we had already, as part of the preparation of our policies and procedures on that, we had already photocopied the flow-chart. And we in both instances used the flow-chart, because you've got to get it right for fairness, you've got to get it right in terms of legal challenge, you've got to get it right in terms of not exposing your Board or your staff actually. And there's been an incident recently that I'm aware of, where because the school didn't have its procedure right, it actually delayed everything, including the help that was needed for the child. Because everything just got put off – it was like because you've broken the rules, start again. And so had they had the procedure right, then the stand-down or the suspension would have gone ahead, the support would have been given. Instead the judgement was that the procedure wasn't right, you have to wait for the next incident.

(School #26)

Four principals explained how they would have done the same again because disciplinary exclusions are for the extreme end of the discipline continuum when a pupil crosses the boundary with some form of extreme misbehaviour. One principal commented:

I don't think that it would change anything that we would do with exclusion. Exclusion to us is a last straw. We would have really got to the end point of all that we try.

(School #29)

And another concurred:

Nil. Because I don't do it lightly and because we had done everything that we could possibly do apart from letting her remain at the school, blowing things out of the water. So I didn't learn a thing, except it reinforced to me that there are some students who are not able to be accommodated in mainstream schools for a whole variety of reasons. And it concerns me that the system does not acknowledge that reality.

(School #33)

One principal talked of the imaginary boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour that principals have to define and then act upon. As one principal pondered:

Perhaps we tended to wait – we had lots of meetings- and tended to wait for the major incident. There were a number of others prior to that, that we could have taken the same action with, but he just crossed that boundary. They were all unacceptable, but this one was a major.

(School #34)

Dilemma analysis revealed a dilemma about when it was time to carry out the disciplinary exclusion. When did the behaviour become so unacceptable that the pupil could no longer be accommodated within the school? This dilemma has been formalised earlier (see page 94).

How principals find the new legislation (Interview Question 6)

The regulations for suspension, stand-down and exclusion changed with the Education Amendment Act (No. 2) 1998 and were implemented in July 1999. Principals were asked how they had found the new legislation when they were dealing with the disciplinary exclusion. There were two common themes:

- Agreement with the new stand-down provision as far as it benefits the school,
- Mixed feelings of the success of the stand-down for all pupils.

Three principals specifically said that they liked the newly introduced stand-down provision. One principal said:

I think the stand-down is excellent. It actually gives time for everyone to consider the case. It actually puts some breathing space in, rather than just straight suspension. It actually gives these incidents a time-line rather than the instant suspension. And you can still suspend instantly if the case warrants it, so it's another step in the system.

(School #34)

Another principal agreed, saying: "Good. More flexibility. The stand-down provision is a positive step. It gives flexibility to principal." (School #33) And the third principal said,

Good. We got the book out and followed the book. We had all the templates. We followed the templates. We didn't try to do anything outside the Handbook. Another school has got my Handbook at the moment. So, it was good. It is quite clear. I think that a stand-down is an excellent tool for a principal to use.

(School #29)

Another principal (School #24) commented on how the new legislation "guarantees fairness for the child involved." However, one principal saw the stand-down as an opportunity to send the following message to the community, that serious misbehaviour would not be tolerated,

I think that in the context of a school that tries not to stand kids down, and tries to put in place good management systems, it sends a message. I mean that we have really only used it with 3 children and really to send a message to the child and the rest of the community that yes, this is totally unacceptable behaviour.

(School #29)

Dilemma analysis revealed a dilemma with respect to the effectiveness of the stand-down for all pupils, in that it may work for some pupils but not for others. One principal explained this point:

For a number of children, it's the warning shot. That's all they need. The stand-down can be made to sound very serious, and for a lot of families where the child does something serious, but it's the first and probably the last significant misbehaviour that they're ever going to do, that's all that's needed. So you've got ten days in a year. It's effective for many children, but for your hard core, it's a stalling. It gives you another step before you can get to suspension. And it allows you to do it ten times, if you choose to do it ten times. But the stand-downs do not modify the behaviour of your at-risk students. There are a number of other children who will just do a dumb growing-up thing and it needs to be treated seriously, and stand-down is very appropriate for them and they certainly become very focussed over it, and because, because of their family and the seriousness that the families take it. So it can be seen as a pretty solid wake-up call. But the reason it's not effective with your hard core is because it does not have the same significance to their family and it's all too late and they really don't care.

(School #33)

Another principal commented on their perception of what some pupils thought of the new stand-down procedure: *"For some kids, it's like a holiday, I mean three days off, five days off."* (School #29)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Effectiveness of the stand-down

On the one hand, the stand-down may be effective with some pupils.

But, on the other hand, it may not work with other pupils.

One principal discussed the new provision of exclusion for pupils under the age of 16 and the requirement for principals to seek an alternative school for the pupil after exclusion,

Because, what happens, you'll know the process whereby if a child is excluded, the school that excludes him has to contact 5 other schools to seek placement. And they usually don't, and the Ministry directs an enrolment at another school. In the instance of the boy I excluded, he was accepted. Well the Ministry directed that he be enrolled at a certain school, which he was, with certain conditions. And I think that he is now at Intermediate or out of Intermediate. There should be some form of out-of-school placement available to schools for pupils who are disrupting and putting schools and pupils at risk.

(School #24)

The new legislation was also perceived as causing a change in the principal's relationship with the Board of Trustees with respect to the disciplinary exclusion process, as described by the following excerpt:

... I think it has been a bit of a challenge for principals who are standing-down or suspending more regularly than we are, say at the intermediate level and at high school level, because the relationship in those circumstances that the principal has previously had with the Board has had to change. My understanding is that the Board must operate as a completely independent and impartial group, rather than being in support of the principal and the action, which I think, would be a fair summary that that was the previous model. From my point of view in standing-down a child, the change is now that my discussions and my rhetoric with the Board Chair on the occasion would be much more limited and therefore less prejudicial if it came to a stand-down, or later on to an exclusion.

(School #26)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: A role conflict for principals

On the one hand, the principal has a role as principal of the school for putting forward the case for a disciplinary exclusion of the pupil to the Board of Trustees. But, on the other hand, the principal has a role as a member on the Board of Trustees for making the decision about the disciplinary exclusion of the pupil.

The legislative requirement of finding a new school for the pupil (Interview Question 7)

The new legislation requires the principal to look for alternative schools for those pupils not returning to their school. Principals were asked what they thought of this requirement of finding alternative schools and, similarly, taking offending pupils from other schools. Results from the questionnaire had shown that a large proportion of these pupils had already been transferred from other schools because of previous disciplinary exclusions and that the present disciplinary exclusion would lead to further school transfers for a large proportion of the pupils. Common themes to emerge from this question were:

- Disagreement with this new provision,
- Exclusion causes transference of the problem from one school to another school and
- Ministry seen as shirking responsibility for these pupils.

Principals described the provision of finding an alternative school for the excluded pupil as unfair, unrealistic, pointless and a waste of time. One principal said:

Personally, I think it's a waste of time. It's the Ministry passing the buck onto schools, because they have no longer got suitable places for these children to go to. And how many principals would actually want... if you ring them up, I've just suspended or just stood this child... will you take this

pupil on ...how many people would go to the supermarket and buy a bag of rotten apples – and that's the problem. They are just passing the buck. The Ministry can force your hand and say, "Thou shalt come..." But I think that you have got to put up those barriers first. Having to ring five other schools, it's unfair.

(School #33)

Another principal said:

I think it is totally unrealistic and I think it is totally unfair to transfer the problem. It may put tighter conditions on a child, but my experience is, it doesn't work in the long term, or in the medium term even.

(School #24)

One principal described the Ministry of Education as being able to 'pass the buck' with the new requirement that schools search for other schools to take on their excluded pupil:

...I've just turned down the offer or request from another school to take an excluded child, and so I understand has every other school, but I haven't had that confirmed, but I just understand that that is the case. Having that requirement, I think, has unbarbed the hook for the Ministry. It's a buck-passing thing really.

(School #26)

A fourth principal described his moral reasoning behind the decision not to take on some excluded pupils,

The system is easy in some ways in that you just contact the school. I've got a letter sitting here on my desk right now that says "Will you take this child?" and my fax response is there, no. It's as easy as that. I don't have to justify my no's.... What I've got here is a fairly formal sort of fax and he's done it really well and it tells you exactly what's been going on. Pretty simple background - from a neighbouring school. So it's a formal request

and it's all stated under the Act and my answer's plain and simple, "No". But behind that, I've spoken to the Principal and spoken to the Psychologist at SES, just to check, because I believe that every kid should be given a chance too, but that's a case that a lot of schools could do without.

(School #29)

Another principal expanded on this reasoning.

The second part of your question. Do we? Yes, we have on occasion and we haven't on occasions. I firmly believe that part of growing up is about making errors and that you are entitled to make errors of judgement, and not get shot for it. It's part of growing up process and we claim that we are understanding of adolescence and we need to factor in that sometimes kids growing up will do some dumb things. It depends on the behaviour. A child who had done something that I was sure that they had learned a significant lesson from and a new opportunity to start afresh would be taken for what it was, I've got no hesitation in enrolling them and taking them on. I have done it on a number of occasions, and, generally I've never regretted it...I take a very responsible attitude to this. But I'm not about voluntarily bringing in extra, and the law says that if they've been excluded, then I don't have to. I have on occasions when I've believed there was a fair chance for a person to get it right. But your hard core - the only reason that they're here, is not that they want education or because Mum wants them to have education. Sadly, cynically, it's because they're under Mum's feet at home, and better that they were your problem than her problem. If Mum was focussed on their education, and got in to the principal six months ago at the last school, it may not have got to exclusion. It's a fairly cynical view, but it's a realistic view.

(School #33)

The dilemma of transferring the problem pupil to another school was formalised as:

Dilemma: Passing the 'buck'

On the one hand, the legislation for disciplinary exclusion allows the principal, who is excluding, to solve the problem of the seriously misbehaving pupil by removing them from their school.

But, on the other hand, the same legislation transfers the problem of that seriously misbehaving pupil to the principal of another school.

An educational solution within the school (Interview Question 8)

The researcher wanted to find out if principals thought they could educate these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools, with respect to special educational needs, curriculum and school organisation. Special educational needs had been a common factor of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions, which had emerged from the results of the questionnaire. Two common themes emerged:

- These pupils could be educated within the school, if they had extra resourcing, and
- These pupils could not be educated within the school with present resourcing and there should be alternative schooling structures for these pupils.

The lack of resources to help and support these pupils within a school presented a dilemma for principals. Two principals thought that it would be possible to accommodate these pupils within their schools if they had extra resourcing. One principal described the need for extra staff and a support programme, saying:

Give me extra staffing and we could do it. Extra staffing and a support programme where you had somebody that could devote their time to our kids, I'm not talking about a dumping ground for others, we could manage a lot of issues. What we've got to be doing with these kids is they're coming to school emotionally challenged and if we could get to them every morning before school starts, you could stop a whole lot of problems down the track. It's just the fact that you have got no resources to stop it there.

(School #29)

And another principal explained the need for more space:

With the two boys that we have had, it has been necessary, on a regular basis to withdraw them and to put them somewhere, which is both nice, and airy, and open, and with windows to not enclose them, but to have them away from other children and in some cases certain staff. The only room in the school that we can use is this room [the principal's office]. Now until the Ministry or whoever makes these decisions, seriously considers the needs of those kids, we can't have them. One of the first things that I considered when the fax came through about that boy and the letter that followed was where would we put him when there was trouble? There is nowhere for him to go, we don't have the room.

(School #26)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Adequate provision of resources

On the one hand, principals think that they are able to provide an education for these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools.

But, on the other hand, they consider that they do not have the resources or Ministry support to do so.

One principal mentioned types of alternative schools which had taken these pupils in the past but which had since closed down:

*When a pupil is highly dysfunctional Ngairi, there is very little that a school can do, when you've got a non-compliant, defiant, abusive, physically dangerous-at-times pupil, very little you can do and again, schools are crying out for somewhere for that pupil to be placed in the interim. Places, I guess, that used to exist in one form or another. Beck House used to exist years ago here, it was closed, and we knew at the time, I was a principal at [****School] at the time and we knew it was a mistake. Now there's nowhere for those children, long term or short term. I don't know if there are still places - there used to be places like Hoban House out of*

Christchurch, McKenzie House, but those institutions are slowly closing or have been closed.

(School #24)

One of these principals specifically mentioned the government's policy of mainstreaming all pupils and how that had affected disciplinary exclusions.

*My school can't. My school can't. The system needs to acknowledge that mainstreaming is a political position at a point in time. I've got no beef with it as a philosophy. But it needs to acknowledge that there are some children, some students, who don't fit the model.... What they need is to be taken out of the loop, where someone can focus on them and their needs.... We used to have places that you could have 24 - 7 support. Beck House was a case in point. Now I look at the students from here and yes, I feel sorry. Excluding them is not doing a thing for them. It's doing a heck of a lot for the other kids who are left here. But putting them on some of these schemes is not really meeting their needs at all. Having them on the streets is certainly setting them up for even more disaster. There should be somewhere - where if someone acknowledged that there are some students, and I suspect that **** is not unique, I reckon that every town in New Zealand would have some, "What are we actually doing to stop a cycle from repeating?" And we're not doing it a heck of a lot.*

(School #33)

The lack of an alternative school to which these pupils could be sent presented a dilemma because principals did not think that these pupils could be accommodated within their schools but there was nowhere else for them to go. This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Mainstream schools for all?

On the one hand, there are some pupils whose behaviour is so extreme, that principals consider they cannot be accommodated within mainstream schools.

But, on the other hand, there are no other educational institutions available for these pupils.

Number of disciplinary exclusions (Interview Question 9)

Principals were asked how many pupils they had had to stand-down, suspend or exclude this year. Three of the principals (Schools #24, #26, and #29) had had no disciplinary exclusions this year. The disciplinary exclusions they had described in the questionnaire, related to the previous year. One principal (School #34) had carried out two disciplinary exclusions this year. The fifth principal (School #33), however, described how he had carried out 26 stand-downs this year:

Common characteristics of these pupils (Interview Question 10)

Common characteristics to the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions were identified in the questionnaire and this was followed up in the interview when principals were asked if they saw any common characteristics in these pupils. This was done in order to further discuss who these pupils were and also as a triangulation check on the data. Factors mentioned by the five principals included:

- Family and home background,
- Special needs for learning,
- Medical ADD condition,
- Socio-economic background and
- Ethnicity.

Four of the principals mentioned family and home background factors being a common denominator. Two of these principals also identified learning needs. One principal said: *“There are usually background family factors of one form or another. Parenting factors also come into it.”* (School #24) Another principal echoed this: *“So yes, there are family and home challenges as well and learning needs usually.”* (School #29) And again, by another principal:

In the main, it's a lack of parental support and mostly, in both cases, the parents have actually been struggling themselves. They've really had no training on how to be a suitable parent and I think they've been poorly parented themselves as well.

(School #34)

And the fourth principal described the difficulty he had in communicating with the some families.

Yes. What are the common denominators – failed learners, single parent/questionable parenting skills in the home, lack of communication – and I'm talking about parents not responding to phone-calls, parents not responding to letters. I would say that there is almost a 100% correlation between these children and parents not turning up to parent interviews, formal parent interviews.

(School #33)

The fifth principal (School #26) identified the medical hyperactivity condition, ADD, as the cause of the pupil's discipline problem. It was also another common characteristic mentioned by the principal of School #29. This principal elaborated on a dilemma identified earlier: that of being unable to find an alternative school for the pupil, saying:

*They are mentally unwell. One of them was psychotic, basically and now has been identified as being schizophrenic, or what do you call it now, bipolar, and now he's being treated for that. But we put up with it. Mum was ***** and two other kids here, one's gone off to Intermediate. We worked closely with this one, prior to the one I wrote about. I can remember him sitting in this office, lots of times. If you look behind that poster, there's a hole in the wall, that's what he did. He attacked his mother in this office, and the kid was sick. He was sick. We were dealing with a sick boy. At that stage, he was on Ritalin. That was the treatment he needed. **** wouldn't take him. **** wouldn't take this other boy. **** is a residential school for behaviourally challenged in ****. Bloody hopeless. So I won't go down that track. There's nothing locally. One other boy that we stood down was straight violent.*

(School #29)

Socio-economic background and ethnicity were also given as other common characteristics, by a principal who said: *“A lot of these children are geographically living very close to each other, in little enclaves, so there is a socio-economic factor. There is an ethnic factor.”* (School #33)

Principals tried to seek outside help and support for pupils who presented problems with family and home background and medical or mental conditions, but there was only so much that the school could do. These common characteristics presented dilemmas for the principals in that these characteristics of the pupils were perceived as being outside the school’s sphere of influence, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils. This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: The purpose of schooling

On the one hand, there are common characteristics to the pupils who have had disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, these characteristics are outside the control of the school, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils.

The School’s Behaviour Management Plan (Interview Question 11)

Principals were asked to explain their school’s Behaviour Management Plan. All schools are now required to have a Behaviour Management Plan. It is a publicly available school document. The researcher wanted to find out where disciplinary exclusions fitted in to the schools’ management of behaviour. Common themes identified in the analysis were:

- Disciplinary exclusion at the extreme end of behaviour management continuum, and
- Specific role of the principal at this stage.

Three of the principals specifically described disciplinary exclusions as being at the extreme end of the continuum for behaviour management. One principal commented:

We've not stood him down, and I hope that the way things are going that we don't need to. But certainly our statement is that (we have got separate suspension stand-down statement and I will dig it out for you and the point is that) it is a last, a very last resort.

(School #26)

Another principal said:

I'll give you a copy of that. This is all preventative stuff. So if we have tried everything and things aren't working, we would have been through the RTLB system, we would have been through BEST unless there was a hugely one-off thing that had happened and it needed to be acted on straight away. And our Behaviour Management Plan says that basically, that in extreme cases, the principal acts. So I'm given the wherewithal in relation to our Behaviour Plan to act if I have to. I would step in there and follow the guidelines which are pretty simple for stand-downs.

(School #29)

And the third principal also described the stage at which the principal starts to initiate the disciplinary exclusion.

But by the time it gets to me, we are really past firing warning shots across the bow stage. We're talking about entrenched patterns of behaviour. I would then have a meeting with my Deputy and the parents. There would have been a number of interactions with the student and there would be a formal warning given.

(School #33)

The principals were asked to provide a copy of their Behaviour Management Plans. The purpose of asking for these documents was to provide a triangulation verification of the data being collected. As these policies are public documents, the researcher has not directly quoted from them in order to protect the identity of the five participant principals.

All five schools' Behaviour Management Plans provide for a continuum of increasing severity in discipline. In all schools, positive rewards were emphasised rather than negative punishments. The role of the principal in this process was mentioned as being at the extreme end of the continuum for misbehaviour. Severity clauses in the policies were for serious misbehaviours which warranted immediate action by the Deputy Principal or the Principal. These behaviours included wilful harm to other pupils and to property, defiance and refusal to obey teacher instructions and verbal abuse to the teacher.

Educational responses needed to stop rising disciplinary exclusions

(Interview Question 12)

The number of primary school suspensions has increased nationally in the past ten years. Principals were asked what types of educational responses were needed to stop this trend. The principals' comments revealed the following themes:

- The rising trend blamed on the government's policy which put schools in competition with one another, and
- The need for various extra resourcing and early intervention programmes.

Three principals thought that the rising trend in disciplinary exclusions had been caused by government's market policy which had resulted in schools being in competition with one another for pupils. As one principal explained:

It doesn't surprise me at all that suspensions are up. It's actually very basic. We are in competition with each other. The government set us up to do that. I have got responsibility to [Roll Number] kids in my school and a whole lot of staff for their jobs. If I don't care how students behave. I don't care whether the community likes it or not, my roll will drop, my staff will lose jobs. I do care. I am roll-focussed, not roll-pre-occupied. I'm roll-focussed because my staff looks to me for some security of tenure. It is important to me what my community thinks of the quality of education in this school, so I will not have students openly disrupt, blow it out of the water, because I have

a responsibility not to. It's for the greater good argument. The question is where do you draw the line.

(School #33)

Another principal offered a similar speculation,

My guess is that, it's only my guess, because I have not observed this, but a media representation of what is going on, particularly in high schools, was that there may have been some collusion between the principal and the board in hooking out kids that were giving trouble and flicking them off. And, I know that from time to time, certain schools were accused of that. They get rid of their trouble-making kids, because they get a reputation for being tough so they get higher enrolments etc, etc. Some people think it's a good marketing ploy to be seen as tough.

(School #26)

And the third principal said: *"...yes, there probably are schools that flick kids, I know there are. There are some of my colleagues that don't take kids on."* (School #29)

The government's policy presented a dilemma for principals. This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Conflicting government policies

On the one hand, the government provides legislation, policy guidelines and support programmes to schools for the disciplinary exclusion process.

But, on the other hand, other government legislation and policy puts schools in competition with one another for pupils, which affects the way in which schools deal with these seriously misbehaving pupils.

Principals suggested several educational solutions to the problem of increasing numbers of disciplinary exclusions - alternative schooling structures (School #24), more resourcing for schools, better training for teachers and support systems within schools (School #29) and Ministry of Education support to help deal with the transient nature of these pupils (School #34). Earlier, when principals had been asked to identify common characteristics of these pupils, they had mentioned family, ethnicity and so on – all factors external to the school. However, one principal answering this question identified a school-based factor contributing to disciplinary exclusions, that of teacher competence, saying;

It shows up here, we've got varying abilities of teachers, the ones that are struggling are the ones that have behaviour problems often or they go through their own personal, emotional drama.

(School #29)

The transience of these at-risk pupils presented a problem, as one principal explained:

And we find here that the other one is the transient nature of the children. Most of the children at risk come from a transient background, where they go from one school or one province to the next. So the Ministry needs to recognise the number of transient children out there. I don't think that they are aware of it. I know of a local school here, that at the start of the year had 150 children and at the end of the year they had 180, but there were only 50 children there that had actually started the year. So that's showing you the ins and outs of it and it's very difficult. How can a school get a tone, and set routines and boundaries when there's that sort of thing – the coming and going.

(School #34)

One principal expressed strong feelings that schools could not do it all – that there is a need for government intervention for better parenting:

I get very angry when I pick up the paper and almost weekly and hear about another social ill that the schools will fix. Very frustrated. We are on a hiding to nothing until someone at a political level starts to hold parents accountable for a number of very basic things. It's not rocket science. It's been articulated frequently. We're pussyfooting around with these people. They do not have the right to bring children into the world and set them up for failure. It's been happening for some time and we're all too precious to deal with it. We all know that there are a number of very basic things that parents should be held accountable for. We don't. We accept that there are sections of society who really don't want to know too much, and we continue to accept that. My attitude is not about beneficiary bashing. It's not about ethnic factors. It's about anyone who through lousy parenting or indifference who sets their children up for failure and what level of political accountability that we can bring to bear on that.

(School #33)

Principals' further comments (Interview Question 13)

Principals were asked if they had any further comments that they would like to add. Several similar themes re-emerged:

- Balancing the needs of everyone in the situation,
- The use of disciplinary exclusion as a last resort,
- The bureaucracy of the new legislation,
- The transference of the problem by excluding the pupil,
- The need for alternative schooling and more resourcing for schools and
- The effect of the government's market policy.

A final dilemma emerged, of principals having to deal with pupils who were seriously misbehaving at younger ages than in the past and the lack of early intervention and help for these younger pupils.

They have got to get 'for real' with the fact that there are more and more badly behaved, misbehaving, seriously misbehaving students coming through at a younger age. The behaviours we're now seeing in the middle of the primary school were high school behaviours not so long ago. Then they became Intermediate behaviours. Now there are 8 and 9 year-olds who are out of control.

(School #33)

And, on the same theme, one principal commented on the need for intervention at pre-school level.

I'm quite keen on this injection into Early Childhood, and probably, an insistence that all children go to a pre-school education centre from the age of say three. And these centres need to be recognised centres – I think that some are just centres that have been set up in back yards. I think that's where the problems start, early on.

(School #34)

This dilemma was formalised as:

Dilemma: Provision for the very young?

On the one hand, there is an increasing number of young primary age pupils receiving and being at-risk of receiving disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, there are no programmes of early intervention, support or alternative schooling structures for these young pupils.

Classification of dilemmas

Dilemma analysis had identified 12 dilemmas from the interview data. These were then re-categorised according to Holmes' (1981) three-part classification of dilemmas according to whether they were normative-based with respect to values or institutional-based according to structures and practices within the school or resource-based as shown in Figure 24 and discussed further in the next chapter.

Figure 24 Classification of dilemmas according to Holmes' (1981) categories.

<u>Holmes' categories</u>	<u>Dilemmas generated in this research</u>
<p><u>Category 1:</u> Normative-based with respect to values, beliefs, ideologies and norms.</p>	<p><u>Dilemma 1. Competing needs</u> On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil to consider. But, on the other hand, the principal has the needs of the other pupils, the staff and the school community to consider.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 2. The discipline continuum</u> On the one hand, the principal had been in the role of providing support and help to the pupil, who had been committing serious misbehaviours over a long period of time. But, on the other hand, when was it time for the principal, to step into the role of disciplinarian and sanction the pupil under the formal disciplinary exclusion process?</p>
<p><u>Category 2:</u> Institutional-based structures, processes, practices and programs with respect to how people operate and perform tasks in institutional settings.</p>	<p><u>Dilemma 3. The purpose of schools</u> On the one hand, there are common characteristics to the pupils who have had disciplinary exclusions. But, on the other hand, these characteristics are outside the control of the school, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 4. A role conflict for principals</u> One the one hand, the principal has a role as principal of the school for putting forward the case for a disciplinary exclusion of the pupil, to the Board of Trustees. But, on the other hand, the principal has a role as a member on the Board of Trustees for making the decision about the disciplinary exclusion of the pupil.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 5. Conflicting government policies</u> On the one hand, the government provides legislation, policy guidelines and support programmes to schools for the disciplinary exclusion process. But, on the other hand, other government legislation and policy puts schools in competition with one another for pupils, which affects the way in which schools deal with these seriously misbehaving pupils.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 6. Effectiveness of the stand-down</u> On the one hand, the stand-down may be effective with some pupils. But, on the other hand, it may not work with other pupils.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 7. Passing the 'buck'</u> On the one hand, the legislation for disciplinary exclusion allows the principal who is excluding, to solve the problem of the seriously misbehaving pupil by removing them from their school. But, on the other hand, that same legislation transfers the problem of that seriously misbehaving pupil to the principal of another school.</p>

<p>Category 3: Resource-based with respect to financial resources, material resources such as buildings and equipment, time and human resources</p>	<p><u>Dilemma 8. Competing use of resources</u> On the one hand, a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources was being expended on one pupil. But, on the other hand, this meant less time and resources for the other pupils.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 9. Parent support</u> On the one hand, the school can put in place various types of support (in-school and outside-school agency) at considerable effort to help the misbehaving pupil. But, on the other hand, if the pupil's family does not support the school in what it is trying to do for the pupil, the school's efforts will have little effect in helping the misbehaving pupil.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 10. Adequate provision of resources</u> On the one hand, principals think that they are able to provide an education for these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools. But, on the other hand, they consider that they do not have the resources or Ministry support to do so.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 11. Provision for the very young?</u> On the one hand, there is an increasing number of young primary age pupils receiving and being at-risk of receiving disciplinary exclusions. But, on the other hand, there are no programmes of early intervention, support or alternative schooling structures for these young pupils.</p> <p><u>Dilemma 12. Mainstream schools for all?</u> On the one hand, there are some pupils whose behaviour is so extreme that principals consider that they cannot be accommodated in mainstream schools. But, on the other hand, there is no other educational institution available for these pupils.</p>
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The Leadership Response

The leadership response made by these principals was a disciplinary exclusion for the seriously misbehaving pupil, such as that made by the principal who said:

But to be quite honest, by the time you get to considering exclusion as an option, you've actually said we can do no more for this child and, no longer can we accommodate them within our school. It's not a fair ask.

(School #33)

Acting fairly in making the final decision to use the sanction of disciplinary exclusion was also mentioned by another principal, who said:

As fairly as I could Ngairé. I guess you'd understand that, of course, there is a lot of background before it gets to the stand-down or suspension stage, so schools usually have come through quite a bit, prior to it getting that serious.

(School #24)

The following comments reflected how they felt about this action. One principal expressed his feelings as, "My feelings, well you get this feeling in your gut which is not nice but it was the correct management decision to make." (School #12, Questionnaire, Question 3c)

Other comments principals made about their final decision were as follows:

One of the factors that I bring to bear on getting to the point [of disciplinary exclusion] is there anything else that we as a school can do or that we haven't done that may be the magic ingredient needed to change behaviours. And when the answer is no, that's the point we're at.

(School #33, Interview, Question 2)

...you've got to get it [the disciplinary exclusion process] right for fairness, you've got to get it right in terms of legal challenge, you've got to get it right in terms of not exposing your Board and your staff actually.

(School #26, Interview, Question 5)

...they [the staff] frequently comment on how supported they feel by a principal who is prepared to make the hard calls.

(School #36, Questionnaire, Question 3e)

From a staff point of view it was important to show that in these rare situations, management was prepared to use the stand-down option as all other avenues had been exhausted.

(School #12, Questionnaire, Question 3e)

I felt terrible about this considering that myself and our systems had failed. Seeing how relieved the staff was after this result, the stand-down, I consider that perhaps we had waited too long. "To be kind – Be Strong" is a good thought I now carry.

(School #50, Questionnaire, Question 3c)

4.4 Summary

Research question 1a) asked, What kinds of pupils were being stood-down, suspended or excluded and did they have any common characteristics? Results from the questionnaire showed that there were several common characteristics to the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions. The pupils were usually 10 and 12 year olds. Males, Maori pupils, pupils from single parent backgrounds and pupils with special educational needs were over-represented. About a third of the pupils had already had a transitory education, in that they had already transferred from a previous school because of disciplinary exclusions. During the interview phase, principals also identified the common characteristics for the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions - family and home backgrounds, learning needs, the medical condition of ADD, socio-economic and ethnicity factors.

Research question 1b) asked, Why were the pupils being stood-down, suspended or excluded? Results from the questionnaire showed that the most common reasons why pupils were receiving disciplinary exclusions were continual disobedience, physical violence in the form of assault or damage to property and verbal assault. There were a small number of alcohol and drug offences and two pupils had sexually assaulted other pupils. The majority of disciplinary exclusions involved more than one category of offence. About half the incidents resulting in a disciplinary exclusion took place out of class.

Research question 1c) asked, What were the events leading up to the stand-down, suspension or exclusion? Results from the questionnaire showed that almost all the pupils had already received formal disciplinary actions for their misbehaviour prior to the disciplinary exclusion and the school had had previous contact with almost all the pupils' families prior to the disciplinary exclusion. The school had been

providing 'in school help' and 'outside school help' to more than half the pupils prior to the disciplinary exclusion. Just over half the principals described the disciplinary exclusion as the result of a build-up of ongoing disobedience over a period of time finally culminating in a major event, which warranted a disciplinary exclusion. Principals' comments during the interview phase also showed that the disciplinary exclusion had usually come after a long history of misbehaviour culminating in one extreme incident. This incident crossed the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and was the point at which the principal had to initiate the disciplinary exclusion process.

Research question 2 focused on how principals managed the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process. Research question 2a) asked, What were the procedures used by the principal during this process? Results from the interview showed that the principals had to deal with the competing needs of everyone in the situation. During the early stages leading up to the disciplinary exclusion, the needs of the one misbehaving pupil were being fully supported by the principal. An extreme incident of misbehaviour then provided the principal with a dilemma. The pupil had crossed an invisible boundary between what was acceptable and unacceptable. The needs of everyone else in the situation came to the fore. At that point, principals thought that they had done everything they could for the pupil and that it was time for them to make a decision. Principals mentioned using the disciplinary exclusion as the last resort and doing what was fair in the situation. They felt that they had no other choices in the situation other than to use the disciplinary exclusion.

Results from the questionnaire showed that the stand-down was the most common form of disciplinary exclusion used. However, it is interesting to note from the interviews with the five principals, the variation in the use of the stand-down procedure with four principals carrying out no disciplinary exclusions during the current year to one school carrying out 26. The disciplinary exclusions that the four principals had initially written about during the questionnaire phase had related to the previous year. Again principals mentioned using the disciplinary exclusion as the last resort and doing what was fair in the situation.

Research question 2b) asked, How were principals meeting these pupils' educational (and other) needs? Results from the questionnaire showed that almost all the principals thought that their school had used considerable resources (time, hard work, emotional energy) in trying to help the pupil. Principals pursued the need for more funding and support (from the family, outside agencies and the Ministry) for schools to deal with these pupils. They also saw the need for alternative schooling or outside-school services for the extreme cases. Results from the interview showed that during the time leading up to the disciplinary exclusion, the principals had put into place various types of support for the pupils and had used many outside agencies with varying degrees of success. The principals and their staff had used considerable financial resources, time, energy, effort, stress and personal sacrifice in trying to meet the needs of this one pupil. However, principals felt that a lack of parental support also hindered their efforts with the pupil. Another cost to the school was the way in which these pupils caused the school to be perceived by the community.

Research question 2c) asked, What happened to these pupils after the stand-down, suspension or exclusion incident? Results from the questionnaire showed that with respect to the consequences of the disciplinary exclusion, about half of the principals found that it had proved to be a positive experience for the pupil in that it provided a catalyst for change. Results from the interviews showed that some principals wanted alternative schooling structures for the seriously misbehaving pupils whom they felt could not be accommodated within mainstream schools. However, some principals felt that they could help these pupils within their schools if they had extra resourcing.

Research question 3 focussed on, How do principals view the stand-down, suspension or exclusion process? Research question 3a asked, How did principals perceive the new legislation for the stand-down, suspension and exclusion process? The principals had personally experienced a wide range of feelings over the disciplinary exclusion incidents with frustration and disappointment being the most common feelings but also stress, anger, concern, resignation, despair, hurt, disgust, sadness and a sense of failure. The principals all agreed that "the principal bears the brunt of the task in disciplinary exclusions" and almost all agreed that "the principal acts as the disturbance handler" and that "the principal does a juggling act to balance

the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils". Principals had encountered a range of reactions from the parents or caregivers to the disciplinary exclusion of their child. Most parents or caregivers expressed understanding, appreciation and support of the school's action with concern for their child. Others were not supportive of the school's action and were angry and upset with the child. Resignation and acceptance were the most frequent feelings of the parents/caregivers as described by the principals. The most frequent staff reactions encountered by the principals were relief and support of the principal's stance. Other reactions such as concern for the pupil, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and exhaustion were also mentioned. However, results from the questionnaire showed that almost all the principals thought the disciplinary exclusion was a successful experience for the school with the majority of principals finding it to be the preferred course of action, although a third of the participants would have preferred another course of action.

Results from the interviews showed that, once the decision was made, principals identified the need to strictly follow the Ministry of Education guidelines for disciplinary exclusions and the necessity of getting the paperwork correct. The bureaucracy of the new legislation for the stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions was alluded to by several of the principals.

The principals liked the new stand-down legislation for dealing with the pupils but questioned its effectiveness with the hard-core misbehaving pupils. With respect to exclusions, principals did not like the legislative provision of trying to find other schools to take their excluded pupils and, similarly, did not always take on other schools' excluded pupils. They felt that the Ministry of Education was not taking responsibility for these pupils and that it was just transferring the problem to other schools.

Principals interpreted the rising trend in disciplinary exclusions to be caused by the government's market policy, which had put schools in competition with one another for pupils and the need for schools to promote a good image. They suggested a variety of educational (and other) solutions to the problem which included alternative schooling structures, more resourcing for schools, better training for

teachers, special support systems being established within schools, Ministry of Education support in dealing with the transient nature of these pupils and very early intervention (as early as pre-school) to identify and help these at-risk pupils and their families.

The disciplinary exclusion process was found to present 12 dilemmas to principals in terms of conflict over values, resources and the policies and practices required of schools as institutions.

4.5 Conclusion

The data from the questionnaire, documents from the Education Review Office and schools' Behaviour Management Plans and the interview transcripts have been analysed and the findings have been reported in this chapter. The next chapter, Chapter Five, presents a discussion of these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

There are too many texts which do not give value to the words and experiences of those closest to the action, preferring instead to explore distant theoretical labyrinths. Leadership of schools in changing times is fraught with opportunities and challenges. Leaders are expected to manage competing interests, to create conditions which form the foundation for lifelong learning, and to raise achievement levels of the motivated, the unmotivated and those between.

(Day et al, 2000, p. 5)

This chapter begins by discussing the findings arising from the previous chapter under the headings of the research questions guiding this study. Among the findings are the 12 leadership dilemmas of disciplinary exclusion faced by principals, which emerged from the dilemma analysis. The notion of a dilemma is central to this study. A dilemma is like the choice between Scylla and Charybdis, the devil and the deep blue sea, in Homer's *Odyssey* (750 B.C.). The dilemmas faced by principals are multifaceted situations for which a course of action must be chosen that principals find incompatible and inescapable.

Rather than entering into a philosophical discussion of professional ethics and moral principles, the dilemmas instead provide a structure for the discussion on the principals' experiences of disciplinary exclusions. The principals had all experienced facets of each dilemma and the dilemma analysis allowed these fragments to be drawn together around the shared incidents of disciplinary exclusion. Initially, the discussion focuses on excerpts of the principals' own words which have been preserved to describe how the principals dealt with and felt about the dilemmas; that is, their own leadership responses to the process.

Berlak (cited in Ball, 1987) stresses the importance of preserving the participant's own words when using dilemma analysis:

The dilemmas are not to be conceived as entities that may be physically located in persons' heads or in society. Rather they are linguistic constructions that like lenses, may be used to focus upon the continuous process of persons acting in the social world.

(Berlak, cited in Ball, 1987, p. 157)

The discussion of the findings and each dilemma is widened and linked to previous research and theory to discover what these cases reveal about the tensions of disciplinary exclusion confronting principals as they deal with disciplinary exclusions. Finally, a model of the disciplinary exclusion process is presented.

5.1 The disciplinary exclusion incident

The pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions

The characteristics shared by pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions in this study were identified as:

- Age - usually older 10 and 12 year olds in their final years at the school,
- Gender – male,
- Ethnicity – Maori,
- Parenting/home background – single parent families,
- Special educational needs,
- Medical/mental conditions - such as ADD,
- Transience of pupil – often already transferred from a previous school because of a disciplinary exclusion and then transferred again as a result of the disciplinary exclusion in the present school, or living a transient family lifestyle.

These findings present dilemmas for the principals. The first dilemma relates to the young age of these primary school pupils.

Dilemma: Provision for the very young?

On the one hand, there is an increasing number of young primary age pupils receiving and being at-risk of receiving disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, there are no programmes of early intervention, support or alternative schooling structures for these young pupils.

What we really need and I'm talking about these six-year olds really, is early identification. And New Zealand is really missing out on the Plunket system because the early identification of poor parenting, or malnutrition or child abuse used to be recognised by those people. By the time they got to schools, everyone was well aware of them. Now schools are only finding out about these children when they arrive at your back doorstep and many of them haven't been to a pre-school centre.

(School #34, Interview, Question 8)

Recent New Zealand statistics (Ministry of Education, 2001a) also show that more children are offending at a younger age. Overseas, Hayden (1997a) presents similar findings from research on primary school pupils saying that: *"There has been an expression of concern by teachers that a minority of children are presenting with more difficult behaviour and at a younger age."* (Hayden, 1997a, p. 20)

The majority of disciplinary exclusions in this study occurred at the ages of 10 and 12 years of age, which correspond to the final years at either primary or intermediate school. The smaller number of disciplinary exclusions at the age of 11 may be explained by pupils' transition from primary school to intermediate school and the associated change from being the 'big boys' at primary school to being the 'new boys' at intermediate school with a chance for a fresh start. Of utmost concern are the very young children who are physically violent. Pupils in this study, as young as six, are being excluded and suspended for physical violence. One six year-old pupil was stood-down for physically assaulting a teacher and another six year-old was excluded for physically assaulting another pupil. Ministry of Education funding is available for the support and resourcing of secondary schools to deal with disciplinary exclusion but not for primary schools. The Ministry of Education

recently established a 'Suspension Reduction Initiative' in several regions, specifically aimed at reducing the number of Maori disciplinary exclusions at secondary school level. However, no primary schools have been included in this initiative. Furthermore, the legislative requirement of providing counselling for pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions is also difficult for primary schools. Most secondary schools have guidance counsellors but most primary schools do not.

The next dilemma relates to the other common characteristics of the misbehaving pupils and the purpose of schooling for all pupils.

Dilemma: The purpose of schools

On the one hand, there are common characteristics to the pupils who have had disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, these characteristics are outside the control of the school, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils.

When a pupil is highly dysfunctional Ngairi, there is very little that a school can do, when you've got a non-compliant, defiant, abusive, physically dangerous at times pupil, very little you can do, and again schools are crying out for somewhere for that pupil to be placed in the interim.

(School #24, Interview, Question 8)

The child that was stood down – he had real needs parenting-wise and that had come right through from his very early childhood. There was considerable abuse, he had witnessed some horrific violent scenes and his father is in prison at the moment so no contact, so that is the drama. And so he had those needs, and really, things should have happened for him a long time before he even reached primary school.

(School #34, Interview, Question 1)

In this study, boys received almost all the disciplinary exclusions. New Zealand statistics for all pupils (not just primary school pupils) also show that more boys than girls receive disciplinary exclusions. There are similar findings in overseas research

(Hayden, 1997a; Imich, 1994; Parsons, Castle, Howlett & Worrall, 1996; Wright et al, 2000; Kilpatrick, 1998a, 1998b). A longitudinal study of gender differences in a birth cohort of over 1000 Christchurch children (Fergusson & Horwood, 1997) found that gender differences in educational achievement could not be explained by gender differences in intelligence, since boys and girls had very similar IQ test scores. However, they found that the gender differences in educational achievement could be explained by differences in classroom behaviours, with boys being more prone to disruptive and inattentive classroom behaviours which appeared to impede their learning and lead to male educational disadvantage. The under-achievement and behaviour problems of boys at school have become the focus of much attention and research in New Zealand recently. The Education Review Office Report (1999) "The Achievement of Boys" suggests that:

Schools have a role to play in addressing boys' behavioural problems. It is likely that the achievement of all students will suffer if bullying is allowed or the emotional environment is intimidating and negative.

(Education Review Office, 1999)

The report identified the common factors in schools in which there was good relative achievement of boys. These important factors were:

- A high standard of behaviour management and discipline,
- A supportive environment with positive role models and where students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions,
- A wide range of programmes, including subjects that are of particular interest to boys,
And specifically for primary schools,
- Differences in preference in reading matter and
- Styles of expression and modes of learning.

However, a more recent Education Review Office Report (2000b) "Promoting Boys' Achievement" found that "... *there remains a significant minority of schools that showed no evidence of specific awareness of gender differences in learning...*" (Education Review Office, 2000b). Therefore, it is interesting to note

that principals interviewed in this present study did not identify male gender as being a common characteristic of pupils most likely to receive disciplinary exclusions.

This study's findings, that more than half the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions are Maori, supports the national statistics which show an over-representation of Maori students in the disciplinary exclusions data (although Maori students make up only approximately 20% of students at state and state integrated schools - the proportion being slightly higher in primary schools (Education Review Office, 2001)). One English initiative, reported in Osler and Hill (1999), which has had considerable success at reducing disciplinary exclusions of black boys, is the KWESI project. It is a community-based mentoring project in partnership with schools, whereby black men act as mentors with individual boys. Research from the KWESI initiative found that:

Our research demonstrates that schools which adopt a 'colour blind' approach to the reduction of school exclusions are successful in cutting exclusion for all groups, but do not address existing inequalities, leaving particular ethnic groups vulnerable to exclusion.

(Osler & Hill, 1999, p. 60)

Other overseas research, into racial differences in disciplinary exclusions (Wright et al, 2000), found that exclusion is not simply the result of conflict between the pupil and the teacher, as "*such interactions must be set within the wider ability of policy to dictate how 'race', gender and class are constructed and experienced within schools*" (Wright et al, 2000, p. 4.) Similarly Hayden (1997a) concluded that the overrepresentation of Black children in educational statistics is caused by the way Black families are pathologised by economic and social exclusion. In New Zealand, a report by the Education Review Office (2001) "Provision for Maori students in mainstream schools", also mentioned the over-representation of Maori students in the suspensions statistics and the lack of support in schools saying that: "*Relatively few schools have specific programmes or initiatives in place aimed at identifying and overcoming barriers to learning for Maori students.*" (Education Review Office, 2001) Therefore, it is interesting to note that only one principal in this present study

identified ethnicity as a common characteristic of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions.

Principals in this study, however, did recognise the factor of parenting and home background to be a significant characteristic of at-risk pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions. The socio-economic status of the household was identified as a factor during the interview process. In some situations, principals thought that school was the one safe place for the child where there were consistent, predictable and caring adults.

*The second one was the boy himself who needed to be put under a different sort of care than he was receiving in terms of being regularly medicated, being regularly fed, and there were a few other issues like that. (Interview, Question 1) There had been a series of visits to the home to discuss the child's needs, as well as two meetings at school with the Mum, who was herself a little helpless or felt that she was helpless to do much more. And she was also resistant to the approaches that had been made by CYFs and other welfare agencies, including the hospital team called the CAF (Child and Family) team that are based at the [****] Hospital. They are on a health-funded basis.*

(School #26, Interview, Question 2)

School is the best part of this child's life. His behaviour is only a small reflection of what is going on around him.

(School #34, Questionnaire, Question 4g)

Overseas research (Hayden, 1997a) shows that excluded children are more likely to come from single parent homes than homes where both parents live together. Indeed, Hayden describes some of the households of excluded pupils as 'chaotic' and under great stress. Traditionally, pupils came from two-parent nuclear families, which were well designed to provide the 'social capital' that Coleman (1987) described as an essential requirement for children, in order for them to cope with the world around them. However, with the erosion of the two-parent family, the school has become the alternative source for the development of 'social capital'.

Parsons (Commission for Racial Equality, 1996) found that pupils from areas of socio-economic disadvantage with high unemployment and related poverty were more likely to be excluded. Hayden (2001a) also confirmed this finding, saying:

Most permanently excluded children come from lower socio-economic groups, this is likely to relate to attitudes to education and schooling, sub-cultural differences in terms of conventions of behaviour as well as some very real material and cultural differences.

(Hayden, 2001a, p. 11)

Another common factor characterising pupils who had received disciplinary exclusions is special educational needs. Pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions were identified in this study as having learning and/or behavioural problems that required more support and resources than were available from the classroom teacher. Often, these pupils were in receipt of additional teacher aide hours. The distinction needs to be made between the 'naughty' pupils, those who are sometimes disruptive, and the 'needy' pupils, those pupils with special educational needs, medical/mental needs, needs for better parenting and home backgrounds and the equity needs related to gender and sex. The following excerpts describe the difference between 'naughty' and 'needy' pupils. One principal describes a violent 11 year-old pupil who seemed to be able to make a rational choice about his behaviour:

This child's behaviour was incredibly difficult – he was "smart", manipulative and very knowing. He was violent, self-centred and aggressive – always when it suited him. We often referred to the 'light switch' – on/off. He could hit, hurt and the next second be nice as and make no connection to the previous incident. 'Black' was another word that came to mind.

(School #29, Questionnaire, Question 3c)

This was in contrast to a pupil described by another principal - a 12 year-old boy who was not in control of his behaviour:

Child chased children with cricket bat on playground. Staff removed bat. When 9.00 a.m. bell rang, child stood at large glass doors at back of class,

verbally abused teacher (principal). Picked up softball bat – charged at teacher. Ran outside and bashed in 3 panels of wall. Fell in a heap crying.

(School #13, Questionnaire, Question 3a)

The association between special educational needs and exclusion has been well documented overseas (Galloway et al, 1982; Kilpatrick, 1998a; Osler & Hill, 1999; Hayden, 1997a). As Hayden (2001a) explains:

Many excluded children have special educational needs, usually categorised as primarily behavioural - or EBD [Emotional Behavioural Difficulties]. These children do not always have their educational needs adequately met in a mainstream classroom – either because of a lack of understanding or training in the teaching and support staff, sometimes because of a lack of sympathy, or because there are insufficient practical resources to address the individual's need (staffing and space in particular).

(Hayden, 2001a, p.11)

It could be expected that pupils with medical/mental conditions, such as ADD, could be expected to behave inappropriately and, therefore, as a group, receive more disciplinary exclusions. Hayden, Sheppard and Ward (1996) advocate that pupils with these special conditions should have their needs addressed differently, because:

Perhaps a key issue for schools is that of recognizing whether a disruptive child is 'naughty' or 'distressed'. If the former, it is a discipline problem for the particular school, within which exclusion could be seen as an acceptable final sanction, albeit reluctantly. If the latter, however, support structures for the child and the school are indicated; in effect, the antithesis of exclusion.

(Hayden et al, 1996, p. 224)

However, this is not so easy in practice, as Hayden (1997a) reports:

... the reality of the options open to schools when faced with a child whose behaviour suggests that they may have special educational needs and in

effect cannot be taught in a full class without additional support. A school can attempt to access additional resources, or they can resort to a much more immediate option of exclusion. While Stirling has found that most schools in practice prefer to explore the first option, she notes the disincentives in terms of time and money in doing so. Meanwhile it is likely that parents of other children in this child's class will be complaining, and may be even threatening to take their children elsewhere, with the associated financial consequences for the school.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 19)

That the group of pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions in this present study had common characteristics was in keeping with the findings of overseas research, such as Hayden (1996b, 1997a), who found that primary school pupils experiencing exclusion were either 'children in need' or 'children with special educational needs' and they were at such a level of multiple disadvantage that schools alone could not be expected to provide remedies. Overton (1995) spoke of the lack of provision in New Zealand for at-risk secondary pupils: "*There are not enough agencies to cater for difficult children. Social problems are increasingly being thrown back on schools.*" (Overton, 1995, p. 10) And similarly overseas, Parsons, Godfrey, Howlett, Hayden and Worrall (2001a, p. 4) saw the need for 'joined up' problems to have 'joined up' solutions.

The incidents causing disciplinary exclusions

The incidents resulting in the use of stand-downs, suspensions or exclusions in this study were:

- Continual disobedience,
- Physical violence in the form of assault or damage to property,
- Verbal assault,
- A small number of alcohol and drug offences and
- A very small number of sexual incidents.

The majority of the incidents resulting in disciplinary exclusions involved more than one category of offence. About half of all the incidents took place out of class, on the way to and from school, during morning break, lunchtime or on day trips.

The findings about the types of incidents causing disciplinary exclusions of primary pupils were similar to those of Prochnow (1998) and were also reflected in the national statistics. That the incidents were mainly of a physical nature might have been anticipated given that at this stage of a child's development aggression is more likely to be physical rather than verbal. Of concern was the small number of sexual incidents that were copycat actions by the pupils of an incident very recently occurring in a television broadcast of a rugby league game.

The events leading up to disciplinary exclusion

The study found that:

- Almost all the pupils had already received formal disciplinary actions for their misbehaviour,
- The school had had previous contact with almost all the pupils' families prior to the disciplinary exclusion and
- Principals felt that lack of parental support also hindered their efforts with the pupil.

The disciplinary exclusion usually occurred after a long history of offending rather than being a one-off incident. Just over half the principals described the disciplinary exclusion as the result of a build-up of ongoing disobedience, over a period of time, finally culminating in one extreme major incident, which was the 'final straw'. During this time, the pupils and their parents or caregivers had received formal communication about the misbehaviour. The next dilemma relates to the support (or lack of it) that schools received from parents when dealing with the misbehaving pupil.

Dilemma: Parent support

On the one hand, the school can put in place various types of support (in-school and outside-school agency) at considerable effort to help the misbehaving pupil. But, on the other hand, if the pupil's family does not support the school in what it is trying to do for the pupil, the school's efforts will have little effect in helping the misbehaving pupil.

We're an Intermediate school, so they're eleven when we get them. We've got them for eight terms. Talk to any psychologist about when attitudes and values become almost in the too- hard basket to change. We can modify behaviour and I think that we can modify quite effectively in our school; but there are children that come here, who have failed long before we have got them. We can set up an environment, where the staff are focused on the needs of our kids. We are can set appropriate learning environments which we have done with our property upgrade. We can have very clear and reasonable expectations for behaviour. We can knock ourselves out on extra-curricular. What we can't do is undo eleven years of pre-conditioning. (Interview, Question 12) The suspension and consequent exclusion were actions taken after 18 months of other containing actions taken by the school. The trigger point for suspension was when we realised that there was: nothing more we could do, we were not going to get home support (consistent), the student had no intention of making any change. (Questionnaire, Question 3a)

(School #33)

This finding confirmed what other research (Blyth & Milner, 1993; Galloway & Barrett, 1982; Hayden, 1997a; Imich, 1994) has revealed:

It soon became obvious that there was rarely a single event or even main reason for most exclusions, although there was a precipitating event. In other words, most exclusions were the result of a protracted period of difficulty in school with and for a particular child, with a particular event even triggering an exclusion.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 91)

Overseas research (Kilpatrick, 2000) found that parental support was an important factor in managing behaviour in schools and that low suspending schools appeared to obtain parental support more successfully than high suspending schools. Brodie (1996) suggested that:

Another area of difference between the situation of pupils excluded at primary school level compared to those of secondary school age may be that of parental involvement. While it is probably true for excluded pupils of all ages that there are more positive outcomes where parents are especially proactive, it was suggested that parents can exert greater influence where their children are at primary school.

(Brodie, 1996, p. 7)

During the early stages leading up to the disciplinary exclusion, the needs of the pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusion were being fully supported by the principal. An extreme incident of misbehaviour then provided the principal with the decision about a disciplinary exclusion. The pupil had crossed a boundary between what was acceptable and unacceptable and the needs of everyone else in the situation had to come to the fore. At that point, principals thought that they had done everything they could for the pupil and that it was time for them to make a decision. Principals mentioned using the disciplinary exclusion as the last resort and doing what was 'fair' in the situation. They felt that they had no other choices in the situation, other than to use the disciplinary exclusion. The incompatibility of the two different roles of the principal, as the provider of support for learning and teaching within the school and as the disciplinarian, in the time leading up to the disciplinary exclusion provided the next dilemma for principals.

Dilemma: The discipline continuum

On the one hand, the principal had been in the role of providing support and help to the pupil, who had been committing serious misbehaviours over a long period of time.

But, on the other hand, when was it time for the principal to step into the role of disciplinarian and sanction the pupil under the formal disciplinary exclusion process?

Yes, again I can speak for my colleagues, I think we probably put up with far more negative behaviour than we used to in the past simply to avoid suspension and that can be very stressful for a classroom teacher, other children in the school, and the school as a whole.

(School #24, Interview, Question 13)

*... schools work very, very hard to keep their kids and they work very, very hard at helping those children. In the case that's recently happened here in [****], I'm aware of just how hard that school worked to help that child and the lengths that they went to protect the teacher, the other children while retaining that child at the school - to the extent that the child was basically in separate care for all the school day. And yet the school only received 10 hours a week for the child, so the school had to come up with the other 15 hours out of their SEG or their other operational funds.*

(School #26, Interview, Question 7)

One of the factors that I bring to bear on getting to the point [of disciplinary exclusion] is there anything else that we as a school can do or that we haven't done that may be the magic ingredient needed to change behaviours. And when the answer is no, that's the point we're at.

(School #33, Interview, Question 2)

Principals found the counselling role, involving providing support, encouragement and support, incompatible with the disciplining role of issuing sanctions and punishment. The counselling role of the principal has been increasingly important in recent times with the changes in family structure and societal problems.

5.2 Principals' management of the disciplinary exclusion process

The formal disciplinary exclusion process

The most commonly used procedure was the stand-down although suspensions and exclusions were also used. The number of disciplinary exclusions between schools varied between none being carried out during the current year to one school carrying

out 26 stand-downs. However, this principal's comments showed that he preferred to use the newly introduced stand-down for the purpose it had been devised for – as an early warning to the pupil and the parents or caregivers, before having to initiate the more serious sanctions of suspension and exclusion.

Twenty-six. Stand-downs included of course. It would have been nine three years ago, but they would have been more Section 16 suspensions then. My argument is - I'm not embarrassed about the number of stand-downs. That's what they were designed to do. Now if I said three but we've had five exclusions, I'd actually feel guilty, because I hadn't used the power available to me - the legislation appropriately, stand-downs are warning shots, they are designed to be used and we don't do that lightly either, but that's what they're there for. We have used them with some students. That's not 26 different kids. Some of them, I've stood down four times. And of course, then if you've exhausted those options, then eventually you get to look at other options. I like the stand-down provision.

(School #33, Interview, Question 9)

A study of exclusion in five English secondary schools (Wright et al, 2000) supported the findings of school effectiveness research of the differences that individual schools make to pupils' academic and social outcomes. Parsons (1999) also raised this issue:

Currently the effective school is seen in government and research terms as one with good academic results – learning is proven to have taken place. The 'good' school may be different, placing an emphasis on its caring role (without detriment to its academic functions). The 'very good' school, very much a moral project, may be the inclusive school which keeps its clients and retains the responsibility to cater for their needs – however demanding these may be.

(Parsons, 1999, p. 34)

Once the decision was made for a disciplinary exclusion, principals acknowledged the need to strictly follow the 1999 Ministry of Education “Guidance for Stand-downs, Suspensions, Exclusions and Expulsions” in strict detail. Principals in the study thought that there was too much paperwork involved with the new process - several principals in their comments alluded to the ‘bureaucracy’ of the new legislation for the stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions. The principal was responsible for having to recommend the disciplinary exclusion although s/he may have been the only one knowing all the mitigating circumstances of the pupil. This led to the following dilemma.

Dilemma: A role conflict for principals

One the one hand, the principal has a role as principal of the school for putting forward the case for a disciplinary exclusion of the pupil, to the Board of Trustees.

But, on the other hand, the principal has a role as a member on the Board of Trustees for making the decision about the disciplinary exclusion of the pupil.

The principal is sometimes the only person ensuring natural justice occurs and the student’s rights are met. The principal often is more aware of the bigger picture – that is, outside agency involvement, home circumstances, confidential background information – and is able to factor this into the suspend or not suspend equation.

(School #33, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

[The principal] Has to advocate for the child involved.

(School #49, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

Some BOT [Board of Trustees] blame the principal for the situation – they complain the report .to BOT is not balanced it should state the positives regarding the child. They don’t want to be seen as them only kicking the kid out.

(School #38, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

Where there is a supportive Board behind the principal, it makes the task much easier.

(School #20, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

New adversarial model implies principals are over zealous – need reining in. (Questionnaire 4f) ...you've got to get it [the disciplinary exclusion process] right for fairness, you've got to get it right in terms of legal challenge, you've got to get it right in terms of not exposing your Board and your staff actually. (Interview, Question 5)

(School #26)

Often feel that the child being disciplined has more rights than their innocent victims.

(School #13, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

I think it's fair comment to say that there is a lot of paperwork, the procedure has got to be done properly or a school can get involved with an Ombudsman's inquiry and I think that results in principals probably putting up with dysfunctional behaviour, that years ago they wouldn't have.

(School #24, Interview, Question 13)

Meeting the pupils' educational (and other) needs

This study found that, in the time leading up to the disciplinary exclusion, principals had been trying to meet the educational (and other) needs of the pupil through:

- Considerable use of school resources (time, hard work, emotional energy) trying to help the pupil,
- The school had been providing 'in school help' such as teacher aides and 'outside school help', to more than half the pupils prior to the disciplinary exclusion with varying degrees of success,
- Pursuit of more funding and support (from the family, outside agencies and the Ministry) for schools to deal with these pupils and
- Pursuit of alternative schooling placement for the extreme cases.

These findings lead to more dilemmas. A dilemma arises over the competing use of resources between the misbehaving pupil and the rest of the school.

Dilemma: Competing use of resources

On the one hand, a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources was being expended on one pupil.

But, on the other hand, this meant less time and resources for the other pupils.

How can you expect a teacher in the classroom who is expected to extend the brighter ones, put in learning support for the learning support needs, deal appropriately to the middle and all of the other things with uniform and assessment and you know, the whole nine yards, and then you put in a very disruptive, very challenging student or two. And there is a cost to this. You either focus on the twenty-nine and this child doesn't get the level of support they need. Yes you've got RTLBs [Resource Teachers for Learning and Behaviour]. Yes you've got teacher aides. Yes, you've got learning support and we have all of those, but the behaviour tends to dominate, so the learning needs tend to come second. If you've got a kid who is behaviourally disruptive, you are less likely to be able to fix the learning needs, if you are totally focused or continually focused on the behaviour needs.

(School #33, Interview, Question 8)

On average 10 hours per week of my [principal] time are taken up by suspension for this one child.

(School #46, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

The time used up in the process – letters written/ conversations held/ organisation of meetings etc uses up far too many valuable hours.

(School #25, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

We're actually burning off quality teachers. We've got that much in a week that we expect teachers to do. And we've got very, very committed schoolteachers, who are saying 'I don't know how many more years of this

level of stress that I can handle.' I think that the government has to send some signals to hold parents accountable for their children's failure, instead of schools being rapped over the knuckles for the increasing rate.

(School #33, Interview, Question 12)

This study shows that most of these at-risk pupils were being provided with in-school and outside-school help from various educational and other social agencies. Principals commented on how they themselves spend many hours on the telephone, writing letters and in meetings for each of these at-risk pupils. Although the principals in this study had done their utmost to help the pupil, there was wide acknowledgement that this had not been achieved without costs in time, effort and resources to the school.

Parsons (1996) investigated the financial cost of the excluding primary school pupils in England and found that the costs of providing the excluded pupil with social services, home tuition and any related police/court costs were more than double those of maintaining the pupil in the school. Although a comparison of the actual figures cannot be made between New Zealand and England, the study showed that the excluding a pupil resulted in 'cost shunting', in that other parts of the education system and other government social service agencies then bore the costs. Parsons (1996) argues that "*the money spent on pupils excluded from primary school would be best spent on maintaining the pupils in school*" and "*Finance aside, the principle should be that we do not permit such damaging rejection experiences to happen to the developing young*". (Parsons, 1996, pp. 114-115)

The next dilemma relates to how principals also had to deal with the competing educational (teaching and learning) needs of everyone in the situation. The principal also has the responsibility to ensure that every pupil in his or her school receives an education by providing a safe physical and emotional environment for pupils to be able to learn and for the staff to be able to teach. Aggressive, violent behaviour puts pupils and staff at risk of physical and emotional harm. A hidden cost to the school is the way in which these pupils caused the school to be perceived by the community. The process of suspensions, stand-downs and exclusions involves the interaction between different groups with different aims, priorities and definitions of

reality because of their different roles in the situation. This leads to the next dilemma.

Dilemma: Competing needs

On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil to consider.

But, on the other hand, the principal has the needs of the other pupils, the staff and the school community to consider.

... as a Principal I will never allow one child to consistently deny others their right to learn in a safe environment and teachers also have the right to teach. Parents must be held more accountable for their contributions to the behavioural problems of their children and must support the school initiatives. Had the parents of this child supported our initial strategies we may not have arrived at the exclusion stage. The refusal of the parents to entertain our suggestions resulted in the eventual exclusion. The negative attitudes and influences in the home were too great for us to overcome.

(School #36, Questionnaire, Question 4g)

I was concerned that no matter what I did, someone would not be happy with the outcomes and that the perception of the school may be damaged in the larger community. (Fortunately that did not happen.)

(School #20, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

I had a job to do – support the students, parents, staff (teachers and 1:1 teacher associate) classmates and all other students. I did what was needed when it was needed. The pain, the anger, the frustration was part of the deal – no escape!!

(School #29, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

The title of the New Zealand study (Prochnow, 1998) echoes these principals' responses – "Suspension's human cost: damned if you do, damned if you don't". Prochnow (1998) explained:

There is an evident reluctance to suspend a child particularly when there is nowhere for the child to go, however in many cases the principals reported the suspension was necessary to protect the other children and teachers, and support the teachers and the school.

(Prochnow, 1998, p. 13)

The next dilemma relates to the perceived inadequate provision of resources and support by the Ministry of Education.

Dilemma: Adequate provision of resources

On the one hand, principals think that they are able to provide an education for these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools.

But, on the other hand, they consider that they do not have the resources or Ministry support to do so.

Let's staff resource schools so that they can have all the systems so that they can act immediately as opposed to having to apply for RTLB support and SES and waiting for all the assessments.

(School #29, Interview, Question 12)

*We're a Decile * school, we have a real cross-section of kids and we've got a cross-section of behaviourally challenged kids. And a lot of schools haven't got good enough people or systems of management in their classrooms. It shows up here, we've got varying abilities of teachers, the ones that are struggling are the ones that have behaviour problems often or they go through their own personal, emotional drama.*

(School #29, Interview, Question 12)

Schools are not equipped to deal with extreme behaviour and there are just not enough places for parents and schools to get real assistance from (not just talk assistance but real practical assistance).

(School #14, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

Principals suggested a variety of educational solutions (and other) to the pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusions, which included more resourcing for schools, better training for teachers, special support systems being established within schools, Ministry support in dealing with the transient nature of these pupils, very early intervention to help these pupils and their families (as early as the pre-school stage), a specially designed space or temporary withdrawal facility within the school similar to what some secondary schools have and alternative schooling structures.

Hayden (1997a) mentioned an English study which placed “*resource issues at the top of the list of underlying reasons for increases in exclusions – the lack of alternative provision for children perceived in need of it; and in the lack of educational psychologist time and support services to address behaviour problems*” (Hayden, 1997a, p. 19). Parsons (1999) argues that these at-risk pupils are in need of more education, not less, as affirmed by Hayden and Martin (1998), who wrote:

Exclusion from school should be regarded as a visible opportunity to help and not just an issue of finding another school place or another educational opportunity.

(Hayden & Martin, 1998, p. 326)

Related to the inadequate provision of resources within schools is the perceived lack of outside placements for pupils with extreme behaviour problems. This led to the next dilemma.

Dilemma: Mainstream schools for all?

On the one hand, there are some pupils whose behaviour is so extreme that principals consider that they cannot be accommodated in mainstream schools. But, on the other hand, there is no other educational institution available for these pupils.

I feel strongly that schools must still have a way of removing severe, very harmful threat to them that children occasionally present, and it's not good enough for the state to make schools the bottom of the sump in terms of just

receiving all the problems if there are increasing numbers of kids getting stood-down, suspended and excluded. There's got to be something aside from what schools are doing, because supposedly, school practice is improving - pass. But if it is, then something else is causing this, isn't it? (Interview, Question 13) Locally, at the moment, although I think that might be about to change, there isn't a place for those kids to go if you can't find another school for them. There's nowhere for them to go. So that will be affecting the judgements of principals and Boards in deciding to exclude and that shouldn't be a consideration when a Board finally decides that it is simply unable to keep that child any longer because of the risk that they present to the other children or staff, but particularly other children. And so that's really an issue about under-resourcing or inappropriate resourcing, I think. There's got to be institutions where they can go. (Interview, Question 7)

(School #26)

For us, what we have got under the new part of the Act with stand-downs and exclusions, I think that it works for us. We need more help with some of these more difficult kids with some not accepting that they should not be at school. There's got to be other alternatives. There's got to be other alternatives.

(School #29, Interview, Question 12)

I think the one that I have mentioned several times and that is having somewhere children can go to short, medium or long term. They can be taken out of the school.

(School #24, Interview, Question 12)

The child had exceptional behavioural problems. Should not have been in the classroom. His needs could not be catered for.

(School #49, Questionnaire, Question 4e)

For a few children like this child, school is not a suitable place, but where else is there?

(School #34, Questionnaire, Question 4f)

*This child needs to be in a specialised withdrawal unit for pupils with serious mental health problems (Referral to **** [Residential School] refused because he is too extreme!).*

(School #46, Questionnaire, Question 4e)

Many of the residential homes, which had existed for children with acute behavioural problems, have closed down, as these children have been moved into mainstream schools, under the policy of inclusive education. However, some principals wanted alternative schooling structures for the seriously misbehaving pupils exhibiting extreme behaviours, whom they felt could not be accommodated within mainstream schools.

After the disciplinary exclusion

Principals found that the disciplinary exclusion had generally proved to be a positive experience for the pupil because it was a catalyst for change. Although principals used the stand-down as a deterrent, they realised that, for a small hard-core group of multiple offenders, the stand-down did not work and that these pupils would go on to receive suspensions or exclusions. Principals, however, still used the stand-down to give staff and the other classmates a respite.

The recently introduced government legislation provided several dilemmas for principals. The first of these is:

Dilemma: Effectiveness of the stand-down

On the one hand, the stand-down may be effective with some pupils.

But, on the other hand, it may not work with other pupils.

Principals also did not like the provision of finding another school for the pupil they were excluding and similarly, did not always take on other schools' excluded pupils. There were often 'no takers'. This leads to the next dilemma.

Dilemma: Passing the 'buck'

On the one hand, the legislation for disciplinary exclusion allows the principal who is excluding, to solve the problem of the seriously misbehaving pupil by removing them from their school.

But, on the other hand, that same legislation transfers the problem of that seriously misbehaving pupil to the principal of another school.

I think it's a pointless provision. It says, "must endeavour" or something to that effect. It doesn't say that you have to place them. It says that you have to use all reasonable ...within so many days, you must approach a certain number of schools and try and get them re-enrolled. Now I can tell you the reality is, who wants highly disruptive, threatening, dangerous, angry students? So you ring and the first question is why are you offering me the chance to enrol this student? Because I've just suspended her. If you get any further, and I underline if, what were their behaviours and you say, one, two, three and they say, they don't want to know. And quite often, you get I don't want to know the minute that you ring and say I am ringing as a requirement...and why would they want to know?

(School #33, Interview, Question 7)

But it is also my experience, that if a child is suspended at a primary level from one school, then transferring him from one school to another doesn't solve the problem, it just transfers the problem.

(School #24, Interview, Question 13)

I certainly enquired where this child is at in the fax sitting on my desk. The child has got severe mental problems. So the principal of that school is trying to do what I was doing, and saying "Hey somebody has got to help us here. This kid should not be..." Everybody is agreeing, this child shouldn't be in a school environment, or if they are in a school environment, there should be special things put in place. I have been in a school where we took on a directed enrolment and to a degree it worked. We turned the child down

in the first place, but I let it be known that if it is directed, we'd take him, because I used his directed status to put pressure on the Ministry and other people to fund this kid. I'll take him, if you fund full-time support. So we jumped in teacher aide hours and that sort of thing. But that's what I would do again. If it is well documented what a child has put a school through... You feel as if you have to do the running around and find another school, you've failed and there's that sort of feeling about it but I personally don't have a problem with it. I'll just contact the neighbouring schools and if they don't, then I'll just ring the Ministry and say "He's yours now." I don't think it actually says that you have to give a reason why you're declined; you've just got to approach five schools.

(School #29, Interview, Question 7)

You ask them why they were excluded from their last school. They will blame their principal, their teacher. They'll blame everyone but themselves – their ownership of anything. You ask them if they've learnt anything from the experience and you'll get 'Nah'. The body language is very, very clear. Now I'm not about proving how clever I am, by continually taking children on who I know within two weeks are going to bring their behaviour from the other school into mine. I don't need that; I've got issues to deal with of my own.

(School #33, Interview, Question 7)

These comments, however, conflict with a recent statement by Jim Matheson, Operational Policy Manager for the Ministry of Education, who said:

There is a great deal of co-operation between schools and the Ministry of Education's local offices, especially when a new school needs to be found for an excluded or expelled student. The aim is always to get students back into school.

(Ministry of Education, 2001a, p. 3)

Principals felt that the Ministry of Education was not taking responsibility for these pupils, and that it was just transferring the problem to other schools. This resistance to taking in pupils who had received disciplinary exclusions in other schools was also noted in an earlier New Zealand study, conducted prior to the new legislation for disciplinary exclusions. Ludbrook (1990) comments:

Youth Law Project has often been told that some schools feel angry that they are constantly being asked to enrol difficult students thrown out of other schools. There is resentment that schools that accept a commitment to care for all of their students, even the difficult ones, are expected to pick up the discards from schools which have draconian disciplinary procedures. This can place an unfair strain on the resources of the 'caring' school. It can also cause resentment that the 'punitive' school can boast a community reputation for high disciplinary standards at the expense of the caring school.

(Ludbrook, 1990, p. 4)

Similarly, overseas, Hayden (1997a) found that:

The resistance among head teachers to taking on children who have been excluded from other schools can also be attributed to the introduction of quasi-markets in education on several counts: in relation to the image and marketability of the school and the pressures from other parents as 'customers'; and in relation to the possible effects on the achievements of other children and thus measurable outputs in terms of academic results.

(Hayden, 1997a, p. 30)

London Education Authorities have moved towards a 'one-for-one' or 'fair dealing' arrangement whereby the school excluding a pupil is expected to take an excluded pupil from another school. This prevents one school with perhaps a decreasing roll taking too many pupils excluded from other schools; thus, counter balancing the competitive element introduced by the government's market reforms. In addition, this may discourage schools from disciplinary exclusions in that schools may prefer to keep the one who they know, rather than the one who they don't know.

Principals in this study saw the disciplinary exclusion process as contributing further to the transitory nature of these pupils' schooling by causing further school changes for these pupils. Overseas research by Kilpatrick (2000), of multiply suspended pupils in Ireland, found that at secondary school age, "...just over a quarter of those pupils who had been multiply suspended were subsequently expelled." (Kilpatrick, 2000, p.4) This reinforced Kilpatrick's belief that:

... pupils who are multiply suspended would be better supported through pastoral care and/or special education needs systems within schools since their problems may be rooted in emotional and behavioural difficulties for which they have few or inadequate coping strategies.

(Kilpatrick, 2000, p. 4)

The transitory nature of the excluded pupils causes problems to the school as well as the pupils themselves. Principals find it difficult to build a cohesive school culture, as was mentioned by one principal in this study. Similarly, an English government report reported:

Problems are also posed for schools which receive disaffected pupils excluded from other schools or pupils transferred on the advice of their previous school to leave voluntarily or face exclusion. Both of these groups of pupils can unsettle schools, even those which have a successful track record in managing 'their own' pupils. The effect of some of these pupils on schools already under pressure is of real concern. In some schools, up to three-quarters of all exclusions are of pupils who have previously been excluded from other schools.

(OFSTED, 1998)

Pupils need a sense of belonging and success. Moving a pupil to another school does not usually solve the problems for the at-risk pupil as has been found with the transition from primary to secondary school. The New Zealand study by Overton (1995), found that the majority of students, who were engaging in inappropriate behaviour at secondary school, were students who could be identified and remembered by their primary school teachers as pupils who engaged in inappropriate

behaviours at primary school. The majority of these at-risk primary school students had gone on to become at-risk secondary students. As the Overton study showed, being stood-down, suspended or excluded so young in their school career, does not augur well for these pupils in the future. Similarly, a small-scale follow-up study (Hayden, 1997b), of 65 excluded primary school pupils in England, found that 85% of these pupils continued to have disciplinary problems at school, further exclusions or go on to special educational facilities. A large follow-up English study (Parsons et al, 2001a), on the outcomes in secondary education for children excluded from primary school, found that nearly half received further primary school exclusions and over a third received exclusions in their secondary education. These researchers also found that the problems intensified for 50% of the children, stayed the same for 18% and improvements were in evidence in 32% of the children in the study (Parsons et al, 2001b, p. 1).

The principal and the other parties

When dealing with all the stakeholders in the process, principals found a range of reactions by the parents or caregivers to the disciplinary exclusion with most being understanding, appreciative and supportive of the school's action with concern for the pupil but some were not supportive of the school's action and being angry and upset with the child. Resignation and acceptance were the most common feelings of the parents or caregivers, as described by the principals.

Principals also found the disciplinary exclusion incident traumatic for the school staff. The most common staff reactions were relief and support of the principal's stance. Other reactions such as concern for the pupil, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and exhaustion were also mentioned.

The principals themselves experienced a wide range of feelings over the incident – with frustration and disappointment being the most common, but also stress, anger, concern, resignation, despair, hurt, disgust, and sadness. Several principals saw disciplinary exclusions as a failure on part of their school in not being able to overcome the problem and retain the pupil in the school. The principals all agreed that “the principal bears the brunt of the task in the disciplinary exclusions” and

almost all agreed that “the principal acts as the disturbance handler” and that “the principal does a juggling act to balance the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils”. Fitchett (1999) found that the feelings of helplessness that the principals expressed over the situation were intensified at the primary school stage because:

...primary school personnel often form close relationships with families and also primary schools are run more as a unit with teachers very much part of the school team. This increases the pressure on the principal to support staff and to do all that can be done for the child and his/her family.

(Fitchett, 1999, p. 5)

5.3 Principals’ views on the disciplinary exclusion process

Almost all the principals thought the disciplinary exclusion was a successful experience for the school and the majority of principals found it to be the preferred course of action although a third would have preferred another course of action.

[The exclusion was] successful for the students whose classroom was continually disrupted, unsuccessful in that any exclusion is a “failure” on the part of the school. In a perfect world we would be able to accommodate all students. There are some students (a growing number) who are simply too disruptive to expect schools to accommodate them and meet their needs.

(School #33, Questionnaire, Question 4)

Other educational legislation affects the disciplinary exclusion process.

Dilemma: Conflicting government policies

On the one hand, the government provides legislation, policy guidelines and support programmes to schools for the disciplinary exclusion process.

But, on the other hand, other government legislation and policy puts schools in competition with one another for pupils, which affects the way in which schools deal with these seriously misbehaving pupils.

*There is a price that schools pay, that is unreasonable. Government policy has put schools in competition with each other. I don't care how much they fudge it, that's what they have done. It would be naïve to pretend that we are not all competing with the shrinking pool of students. Now, if you are in competition, you are aware, critically aware of how your community perceives your school. You need to be. So if you've got students in your classroom who are abusive, threatening, thieving, swearing, defiant, you know, we could go on, you've got 29 other kids going home every day 'un-marketing' your school, negatively marketing your school to their caregivers. "Mum I love ***** but ***, let me tell you what he did today." And Mum's sitting there saying, "My God, why don't they... why doesn't the principal do something about it, this is not on." Parents start talking about. "I'm thinking of moving my child." We're actually walking a real tightrope between trying to support the students who need a tremendous amount of support because they come from all sorts of backgrounds. We try and do our best for them, and the kids who just want to get on with it.*

(School #33, Interview, Question 8)

The same principal also said:

*I get quite concerned every time I read about the suspension/ exclusion statistics from the Ministry. They publish them and I read them with great interest. There is an implication, a political implication, that if we tighten things up with schools then we will change this. And they've got it wrong. It doesn't matter how much tightening up, they never change the competitive model. If they don't, it's not going to change a thing. As long as I'm in competition with that *****School and that *****School, I am going to be very, very focused on the effect of these children on how my school is seen in the community. The government controls that one.*

(School #33, Interview, Question 13)

Principals in this study interpreted the rising trend in disciplinary exclusions as a result of the government's market policy that put schools in competition with one another for pupils. They referred to the impact these policy changes had made to

parental expectations and the workload of teachers. Several principals introduced the idea that stand-downs, suspensions, and exclusions sent a message to other pupils and the school community, that serious misbehaviour will not be tolerated. Overseas research by Parsons (Commission for Racial Equality, 1996) also found that exclusion rates were higher in schools with falling rolls which were forced to take pupils excluded from elsewhere, but the principal also had to be seen as tough on discipline in order to improve the school's standing in the eyes of the community and, therefore, attract pupils and bolster the school roll. Schools have been forced to become more efficient as they have moved into the free market context and, therefore, give less priority to individual needs and maintaining disruptive pupils, resulting in less emphasis on equality issues.

While schools may try to balance the business ethic with that of their professional standards this is an extremely difficult task and in many schools the level of tolerance for disruptive pupils appears to have dropped sharply.

(Kilpatrick, 1998a, p. 5)

Very recent research by Wright et al (2000) found that a principal's philosophy is crucial in terms of the role of punishment and whether it is the rights of the pupil or the other pupils and staff which should have priority.

Each school will have developed norms as to what is considered acceptable effort to expend on different types of pupils who have been allocated to categories such as the 'deserving' and the 'undeserving'.

(Wright et al, 2000, p. 17)

School effectiveness research, from the 1970s and 1980s, suggested that schools in similar socio-economic areas had different exclusion rates according to their school ethos and management. Recent research (Wright et al, 2000) links school effectiveness to the effect of competitive advantage caused by the quasi-market reforms in education. These reforms have caused schools in disadvantaged areas to suffer multiple disadvantages – lack of resources, a concentration of pupils with challenging behaviour in the schools and poverty, family and unemployment problems in the background.

Notwithstanding the argument that the issue of exclusion is complex and the problem extensive, what becomes evident is the overlapping of the development of education policies since the 1980s and the increasing rates of school exclusion.

(Wright et al, 2000, p. 4)

Hayden (2001a) also confirmed this:

Many of the 'risk factors' for individuals associated with exclusion are known, when a range of these 'risk factors' coincide with a school and/or LEA under stress, and more specifically individual teachers having difficulty managing their work, the risk of exclusion is likely to increase.

(Hayden, 2001a, p. 4)

The changed disciplinary exclusion legislation itself may be a factor that has contributed to the increase in disciplinary exclusions in New Zealand. Disciplinary exclusions should be conducted in a way that teaches the pupil more appropriate behaviours. However, the principals in this study have commented upon how bureaucratic the legislation is now, with its strict procedural requirements and the necessary accompanying paperwork.

A comparative study between exclusion in Ireland and England and Wales (Barr et al, 2000) found there were less permanent exclusions from school in Ireland than in England and Wales and they linked this to differences in the statutory legislation regulating exclusions in the different countries. They found that the Irish legislation had a welfare focus and was pupil-centred in its emphasis on support strategies whereas the English and Welsh legislation was punitive and more concerned with formal procedural justice.

5.4 The dilemmas and the leadership response

The dilemmas of disciplinary exclusion were categorised according to Holmes' (1981) three-part classification according to normative values, institutional practices and resources, as shown in Chapter Four, (Figure 24).

Values

Two dilemmas belonged to the first category of normative-based dilemmas with respect to values, beliefs, ideologies and norms. The first of these, “Competing needs”, was a dilemma over the needs of one individual versus the common good.

The second dilemma, “The discipline continuum” is caused by the underlying value conflicts in the two roles of the principal in the disciplinary exclusion process – as a provider of pastoral care and guidance and at the other extreme of the discipline continuum, as a disciplinarian using extreme sanctions. These principals held values that suggested a focus on both people and the school, which were driven by issues of care, fairness, social responsibility, social justice and a commitment to their learning community. As one principal comments,

*We're proud of our behaviour management and the way we work with kids and I suppose, proud of what we put up with. But we also minimise it for the rest of the staff. It was pretty tough on ***** the teacher and ***** the teacher aide. But we all agreed that we stick at it. He spent a lot of his time over here in this office. I was the only person that was free. (Interview, Question 5) I feel that [School Name] School has given this student a huge amount of its time and energy, and unfortunately, time and again, it has been put into a situation where we are left to pick up the pieces. When the full file of [pupil] is laid out, many would say that we should not have gone so far. I do believe, however, that in the context of the support and follow-up, the right decisions have been made. However, no school should have to continually deal with a child like this. (Questionnaire, Question 3c)*

(School #29)

This principal united his staff behind the decision to care and support this difficult pupil within their school and he was himself fully involved in day-to-day caring for this difficult pupil. He did, in fact, ‘walk the talk’. Another principal made the following comment,

We're actually walking a real tightrope between trying to support the students who need a tremendous amount of support because they come from all sorts of backgrounds. We try and do our best for them, and the kids who just want to get on with it. (Interview, Question 8) Students found her a threatening influence – everyone had a need – many of them (the needs) were in conflict. (Questionnaire, Question 3e) I was aware of a high level of staff frustration contending with the behaviour. (Questionnaire, Question 3c) I think by the time you get to exclusion as a possibility, you are actually looking at your needs, rather than the family and the student's. (Interview, Question 1)

(School #33)

These principals had the ability to gain the alignment and participation of their staff as they dealt with these difficult pupils.

Institutional-based structures, processes, practices and programs

Five dilemmas were identified in the study as belonging to Holmes' second category of dilemmas based on institutional-based structures, processes, practices and programs with respect to how people operate and perform tasks in institutional settings.

The first of these dilemmas, "The purpose of schools", is related to the function of schooling as supported by the structures, practices and programs within the school; that is, the role of the school in providing an academic education versus the holistic role of the school in educating the 'whole' person. The other four dilemmas in this category are related to dilemmas found in the structures of the new government legislation for disciplinary exclusion. They are, "A role conflict for principals", "Conflicting government policies", "Effectiveness of the stand-down" and "Passing the 'buck'."

At the root of these institutional-based dilemmas is the tension between the leadership and the management functions of principalship. Cuban (1996) describes this basic dilemma of identity,

Am I a manager, politician, or instructional leader? Each role contains desirable values that compete with one another. Reconciling the conflicting demands of these roles is the perpetual task ... that principals face openly or wrestle with silently.

(Cuban, 1996, p. 7)

A selection of examples of what principals said about their decision to invoke a disciplinary exclusion has been presented to illustrate the conflicts that principals faced between their personal values and moral principles in the management functions and the leadership demands that informed their decision. Management 'by doing things right' and leadership 'doing the right thing' (Bennis, 1984) were both essential components of these principals' roles, as shown by the following comments,

My feelings, well you get this feeling in your gut which is not nice but it was the correct management decision to make. (Questionnaire, Question 3c)
From a staff point of view it was important to show that in these rare situations, management was prepared to use the stand-down option as all other avenues had been exhausted. (Questionnaire, Question 3e)

(School #12)

I felt terrible about this considering that myself and our systems had failed. Seeing how relieved the staff was, after this result, the stand-down, I consider that perhaps we had waited too long. 'To be kind – Be Strong' is a good thought I now carry.

(School #50, Questionnaire, Question 3c)

...they [the staff] frequently comment on how supported they feel by a principal who is prepared to make the hard calls.

(School #36, Questionnaire, Question 3e)

...I would emphasise that with the nature of schools really, I think, how would I put it, perhaps if we err, we err on the side of the child that is causing the dysfunctional behaviour or exhibiting the dysfunctional

behaviour. (Interview, Question 3) Yes, again I can speak for my colleagues, I think we probably put up with far more negative behaviour than we used to in the past simply to avoid suspension and that can be very stressful for a classroom teacher, other children in the school, and the school as a whole. (Interview, Question 13) I guess every principal is primarily in a support role for both the staff and the other children. (Interview, Question 1) I think it [the new legislation] guarantees principals put off a suspension process as long as they can in the interests of the child. But it comes to the point where the safety and educational welfare of the other children comes to the fore and have got to be considered. (Interview, Question 5)

(School #24)

The principals realised that part of being an effective principal was the ability to deal with the dilemmas and to make the tough decisions. ‘Walking the tightrope’ was a metaphor used earlier by one of the principals in this study. Cuban (1996) also commented on this sense of uneasiness with which principals retain after making their ‘hard calls’ in these conflict-filled situations, saying: “*We invent a tightrope to walk, knowing that to cross the tightrope juggling the competing claims will still leave us uneasy.*” (Cuban, 1996, p. 19)

Resources

The final five dilemmas were identified as resource-based with respect to financial resources, material resources such as ‘time-out’ space, time and human resources and as such belonged to Holmes’ third category. They are, “Competing use of resources”, “Parental support”, “Adequate provision of resources”, “Provision for the very young?” and “Mainstream schools for all?” Principals felt that they could provide an inclusive education for most of these pupils within their schools if they had more resources and support.

The way in which the dilemmas of disciplinary exclusion are resolved depend on the management and leadership skills of the principal, because:

Struggles over competing values do not go away. Unattractive options still present themselves and choices must be made. The satisficing compromises that were made at one time are rebuilt to meet new conditions. Hence, dilemmas, unlike problems, are continually managed, not solved.

(Cuban, 1996, p. 4)

Although, the purpose of this research was not to find the characteristics of leadership in these principals, the excerpts showed examples of how these principals were values-led, people-centred and able to manage a number of ongoing tensions and dilemmas – a values-led contingency leadership – the type of leadership, which Day et al (2000) describe as post-transformational. Sergiovanni (2001) said that reflection, combined with personal vision and an internal system of values, becomes the basis of leadership strategies and actions, because: *“If the heart and the head are separated from the hand, then the leader’s actions, decisions and behaviours cannot be understood.”* (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 39)

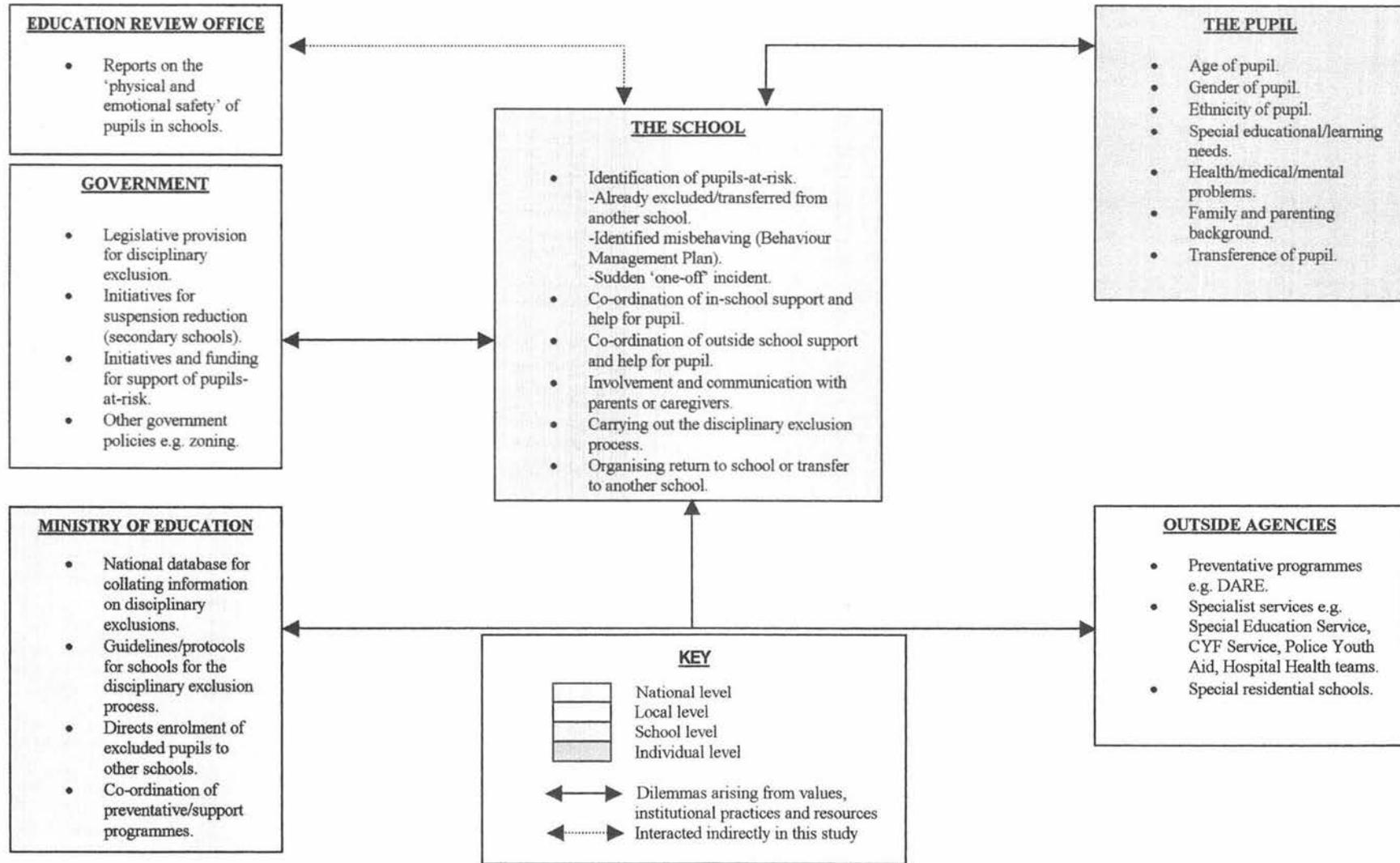
5.5 Modelling the disciplinary exclusion process

This study has shown the complexity of the process of disciplinary exclusion for principals. First, the theoretical debates from individual, family, institutional and political perspectives, identified in Chapter Two and recognised in this current study, highlighted the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the disciplinary exclusion process. Second, the national statistics identified the main areas of concern as the increasing number of disciplinary exclusions, the high proportion of male and Maori pupils being stood-down and suspended and the increasing proportion of disciplinary exclusions occurring at primary school level. These trends have also been identified in this study.

The dilemmas that principals face in the disciplinary process are caused by tensions or contradictions between the principals’ personal and professional values, the institutional structures and practices of the schools and the adequacy of the provision of resources to schools for the education of these pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusion. These findings have been summarised in a model of the disciplinary exclusion process, as shown diagrammatically in Figure 25.

Figure 25

MODEL OF THE DISCIPLINARY EXCLUSION PROCESS



This model is an adaptation of a model by Hayden (1997a, p.115) in which there were three spheres of influence – the child, the school and the home. The present study has shown that the disciplinary exclusion process can be viewed from a number of levels with influences stemming from various contexts - the individual pupil and their family, the school, the local Ministry of Education and other local outside agencies and the national influence of government policies and legislation.

At national level, a principal's permission to use disciplinary exclusions is governed by government legislation. Principals in this study revealed dilemmas arising from procedural shortcomings in the legislation for disciplinary exclusions – such as the effectiveness of the newly introduced stand-down procedure for the seriously misbehaving pupil, the requirement on schools to find alternative placements for excluded pupils, the conflict for principals in their role as a member on the Board of Trustees during the disciplinary exclusion process. Other government educational policies such as zoning procedures also impact on principals' views on disciplinary exclusion. School zoning procedures have created a competitive market environment in which schools must attract an optimum number of pupils in order to attain funding and staffing. Declining rolls result in less funding and loss of staff. Principals are aware of the effect, that having seriously misbehaving pupils in their classrooms disrupting the educational opportunities of other pupils, has on a school's reputation in the local community. These influences originate at national level and cause dilemmas for principals.

At the local level, both Ministry of Education policy and provision can lead to dilemmas for the principal with respect to lack of resources and alternative placements for excluded pupils. Counselling provision and the recently introduced suspension reduction programmes have been directed at secondary age pupils and are not available for primary schools. The Education Review Office (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) to a small degree monitors disciplinary exclusions in schools as part of its regular review process and it has published national reports about at-risk pupils. A range of other external factors also cause dilemmas for the principal such as pupils' health issues, family background and lack of support by some families for what the school is trying to do for the at-risk pupils.

At school level, the principal also finds dilemmas – meeting the needs and providing extra resources such as teacher aide time for the at-risk pupil and balancing everyone's needs. These are the dilemmas that principals have to face in their leadership and management of disciplinary exclusions.

Pupil characteristics, such as age, gender, ethnicity, special educational needs and mental or medical problems and changes of school because of previous disciplinary exclusions, interact at an individual level to cause problems and conflicts for principals in terms of resourcing, institutional practices and values.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented a discussion of the findings and analysis of this study. The discussion was presented within the guiding framework of the research questions and focused on the dilemmas of disciplinary exclusions with the concept of the dilemma providing the bridge between practice and theory.

Chapter Six, the next chapter, presents a conclusion to this study of disciplinary exclusions in which there will be a summary of what was previously known, how this study was conducted, how the little used technique of dilemma analysis was used and how this study contributes to further knowledge with the concept of the dilemma being used to bridge practice and theory in the discussion of the implications for future principal practice and the recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

He's five years old, he's blonde, gorgeous smile, angelic face. Sad thing is, he's probably coming to prison, and on the way he'll probably kill someone. The reality is there are children whose lives are pre-destined from the age of 18 months, 2 years, 3 years. I'm seeking to touch the nerves of middle class New Zealand to get off their butts and understand how serious a problem we have.

(Lashlie, 2001)

These were the words of Celia Lashlie, a senior officer for the Specialist Education Services, an agency that schools call upon for help with these seriously misbehaving pupils, who lost her job when she spoke out about the need for public and government awareness and support for the problem of young children, such as the pupils in this study, who are in need of early intervention, support and education.

The aim of this thesis has been to focus specifically on principals' experiences and views as they managed the actual disciplinary exclusion process for young seriously misbehaving pupils at primary school level. It is now just over three years since the government introduced new educational legislation for disciplinary exclusions and, with the lack of research worldwide into principals' perceptions of the disciplinary exclusion process, such a study is timely.

To conclude this study, the major findings from the three major research questions are summarised. The implications for principals' practice, recommendations for further research and reflections upon the methodology are presented. Finally, the chapter concludes with the limitations and the contributions that these findings make to both the theory and practice of educational administration and recommendations for the future.

6. 1 Summary of the findings

Throughout this study it was evident that principals worked hard at maintaining and providing an education for extremely difficult pupils, but these pupils presented a dilemma for principals. On the one hand, comments showed that schools, caring principals and hardworking teaching staff went out of their way to support and educate these pupils in their schools. But, on the other hand, principals perceived that they had no other choice but to use the disciplinary exclusion process for the young pupils who were seriously misbehaving in their schools.

The results of this research support the following major conclusions to the three main research questions.

The disciplinary exclusion incident (Research Question 1)

1. The characteristics of the primary age pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions, in this study, are an accentuated version of the trends of age, gender and ethnicity factors already identified in the New Zealand national statistical database for all pupils in New Zealand state schools, now monitored by the Ministry of Education. The behaviours causing the disciplinary exclusion are also similar to the national statistics with physical violence and continual disobedience being the most common reasons for such sanction.

2. This study also identified parenting and home backgrounds, special education and learning needs and medical or mental conditions, such as ADD, in these primary pupils, which were also factors identified in previous New Zealand research of secondary pupils' 'disciplinary exclusions' and in overseas research. Information on these factors is not collected for the national statistical database. The final incident incurring the sanction of disciplinary exclusion usually occurred after a long history of offending building up to a major incident, during which time the school had gone to tremendous efforts to change the pupil's behaviour, help and support the pupil with their various needs and enlist the help of the parents or caregivers.

3. In addition, this study has also isolated several other characteristics of these primary school pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions - the final year of school (either at primary or intermediate) and the transference of these at-risk pupils from school to school. School exclusion can be attributed to many interacting complex factors, including those related to individuals, families, educational and outside institutions, the social context as well as the direct impact of changing economic and education government policies and legislation.

Principals' management of the disciplinary exclusion process (Research Question 2)

1. Disciplinary exclusions are used as a last resort by the principals. The competing needs of everyone involved in the situation provide a tension for principals. In the early stages, before the misbehaviour crossed the boundary between what was acceptable and could be tolerated to what was totally unacceptable, the principal had been fully supporting the needs of the pupil through in-school and outside school agency and parental involvement and a huge investment of time, staffing and resources. However, principals were highly conscious that other people in the school community had competing needs with this pupil.

2. The use of disciplinary exclusions varied widely between schools. Most principals used disciplinary exclusions as the very last resort. Stand-downs were the most commonly used sanction. The newly introduced legislation was seen as requiring a huge amount of paperwork and as a source of bureaucracy. Principals perceived a lack of Ministry of Education support and resourcing and parental inaction for dealing with such seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools. Indeed, principals felt that pupils displaying such extreme misbehaviour could not be accommodated within mainstream schools but that there were no alternatives for these young pupils.

Principals' views on the disciplinary exclusion process (Research Question 3)

1. Principals experienced a wide range of feelings over the disciplinary exclusion incidents such as frustration, disappointment, stress, anger, concern, resignation, despair, hurt, disgust, sadness and a sense of failure. The principals saw themselves

in the unenviable position described by the statements, “the principal bears the brunt of the task in disciplinary exclusions”, “the principal acts as the disturbance handler” and “the principal does a juggling act to balance the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils”. Principals encountered mixed reactions from the parents or caregivers to the disciplinary exclusion of their child with most, however, being understanding, appreciative and supportive of the school’s action. Also, principals were aware of the depth of feelings of their staff, with common reactions being relief and support of the principal’s stance, concern for the pupil, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and exhaustion.

2. Principals generally found the disciplinary exclusion to be a successful experience for the school and it was the preferred course of action for the majority of principals. The principals liked the new stand-down legislation for dealing with the pupils in that it provided a wake-up call for some pupils but they questioned its effectiveness with the hard-core misbehaving pupils. With respect to exclusions, principals did not like the new legislative provision of trying to find other schools to take their excluded pupils and, similarly, did not always take on other schools’ excluded pupils. Again, they felt that the Ministry of Education should provide more support and that this requirement was contributing towards transference of the problem rather than a solution.

3. Principals put forward a variety of educational (and other) solutions to the problem such as alternative schooling structures, more resourcing for schools, better training for teachers, special support systems being established within schools, Ministry of Education support in dealing with the transient nature of these pupils and very early intervention (as early as pre-school) to identify and help these at-risk pupils and their families.

4. Principals perceived the rising trend in disciplinary exclusions to be caused by the government’s market policy that had put schools in competition with one another for pupils and the need for schools to promote a good image.

The dilemmas of the disciplinary exclusion process

The disciplinary exclusion process was found to present 12 dilemmas to principals. These dilemmas were categorised according to Holmes' (1981) classification of dilemmas arising from conflicts over principals' personal values, resources and the policies and practices required of schools as institutions. For ease of reading, the dilemmas categorised according to Holmes are reproduced at this point:

Category 1: Normative-based with respect to values, beliefs, ideologies and norms.

Dilemma 1. Competing needs

On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil to consider.

But, on the other hand, the principal has the needs of the other pupils, the staff and the school community to consider.

Dilemma 2. The discipline continuum

On the one hand, the principal had been in the role of providing support and help to the pupil, who had been committing serious misbehaviours over a long period of time.

But, on the other hand, when was it time for the principal, to step into the role of disciplinarian and sanction the pupil under the formal disciplinary exclusion process?

Category 2: Institutional-based structures, processes, practice and programs with respect to how people operate and perform tasks in institutional settings.

Dilemma 3. The purpose of schools

On the one hand, there are common characteristics to the pupils who have had disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, these characteristics are outside the control of the school, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils.

Dilemma 4. A role conflict for principals

On the one hand, the principal has a role as principal of the school for putting forward the case for a disciplinary exclusion of the pupil, to the Board of Trustees.

But, on the other hand, the principal has a role as a member on the Board of Trustees for making the decision about the disciplinary exclusion of the pupil.

Dilemma 5. Conflicting government policies

On the one hand, the government provides legislation, policy guidelines and support programmes to schools for the disciplinary exclusion process.

But, on the other hand, other government legislation and policy puts schools in competition with one another for pupils, which affects the way in which schools deal with these seriously misbehaving pupils.

Dilemma 6. Effectiveness of the stand-down

On the one hand, the stand-down may be effective with some pupils.

But, on the other hand, it may not work with other pupils.

Dilemma 7. Passing the 'buck'

On the one hand, the legislation for disciplinary exclusion allows the principal who is excluding, to solve the problem of the seriously misbehaving pupil by removing them from their school.

But, on the other hand, that same legislation transfers the problem of that seriously misbehaving pupil to the principal of another school.

Category 3: Resource-based with respect to financial resources, material resources such as buildings and equipment, time and human resources.

Dilemma 8. Competing use of resources

On the one hand, a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources was being expended on one pupil.
But, on the other hand, this meant less time and resources for the other pupils.

Dilemma 9. Parent support

On the one hand, the school can put in place various types of support (in-school and outside-school agency) at considerable effort to help the misbehaving pupil.

But, on the other hand, if the pupil's family does not support the school in what it is trying to do for the pupil, the school's efforts will have little effect in helping the misbehaving pupil.

Dilemma 10. Adequate provision of resources

On the one hand, principals think that they are able to provide an education for these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools.

But, on the other hand, they consider that they do not have the resources or Ministry support to do so.

Dilemma 11. Provision for the very young?

On the one hand, there is an increasing number of young primary age pupils receiving and being at-risk of receiving disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, there are no programmes of early intervention, support or alternative schooling structures for these young pupils.

Dilemma 12. Mainstream schools for all?

On the one hand, there are some pupils whose behaviour is so extreme that principals consider that they cannot be accommodated in mainstream schools.

But, on the other hand, there is no other educational institution available for these pupils.

6.2 Implications for principals' future practice

Cuban (1996) commented on the guilt felt by principals as they resolve such dilemmas, saying:

... in a 'can-do' culture that often generates a guilt-inducing 'mirage of simple solutions', it is important to recognize that many situations do not lend themselves to clearly defined solutions. The best we can do is to reframe the dilemmas through explicit analysis and thus seek to "create better compromises and more elegant tightrope walks. Reframing and managing dilemmas are art forms, filled with doubt but at least free of corrosive guilt.

(Cuban, 1996, p. 19)

Holmes (1981) designed a three-part classification of dilemmas according to personal values, institutional practices and resources, as a way of allowing principals to frame their own work and reflect on their practices. Holmes' framework,

therefore, is used to structure the following discussion on the implications of the findings for principals' future practice.

Values

Some problems that principals face, such as school budgets, can be solved by simple management practices, but other problems, such as those of disciplinary exclusion, are more difficult to resolve because there are underlying leadership dilemmas of competing values.

1. The dilemma of competing needs of the individual pupil versus the common good of all the school community is contradictory in nature for the principal. When, as a last resort, the principal decides on disciplinary exclusions for a small number of seriously misbehaving pupils, this may benefit the school as a whole while it seriously disadvantages a small number of pupils. How can principals minimise this damage to these pupils?

2. The conflicting roles of the principal on the discipline continuum range from the principal being the provider of support at one end of the continuum to being a disciplinarian using the extreme sanctions of disciplinary exclusions at the other end of the continuum. A principal's decision to take one course of action over another course of action is contingent on the context or situation and relates to their ability to 'read' and adjust to the particular context or set of circumstances they face. A principal's basis for influence and authority in this decision will be based on his or her beliefs, moral values and previous experiences.

3. The ultimate goals of schooling are to provide an education for pupils so that they can be employable and also to enable the development of pupils who are moral and responsible members of society. Because schools are moral institutions and principals are moral agents (MacBeath, 1998), principals have to model moral leadership in the way they run their schools.

The findings of this study with respect to values have important implications to principals' future practice, because as Jacobson and colleagues (1996) explain:

Unlike problems that can be solved, dilemmas can only be managed, and the key to managing these persistent dilemmas is to recognise the values in conflict.

(Jacobson, Hickcox & Stevenson, 1996, p. ix)

Institutional practices

1. A higher incidence of disciplinary exclusions occurs for male pupils, Maori pupils, pupils with special educational needs and during the final year at primary school. These trends have implications for principals for provision of equal opportunities for all pupils. Schools should monitor their own disciplinary exclusion data to determine any common characteristics (such as gender, age or ethnicity) of pupils within their schools receiving the majority of the disciplinary exclusions and, thereby, identify if this is an equity issue for the school. There is an obligation on all schools to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, within the Education Act (1989) and the National Administration Guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2000a). To further this purpose, the Education Review Office has included the achievement of boys and of Maori pupils as evaluation criteria for school reviews. If an issue of equity was revealed, then equal opportunities training, as part of the professional development process for staff, would be required, such as described by Osler and Hill (1999),

Management training programmes for headteachers and curriculum leadership and behaviour training for new and experienced teachers need to explore questions of racial equality and discrimination as they affect the everyday lives of pupils both in and beyond the school.

(Osler & Hill, 1999, p. 59)

Also, if there are identifiable groups of pupils within a school commonly receiving disciplinary exclusions, then schools should endeavour to discover the needs of these pupils and cater for them. For example, are representative adult gender and ethnic

role models available to the pupils either on the staff or through community involvement with the school? If schools do find that their disciplinary exclusions are occurring in the final year at school, then there are implications for school organisation and the learning and teaching programmes of these at-risk pupils in their final year at school.

2. Disciplinary exclusions may be inappropriate for pupils with special educational needs. Are the learning programme and the learning environment appropriate for the pupil? There may be a need for a range of responses to suit either the 'naughty' or the 'needy' pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusion.

3. Serious and repetitive misbehaviours, which have already resulted in a disciplinary exclusion, indicate the need for a formal assessment of the pupil's learning and behavioural needs. Are the psychological, emotional or educational needs of the pupil, in fact, being met by the school? Or are the pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions because of a special need that is not being met?

4. The government legislation and accompanying 1999 Ministry of Education guidelines for disciplinary exclusion are designed to provide a solution for schools by enabling them to temporarily or permanently remove their seriously misbehaving pupils. However, this solution, in fact, may perpetuate the problem. A disciplinary exclusion such as a stand-down or suspension may remove the pupil from the school but does not change anything in that learning environment, with the likelihood of the pupil continuing the same inappropriate behaviours when they return to the school. The time spent out of the school can be an opportunity for the school, the family and the pupil to work on a plan for the successful re-integration back into the school. What changes can the school effect to prevent this behaviour from reoccurring? Such changes could include different instructional methods or tasks, working with different peers in different locations, a more flexible school day and having the opportunity to learn replacement behaviours from a role model or mentor.

5. The traditional use of disciplinary exclusions may not be an appropriate response to the multiple needs of some of these at-risk pupils in today's schools. The nature of the behavioural problems and the changed structure of families may mean that

disciplinary exclusions do not have the desired effect and, in fact, may increase the probability of misbehaviour occurring in the future.

Resources

1. The principal expends a tremendous amount of time on staffing and co-ordination of efforts between the school, outside agencies and the family or whanau of the misbehaving pupil. Is there a need for a case manager to be assigned within the school to co-ordinate, monitor, manage and oversee these at-risk pupils' education, pastoral care, discipline issues and communication with the family or whanau and outside agencies?
2. Pupils with special needs may act in violent ways because of their behaviour disorders or disabilities and, therefore, staff may need specialised training to deal with these pupils. What ongoing professional development is required by the staff and the principal to deal with the needs of these at-risk pupils? For example, what techniques of physical restraint should be used for the physically aggressive and violent pupils who are endangering other pupils?
3. Principals who do accept pupils excluded from other schools need to be able, first, to acquire the adequate resources and, then, put into place the appropriate support to integrate these pupils into their schools and to monitor their progress.

6.3 Implications for further research

The author would like to suggest the need for further research on:

1. The early identification and monitoring of pupils at-risk of disciplinary exclusions, as they transfer through the school system from pre-primary to primary and high school. Pupils could be assessed upon entry to pre-school or primary school to assess their maladaptive behaviours and their personal, social and academic needs. Early identification could then allow schools and parents or whanau to implement positive behaviour support plans to teach positive behaviour replacement with the aim of interrupting the predicted trajectory of misbehaviour. Such a tracking system

for these at-risk pupils would prevent the following situation from happening. The principal writes about receiving a misbehaving pupil from another school who then went on to receive a disciplinary exclusion in the present school:

He had been dropped on us as well from another school through a CYFs decision, so we were a bit sparky about that originally too. They had thought that this would be a good move for this kid and the parents had enrolled him here, but we only found out what he was really like after he'd been enrolled. So that was a back-door sort of thing really, we felt. We weren't that happy with that.

(School #29, Interview, Question 2)

2. A longitudinal study of at-risk pupils, who have received disciplinary exclusions at primary school level, is needed to trace what happens to these pupils as they progress through their school years. Do they drop out of the education system at a young age? Do they become seriously misbehaving pupils at secondary school level? What effects do the disciplinary exclusions have on these pupils?
3. The causes of the greater number of disciplinary exclusions, occurring in the final year at primary or intermediate school and the types of procedures that schools could implement to prevent this from occurring.
4. Restorative justice conferences, originally trialled in the New Zealand Youth Justice system, which have been trialled in secondary schools in Auckland and overseas with some success as an alternative to the disciplinary exclusion process. With their emphasis of family or whanau group conferencing and with the greater importance of family rather than peer group for the primary age pupil, would they be more appropriate and have greater success than the traditional use of disciplinary exclusions in primary schools?
5. The ways in which the efforts of schools, outside agencies and the Ministry of Education can be co-ordinated to provide support to at-risk pupils.

6. The types of support programmes that are needed at primary school level for these 'pupils in need' and 'pupils with special educational needs'? During an interview, one principal called for such research saying:

We need someone to come and do some research on that very question. How can a school support... what impact would internal systems have for changing potential behaviour, suspensions, stand-downs... what would it cost in relation to the overall cost of this? What could we save?

(School #29, Interview, Question 12)

7. The early preventative strategies that could be used with these repeat offending pupils.

8. The monitoring devices and support programmes which could be devised for the successful integration of transient pupils who have been transferred because of disciplinary exclusions elsewhere.

9. The possible existence of different characteristics between schools and principals that have and have not used the disciplinary exclusion process. This study revealed both low and high rates of disciplinary exclusions in different schools.

10. The possibility of a legislative factor in the rise in disciplinary exclusions in New Zealand, in that the new legislation for disciplinary exclusions with its procedural emphasis has had an impact on the inclination of schools to use disciplinary exclusions.

6.4 Reflections on the methodology

With the benefit of hindsight, the following changes in methodology may assist other researchers in this area of study:

1. On a future occasion and whilst taking into account the privacy and sensitivity of the topic, an initial group interview may also prove useful to provide a more general preliminary understanding.

2. The QSR NU*DIST program proved extremely useful but time, greater efficiency and familiarity with the program would help capitalise on its huge capabilities.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The following limitations have been identified:

1. The author has already identified the limitations of the sample size of the provincial area studied and the methodology used earlier in the study and reiterates that the study is not representative of all primary school principals. Indeed, this study focused on principals who had carried out 'disciplinary exclusions'. The 'voices' of other principals who had not used disciplinary exclusions were not heard. What were their views on the disciplinary exclusions process?

2. Although the principals were sent transcripts of their interviews for verification of accuracy, the author would have also liked to collaborate with the principals as a group after the dilemma analysis stage of the construction of the dilemmas. However, this was impossible for several reasons. Principals found disciplinary exclusions to be a very sensitive issue and, although they were willing to openly write and talk about their experiences under the cloak of privacy set out by the ethical procedures of this research, they may have been more restrained and even unwilling to repeat their comments in a group discussion. In addition, the author was aware of the amount of time that the participants had already committed to this study and also the timing of this stage of the research, coinciding with the busy end of year activities for principals. The author decided that a summary report (Appendix H) of the final thesis be sent to the 23 participating principals.

6.6 Contributions of the study

Notwithstanding these limitations, the writer considers that the study has a number of strengths and contributions worthy of note.

1. It allowed a specific focus on principals' experiences with the disciplinary exclusion process, especially at the primary school level where the trend for

disciplinary exclusion has been increasing. This area has previously received little study.

2. The second strength relates to the sample obtained. Both the willingness with which principals provided written and verbal narrative descriptions of their experiences with the disciplinary exclusion process and the openness of feelings expressed in their comments were reflected in the response rate to the study. It is recognised that this openness and willingness may have been created by the strict ethical procedures governing the privacy of the information they provided.

3. The third strength relates to the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, which provided the author with the ability to better explore the reality of the principals' experiences. Computer programs allowed for data analysis of the huge amounts of quantitative and qualitative data collected. A spreadsheet was used for simple quantitative data analysis and the recently developed computer program, QSR NU*DIST was used for the qualitative data analysis.

4. This research resulted in the development of a model of the disciplinary exclusion process.

5. This study identified the potential of the concept of dilemmas as a tool for reflection by principals of their work in the disciplinary exclusion process.

6. The author demonstrated the use of Winter's (1982) method of dilemma analysis, but found that his classification of dilemmas was too ambiguous.

7. Instead, the author used Holmes (1981) classification of dilemmas, which would provide a framework that would allow for principals' reflection on their previous experiences and future practice. David Stewart, one of the facilitators of the Massey University study reported in Prochnow (1998) and Fitchett (1999) on which this present study was based, commented, to the author of this present study, that the intention had been to produce a course in kit form for professional development leadership training courses of principals on disciplinary exclusions. However, this

did not occur because of the researchers' time and travel commitments. This present study has the power to inform such leadership training courses.

The concept of dilemmas in the work of principals, the methodology of dilemma analysis and the classification of dilemmas (Holmes, 1981) according to values, institutional practices and resources as used in this present study, have the power to provide a bridge between theory and practice; that is, between espoused theories and theories-in-use, (Agyris & Schon, 1974, 1978) by allowing principals to develop a framework for reflection on their actions, as they deal with tensions and dilemmas in their leadership. Dimmock (1996) commented on the importance of principals being able to transform dilemmas into resolvable courses of action. This ability was dependent on the principal's ability to analyse the dilemma and to view the problem through an expanded range of frames; that is, 'multi-framing and re-framing' to enable a wider understanding of the issues and an expanded range of options by which to address them.

Ability to reframe, in Bolman and Deal's terms, requires considerable cognitive dexterity on the part of school leaders. Accordingly, it is appropriate that ideas for developing these cognitive skills in school leaders are addressed.

(Dimmock, 1996, p. 165)

Reflection by principals is needed to connect practical dilemmas and the theoretical ethical principles that underlie dilemmas such as those of disciplinary exclusion. Such reflection can promote professional growth and lead to the development of transformational leaders. Leadership training of principals could integrate dilemma analysis and reflection on real-life dilemmas within a problem-based learning approach because "*dilemmas present opportunities as well as challenges for visionary, proactive and creative school leaders*" (Dimmock, 1999, p. 97).

8. Finally, this study helps to begin to meet the need for more applied research in which the principals' voices are heard, so that the experience that principals gain is available to colleagues who may also benefit.

6.7 Recommendations from the study

1. That this study could assist government planners in their understanding of the practicalities of the disciplinary exclusion process at primary school level. Consideration needs to be given to the extreme cases that are not catered for by the current legislation.

Principals do not view the new procedure of stand-down as having much success for pupils exhibiting repeat, extreme misbehaviour. Furthermore, principals do not like the current provision of exclusion, which requires them to look for alternative schools for the offending pupils. Principals often encounter the situation where other schools refuse to take these pupils. Principals want an alternative type of school to which they can send these extreme cases. Such an alternative provision of education is necessary for young excluded primary age pupils who are too young to be left at home alone and unsupervised on Correspondence School courses while parents or caregivers are at work.

2. That ongoing meetings be held with all parties working with these at-risk pupils – principals of local area schools and representatives of Boards of Trustees, outside agencies and the local Ministry of Education - to discuss and establish local area procedures in order to identify these at-risk pupils and to co-ordinate their efforts.

Principals mentioned the need for early identification, intervention and co-ordination of efforts from early childhood through to primary and secondary school. While realising the importance of managing privacy issues, the benefits of establishing a cohesive approach would accrue from effective communication and co-ordination of efforts.

3. That, while the principals found the 1999 Ministry of Education guidelines helpful, perhaps training in the legal aspects of disciplinary exclusion would also be of benefit to principals. A series of two-day courses would enable principals to consider:

- **The legal requirements for due process and natural justice,**
- **The procedures that principals could implement within their schools for managing the paperwork required,**
- **The procedures for communication between parents or caregivers, the Board of Trustees, the wider school community, outside agencies, other schools and the Ministry of Education.**

Principals found the 1999 Ministry of Education “Guidance for Stand-downs, Suspensions, Expulsions and Exclusions” helpful, especially the flow-chart of the procedural steps they needed to implement. However, they found that the process involved an enormous amount of paperwork and bureaucracy. Principals also encountered problems dealing with the conflicting interests of everyone involved in the process and they spent a large amount of time communicating with all the stakeholders.

6.8 A final comment

A small number of primary school children can be described as being at high risk of missing much of their compulsory education. This has serious implications for the pupils involved because of their young age and the vulnerability of these children and, also, for the principals because the disciplinary exclusion process presents principals with fundamental practical and ethical leadership dilemmas in their decision, “To exclude or not to exclude?”

Final words for this study come from James Burns, author of “Leadership” and creator of the theory of transformational leadership, who said recently in an interview:

Since writing ‘Leadership’, ...I have become even more impressed by the role of values in the study and exercise of leadership; more impressed by the role of conflict, which tends to be downplayed in much of the literature by people who are more interested in consensus; and more interested in creativity, in leaders as creative persons.

(Burns, cited in Bailey, 2001, p. 1)

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS

Suspensions, Stand-downs and Exclusions

Researcher: Ngaire Addis

No:

Questionnaire For Principals

This questionnaire is designed to find out how principals of primary schools manage and view the process of suspension, stand-down and exclusion of pupils.

Please do not use your name, your school's name or staff or pupil names on this questionnaire. The questionnaire is coded above for purposes of the necessary follow-up of non-responses only. Thus, you, your pupils and your school will not be identified in the final research.

You can be assured that confidentiality will be respected.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Many questions can be answered by simply drawing a circle around your response. In a few questions, however, you will be required to elaborate.

Please feel free to write as much as you wish.

Please note that return of the questionnaire implies consent.

If you are willing to be part of a smaller group of primary school principals who will also be interviewed about this subject, could you please tick the box.

If you would like a copy of the results at the end of the research, please tick the box.

2. School's involvement with the pupil prior to the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion incident.
(Please circle one)

- a. Had the pupil come to your school as a result of being suspended/ stood-down/ excluded from another school?

Yes/ No/ Don't know

- b. Had there been previous disciplinary actions taken against this pupil in your school?

None (no disciplinary action recorded by the school)

Informal only (litter collections, detention)

Formal (formal written record)

- c. Had the school had contact, in the past, with the pupil's family over his/her behaviour?

None/ Some/ A lot

- d. What help had the school been able to provide, in the past, to try to improve the pupil's behaviour?

-In school help (e.g. Resource Teacher in Learning and Behaviour, Social Workers in schools, Homework Centres)

-Outside school help (e.g. Police, CYFs, community agency)

-None so far

- e. Had the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion followed a period of hard work, time and emotional energy being put into the pupil?

Yes, considerable / Some / No

3. Description of the actual suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion

Describe the actual incident that led to the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion.

Include such things as:

- a. the incident that led to the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion.
- b. the official steps you went through to suspend/ stand-down/ exclude the pupil.
- c. your feelings at the time.
- d. the reaction from the pupil's parents/ caregivers.
- e. staff reaction and feedback.

(Please feel free to continue onto extra paper provided at the end of the questionnaire)

4. Consequences of the Suspension/ Stand-down/ Exclusion. (Please circle one)

- a. What happened to the pupil after the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion?

Returned to school/ Transferred to another school/ Don't know

- b. Do you think that the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion proved to be a positive experience for the pupil in that it provided a catalyst for change? **Yes/No**

- c. Do you think that it was a negative experience for the pupil because the pupil's behaviour has not improved? **Yes/No**

- d. Do you consider that the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion was a successful or unsuccessful experience for the school?

Successful/ Unsuccessful

- e. Would you have preferred to have taken another course of action in this case?

Yes/ No (Please elaborate)

- f. Do you identify with any of the following descriptions of how you felt in this case?

- The principal bears the brunt of the task in the suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion. **Yes/No**
- The principal acts as the disturbance handler **Yes/No**
- The principal does a juggling act to balance the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils. **Yes/No**
- Other (please elaborate)

- g. Do you have any additional thoughts about this suspension/ stand-down/ exclusion? (Please elaborate)

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this research. I would be grateful if you would return it to me by 31 August in the reply-paid envelope. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

NGAIRE ADDIS

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

Stand-downs, Suspensions and Exclusions

Interview Schedule

1. In the earlier questionnaire, you described a stand-down/ suspension or exclusion incident. How did you as principal deal with the differing needs of everyone involved in that incident - the offending pupil, the other pupils and the staff?
2. What choices other than to stand-down, suspend or exclude were available to you in that incident?
3. What costs (with respect to staffing, funding, time, effort, etc) had already been deployed on that pupil?
4. What outside school support (parental and outside agency) would you have found helpful in that incident?
5. What implications did that incident have for you, in terms of how you would deal with the stand-down, suspension exclusion process in the future?
6. The regulations for suspension/ stand-down and exclusion changed with the Education Amendment Act in July 1999. How did you find this new legislation when you were dealing with this suspension case?

7. The new legislation requires schools to look for alternative schools for these pupils not returning to their school. What do you think of this requirement of finding alternative schools, and similarly, taking offending pupils from other schools?

8. What are your thoughts about how your school can educate these seriously misbehaving pupils with respect to curriculum/ special needs and school organisation?

9. How many pupils have you had to stand-down, suspend or exclude this year?

10. Do you see any common characteristics in these pupils?

11. Please explain your school's Behaviour Management Plan.

12. The number of primary school suspensions has increased in the past ten years. What educational responses do you think would stop this trend?

13. Do you have any further comments that you would like to add?

Could I please have a copy of your Behaviour Management Plan?

Once I have transcribed this tape, I will send you a written copy so that you can verify that what you have said has been recorded accurately.

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM FOR PRINCIPALS

Suspensions, Stand-downs and Exclusions

Researcher: Ngaire Addis

Consent Form

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to decline to answer any particular questions.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that the information provided will be handled in such a way as to protect the confidentiality of the school, the staff, the pupils and myself and will ensure safe custody of this information. (The information will be used only for this research).

If a follow-up interview is necessary and is to be taped for the purpose of accurately transcribing into written form the responses to the interview:

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I also understand that I have the right to ask for the audiotape to be turned off at any time during the interview.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in this Information Sheet.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Protocol 01/56.

APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PRINCIPALS

Suspensions, Stand-downs and Exclusions

Information Sheet

I am a Postgraduate student in the Graduate School of Education at Massey University and I would like to invite you to participate in a research study, which is being undertaken to fulfil requirements of a Master of Educational Administration Degree.

Professor Wayne Edwards, Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education, College of Education, telephone: (06) 351-3368, is my supervisor.

- 1. The aim of this study is to identify how local area primary school principals manage and view the process of suspensions, stand-downs and exclusions as legislated recently in changes to the Education Act. Past research, conducted into this topic, has involved analysis of statistics and has been conducted from the pupil's viewpoint and predominantly at secondary school level. Instead, I would like to focus on the views of the primary school principals in a reflective study on how they view and manage the process.*
- 2. The research has two phases – the first involves a written questionnaire to be completed by principals from a sample of 50 primary schools in the local area and second, a more in-depth analysis by interview of a small number of those principals. It is expected that the questionnaire will take approximately 40 minutes to complete and that the smaller follow-up group of interviews would have a time limit of 45 minutes.*
- 3. The sample of participating schools has been chosen from a Ministry of Education list of all schools in Hawkes Bay. Information obtained in the questionnaire and the interview will be used to answer questions related to the research focus of how primary school principals manage and view the suspension process. It will be analysed and summarised for the purpose, of writing a masterate thesis.*
- 4. Confidentiality and anonymity will be protected by nominating code identifiers generated by random numbers to each of the schools and participating principals are specifically asked not to name their institution, their staff, their pupils or themselves in their responses. Codes for schools are used only as a research design technique to enable follow-up of non- response and for my supervisor to check my findings. Similarly, in the final thesis, no names will be used which could identify an institution, staff, pupils or principals.*

5. *The interview will be audio taped for the sole purpose of accurately transcribing what has been said at the interview. You will be offered the opportunity of viewing and checking the written transcription of the taped interview. On completion of the project, all data, questionnaires, interview tapes and transcripts and school codes will be destroyed.*
6. *Please realise that as a participant in this research study, you would have the right:*
 - *to decline to participate;*
 - *to refuse to answer any particular questions;*
 - *to withdraw from the study at any time;*
 - *to ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
 - *to provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
 - *to be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded*
7. *Please note that return of the Questionnaire and taking part in the Interview imply consent.*
8. *If you have any further questions about this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me, telephone XXXXXXXX.*

Signed:

Dated:

Ngairé Addis

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Protocol 01/56.

APPENDIX E: INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

c/- Professor Wayne Edwards
Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education
College of Education
Massey University
Palmerston North

«JobTitle»
«School»
«City»

12 August 2001

Dear «Title» «LastName»

I am a Postgraduate student in the Graduate School of Education at Massey University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study, on the subject "Stand-downs, Suspensions and Exclusions". The main focus of the research is to look at this topic from the principal's point of view. Therefore, the study will require input only from you, the principal of the school, by way of completing the enclosed questionnaire. Later, I also intend to ask a smaller number of principals to be involved in interviews. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of a Master of Educational Administration degree.

Please find enclosed a participant Information Sheet and Consent Form for you, plus a copy of each for the Board of Trustees for their information, which Massey University requires me to send to you.

Therefore, I ask you to take part in this study by completing the enclosed questionnaire. When you have completed the questionnaire, could you please put it with the signed, completed consent form into the enclosed, self-addressed reply-paid envelope and post it to back to me, via the Massey University address of Dr Wayne Edwards, which is at the top of this letter, by 31 August.

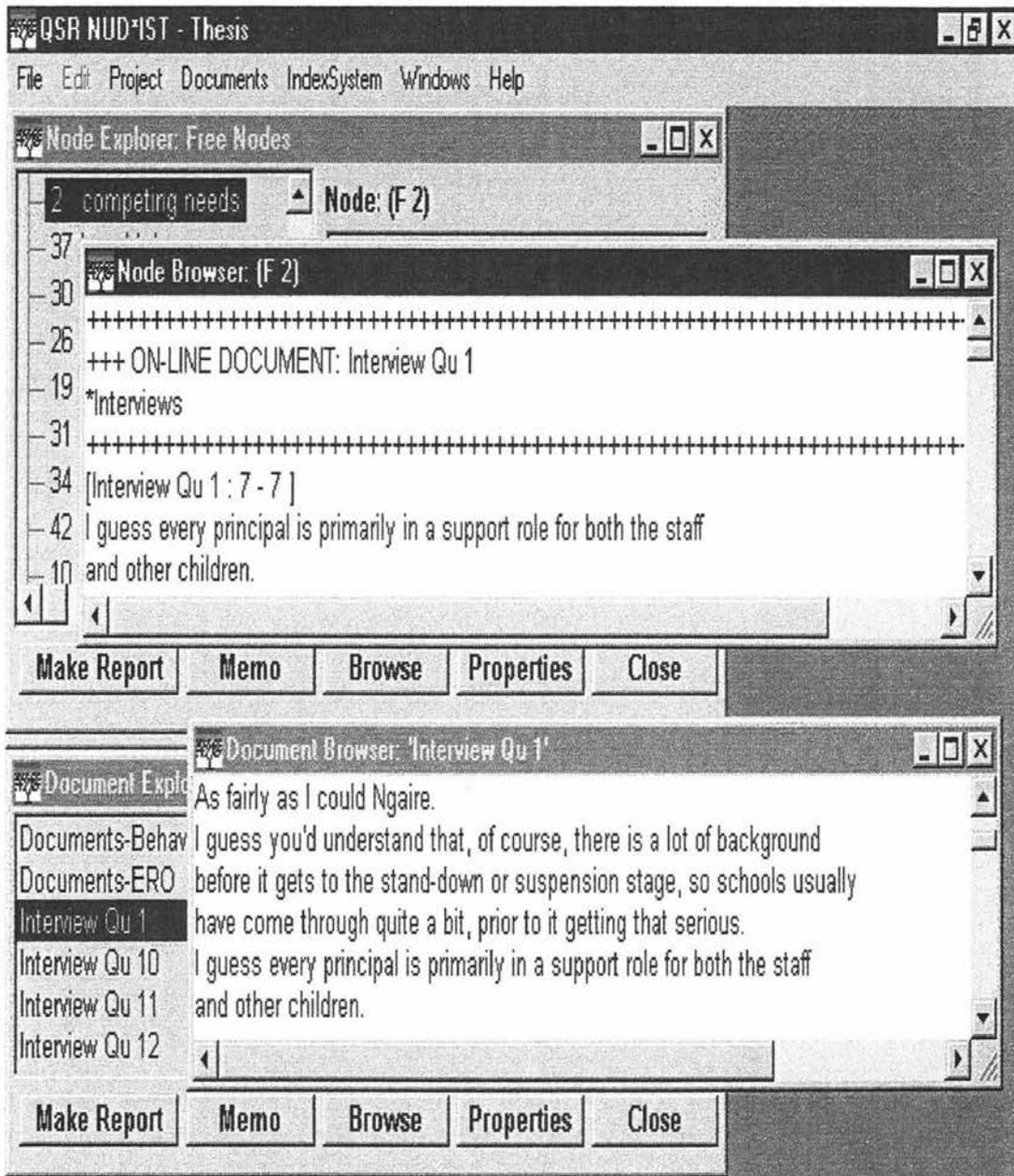
If you would also be willing to be part of a smaller group of primary school principals who will be interviewed on the topic, could you please tick the box on the front cover of the questionnaire.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to being in touch with you again soon.

Yours sincerely

Ngairé Addis

APPENDIX F: SCREEN DUMP OF THE QSR NU*DIST DOCUMENT BROWSER AND INDEX BROWSER



APPENDIX G: QSR NU*DIST PRINTOUT FOR THE NODE 'COMPETING NEEDS'

Q.S.R. NUD.IST
PROJECT: Thesis

(F 2) //Free Nodes/competing needs

*** No Definition

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 1

+++ Retrieval for this document: 11 units out of 83, = 13%

*Transcribed Interview School #24 4

++ Text units 7-7:

I guess every principal is primarily in a support role for both the staff
and other children. 7

*Transcribed Interview School #26 9

++ Text units 13-14:

The main purpose of the stand-down in the first instance was to protect
the little brother. 13

Once we did that, there were a number of needs to consider. 14

++ Text units 17-17:

The other need that arose was the particular needs of the mother in that
she cannot read. 17

*Transcribed Interview School #29 23

++ Text units 24-24:

We certainly had pressures from other parents in relation to his
management. 24

++ Text units 35-35:

But in the end, when he violently attacked a child, the parents wanted
action, and we said, "Yes, we agree entirely with you." 35

*Transcribed Interview School #33 39

++ Text units 40-40:

I think that by the time you get to exclusion as a possibility, you are actually looking at your needs, rather than the family and the student's. 40

++ Text units 47-47:

So my answer to you would be, I wasn't trying to meet the needs of the student and the family. 47

++ Text units 49-49:

But I was looking at the interests of her classmates, the teaching staff and the school and its position in the community and that if we were to keep that student in our school, there was no more, honestly, that we could have done. 49

*Transcribed Interview School #34 52

++ Text units 55-55:

And so he had those needs, and really, things should have happened for him a long time before he even reached primary school. 55

++ Text units 65-65:

And what we had here - I thought our parents were excellent- they had a lot of patience with him, because it was their children who were getting

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+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 13

+++ Retrieval for this document: 2 units out of 67, = 3.0%

*Transcribed Interview #33 25

++ Text units 46-47:

Now how on earth can a school be expected to accommodate and educate that child and [] other kids who do want to learn. 46

People have been saying it for a long, time. 47

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+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 3

+++ Retrieval for this document: 14 units out of 66, = 21%

*Transcribed Interview #24 4

++ Text units 5-5:

I wouldn't want to put it in monetary terms Ngaire, but again I would

emphasize that with the nature of the schools really, I think, how would I put it, perhaps if we err, we err on the side of the child that is causing the dysfunctional behaviour or exhibiting the dysfunctional behaviour.	5
*Transcribed Interview #26	7
++ Text units 12-15:	
The advice that we were getting from the SES, from the behaviour person at SES, was that when these children blow up and have a physical incident or feel that they are being challenged or something like that, then the advice from SES was that we remove the other children from the classroom.	12
Before this child arrived and with other children we have had who have been similar, we decided as a staff that we wouldn't do that, and while it mightn't be P.C. our decision was that the needs of the others came before the needs of that individual.	13
And so we would not empty a classroom for one child.	14
So we remove the child rather than removing all the kids.	15
*Transcribed Interview #29	18
++ Text units 28-28:	
But the stress on the teacher aide was cruel.	28
*Transcribed Interview #33	41
++ Text units 45-45:	
A lessening of quality of a learning environment for thirty pupils as this particular student went through her disruptive behaviours.	45
++ Text units 48-49:	
Huge, in that if the school had not put that time into that pupil we could have been doing other things for more positive outcomes - with extension groups or whatever.	48
You've got so much energy, you've got so much time and every bit of both of those that a misbehaving student takes off, they're taking off effort that you could have put into positive things for other kids that are not misbehaving. So there is a price that we all pay.	49
*Transcribed Interview #34	51

++ Text units 57-58:
And people don't really understand all the support mechanisms that are in there for the child. 57
And parents don't understand that this child probably needs more support than what they did, so they look at the little picture, they don't look at the big picture at what's best for this child. 58
++ Text units 60-62:
We had two irate parents, really irate parents who wanted the child physically thrown out and couldn't see rhyme or reason and these were in the early stages with minor incidents. 60
They basically took the attitude that they didn't want their children mixing with children like this. 61
It also took a strain on the teacher. 62
+++++
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 5
+++ Retrieval for this document: 3 units out of 51, = 5.9%
*Transcribed Interview #24 4
++ Text units 8-8:
But it comes to the point where the safety and educational welfare of the other children comes to the fore and have got to be considered. 8
*Transcribed Interview #29 19
++ Text units 24-24:
But we also minimize it for the rest of the staff. 24
++ Text units 26-26:
But we all agreed that we stick at it. 26
+++++
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 6
+++ Retrieval for this document: 1 unit out of 59, = 1.7%
*Transcribed Interview #24 4
++ Text units 7-7:
There should be some form of out-of- school placement available to schools for pupils who are disrupting and putting schools and pupils at

risk. 7

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+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 7

+++ Retrieval for this document: 4 units out of 95, = 4.2%

*Transcribed Interview #26 8

++ Text units 12-12:

In the case that's recently happened here in [], I'm aware of just how hard that school worked to help that child and the lengths that they went to protect the teacher, the other children while retaining that child at the school - to the extent that the child was basically in separate care for all the school day. 12

++ Text units 16-16:

So that will be affecting the judgements of principals and Boards in deciding to exclude and that shouldn't be a consideration when a Board finally decides that it is simply unable to keep that child any longer because of the risk that they present to the other children or staff, but particularly other children. 16

*Transcribed Interview #33 48

++ Text units 79-80:

I don't need that, I've got issues to deal with of my own and I take a very responsible attitude to this. 79

But I'm not about voluntarily bringing in extra, and the law says that if they've been excluded, then I don't have to. 80

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Interview Qu 8

+++ Retrieval for this document: 12 units out of 78, = 15%

*Transcribed Interview #33 39

++ Text units 52-53:

We're actually walking a real tightrope between trying to support the students who need a tremendous amount of support because they come from all sorts of backgrounds. 52

We try and do our best for them, and the kids who just want to get on

with it.	53
++ Text units 56-58:	
How can you expect a teacher in the classroom who is expected to extend the brighter ones, put in learning support for the learning support needs, deal appropriately to the middle and all of the other things with uniform and assessment and you know, the whole nine yards, and then you put in a very disruptive, very challenging student or two.	56
And there is a cost to this.	57
You either focus on the twenty-nine and this child doesn't get the level of support they need.	58
++ Text units 61-62:	
Yes, you've got learning support and we have all of those, but the behaviour tends to dominate, so the learning needs tend to come second.	61
If you've got a kid who is behaviourally disruptive, you are less likely to be able to fix the learning needs, if you are totally focused or continually focused on the behaviour needs.	62
++ Text units 65-69:	
Now I look at the students from here and yes, I feel sorry.	65
Excluding them is not doing a thing for them.	66
It's doing a heck of a lot for the other kids who are left here.	67
But putting them on some of these schemes is not really meeting their needs at all.	68
Having them on the streets is certainly setting them up for even more disaster.	69
+++++	
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Questionnaire Qu 3a	
+++ Retrieval for this document: 2 units out of 181, = 1.1%	
*School #29	74
++ Text units 116-116:	
The majority of this contact was in relation to his behaviour and concerns that we had about his safety and the safety of children at this school.	116

++ Text units 122-122:
I have no hesitation in recommending to the board his immediate
suspension and consideration should be given to exclusion as this student
is a risk to all around him and in particular the schools he will attend
in the future. 122

+++++
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Questionnaire Qu 3c
+++ Retrieval for this document: 4 units out of 90, = 4.4%
*School #24 25

++ Text units 26-26:
Concern for the teacher, and the students in that class. 26
*School #28 35

++ Text units 36-36:
Disappointed but resigned to the fact it was best for all concerned. 36
*School #33 53

++ Text units 56-56:
Students found her a threatening and disruptive influence. - everyone had
a need - many of them(the needs) were in conflict. 56
*School #50 88

++ Text units 90-90:
Seeing how relieved the staff were after this result, the stand-down, I
consider that perhaps we had waited too long. "To be kind - Be Strong"
is a good thought I now carry. 90

+++++
+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Questionnaire Qu 3e
+++ Retrieval for this document: 8 units out of 81, = 9.9%
*School #13 13

++ Text units 14-14:
Exhausted - fed up with the time and money and energy, the child was
consuming. 14
*School #29 39

++ Text units 42-43:

Many wanted him excluded - like a year before he was!! 42

They felt it wasn't fair on other kids - it wasn't safe. 43

*School #33 45

++ Text units 46-48:

I was aware of a high level of staff frustration contending with the behaviour. 46

Students found her a threatening and disruptive influence. 47

Everyone had a need - many of them(the needs) were in conflict. 48

*School #40 64

++ Text units 65-65:

Safety of children was paramount. 65

*School #50 79

++ Text units 80-80:

Seeing how relieved the staff were after this result, the stand-down, I consider that perhaps we had waited too long. "To be kind - Be Strong" is a good thought I now carry. 80

+++++

+++ ON-LINE DOCUMENT: Questionnaire Qu 4g

+++ Retrieval for this document: 2 units out of 78, = 2.6%

*School #36 52

++ Text units 53-53:

None - except that as a Principal I will never allow one child to consistently deny others their right to learn in a safe environment and teachers also have the right to teach. 53

*School #46 67

++ Text units 69-69:

This one child is slowly but surely draining the life-blood out of our school. 69

+++++

+++ Total number of text units retrieved = 63

+++ Retrievals in 11 out of 22 documents, = 50%.

+++ The documents with retrievals have a total of 929 text units,

so text units retrieved in these documents = 6.8%.
+++ All documents have a total of 1586 text units,
so text units found in these documents = 4.0%.
+++++

APPENDIX H: RESEARCH REPORT

Stand-downs, Suspensions and Exclusions: A Dilemma for Primary School Principals

Ngairé Addis

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of disciplinary exclusions occurring in New Zealand schools. A reported 11,972 cases of stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions occurred in the first six months of the 2001 school year. Of special concern has been the growing proportion of primary and intermediate pupils who are being stood-down, suspended and excluded. These trends have attracted much media attention and public comment.

The aim of this thesis has been to focus specifically on principals' experiences and views as they managed the actual disciplinary exclusion process for young seriously misbehaving pupils at primary school level. It is now just over three years since the government introduced new educational legislation for disciplinary exclusions and, with the lack of research worldwide into principals' perceptions of the disciplinary exclusion process, such a study is timely. The research process involved two main research methods (survey research and case-study research) and a sample of 23 primary and intermediate school principals.

Findings from the study:

1. The characteristics of the primary age pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions in this study, are an accentuated version of the trends of age (older), gender (male) and ethnicity (Maori) factors already identified in the New Zealand national statistical database for all pupils in New Zealand state schools, now monitored by the Ministry of Education. The behaviours causing the disciplinary exclusion are also similar to the national statistics with physical violence and continual disobedience being the most common reasons for such sanction.

2. This study also identified parenting and home backgrounds, special education and learning needs and medical or mental conditions, such as ADD, in these primary pupils, which were also factors identified in previous New Zealand research of secondary pupils' 'disciplinary exclusions' and in overseas research. Information on these factors is not collected for the national statistical database. The final incident incurring the sanction of disciplinary exclusion usually occurred after a long history of offending building up to a major incident, during which time the school had gone to tremendous efforts to change the pupil's behaviour, help and support the pupil with their various needs and enlist the help of the parents or caregivers.

3. In addition, this study has also isolated several other characteristics of these primary school pupils receiving disciplinary exclusions - the final year of school (either at primary or intermediate) and the transference of these at-risk pupils from school to school. School exclusion can be attributed to many interacting complex factors including those related to individuals, families, educational and outside institutions, the social context as well as the direct impact of changing economic and education government policies and legislation.

4. Disciplinary exclusions are used as a last resort by the principals. The competing needs of everyone involved in the situation provide a tension for principals. In the early stages, before the misbehaviour crossed the boundary between what was acceptable and could be tolerated to what was totally unacceptable, the principal had been fully supporting the needs of the pupil through in-school and outside school agency and parental involvement and a huge investment of time, staffing and resources. However, principals were highly conscious that other people in the school community had competing needs with this pupil.

5. The use of disciplinary exclusions varied widely between schools. Most principals used disciplinary exclusions as the very last resort. Stand-downs were the most commonly used sanction. The newly introduced legislation was seen as requiring a huge amount of paperwork and as a source of bureaucracy. Principals perceived a lack of Ministry of Education support and resourcing and parental inaction for dealing with such seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools.

Indeed, principals felt that pupils displaying such extreme misbehaviour could not be accommodated within mainstream schools but that there were no alternatives for these young pupils.

6. Principals experienced a wide range of feelings over the disciplinary exclusion incidents such as frustration, disappointment, stress, anger, concern, resignation, despair, hurt, disgust, sadness and a sense of failure. The principals saw themselves in the unenviable position described by the statements, “the principal bears the brunt of the task in disciplinary exclusions”, “the principal acts as the disturbance handler” and “the principal does a juggling act to balance the needs of the pupil over the needs of the staff and other pupils”. Principals encountered mixed reactions from the parents or caregivers to the disciplinary exclusion of their child with most, however, being understanding, appreciative and supportive of the school’s action. Also, principals were aware of the depth of feelings of their staff, with common reactions being relief and support of the principal’s stance, concern for the pupil, sadness, frustration, anger, disappointment and exhaustion.

7. Principals generally found the disciplinary exclusion to be a successful experience for the school and it was the preferred course of action for the majority of principals. The principals liked the new stand-down legislation for dealing with the pupils in that it provided a wake-up call for some pupils but they questioned its effectiveness with the hard-core misbehaving pupils. With respect to exclusions, principals did not like the new legislative provision of trying to find other schools to take their excluded pupils and, similarly, did not always take on other schools’ excluded pupils. Again, they felt that the Ministry of Education should provide more support and that this requirement was contributing towards transference of the problem rather than a solution.

8. Principals put forward a variety of educational (and other) solutions to the problem such as alternative schooling structures, more resourcing for schools, better training for teachers, special support systems being established within schools, Ministry of Education support in dealing with the transient nature of these pupils and very early intervention (as early as pre-school) to identify and help these at-risk pupils and their families.

9. Principals perceived the rising trend in disciplinary exclusions to be caused by the government's market policy that had put schools in competition with one another for pupils and the need for schools to promote a good image.

In addition to these findings, the disciplinary exclusion process was also found to present 12 dilemmas to principals. These dilemmas were categorised according to dilemmas arising from conflicts over principals' personal values, resources and the policies and practices required of schools as institutions. They are:

Dilemmas that are normative-based with respect to values, beliefs, ideologies and norms.

Dilemma 1. Competing needs

On the one hand, the principal has the needs of the one misbehaving pupil to consider.

But, on the other hand, the principal has the needs of the other pupils, the staff and the school community to consider.

Dilemma 2. The discipline continuum

On the one hand, the principal had been in the role of providing support and help to the pupil, who had been committing serious misbehaviours over a long period of time.

But, on the other hand, when was it time for the principal, to step into the role of disciplinarian and sanction the pupil under the formal disciplinary exclusion process?

Dilemmas that are caused by institutional-based structures, processes, practice and programs with respect to how people operate and perform tasks in institutional settings.

Dilemma 3. The purpose of schools

On the one hand, there are common characteristics to the pupils who have had disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, these characteristics are outside the control of the school, in terms of how they could help these at-risk pupils.

Dilemma 4. A role conflict for principals

On the one hand, the principal has a role as principal of the school for putting forward the case for a disciplinary exclusion of the pupil, to the Board of Trustees.

But, on the other hand, the principal has a role as a member on the Board of Trustees for making the decision about the disciplinary exclusion of the pupil.

Dilemma 5. Conflicting government policies

On the one hand, the government provides legislation, policy guidelines and support programmes to schools for the disciplinary exclusion process.

But, on the other hand, other government legislation and policy puts schools in competition with one another for pupils, which affects the way in which schools deal with these seriously misbehaving pupils.

Dilemma 6. Effectiveness of the stand-down

On the one hand, the stand-down may be effective with some pupils.

But, on the other hand, it may not work with other pupils.

Dilemma 7. Passing the 'buck'

On the one hand, the legislation for disciplinary exclusion allows the principal who is excluding, to solve the problem of the seriously misbehaving pupil by removing them from their school.

But, on the other hand, that same legislation transfers the problem of that seriously misbehaving pupil to the principal of another school.

Dilemmas that are resource-based with respect to financial resources, material resources such as buildings and equipment, time and human resources.

Dilemma 8. Competing use of resources

On the one hand, a tremendous amount of time, effort and resources was being expended on one pupil.

But, on the other hand, this meant less time and resources for the other pupils.

Dilemma 9. Parent support

On the one hand, the school can put in place various types of support (in-school and outside-school agency) at considerable effort to help the misbehaving pupil.

But, on the other hand, if the pupil's family does not support the school in what it is trying to do for the pupil, the school's efforts will have little effect in helping the misbehaving pupil.

Dilemma 10. Adequate provision of resources

On the one hand, principals think that they are able to provide an education for these seriously misbehaving pupils within their schools.

But, on the other hand, they consider that they do not have the resources or Ministry support to do so.

Dilemma 11. Provision for the very young?

On the one hand, there is an increasing number of young primary age pupils receiving and being at-risk of receiving disciplinary exclusions.

But, on the other hand, there are no programmes of early intervention, support or alternative schooling structures for these young pupils.

Dilemma 12. Mainstream schools for all?

On the one hand, there are some pupils whose behaviour is so extreme that principals consider that they cannot be accommodated in mainstream schools.

But, on the other hand, there is no other educational institution available for these pupils.

Recommendations from the study:

- 1. That this study could assist government planners in their understanding of the practicalities of the disciplinary exclusion process at primary school level. Consideration needs to be given to the extreme cases that are not catered for by the current legislation.**

Principals do not view the new procedure of stand-down as having much success for pupils exhibiting repeat, extreme misbehaviour. Furthermore, principals do not like the current provision of exclusion, which requires them to look for alternative schools for the offending pupils. Principals often encounter the situation where other

schools refuse to take these pupils. Principals want an alternative type of school to which they can send these extreme cases. Such an alternative provision of education is necessary for young excluded primary age pupils who are too young to be left at home alone and unsupervised on Correspondence School courses while parents or caregivers are at work.

2. That ongoing meetings be held with all parties working with these at-risk pupils – principals of local area schools and representatives of Boards of Trustees, outside agencies and the local Ministry of Education - to discuss and establish local area procedures in order to identify these at-risk pupils and to co-ordinate their efforts.

Principals mentioned the need for early identification, intervention and co-ordination of efforts from early childhood through to primary and secondary school. While realising the importance of managing privacy issues, the benefits of establishing a cohesive approach would accrue from effective communication and co-ordination of efforts.

3. That while the principals found the Ministry of Education guidelines helpful; perhaps training in the legal aspects of disciplinary exclusion would also be of benefit to principals. A series of two-day courses would enable principals to consider:

- **The legal requirements for due process and natural justice,**
- **The procedures that principals could implement within their schools for managing the paperwork required,**
- **The procedures that principals could implement to enable communication and support between parents or caregivers, the Board of Trustees, the wider school community, outside agencies, other schools and the Ministry of Education.**

Principals found the Ministry of Education “Guidelines for stand-downs, suspensions, expulsions and exclusions” helpful, especially the flow-chart of the procedural steps they needed to implement. However, they found that the process involved an enormous amount of paperwork and bureaucracy. Principals also

encountered problems dealing with the conflicting interests of everyone involved in the process and they spent a large amount of time communicating with all the stakeholders.

Conclusion:

Throughout this study it was evident that principals worked hard at maintaining and providing an education for extremely difficult pupils, but these pupils presented a dilemma for principals. On the one hand, comments showed that schools, caring principals and hardworking teaching staff went out of their way to support and educate these pupils in their schools. But, on the other hand, principals perceived that they had no other choice but to use the disciplinary exclusion process for the young pupils who were seriously misbehaving in their schools.

c/- Professor Wayne Edwards
Department of Social and Policy Studies in Education
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Palmerston North

«JobTitle»

«School»

«City»

<Date>

Dear «Title» «LastName»

I am a Postgraduate student in the Graduate School of Education at Massey University. Recently, I undertook a research study, on the subject “Suspensions, Stand-downs and Exclusions” in which you took part by way of responding to a questionnaire and/or being interviewed. I enclose a Research Report on the findings of this study. I trust that the report will be of interest and worthwhile.

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for your participation in this study.

Yours sincerely

Ngairé Addis