Reducing School Stand-Downs –

A case study of one New Zealand secondary school

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ABSTRACT

In 2012 schools in New Zealand stood-down over 13,000 students as a result of behavioural difficulties. Within this data are a disproportionate number of low decile, male and Māori students. This present study examines the stand-down processes at one secondary school to compare the study school's stand-down data with national norms, and conduct a case study within the school to gather different perspectives on a stand-down event from two students, their families, and school staff. Possible ways to reduce stand-downs and intervene early before behaviour peaks to a level that may justify a stand-down are examined from a global view and then in relation to the specific contexts at the study school. Successful measures that can lead to a reduction in school stand-downs include the implementation of a positive behaviour framework such as School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning which is being promoted and implemented in New Zealand, which take a targeted, tiered approach to behavioural interventions. Restorative Practices and seeking interventions that assess the function of student behaviour are also highlighted as successful measures to reduce the time students spend out of school as a result of behavioural incidents.

Table of Contents

Appendices

List of tables

List of figures

CHAPTER ONE

Background to the Study

Setting the Scene

When the Ministry of Education released their annual stand-down, suspension, exclusion and expulsion data in July 2013, they were presenting figures showing that stand-down rates had fallen for the sixth consecutive year, and that the rates of stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions now sit at their lowest rate in 13 years of recorded data (Education Counts, 2012). However, within that data lies evidence of 16, 712 stand-downs in one year, involving a total of 13, 040 different students (Education Counts, 2012). Is denying 13,000 students educational instructional time the best way to deal with behavioural issues at school?

A Snapshot of Stand-downs in New Zealand Schools

As part of a disciplinary process, schools within New Zealand are able to stand students down for a period of up to five days, for a maximum of ten days per school year (Ministry of Education, 2012). The decision to stand-down a student is at the discretion of the principal, and unlike a suspension or exclusion, does not require consultation with the Board of Trustees[1]. Suspensions are a more formal removal of a student from school that results in a meeting with the Board of Trustees which decides the outcome for the student. The Board of Trustees decides how to manage the student's misbehaviour and can either lift the suspension with or without conditions, extend the suspension with conditions, or exclude the student from the school.

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[1] All of New Zealand's state and state-integrated schools have a Board of Trustees, elected by the parent community and staff members, responsible for the governance and management of the school.

Exclusion is the formal removal of a student from a school (MOE, 2012). While all forms of exclusion are a paramount issue, the focus of the present study is restricted to stand-down data only. [2]

The Ministry of Education (2006; Education Counts, 2013) states that student attendance and engagement are fundamental foundations for student achievement, and that stand-down rates can be used as indicators of student engagement. High levels of stand-downs can provide indications that behavioural issues are present at a school and engagement may be absent (Education Counts, 2013). There is a great deal of variation within New Zealand stand-down data, as stand-down rates vary between schools, decile ratings and ethnic groups, to which the Ministry of Education has commented that stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions are not measures of student behaviour, but of a school's reaction to behaviours (Education Counts, 2013). What one school chooses to stand-down a student for, another may not. Encouragingly, the national trend of decreasing stand-down rates indicates that there are alternative responses to problematic behaviour available to schools that may lead to less students losing instructional time as a result of behavioural issues.

Examining data since 2000, the stand-down rate in New Zealand peaked in 2006 at 30 stand-downs per 1000, and has followed a downward trend since, now at a rate of 26 stand-downs per 1000. However, schools are standing down Māori students more than any other ethnic group. In 2011, the stand-down rate for Māori was 46.1 stand-downs per 1000. This figure is 1.5 times higher than the stand-down rate of Pacifika students who were stood down at a rate of 30.1 per 1000; and 2.6 times as high as the stand-down rate for European/Pakeha which was 17.8 per 1000. This means that Māori students, who represent only 22% of the total school

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[2] The term stand-down is used in New Zealand, while internationally a stand-down is called a suspension. While reporting international research, the word stand-down is used to ensure clarity within the New Zealand context.

population, get stood down nearly three times as often as NZ European students, and Pasifika students, who represent 14% of the total student population get stood down twice as often as NZ European students.   The lowest stand-down rate by an ethnic group were Asian students, at a rate of 6.5 per 1000 in 2011 (Education Counts, 2013). This disparity between ethnic groups are mirrored in the United States, where 17% of African American students were stood-down at least once compared to a rate of 5% for whites (Losen & Gillespie, 2012), and in the United Kingdom where Black Caribbean students are four times more likely to be excluded than the school population as a whole (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012). These figures call for an examination of stand-down practices within New Zealand to see if this disparity can be addressed. See figure 1.1: Age-standardised stand-down rates by ethnic group (2000 – 2012).

Figure 1.1. Age-standardised stand-down rates by ethnic group (2000 to 2012)
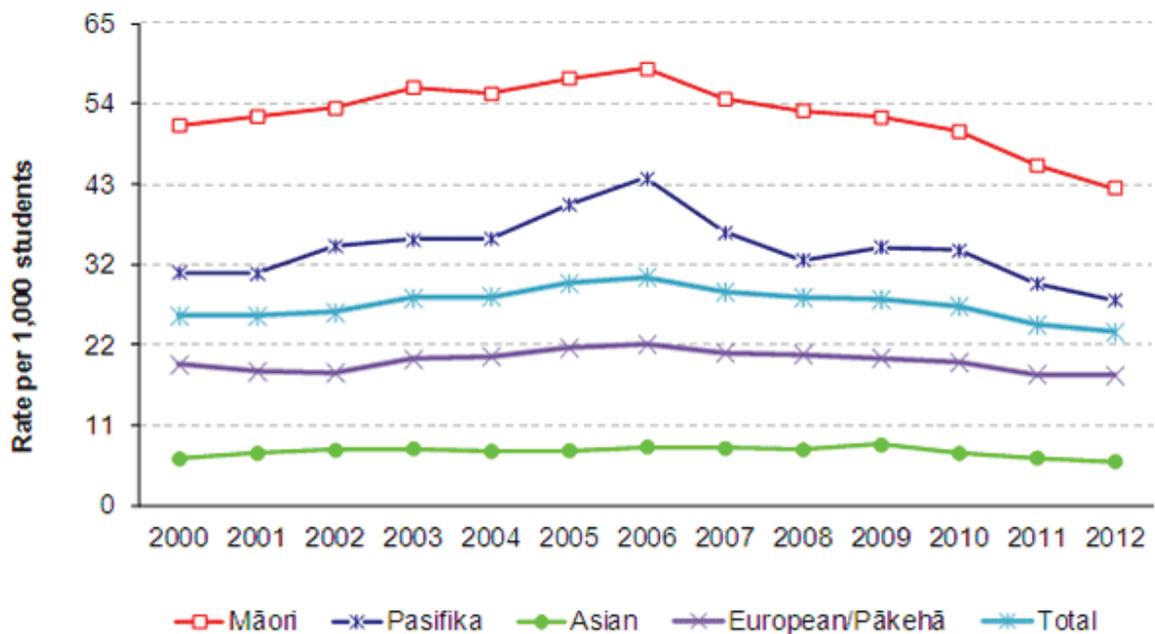
Source: Education Counts, Ministry of Education, 2013.

Male students consistently experience more stand-downs than female students. The 2012 data shows that males were stood down at a rate 2.4 times higher than the female rate. In 2012, the majority of stand-downs took place at the secondary school level, with 72.3% occurring at that level. Students as young as 5 were stood down in 2012, though students aged 13 to 15 were most likely to be stood down, accounting for 61.9% of all stand-downs (Education Counts, 2013).

Another notable disproportional representation within school stand-down data is decile rating.[3] Students attending decile one and two schools are nearly five times more likely to be stood down than students attending decile nine and ten schools (Education Counts, 2013). This data highlights the reality that Māori male students aged between 13-15 and attending a low decile school are most likely to be stood-down from school as a result of a disciplinary action. In the New Zealand Māori Education Strategy, Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success (Ministry of Education, 2008), the Ministry of Education acknowledged that the education system has been inequitable for Māori students, and highlighted the need to raise Māori students' engagement and achievement.

When examining the type of behaviour that leads to stand-downs, physical assault on other students was the main reason for stand-downs in 2012 comprising 26% of all stand-downs. Continual disobedience accounted for 23% of reasons for stand-downs, and verbal assault on staff had an occurrence of 14% in the stand-down data. These three behaviours accounted for close to two-thirds of all stand-downs. When this data is broken down by gender, the prevalent behaviour leading to male student stand-downs is physical assault on another student, while

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[3] Decile rating indicate the socio-economic community of a school. Decile one schools are the schools with the highest proportions of students from low socio-economic communities, while decile ten schools have the lowest proportion of these students.

female students are more likely to be stood down for continual disobedience than any other

behaviour. See Table 1.2 for more information.

Table 1.2. *Percentage of stand-downs, by behaviour (2000-2012)*

Year	Behaviour								
	Continual Disobedience	Drugs (Including Substance Abuse)	Physical Assault on Other Students	Physical Assault on Staff	Verbal Assault on Other Students	Verbal Assault on Staff	Smoking or Alcohol	Theft, Vandalism or Arson	Other
2012	22.7	7.1	26.0	2.9	2.7	13.6	6.3	7.7	11.0
2011	21.9	7.6	25.5	2.7	2.5	14.9	5.9	7.7	11.3
2010	21.7	8.0	25.9	2.8	2.6	14.3	6.5	8.2	9.8
2009	23.3	7.0	25.7	2.8	2.1	14.6	6.5	8.1	9.9
2008	25.1	5.8	25.8	2.8	1.9	14.9	7.0	7.6	9.1
2007	25.5	4.9	25.3	2.8	2.2	14.1	7.8	8.0	9.4
2006	26.1	4.4	24.4	2.6	2.1	15.1	7.5	7.7	10.0
2005	25.8	5.8	24.9	2.6	2.2	15.2	6.9	6.9	9.6
2004	25.2	4.8	24.9	2.1	2.4	15.6	7.4	7.7	9.8
2003	24.8	4.7	23.6	2.3	2.5	17.3	7.6	7.9	9.3
2002	25.9	6.0	22.3	2.2	2.2	16.0	9.3	7.2	8.9
2001	25.3	5.5	23.7	2.0	2.3	15.7	9.8	7.6	8.1
2000	24.8	5.0	23.0	2.1	2.3	16.1	10.2	8.2	8.3
"Other" category includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, weapons and other harmful or dangerous behaviour.									

Source: http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/indicators/main/student-engagement-participation/80346

Within this data 7% of high schools across New Zealand did not use stand-downs at all, compared to 59% of primary schools who reported that they did not stand any students down during the 2011 school year (Education Counts, 2013). This variation in data is puzzling. Why is it that some schools can have a low level or no stand-downs, while other schools have high numbers of school stand-downs, which means that these students are missing educational time due to behavioural issues?

Section 14 of the Education Act, 1989, states that:

"The principal of a state school may stand-down or suspend a student if satisfied on reasonable grounds that-

(a) The student's gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school; or

(b) Because of the student's behaviour, it is likely that the student, or other students at the school, will be seriously harmed if the student is not stood-down or suspended for an unspecified period."

The Ministry of Education provides guidelines to principals facing a stand-down decision, which include considering the facts from the incident to decide whether a student's actions constituted gross misconduct or continual disobedience that may risk serious harm or set a harmful example to other students, and clearly states that if the behaviour does not fall into the category of gross misconduct, continual disobedience or behaviour risking serious harm then principals may not stand-down the student. However, these categories are not clearly defined. A focal point for policy concerns is the definition of 'continual disobedience', one of the most prevalent reasons cited for stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions in New Zealand. At present it is up to the discretion of the principal to determine whether the behaviour is indicating a

pattern of entrenched misbehaviour, and whether the perceived 'continual disobedience' is a harmful or dangerous example to other students in the school (MOE, 2009). Unlike suspensions and exclusions, the principal is able to make that decision alone, and the very interpretation to what constitutes continual disobedience will impact stand-down rates for individual schools.

As stated, schools throughout New Zealand have varying rates of stand-downs, from schools such as the Victory School in Nelson that has not stood a student down for nine years (Family and Community Services' e-newsletter, April 2010) to a High School in the Waikato that held the highest stand-down rate in 2007 when it stood down 105 students in 2007 – with a roll of 407, this amounted to almost one in four students (Waikato Times, 25/07/2008). This variation of stand-down rates between schools highlights some paramount issues with stand-downs in this country: How can schools increase the engagement of priority learners' and at-risk students? What are effective ways to reduce the number of stand-downs? And the need to clarify the term "continual disobedience" to reduce the rate of individual interpretation that this term presently allows. Because there is no need to report to a governing body when standing-down a student, there are no checks in place to ensure that the behaviour is at a level of severity to warrant the stand-down. It is also clear that whatever the term 'continual disobedience' means, there are schools in New Zealand that are struggling to manage difficult behaviour effectively.

When managing difficult behaviour, schools face competing demands. There is a primary need to ensure a safe learning environment for all learners, however the needs and potential consequences of the stand-down on the individual student exhibiting behavioural difficulties also warrants consideration (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). A comprehensive

review of school exclusion in Scotland (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2001) highlighted the complexity of the issue, saying:

> *The use of exclusion from school as a response to disruptive behaviour raises the important issue of pupil's right to education. There can be no doubt that the impact of repeated or extended periods of exclusion from school, possibly with little alternative educational provision, is damaging to any pupil's education and long-term life prospects. It is equally clear that schools cannot allow situations to persist in which an individual pupil's behaviour seriously disrupts the educational process of classmates. The challenge for schools is to minimise exclusion with its attendant undesirable consequences for the individual concerned, whilst ensuring that the effective education of other pupils is not disrupted (p.1).*

Research Questions

This project seeks to examine the stand-down process within New Zealand and investigate viable alternatives for schools to consider that may be more effective in changing behaviour. By taking a closer look at the stand-down process in one school, the present research seeks to answer these questions:

- What are the rates of stand downs across secondary schools in New Zealand and do stand down patterns in the case study setting reflect national trends?

- In relation to two specific cases, what are the perspectives of the students, the students' parent or caregiver and school personnel regarding the present stand-down process?

- What steps can the target school take to reduce the use of stand-downs for students who display inappropriate behaviour?

- How can the target school intervene early to avoid or reduce behaviours that may lead to stand-downs?

Rationale and benefits of this study

Given the broadly inequitable patterns of stand-downs found in New Zealand schools, it is important to examine more closely the stand-down procedures in one school. This is an important topic as every year, children are denied access to education by way of stand-downs, while research has shown that time out of class may result in academic difficulties (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). By taking a closer look and contextualizing vaguely defined terms such as continual disobedience, illuminating the thoughts and feelings of school personnel, the parents and most importantly the student's voice, this research aims to identify the numerous factors leading up to a stand-down. Ultimately, the objective of this inquiry project is to generate new insight into how students' challenging behaviour can be managed without removing students from the learning environment. By examining the specific behavioural difficulty that leads to each stand-down, it is hoped that this study can raise awareness of strategic alternatives to shift behaviour without a subsequent loss of educational time.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The present research seeks to examine the current stand-down process within New Zealand. While stand-down rates are on a decline, students continue to lose educational time because of behavioural difficulties. Research has shown that time spent out of class as a result of behavioural issues may exacerbate academic difficulties (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009) and alienate at-risk students who most likely need the supports a school can offer (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Collin, 2001; Dharan, Meyer & Mincher, 2012; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009), and rather than improve student behaviour, school stand-downs appear to predict future rates of misbehaviour and school stand-downs (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008).

The first research question in this study investigates the rates of stand-downs across secondary school in New Zealand, and questions if stand-down patterns in the case study reflect national trends. A breakdown of stand-downs on a national level was provided in the previous introduction, setting the scene for the present research. This review examines literature that considers the impact of a school stand-down on the individuals involved, and how behavioural issues can be better attended to with an aim to intervene early before difficulties with student behaviour reach the point of a stand-down. This chapter will highlight initiatives that have shown to reduce stand-down rates and decrease difficult behaviours at school.

Impact of stand-downs

Stand-downs are often used by schools to send a message to the school community about what is acceptable behaviour (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). It is acknowledged that at times it may be necessary to have a student spend time away from school, often to provide temporary relief, especially following acts of violence where the safety of staff and students may be compromised by having the offending student at school (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1999; Chin, Dowdy, Jimmerson & Rime, 2012; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; MOE, 2009). However, internationally researchers have been pushing to ensure that stand-downs are a last resort and that actions are taken within schools to ensure that stand-downs are not used as a form of discipline (e.g. Chin, Dowdy, Jimmerson & Rime, 2012; Collin, 2001; Fenning, Pulaski & Gomez et al, 2012; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Michail, 2011; BC MOE, 1999; Smith, Bicard, Bicard & Baylot Carey, 2012).

Losen and Gillespie (2012) suggest that if stand-downs were a deterrent, then the rate of repeat stand-downs would be low. In the US, 3.9% of students were stood-down in the 2009-2010 school year: 2.7% more than once. Within New Zealand, of those stood down in 2012, 79% were stood down only once. Bear (2012) argues that stand-downs can be effective in deterring problem behaviour for some, as there are students who are stood down only once, and fail to re-offend after their stand-down. He suggests that in conjunction with school and family, a message can be sent to some students that the behaviour they were stood-down for is unacceptable. However, often the students who are exhibiting inappropriate behaviours are students who do not have supportive home environments (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Meyer & Evans, 2013). As a result, students who need support the most are being pushed away from school (Bloomberg, 2003) and away from the support of peers (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). A

stand-down can lead to an increase in home stress (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Meyer & Evans, 2012) and also alienation (American Academy of Paediatrics, 2003; Collin, 2001; Dharan, Meyer & Mincher, 2012; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009) of students who are already exhibiting signs that they are not managing at school. Chin et al. (2012) support this viewpoint, citing a number of studies showing that students with behavioural difficulties, hyperactivity, aggression and poor social skills are less likely to positively change their behaviour as a result of a stand-down.

Besides the obvious concern that stand-downs remove students from the learning environment and result in a reduction of instructional time, consideration must be made towards the possibility that a stand-down may increase the academic difficulties of students who are already struggling at school (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). Chin et al., (2012) supports the concern of missed instruction when stood down, reporting that students who are stood-down often have academic difficulties. Students who find school a constant struggle academically are not likely to see the chance to have a few days off as a deterrent, and run the risk of falling further behind (Collin, 2001). In fact, the stand-down may provide students days off school to engage in activities they would prefer to school, thus rewarding anti-social behaviour (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009b).

Research has shown that students that have been stood-down are more likely to drop out of school (Fenning et al., 2012; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; Losen & Gillespie, 2012), engage in substance abuse (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009) and engage in acts of crime (AAP, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009) and are at a greater risk of incarceration (Losen & Gillespie, 2012) when out of school and with more time and opportunity to become involved in potentially harmful and dangerous activities.

While research indicates that there are detrimental effects of removing students from school, an analysis in British Columbia, Canada reported that discipline processes that served as punishment without instructional components have not been shown to decrease inappropriate behaviours (BC MOE, 1999). On the contrary, rather than reducing the likelihood of future behavioural incidences, school stand-downs appear to predict further incidences of misbehaviour and stand-downs (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008).

Using stand-downs as a response to challenging behaviours fits within a zero-tolerance approach to challenging behaviour (Advancement Project, 2010; American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Browne-Dianis, 2011; Efreom-Lieber & Lieber, 2010; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; Martinez, 2009). Zero-tolerance policies can be defined as "rules with no leeway, such that certain behavioural acts lead to the automatic use of discipline strategies" (Efreom-Lieber & Lieber, 2010, p. 105). This approach aims to reduce challenging behaviours through deterrence, by sending a message to the school community that certain behaviours will not be tolerated (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). Originating from the 1980s United States Government's 'war on drugs', 'zero-tolerance' was legislated into the American school system through former president Clinton administration's Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) in 1994. This law, passed to address school violence, required schools to institute a zero-tolerance policy for students bringing firearms to school, and enforce a minimum one year expulsion to students who brought a firearm to school, or schools would lose federal school funding (GFSA, 1994). Martinez (2009) points out that "legislature modelled a policy for U.S. students and schools after a law that was originally developed to target drug lords." (p.154)

This zero-tolerance stance operates on the assumption that removing students who engage in inappropriate behaviours will allow others to continue learning in a safer environment

(Advancement Project, 2010) and that the certain punishments of zero tolerance would have a deterrent effect on students (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008), thus improving both student behaviour and school discipline. Originally established to target the most serious of behaviours, schools began to stand-down students as a response to all undesirable behaviours, including minor ones. Fenning et al. (2012) conducted a content analysis of school's codes of conduct in 120 schools within six American states, finding that behaviour policies were most likely to focus on punitive responses, even for minor behaviours, so students are getting stood down as a response to their lateness and truancies. The concern researchers raise with the zero-tolerance approach is that it is a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing discipline problems in school, and the creates a 'school-to-prison pipeline' (Advancement Project, 2010) that sees students who are struggling cast out of school, given more time and opportunity to engage in harmful or dangerous acts, and become part of the criminal justice system.

Researchers have found no empirical evidence to support the deterrent effect of stand-downs, and have shown that stand-downs are not effective at reducing undesirable behaviours or in promoting positive behaviours (e.g.: Chin et al., 2012; Fenning et al., 2012). Research suggests that the stand-down process could be counter-productive, as students who have been stood down have exhibited increases in problem behaviour, and shown to be more likely to be stood down again. Evidence both in New Zealand and internationally show that students who have been stood down have reported to hate school (Collin, 2001), feel unwanted and under-valued (BC MOE, 1999), and may encourage their peers to truant to be with them (Meyer & Evans, 2012).

An international study found that school stand-downs increase the likelihood of further anti-social behaviour (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). Examining the impact of school stand-downs on subsequent antisocial and violent behaviour 12 months later, their research showed that students who were stood-down from school were 50% more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour and 70% more likely to engage in violent behaviour compared to students who had not been stood-down.

New Zealand researchers Meyer and Evans (2012) raise the important consideration of the stand-down on a student's family life. Often the families of at-risk learners lack to capacity to provide a structured environment during the student's time off school. The home situation may be part of the learner's problems, and the added stress of a stand-down could potentially increase discord or abuse. Certainly the idea of having at-risk students away from the structured school setting raises the concern that when students are out of school they have more opportunity to become involved in harmful activities (e.g.: Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009b; Michail, 2011; Meyer & Evans, 2012).

Smith (2009) conducted a study examining the impact of exclusion on families within a New Zealand context, and reported that families often felt angry, helpless, and unsupported during the process, and felt that schools did not provide their children with the supports they felt were necessary. Towl (2012) also conducted a case study interviewing schools, families and students in New Zealand that have been stood down, with a focus on how the stand-down process affected the child's identity and how others viewed them as members of a learning community. Towl interviewed ten students who had been stood down in year eight and upwards, and re-visited the participants six months later. Each of the students interviewed spoke about unresolved conflicts at school that they felt were restricting participation before they were stood-

down from school. Families in Towl's case study reported a sense of separation between home and school following a stand-down, and feelings of disappointment and confusion with trying to work with school to re-integrate their children back into school. Parents reported feeling that their child had developed a reputation that impacted how they felt their child was treated at school.

A number of studies have investigated students' perspectives on standing down and/or excluding students as a response to undesirable behaviour at school. There are gaps within the literature regarding the impact of school stand-downs within New Zealand, and there is a need for research to further examine school stand-downs from a national perspective to ensure the relevance of international evidence within a New Zealand context. Internationally, interviews with both students who have been removed from school as a result of a disciplinary process and mainstream students who have not been involved in a stand-down consider the stand-down process ineffective or even counterproductive (Centre for Social Justice, 2011; McClusky, 2008; Knipe, Reynolds & Milner, 2007; Michail, 2012). Students report that often the time spent away from school is seen as a holiday and often students enjoy the time they spend away from school.

In Scotland, McClusky (2008) interviewed mainstream students about exclusionary practices at school, and reported that students perceived that teachers may consider a stand-down to work towards changing students' behaviour, but the students in the study reported feeling that stood-down students were being punished but not helped. The students interviewed felt that stand-downs were over-used, at times inappropriately used and perceived a lack of consistency and effectiveness with the practice. The interviewed students also reported the benefit of teachers who "are fair, who listen, who have a sense of humour, who set high academic standards, and who respect young people" (p. 460).

A study in Northern Ireland by Knipe, Reynolds and Milner (2007) interviewed the general population of secondary schools. While the majority of students agreed with standing down students for violent behaviour, the interviewees thought that stood-down students may think of time away from school as a holiday, and highlighted the importance for stood-down students to have school work to do at home, and that parents should not allow them to see friends or leave the house. The researchers reflected that capturing the student's voice added value to understanding the effects of the school system on students and highlighted the importance of shaping the school system through listening to students.

A report compiled by the Centre or Social Justice (2011) in the UK, reported student voices on stand-downs which included: "Most kids like it"; "I slept all day until my mates got home "; "I played X-Box" "I got bored and angry. Everything kicked off at home because I was around too much" (p. 135), highlighting the importance of addressing student's behaviour rather than simply punishing them. In Australia, Michail (2012) collected similar student reports, including "I reckon it's just a little holiday, you just get to have some fun at home. They reckon you're going to think about what happened at school but it just doesn't happen" (p. 8).

Michail (2012) conducted a case study interviewing 10 students who had been stood down at least once in the last year. Michail reports that the majority of students interviewed felt angry when told that they had been stood-down. One of the key questions she asked these students was why the stand-down did not change their behaviour. Reasons study participants provided included perceptions that the stand-down was given for behaviour seen as inappropriate only to adults, that the stand-down did not address the root of the behaviour, and that students were taken away from their learning.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner on Exclusions (2011) conducted a comprehensive report on disciplinary exclusions in the UK. The report stated that students do not consider stand-downs to be an effective tool in changing behaviour, but interviewed students who reported that a mixture of restorative practices, internal isolation and removal of privileges such as break time and the ability to participate in extra-curricular activities were more likely to be effective responses to difficult behaviour at school.

There is significant research demonstrating the detrimental impact of having at-risk students spend time out of school. If stand-downs are to be decreased, however, it is important to examine what does work for students exhibiting behavioural difficulties so problem behaviour is addressed. The goal is to find ways to address behavioural difficulties within the school context which is can make positive changes to student behaviour and engagement while keeping students at school.

Initiatives to Reduce Stand-Downs

Before examining initiatives to engage students and potentially improve behaviour, it is important to consider the developmental level of secondary school students. The American Psychological Association (2008) highlighted that adolescents, particularly before the age of 15, display social immaturity in at least the following areas: poor resistance to peer influence, attitudes toward and perception of risk, future orientation, and impulse control. This suggests that adolescents are more likely to take greater risks and to reason less about the consequences of their behaviour. Schools are in an important position to nurture student's growth towards maturity, which makes using preventative measures and teaching appropriate skills so important. Preventative measures are much more effective in changing behaviour than negative consequences (Smith, Bicard, Bicard & Baylot Casey, 2012).

Research investigating ways to keep students engaged and at school has revealed a number of initiatives that have proven successful. The importance of early identification of at-risk students, provision of individual support, developing positive attitudes and social skills as well as working in partnership with parents and whānau are fundamental areas to consider when attempting to reduce students' time outside of the class (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2001). Many successful strategies address the issue at a systems level, and work to avoid behavioural issues that can lead to stand-downs, or address issues early rather than manage them at crisis point. Other initiatives look at different ways to engage students rather than expect all learners to fit into the traditional classroom context. The following section of the literature review highlights the more successful and accessible interventions that schools have utilised that can lead to a reduction in stand-downs, and examines how these could work in a New Zealand context.

School- wide positive behaviour for learning.

School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning (SW-PB4L) is a school-wide initiative geared at enhancing behaviour and learning that is currently being implemented in schools across New Zealand (MOE, 2013b). The key foundations of the school-wide initiative are that opportunities for learning and achievement increase if:

- The school environment is positive and supportive

- Expectations are consistently clear

- Children are consistently taught desired behaviours

- Children are consistently acknowledged for desired behaviours and responded to in a fair and equitable way (MOE, 2013b).

SW-PB4L is an evidence based framework that works on the knowledge that positive behaviour can be learned, and difficult and disruptive behaviour can be unlearnt, and involves a perspective shift from seeing an individual student as a 'problem' towards proactively changing the environment around students to support positive behaviour. This involves a recognition that punitive and exclusionary approaches to discipline do not bring about long-term and sustainable changes in behaviour (MOE, 2013b). School-wide PB4L supports the national application of evidence-based programmes and frameworks within New Zealand that have been shown to improve the social culture of schools, and recognises that there are no quick fixes, but instead takes a long-term view to ensure that changes in behaviour are sustained. The concept is that students' behaviour will improve when environments are created that increase the likelihood that students will learn and behave, rather than 'making' children comply (Sugai, Horner, Lewis-Palmer & Todd, 2005).

The introduction of PB4L by the Ministry of Education was a response to research from within New Zealand that recommended that behavioural problems be addressed as early as possible in a child's life. Church (2003) and the Advisory Group on Conduct Problems (2009) highlighted School-wide Positive Behaviour Supports as a successful framework to support improved behaviour in schools. The Ministry of Education adopted PB4L at Taumata Whanonga, a behaviour summit in 2009 and is in the process of implementing the programme in 400 schools within five years (MOE, 2013b). PB4L consists of three components: School-Wide PB4L, Incredible Years Parenting (IYP) programmes and Incredible Years Teacher (IYT) programmes. Schools that commit to implementing school-wide PB4L are provided with Ministry of Education training and $10 000 per year for three years (MOE, 2011).

School-Wide PB4L looks at student behaviour in a tiered approach that emphasises prevention (Sugai & Horner, 2009). At each tier schools put systems and practices in place that match the needs of their students. Tier 1 focuses on universal behavioural support systems across the whole school, while Tier 2 looks at more intensive interventions for students who are not responsive to primary tier interventions and require additional behavioural support. This generally includes 0-15% of the student population. Tier 3 looks at supporting the 0-5% of students who exhibit chronic, challenging and severe behaviour with individualised and intensive behavioural supports (MOE, 2012b; Sugai & Horner, 2009). This tiered system can be summarised by considering Tier 1 is for *all* students, Tier 2 is for *some* students, and Tier 3 is for a *few* students (MOE, 2013c).

The Ministry of Education expects it to take three to five years for a school to put the framework into place, but with the development of consistent expectations and models, research has indicated that schools report improved social climate and improved academic performance

when following the school-wide programme (Horner et al., 2004; Skiba & Sprague, 2008). Researchers have also shown that schools with school-wide behaviour plans are perceived as safer environments, suggesting that systematic implementation at the whole-school level is a useful practice (Spaulding et al., 2010). In New Zealand, research shows that behaviour has improved for schools who have introduced school-wide behaviour plans that have included a school-wide buy-in with the following characteristics: creation of clear expectations through discussions about what was appropriate behaviour, establishment of consistent, immediate and fair consequences for both appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, and providing support for students to develop positive relationships and learn to behave appropriately (MOE, 2013c). These changes often involve a major culture shift within schools, and for this reason are seen as a long-term approach rather than a quick-fix strategy to address problem behaviour (MOE, 2013).

Part of the school-wide system includes data collection and analysis that shapes school decision making. By recording and tracking incidents, schools are able to see when and where behavioural issues are occurring, and the school is expected to use this data to highlight areas which need improvement either on an individual, classroom or school level. Ideally, the compilation of this data provides schools with the ability to evaluate individual student behaviour, the setting of behaviours, and specific times in the day when problematic behaviour may occur. This data is then used to guide school's interventions and focus. Responses to data analysis could include a school-wide focus and teaching in bullying prevention, or a response to an high number of referrals during lunch time break could lead to specific actions have been taken to engage students at lunchtime or even shortening the lunch break. The data collection process can also highlight specific students with problematic behaviour and can make interventions easier by showing where and when these behaviours occur. Schools report that

with this data, they feel more responsive to the needs of their students and they are able to focus on how to prevent further issues rather than respond when they occur (Spaulding et al., 2010).

The principles promoted within the School-Wide framework support a proactive approach to behavioural difficulties in schools. Smith et al., (2012) suggest that responding to negative behaviours by teaching positive social behaviour provides students with an opportunity to learn from a problematic incident. Researchers support the use of PB4L to change a school's culture from a punitive environment to schools forming a nurturing environment for learners that provide teaching opportunities for not just academic subjects, but also to teach appropriate social behaviours, thus creating a climate that reduces disputes (Chin et al., 2012; Darlow, 2002; Horner et al., 2004; Skiba & Sprague, 2008;).

The New Zealand government has made a large financial commitment to PB4L. The July 2013 budget allocated a further $63.6 million dollars towards the Positive Behaviour for Learning Programme. This amount comes to a total of $145.3 million over the last four years (Education Review, 2013). Between 2010 and 2012, a total of 287 schools have adopted the PB4L School-Wide Framework, and the Ministry forecasts that 628 schools will have access to PB4L School-Wide by 2016 (MOE, 2012a). PB4L: School-Wide prioritises low decile schools with high proportions of Māori and Pasifika students. Almost half of the current 138 secondary schools in New Zealand participating in PB4L: School-Wide have combined Māori and Pasifika rolls of 50% or more, and 53% PB4L: School-Wide schools were from Deciles 1-3, while 91% of schools are Decile 7 or lower (MOE, 2013c).

Schools working within the positive behaviour support framework report that when a shift from punitive to positive responses to student behaviour is made and the social climate of a school is shifted, stand-downs and suspensions are reduced (Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010;

Skiba & Sprague, 2008). More specifically, Bradshaw et al., (2010) conducted a longitudinal study in Maryland, USA of 37 schools over 5 years and reported that schools trained in school-wide positive behaviour showed a significant reduction in school stand-downs while schools that did not adopt the positive discipline philosophy showed no change in the stand-down rate over time.

Schools in New Zealand are also reporting success in raising achievement and reducing stand-down rates since adopting the School-Wide Framework. The Ministry of Education's PB4L School-Wide Indicator Report (MOE, 2013) reports that both achievement rates in PB4L: School-Wide schools have "improved significantly" (p. 25) as have retention rates of students remaining at school until 17 years and over, and there has been a "significant decrease in stand-down rates" (p. 25) over the first two years of implementation compared to schools not implementing the framework. Research tracking the progress of PB4L: School-Wide schools between 2009 and 2011 observed an average decrease in stand-downs of 17% and importantly, these results were unchanged when decile and ethnicity were controlled for MOE, 2013c). For a more specific example, the Principal of Porirua College reports that the PB4L: School-Wide programme has raised achievement at the school by seven per cent. Between 2009 and 2012, stand-down rates at the school have dropped from 61 to 15 and suspensions from 44 students to two (Education Review, 2013).

PB4L has proven to be a successful framework to implement a shift from a more punitive approach to school disciplinary issues to a more positive school climate that accepts that individuals make mistakes and teaches behaviours that schools would like to see. When looking at the success of PB4L in reducing school stand-downs, it is important to highlight that it is not simply the process of adopting this framework that leads to the reduction of stand-downs, but the

24

shift in school climate. Schools that are working from a positive discipline point of view will likely respond differently to discipline issues, and consider options to teach from a student's mistake rather than send the student home.

The philosophies promoted within the PB4L framework support a proactive approach to behavioural difficulties in schools. Smith et al., (2012) suggest that responding to negative behaviours by teaching positive social behaviour provides students with an opportunity to learn from a problematic incident. Researchers support the use of PB4L to change a school's culture from a punitive environment to a nurturing environment for learners that provide teaching opportunities for not just academic subjects, but also to teach appropriate social behaviours, thus creating a climate that reduces disputes (Chin, 2012; Darlow, 2002; Skiba & Sprague, 2008).

Restorative practices.

When a school is dealing with behavioural issues, restorative practices are an option to manage the situation in a positive light that encompasses the principles of positive discipline. Following a disciplinary infraction at a school, the use of restorative practices would involve a discussion involving all affected by the action. This would typically involve a conversation with the wrong-doer(s), and those who were affected by the action. Restorative practices in school challenges the concept that punishment is the best form of deterrence and instead looks at misconduct as a violation of people and interpersonal relationships that need to be healed and restored following an incident (Thorsborne & Vinegard, 2002). By using restorative practices, wrong-doers have an opportunity to right their wrong and make amends to the people who were affected by their actions (Corrigan, 2012; Drewery& Kecskemeti, 2010; Meyer& Evans, 2012;

Thorsborne & Vinegard, 2002). By taking responsibility for their actions, wrong-doers are able to learn from their mistake.

Wachtel (2009) developed the Social Discipline Window, which depicts possible responses that schools (or parents) can take when dealing with undesirable behaviours. This is an elaboration on what he defines as the 'Punitive- Permissive Continuum' which he argues reflects the current popular view but limits the choice of responses of misbehaviour to punish or not to punish. Instead, Wachtel's Social Discipline Window identifies four general approaches to social discipline: neglectful, permissive, punitive and restorative. It provides a continuum of control, characterised by limit-setting and discipline, with a continuum of support, characterised by encouragement and nurturing. Using this concept, Wachtel describes permissive approaches to discipline as comprised of low control and high support, of a low-degree of limit-setting and high in nurturing. Blood and Thorsborne (2005) describe this approach as 'rescuing' and 'excusing', and is described as doing things 'for' people. The punitive approach to discipline is the opposite of permissive and is highlighted as high on control and low on support. The punitive approach is seen as doing things 'to' others and matches the 'zero-tolerance' concept to behavioural issues. An absence of limit-setting and nurturing falls into the neglectful category of responses, and is not engaging. The use of restorative practices employs both high control and high support, and is seen as working 'with' others. This model is commonly used by restorative practice supporters to describe how the restorative concept fits into common perceptions of discipline (e.g.: Blood & Thorsborne, 2003; McCold & Wachtel, 2003; MOE, 2012c). See Figure 2.1.
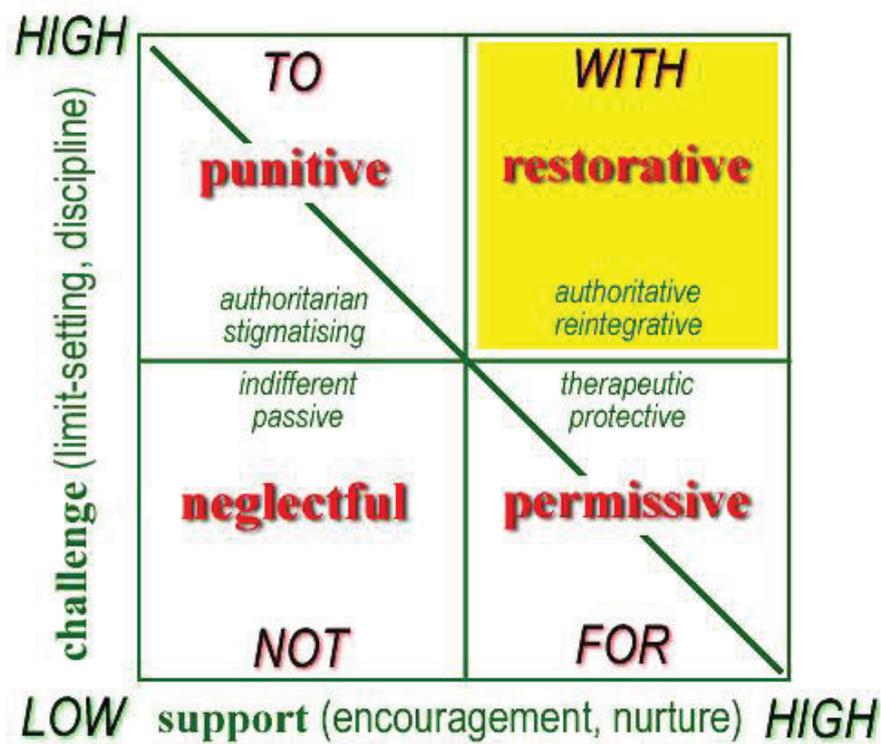
Figure 2.1: *Social Discipline Window (Wachtel, 2009).*

Researchers (e.g. Blood & Thorsborne, 2006; Corrigan, 2012; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Lennox, 2008; Meyer & Evans, 2012; Thorsborne & Vinegard, 2002) promote using a restorative approach to school conflict, where schools take the time to discuss problem events in an open discussion between staff, students and their families to reach solutions that are accepted by all parties. It is a shift away from a punitive approach and instead discusses the issue and together parties seek to find a resolution. International and New Zealand research indicates that schools using restorative practices report lower levels of misbehaviour and disruptions, and an increased sense of belonging and connectedness among students, (see Corrigan, 2012, for a review) which is likely to raise student engagement.

Restorative practices are similar to Māori approaches to wrongdoings, as traditionally a hui[4] would be held to discuss issues within a group. Macfarlane (1998) highlighted the hui whakatika as a process of restoring harmony within a group while taking care to uphold the mana[5] of all individuals involved. Berryman and Bateman (2008) liken the hui whakatika to restorative practices, which indicates that incorporating this concept in schools ensures an inclusive and culturally responsive approach to repairing relationships school-wide (Corrigan, 2012).

Corrigan (2012) reports that there are seven restorative practices that can be adopted by schools, all of which sit within the school-wide framework of Positive Behaviour for Learning. He outlines these as:

1. Restorative Basics – Pumanawatanga: promoting a school-wide attitude of working with students and promoting inclusive relationships between all staff and students.

2. Community Circles- Wā Rino: structured circles with students to build relationships and communication.

3. Collegial Relationships at Work: promoting measures geared at building and maintaining a healthy staff community.

4. Restorative Language and Conversations: Simple scripted conversations for problem solving with students.

5. Brief Restorative Interventions. A collection of restorative problem solving tools for use by school deans and senior management.

6. Classroom Conference Circles: structured problem solving circles for large groups.

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[4] A meeting held within Māori cultural protocols or ways of engagement
[5] Mana refers to the integrity, pride and well-being of an individual

7. Restorative Conferences: Formal conferences to address specific incidents of serious harm.

This is a tiered system that seeks to improve the overall social climate of a school, and allows for issues to be addressed in a less formal way rather than have a full restorative conference for each behavioural incident. The tiered system is designed to fit within the school-wide tiers, with varying degrees of intervention taken to match the seriousness of the particular situation. This tiered system, and how restorative practices fit within the school-wide model, is illustrated in figure 2.2
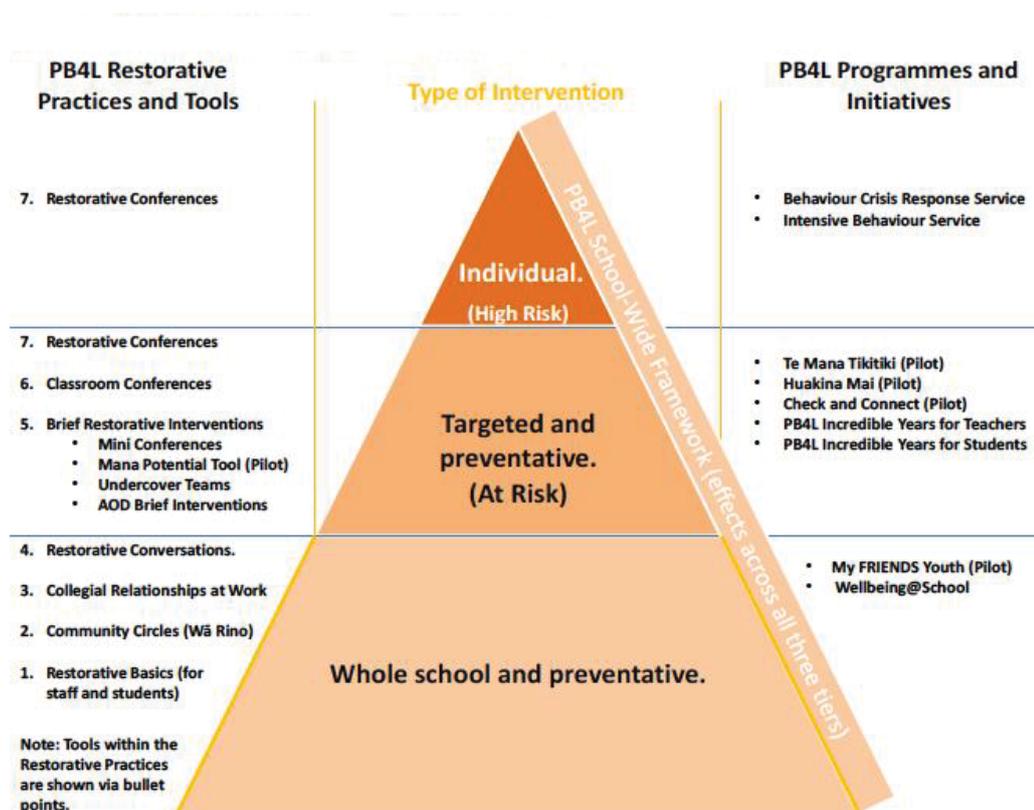
Restorative "Practices" are ways that can be used to deal with inappropriate behaviour and also promote respectful relationships as a foundation for teaching and learning. The model offers a range of "tools" that can be used within each of the Restorative Practices.

Figure 2.2. *Overview of restorative practices within the PB4L context. (From Corrigan, 2012)*

Thorsborne and Vinegard (2003) suggest that when faced with an incident, restorative schools will determine who is accountable for what has happened, who has been affected by the action, and how best to repair that damage and how to prevent it from happening again. The extent of the incident can dictate the number of people included in the discussion, but in a formal restorative conference, the victims, wrong doers and their family would be invited to attend, and the conference would be lead by a trained facilitator.

The concept of restorative practices compliment the philosophies of PB4L, and promote a pro-active response to behavioural issues in that instead of a student being punished, they are encouraged to make the wrong right. Thorsborne and Vinegard (2003) acknowledge that some schools prefer a punitive approach as some schools feel that there needs to be a punishment following an act of harm. They respond to this opinion by suggesting that it is often a natural human reaction to retaliate, yet punishment often stigmatises and isolates the wrongdoer, risking further alienation and lack of engagement by the student and their family. The authors emphasise the fact that the wrongdoers are young people who need the opportunity to redeem themselves and learn from their mistakes. The authors also respond to suggestions that conferencing is a 'soft' option by countering that it is likely easier for some students to be stood-down rather than face up to the a group affected by their actions, suggesting that the process of the restorative conference is the punishment.

Corrigan (2012b) highlights how Restorative Practice sits within the PB4L School-Wide Framework, as both concepts set clear, positive school-wide behavioural expectations that teaches and models the behaviours schools value, while discouraging the behaviours that schools do not want. With a data system in place to analyse trends and inform early interventions,

restorative practices can be a tool to address behavioural incidents within a positive behavioural framework.

In-school stand-downs.

In-school stand-downs are a way of taking a student out of class and away from possible conflicts with peers and/or adults while maintaining school attendance and completion of school work. Students are expected to come to school, but instead of spending time in class they would work in another area of the school and be expected to complete school work, which may include reflecting on the behavioural incident that led to the time out of class.

Meyer and Evans (2012) suggest that rather than having students miss learning opportunities as a result of a behavioural issue, having an in-school stand-down shifts the purpose of the stand-down from punishment to natural consequences. There are a number of benefits to having the students stay at school. The primary message it is conveying to the student is that they are part of the school community and although their behaviour was unacceptable, they are still responsible for their learning (British Columbia MOE, 1999; Meyer & Evans, 2012). This way, schools maintain their commitment to the student and behavioural consequences are not delivered at the expense of learning. Internal stand-downs are often part of a restorative approach, and a restorative conversation or conference would occur during the time out of class.

If a student is required to continue coming to school following a behavioural incident, it ensures that the student remains supervised within the school setting (BC MOE, 1999; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011). This means that the students are not left at home alone or are allowed the freedom of being in the community. Meyer and Evans (2012) suggest that particularly for teenagers, the

stood-down students may encourage peers to truant with them. Principal Youth Court Judge

Becroft has highlighted the importance of keeping youth in school, first simply as a means of

keeping potential youth offenders occupied during the day, but also acknowledging that youth

that are engaged at school are less likely to offend (Becroft, 2009). Keeping young people at

school not only means that schools are ensuring that they do not get into further trouble during

the period of a stand-down, it is also ensuring that the stand-down does not function as a reward.

Families may lack the capacity to provide a structured and constructive environment for the

stood-down student (Meyer & Evans, 2012), while an in-school stand-down can.

Although the in-school stand-down model ensures that a student remains at school, thus

avoiding the concerns over supervision of stood-down students and the potential for a stand-

down to be a school-sanctioned holiday, the resources must be available within a school for this

to be feasible. It requires a space for stood-down students to work independently, and available

adults to supervise them, as well as the organisation of work for the student to complete while

out of class. The resourcing and organisation this requires may be a barrier for schools, but the

logical benefits to keeping students within the learning environment make the concept worth

considering.

Meyer and Evans (2012) have drafted an in-school suspension model that provides

guidelines following a major behavioural incident to take students out of class but continue

attending school, working in a 'time-out' room completing academic work and having

restorative conversations. The model provides a good framework for keeping students at school,

but as this set-up requires a separate classroom, it requires staff to supervise the students while

out of class, which could make the concept unviable without funding. However, this does not

rule out the concept, as schools can take a less formal approach and have internally stood-down

students work in or close to the office, where there are adults close by, and complete work provided by teachers.

Alternative Education.

Within New Zealand, there are alternative education programmes available for 13 to 15 year olds who have become alienated from school, which provides students a different setting and uses different methods to teach at-risk students (MOE, 2013d). There are 14 Activity Centres throughout New Zealand that are governed by secondary schools. These Activity Centres are generally seen as places where students have 'time out' and are then reintegrated back into mainstream secondary education, while other Activity Centres are viewed as an alternative for students who are unable to cope with regular schooling Other alternative education programmes are often delivered by external providers, including church-based groups and private training organizations, many of which do not use registered teachers (MOE, 2013d). The Ministry of Education expects students to remain enrolled in a mainstream secondary school while attending an alternative education programme (MOE, 2013d).

The Education Review Office (ERO) (2010) estimates that there are approximately 3500 students within New Zealand participating in Alternative Education each year. In the ERO (2010) evaluation of alternative education practices, it reported that the majority of enrolling schools did not provide adequate support for the students that they had placed on alternative education, finding that most schools had very little involvement with the alternative education provider or had not sufficiently supported students to transition back into mainstream school.

ERO did highlight a group of secondary schools that did demonstrate good practice in support of their alternative education students. This successful support included overseeing the

transition of students entering and leaving alternative education, involving families in the process and working in partnership with alternative education providers.

The option of alternative education within New Zealand provides opportunity for students for whom mainstream education is difficult to maintain, but at present the quality of education students may receive within these programmes varies. The 2010 ERO study indicates that fewer than 50 percent of students in alternative education go back to school or go onto training or employment. It does, however, provide an option to keep students engaged in education until they are 16 and are no longer legally required to be enrolled at school, and can be successful for re-engaging some students. The information provided is not to suggest that alternative education is used as a replacement to stand-downs, but to acknowledge that traditional schools can be difficult for some students, and there are alternatives that may support some students.

Targeted Programmes

A review examining alternatives to school exclusion in Scotland (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2001) highlighted the importance of early identification of at-risk students, provision of individual support, developing positive attitudes and social skills and working with parents and caregivers as fundamental areas to consider when attempting reducing student's time outside of the classroom. School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning, restorative practices and in-school stand-downs are suggestions of how to structure a school environment and respond to major behavioural issues, but there are a number of additional programmes that can promote positive behaviour and provide support for students who are having difficulties managing their behaviour. These targeted programmes would fit into a School-Wide PB4L framework as

initiatives to use with students in Tier 2, for students who have not been responsive to primary, whole-school interventions and require additional, more intensive behavioural supports.

Individual behaviour plans.

The early identification of students exhibiting concerning behaviours allows schools to construct an individual behaviour plan (IBP) that outlines the behaviours of concern. The use of IBP's is supported by a number of researchers (e.g. BC MOE, 1999; Chin et al., 2012; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011) as an effective early intervention measure. Creating IBPs allow for teachers to discuss the behaviours with other professionals at a school, and staff can collaboratively decide on what interventions may work best for the student. The benefits to having a behaviour plan for specific students are that it ensures a consistent approach is taken each time the behaviour occurs, and ensures the same approach is used by different staff members. Individual behaviour plans are commonly shared with the parents of the students involved, so the family is aware that the school is having difficulties with the student's behaviour, and often families can provide further input on perhaps why a behaviour is occurring or what approaches may be effective in decreasing the behaviour. The collaborative discussion on the student's behaviour may lead to a referral to specialists or outside agencies.

Part of the Individualised Behaviour Plan may involve putting students on a contract, which lists behavioural expectations and requires regular checking in with a key teacher. An example of this process is the Check-In, Check-Out (CICO) system which provides frequent support for at-risk students, and can be part of an early intervention to change behaviour. The CICO program involves setting behavioural goals with a student and then monitoring students closely to encourage fulfilling the goals that were set. Typically, one designated teacher would

provide a morning check in to discuss behavioural goals and encouragement, and an end of day

check to review the day, praise and support to manage any incidents that may have occurred.

Ryan and Zoldy (2011) support the use of CICO systems, as the adult monitoring and regular

praise and attention can have a positive impact on student behaviour.

   Individualising responses to behaviour.

   Chin et al., (2012) have developed a decision-making guide to facilitate choosing

appropriate responses to problem behaviour rather that standing students down. The researchers

suggest that instead of using a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to discipline, that schools determine

interventions that match the function of behaviour. A functional analysis of behaviour involves

observing the behaviour and determining the function of the behaviour by identifying the

antecedents and consequences that occur (Smith et al., 2012). By further understanding a

student's difficult behaviour, it can be easier to determine what type of intervention may be

effective in reducing that behaviour. Chin and colleagues narrowed behaviours into three typical

categories: making bad choices, skill/ability deficit and social/emotional need and then suggested

responses appropriate to each behavioural antecedent. The flow-chart Chin and colleagues

developed is meant to guide schools to choose appropriate alternatives to suspensions. It is

interesting to note that in suggesting interventions for all three of the behavioural categories, the

researchers suggested involving parents in the process and developing a self management plan.

This supports other evidence that suggests developing a plan so behaviour can be managed

consistently between school staff. Also of note is that a school stand-down is not suggested as a

potential intervention across any of the behaviours. See figure 2.3.

STUDENT COMMITS OFFENSE	→	**De-Briefing and Reflection Assignment (Immediate)** At this stage, this can act an (a) an assessment for the school staff to understand the needs of the student and function of the behaviour, (b) a chance for the child to gain awareness of the function of their own behaviour	→	**Assess Function of Behaviour** Use information obtained from the (immediate) de-briefing and reflection assignment, in addition to as much data as can be obtained from (a) student interview, (b) student observation, (c) teacher interview, and/or (d) parent interview. Assess whether the behaviour is due to defiance/making bad choices, skill/ability deficit, or social/emotional need.

Is the behaviour a result of:
Making Bad Choices?
("won't do" versus "can't do", e.g. put graffiti on bathroom walls)

Is the behaviour a result of:
Skill/Ability Deficit?
("can't do" versus "won't do", e.g. hitting children to get attention because they lack skills to initiate peer interactions)

Is the behaviour a result of:
Social/Emotional Need?
(e.g., manifesting anger toward parent divorce with aggression at school?)

Applicable Interventions:
Behaviour contracts (gives concrete outline of behavioural expectations
Natural Consequences (students learn how their behaviours affect others)
Self-Management Plan (can facilitate student awareness and add motivating reinforcements)
Debriefing/reflection assignments (learning component; students learn purpose of specific rules and consequences of not following rules)
Parent Involvement (various strategies discussed can hold parents accountable)

Applicable Interventions:

Self-Management Plan (can facilitate teaching student appropriate behaviours)
Social emotional training (formal teaching of behavioural expectations and social skills can fill the skill/ability deficit)
Parent Involvement (curriculum/lessons can be shared with parents to facilitate generalization of skills; parent training for specific skills may also be influential)

Applicable Interventions:

Counselling (social/emotional issues can be addressed within the context of counselling; strategies can be discussed and referrals can subsequently be make if necessary)
Self-Management Plan (can facilitate teaching student appropriate behaviours)
Parent Involvement (appropriate referrals can be made for parent, family, and individual student resources)

Figure 2.3 *Decision –making guide: choosing appropriate alternatives to suspensions.*
Source: Chin et al, 2013, p. 166.

Chin et al's decision-making guide allows for a more targeted response to behavioural difficulties addressing the student's motivations or needs. This targeted response is more aligned to a teaching model: just as schools differentiate and target specific learning needs, the same can be done towards behaviour. A pilot study using the decision-making guide resulted in reduced school stand-downs and a replacement of a proactive, learning approach to behaviours over more punitive discipline practices (Chin et al., 2013).

Ryan and Zoldy (2011) suggest using progressive discipline as an alternative to stand-downs. They report success in a Canadian school board that has a tiered approach to managing difficult behaviours. Early intervention strategies include contact with parents, detentions, verbal reminders or a review of expectations. If the behaviour persists, Ryan and Zoldy (2011) suggest having a meeting with parents, volunteer service to the school community, conflict mediation and peer mediation. The researchers also highlight the importance of partnerships with community agencies such as local police to support anti-bullying. Although the concept of progressive discipline does not provide a clear template to follow, it does suggest that schools examine behaviour and attempt to respond in a pro-active way and aim to avoid having students away from school.

Check and Connect.

This is a long-term mentoring programme targeted at disengaged students that is being piloted throughout New Zealand in a partnership between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Development using social workers or youth workers as mentors (Ministry of Health, 2012; Ministry of Education, 2013e). Check and Connect is a programme designed to

monitor student levels of engagement through regular 'checks' and an increased 'connection' with an adult mentor and has four key components: a mentor who works with students and families for a minimum of two years; regular 'checks' using school data; timely and individualised interventions supported by the mentor 'connecting' with the students to maintain the student's connections to school and learning; and engagement with families.

The Check and Connect programme is being trialled and evaluated in 17 schools in New Zealand, and preliminary results show positive and immediate effects for some students' well-being and engagement at school (Ministry of Health, 2012). Internationally, Check and Connect has shown to improve outcomes for students with a history of truancy, as it improves enrolment, attendance and odds of graduation for disengaged students at risk of dropping out of school (University of Minnesota, 2013). While the programme shows clear benefits for students through a strong connection with a positive role model, the resourcing required to have trained mentors perhaps making this programme unfeasible to schools outside the pilot cluster. If the pilot study continues to provide positive outcomes it is likely that the Check and Connect Programme will become part of the PB4L: School-Wide Tier 2 intervention repertoire.

Support groups.

Student's exhibiting behavioural difficulties in schools may lack appropriate social skills. Small group instruction geared at teaching or improving specific social skills can be successful in addressing specific social skills deficits. Social Skills deficits can be directly taught in small group situations to target internalised behaviours such as anxiety, depression and social withdrawal; or externalised behaviours such as aggression, disruption or impulsivity (PB4L:SW

Tier 2 training). Withdrawal groups are most successful when staff has a clear view of the key skills and attitudes they are seeking to develop (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2001).

Universal programmes

Universal programmes are a tier one intervention, designed to support all students. Universal programmes can include school-wide anti-bullying campaigns, or direct teaching of school expectations under the PB4L: School-Wide framework. One universal programme that is being piloted through the Ministry of Education is My FRIENDS Youth programme, designed to build self-esteem and teach young people practical skills that will help them to cope with life challenges. The My FRIENDS Youth programme, for young people aged 12-16 years, is an evidence-based resilience programme that is presently being piloted in 10 secondary schools in New Zealand, delivered as part of the Year 9 Health and Physical Education curriculum (MOE, 2013).

The FRIENDS in My FRIENDS Youth stands for:

F – Feelings, learning to regulate feelings and learning to have empathy for others

R – Remember to relax, having quiet time, become more aware of yourself, others and your environment

I – Inner helpful thoughts, changing unhelpful thinking to helpful thinking

E – Explore solutions, learning to find solutions to problems and to face challenges

N – Now reward yourself, be happy with yourself

D – Do it every day, using coping skills when faced with challenging situations

S – Stay strong inside, share your skills with your family and community.

(From MOE, 201).

A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions indicated that students who participated in a universal social and emotional learning programme demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and academic performance (Durlack, Weissbers, Dymicki, Talyor & Schellinger, 2011). The Ministry of Education sees the My FRIENDS programme as a complement to other PB4L programmes as it can contribute to the creation of a positive learning environment, and builds students' ability to self-manage and make responsible decisions. As a Tier 1 intervention, universal programmes can provide a starting point for schools to share their agreed values and equip all students with positive self-management skills (MOE, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at ways to change the climate of a school to make shifts in disciplinary practices. It has highlighted frameworks and practices that are designed to resolve conflicts, restore relationships and focus on positive discipline. When specific behavioural issues are addressed, schools can work towards changing rather than punishing undesirable behaviour. Within New Zealand, many schools are successfully reducing stand-down rates by the incorporation of Ministry of Education initiatives provided under the PB4L umbrella. School-wide PB4L can shift the culture of a school and provide a framework of clear, consistent behavioural expectations for students. When there are conflicts or difficulties with behaviour, the tiered approach of restorative practices can support the intervention and resolution of an issue in a pro-active rather than punitive manner. A number of early intervention techniques were suggested that can address minor issues with behaviour, which can support schools with behavioural change before they reach the point that a stand-down may be considered. The

decision-making guide suggested by Chin et. al., (2012) highlights the importance to look at student behaviour in a similar way as student learning – understand what the student knows and where they are at, and move on from there. The issue that has been highlighted in this chapter is that schools and students can learn to manage and shape behaviour in a way is pro-active, positive and ultimately, successful.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

A case study of one secondary school in New Zealand provided the basis of this research. Stand-down rates were examined at a national level and within the study school, then two students who had been recently stood-down were interviewed, as were the school senior management, teachers involved in the stand-down incidents, and the student's family. This enabled the researcher to gather different perspectives on the stand-down event. Combined with the literature review highlighting successful alternatives to stand-downs, the research project sought to better understand the present rate of stand-downs in New Zealand, and how to shape future practice to ensure fewer students lose educational time as a result of behavioural incidents.

Research Framework

This research project used case study to investigate stand-downs at the target school. Phase one of the research employed document analysis and involved examination of the Ministry of Education's 2012 records on school stand-downs, made available on the Education Counts website. This provided a national picture of how schools are using stand-downs. The data was used to provide specific information on how often students in New Zealand are being stood down, as well details on the types of behaviour that leads to stand-downs, as well as trends in the age, gender and ethnicity of students who are stood down. Use of school data provided further insight into how often and why stand-downs are used at the target school.

Phase two of the research employed interviews. Case study involves interviews with participants in order to bring out details from multiple viewpoints (Tellis, 1997). Using a case

study was particularly suited to this study because the essence of the research was to examine the student's stand-down from multiple perspectives. As Yin (2005) describes, case studies can provide descriptive depth and insight into people and events, which allowed this present research to understand the impact of school stand-downs through gathering separate explanations and descriptions of the same event through multiple participants. Through case studies, the researcher can build a clearer view of a phenomenon under study through integrated interpretations of situations and contexts (Stake, 1995).

The present research used case study to allow a heuristic and critical inquiry to form a constructional perspective on how stand-downs are managed within one secondary school and what impact the stand-down had on the behaviour of the students. Case study provided a way to gain an understanding of school stand-downs to provide a holistic description and explanation of the stand-down process, where the process of the inquiry was of interest rather than the outcome of the research (Merriam, 1998). That is, the purpose of the study was to gather the perspectives, rather than have these perspectives form an outcome.

Research Development

The project began with a discussion with the study school's guidance counsellor over concern of loss of educational instruction for at-risk students. The guidance counsellor informed me that their school had just begun PB4L: School-Wide and were looking at reducing their stand-down rate. The possibility of using this school and situation as a research project was raised, and the counsellor facilitated a meeting with the principal to discuss the idea.

The initial idea for this project was to develop an internal stand-down process for the school, however, the principal was requesting funding for staff to supervise students, and the

process was outside the scope of the present project. My thesis supervisors at Massey University suggested that before specific action to address stand-downs was taken, further information on the current process at the school was required, and the present research was developed. I met again with the principal and gained consent to conduct a case study of the research school.

Research Ethics

A full application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee was required for this research. Massey University identifies the following ethical principals when working with human participants:

- Respect for Persons

- Minimisation of Risk of Harm

- Informed and Voluntary Consent

- Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality

- Avoidance of Unnecessary Deception

- Avoidance of Conflict of Role/interest

- Social and Cultural Sensitivity

- Justice

When completing Massey University's screening questionnaire with my supervisors, the principles of Risk of Harm and Privacy and Confidentiality were seen to be particularly relevant to this study. As during the interviewing process difficult behaviours at school would be discussed, careful handling of the parties interviewed and the information they provided was essential to avoid a potential situation of finding the blame in a situation. The aim of the study was not to take sides or highlight faults but to seek ways that future confrontations may be

avoided, or solutions sought that avoids students being sent home. Similarly, the privacy and confidentiality of the research had to be managed so that the target school was not named and no personal information would be revealed without using pseudonyms.

In the application to the Ethics Committee, one risk of harm that was highlighted was the potential for teachers to realise that they did not engage in best practice leading up to or during the incident which lead to the stand-down. This situation was not realised in the study, as both the students were stood-down for events that occurred outside the classroom so there was no potential to examine specific teacher behaviour.

Concern was also raised that during the interview process, participants may feel uncomfortable recalling or describing a potentially upsetting incident. To deal with this potential risk the researcher ensured that the interviews were conducted with an open, non-judgemental tone and all participants were assured that the content of their interviews would be reported confidentially. Pseudonyms were used for all participants' names, and all identifying information of the study school has been altered to protect the school and individuals involved in the research. A Ministry of Education document titled 'Resolving Problems at School' was available to support family members who potentially felt that they were treated unfairly by the school, which outlines the process to follow to make these concerns known, but both family members interviewed did not require this support.

The ethics application also included steps to ensure the safety of the researcher while conducting the interviews. All student and teacher interviews were conducted at the study school in an interview room or office, which provided privacy within familiar surroundings for the participants. It was decided that interviews with family members would not be conducted at their homes to minimize risk to the researcher. An application to the Massey University Ethics

Committee was approved (Southern B Application 13/24) in May 2013. No contact with any of the participants was made before this approval was granted.

Research Participants

The case study was conducted in one school, a decile 5 co-educational secondary school in a provincial city with a student population of approximately 800 (ERO, 2011). The two students that were interviewed for the study were selected by the senior management of the study school, under the criteria that the students had been stood-down in the 2013 school year. The two students selected were two 15 year-old year 11 students. One a male Māori student who was stood-down for drug-related issues and the other a female student stood-down for continual disobedience, who is also Māori.

To gather the family perspective on the stand-downs, each student was asked to determine a family member who would be suitable to provide their thoughts on the student's stand-down. The male student highlighted his maternal grandmother and the female student selected her mother to be interviewed. Both these subjects consented and were included in the research.

Circumstances surrounding each stand-down was discussed with the principal and deputy principal of the study school. It was originally anticipated that teachers would also be interviewed, but as mentioned, the incidents that lead to both the student's stand-downs did not occur in a classroom context, this was not relevant. Instead the school principal and Year 11 Dean provided the school perspectives within the study.

Research Process

The process of this research project took a linear approach: after the initial literature review and data analyses were conducted, the interviews were conducted to gather the personal voice of those involved in a stand-down process. Two students who had been exhibiting on-going behavioural challenges and had recently been stood-down were selected by the Principal and Deputy Principal at the study school. The Deputy Principal made initial contact with these students, and briefly explained the research project to them. Both students consented to meeting with the researcher. When the researcher came to the school to explain the full context of the research project to the students, the female participant was not at school. The male student agreed to an interview and consented to the researcher discussing his stand-down and behavioural concerns with school staff and their family. That student provided the name and contact details of his primary caregiver and a date for his formal interview was set for a week later.

The male participant reported that he lived with his maternal grandmother, and she was contacted on the telephone and the researcher explained the study project to her and requested an interview time. An unanticipated development occurred at this point, as she did not want to meet in person for a formal interview, but instead requested that we speak about the incident presently over the phone. Oral consent was gained the interview proceeded on the telephone.

At the student interviews, a full explanation of the study was provided, and a consent form that had been approved by the Massey University ethics committee was signed. When the students signed the consent form, it was essential that is was made clear that with their consent they were agreeing to being interviewed, and were also allowing the researcher to examine school behavioural data on them, and granting the researcher access to speak with their family

members and school staff about the incident.   Both students consented to having their interviews recorded.

The student interviews followed a semi-structured format that allowed the researcher to have some specific questions answered about their stand-down event, while also leaving the opportunity for additional anecdotal information to be provided by the student.   The student interviews were conducted in an interview room in the school office area, and took place during the student's "whānau" or homeroom class to ensure that the students did not miss teacher instruction as a result of participation in the study.

The female student, who had been absent on the day the researcher of the initial school visit, was present on the interview day, and the deputy introduced her to the researcher. She consented to participating in the study, and the interview was conducted immediately following. This meeting was conducted in an interview room in the administration area of the school. During the interview she provided her mother's name as her primary caregiver and consented to the researcher contacting her. The male student was interviewed on the same day. Again, consent was gained before the interview began, and was conducted in the interview room close to the school office.

The semi-structured interview allowed for certain information to be gathered, but allowed for the students to provide information they found relevant to their interpretation of their stand-down. The interview was structured so the students could provide information regarding the setting events prior to their stand-downs, and what the students did while stood down, with the opportunity to include their thoughts and opinions on the event. The students were also asked if in their opinion the stand-down had an impact on their behaviour, and commented on what other

disciplinary actions they had been involved in, and their perceived impact of disciplinary actions taken by the school.

Following the student interviews, the Deputy Principal provided the researcher with school behavioural data from the school database. This included all recorded behavioural incidents for the 2013 school year. This allowed the researcher to examine school records of behaviour of concern, and show what lead up to the decision by the school to stand these students down. It provided a school context of the behaviours that had been discussed during the student interview.

The female student's mother was difficult to contact, as it took several calls and messages over a period of weeks until the researcher was able to contact her on the phone. The aim and process of the study was explained, and the option of a formal meeting or phone interview was provided. The mother chose to discuss the stand-down on the phone at that moment. Again, full consent was gained verbally before the interview began. This shift in the research process allowed for important data providing family perspectives to be in the study.

School interviews were provided by both the principal and Year 11 Dean of the study school. These interviews provided information on other supports that were put in place for both the research students, both before and after the stand-down. Each interviewee was asked to provide his opinion on his perceived impact on the stand-down on the research students.

The principal is also the homeroom teacher for one of the participants in the study, so his interview involved gathering perspectives as his role as leader of the school, and also as the support teacher for the student participant. In discussing his role as teacher, the principal was able to provide specific information on the participant's behaviour in his homeroom group through the school year. He provided information on the role of the homeroom teacher and

information on the study student in his group regarding attendance, engagement and behaviour. The Year 11 Dean was also interviewed, as he had been involved particularly with the female subject's disciplinary path throughout the school year. He was contacted by email and the interview was conducted at school. Both were informed of the research process, provided a study information sheet, and gave consent to having the interview audio recorded prior to commencing the interviews.

Data Gathering Tools

In phase one of the study, as stated; data on New Zealand stand-downs was examined. This information, provided on the Ministry of Education 'Education Counts' website contains datum on stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions from 2000 onwards. This provided an opportunity to examine trends over the years, and to recognise specific information on the number of stand-downs, the frequency of specific behaviours leading to stand-downs as well as the age, ethnicity and gender of students who have been stood down.

The study school provided information on student stand-downs in their school charter, the most recent version of which was updated in March 2013. This provided comparative data which was used against national rates of stand-downs, again on ethnicity and gender of stood-down students. Further data on the types of behaviour leading to stand-downs was specifically requested and provided by the principal.

The research project used interviews to gather the perspective of the present stand-down process at the study school, and the analysis of this data will be further elaborated within this chapter. Programmes that have shown to be successful in reducing school stand-downs and ways that early intervention can reduce difficult behaviours at school were researched through a

literature review of evidence-based programmes. See Table 3.1 for a summary of all data

gathering tools utilised within this project.

Table 3.1. *Data gathering tools and participants.*

Research Questions	Data Gathering Tool Used	Research providers and participants
What are the rates of stand downs across secondary schools in New Zealand and do stand down patterns in the case study setting reflect national trends?	Education Counts website Study School Data	All New Zealand Schools Study School
In relation to two specific cases, what are the perspectives of school personnel, the student, the students and the students' parent or caregiver regarding the present stand-down process?	Interviews	Principal and homeroom teacher, Dean, students, family member of stood-down student
What steps can the target school take to reduce the time their students spend out of class as a result of inappropriate behaviour?	Literature Review of successful programs Document analysis of present stand-down data at school Interviews to determine alternative actions taken at study school	 School computer (KAMAR) records Principal and homeroom teacher, Dean, students, family member of stood-down student
How can the target school intervene early to avoid or reduce behaviours that may lead to stand-downs?	Literature Review of successful programmes Interviews to determine perceived success of interventions used	 Principal and homeroom teacher, Dean, students, family member of stood-down student

Data Analysis

Following the interviews, the information gathered was collated and examined to highlight common themes, and also to provide a voice to all that were involved. The participant's interviews were transcribed, and analysed to see if the common themes existed. As all participants were interviewed using the same questions, the transcripts all had the same general construct, though levels of detail and additional information varied. A template was constructed to allow the information to be collated by interview subject, and responses to each interview question could be compared to others reporting on the same event. An excerpt of this template is provided as an example in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: *Analysis of interview questions*

Interview question	Student Response	School Response	Whānau Response
Before the stand-down, what kinds of behaviours got the student into trouble?			

The analysis of the interviews also included examining if the circumstances surrounding these case study stand-downs reflected similarities to the concerning evidence provided in the literature review stating that when stood-down students are more likely to engage in dangerous or anti-social behaviours. A list was made of behaviours described in the literature review, and cross-checked with the interviews. This was particularly relevant in the student interview transcripts, when perhaps school and family were unaware of what the students were doing while stood-down. These were recorded in table form, as seen in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: *Assessing risk factors associated with stood-down subjects*

Behaviour/Protective Feature	Male Case Study Student	Female Case Study Student
Student's unsupervised at home		
Supportive home environment		
More than one stand-down		
Increase in home stress		
Positive behaviour change		
Increased academic difficulties		
Anti-social behaviour rewarded		
Engage in substance abuse while stood-down		
Engage in crime while stood-down		
Further incidences of behavioural difficulties following stand-down		
Encourage peers to truant with them		
Engage in harmful activities while stood-down		

Once all data was collected, a synthesis of the findings provided in-depth information on the complexities of managing behaviour at secondary schools. It is a goal of the study is to use the findings to provide information that could allow schools to intervene early to prevent difficult behaviours to peak and then lead to time outside of school. Gathering differing perspectives on the stand-down process, allowed for a deeper understanding of stand-down events, which provided direct first-hand evidence to inform recommendations on how to develop ways to respond to behavioural difficulties at school that do not result in time spent away from school.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The results will be discussed in relation to each research question. First, the stand-down patterns of the study school will be examined and contrasted with national stand-down data. Once the context of the study school's use of stand-downs is presented, the information that the interviews provided will be presented. First, the circumstances surrounding the female student will be explored by with summaries of the female student's interview, as well as the interview with her mother and the Year 11 dean. Next, the male subject's experience will be presented the same way, with his interview, his grandmother's, and his whānau teacher's perspectives on his stand-down. The information each subject provided will be contrasted to determine if the experiences of the stood-down students confirms present research on school stand-downs. Finally, the steps the study school is presently taking to reduce stand-downs and intervene early with behavioural issues will be explored.

Study School Patterns of Stand-Downs (Research Question 1).

The study school's charter reports 70 stand-downs in 2011 and a lower rate of 56 students were stood down in 2012. It states that in 2012, 21 of these incidents involved Māori students, 6 female and 15 male. A total of 34 European students were stood down, 5 female and 29 male. Interestingly, as 66% of the school population is NZ European and 25% Māori, the study school reflects the national trend of standing-down a disproportionate number of Māori males. In this case, Māori are being stood-down at a rate of nearly 2:1 compared to NZ Europeans[6]. There were

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[6] 840 total population: 21 Māori, 25% of population means 210 students, rate of 10% 34 NZ, 66% means total of 554 students, stand-down rate of 6%.

nine students who were stood down twice, and three students who were stood down three times in 2012.

When asked to provide a breakdown of what behaviours led to stand-downs, the school provided data that was different from that published within their charter. While the school charter reports 56 stand-downs in 2012, the next set of data provided by the school reported 63 stand-downs and was presented in the following format (see table 4.1):

Table 4.1. *Stand-downs by behaviour at study school 2012*

Grounds for Stand-down	Total	Predominant Behaviour	Total
Continual Disobedience	16	Continual Disobedience	14
		Verbal assault on a staff member	2
Gross Misconduct	35	Physical assault on other students	2
		Verbal assault on a staff member	7
		Theft	2
		Alcohol	1
		Drugs/ including substance abuse	19
		Other dangerous/harmful behaviour	4
Likely to cause serious harm	12	Physical assault on other students	10
		Other harmful and dangerous behaviour	2
Total stand-downs for 2012	63		63

The lack of clarity in the data includes a discrepancy in the actual number of stand-downs at the study school in 2012, and the repeated behaviours such as 'verbal assault on a staff member' appearing in both the continual disobedience and the gross misconduct categories

makes the interpretation of this data ambiguous. What it does indicate, however, is that drugs and substance abuse were the most prevalent reason for standing-down students in 2012, with 19 incidents reported at the study school, followed by continual disobedience, with a total of 14 recorded. Physical assault on other students (total =12) and verbal assault on a staff member (total=9) were also significant contributors to stand-downs at the study school in 2012. In order to compare the incidences leading to stand-downs at the study school with national norms, these figures were put into percentages and presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. *Comparison of national stand-down data by behaviour with study school*

	Behaviour, by percentage								
	Continual Disobedience	Drugs (Including Substance Abuse)	Physical Assault on Other Students	Physical Assault on Staff	Verbal Assault on Other Students	Verbal Assault on Staff	Smoking or Alcohol	Theft, Vandalism or Arson	Other
National Figures 2012	23	7	26	3	3	14	6	8	11
Study School 2012	22	31	19	0	0	14	2	3	10

While some behaviours align closely with national figures, others differ greatly. Continual disobedience constitutes 23% of behaviours leading to stand-downs nationally and 22% at the study school, while verbal assault on staff members rates sit at 14% both nationally and at the study school. Physical assault on staff members and verbal assault on other students recorded a low incidence rates nationally and were not a cause for stand-downs at all at the study school in 2012.

The rate of physical assault on other students leading to a stand-down is lower at the study school compared to national norms, with 19% at the study school compared with 26%

nationally. The rates of theft, vandalism and arson leading to a stand-down students was 8%

nationally and a lower rate of 3% at the study school. Similarly, the rates of stand-downs for

smoking and alcohol are lower at the study school compared to national reports, with 6%

reported nationally compared to 2% at study school. However, the rate of drug use leading to

stand-downs is much higher at the study school compared to national norms. While constituting

7% of stand-downs nationally, at the study school 31% of all stand-downs were for drugs. It is

possible that alcohol and smoking may be included within this study school statistic yet even

when taking this possibility into account, the rate of drug use leading to stand-downs is

significantly higher at the study school compared to national rates.

Different Perspectives of the Stand-Down (Research Question 2)

Two students were selected for the case study by the principal and deputy principal. Both

students, one male and one female, had been recently stood down following a number of

behavioural incidents. Anonymity was assured when interviewing participants, so all their names

have been changed within their profiles to protect their identity.

Female student: Destiny.

The female participant is a 15 year old Year 11 Māori student , who will be named

Destiny. Destiny was referred by Shermer High School senior staff as a suitable candidate for the

present study following a number of behavioural incidents. This year at school her recorded

behavioural incidents are for lateness and non-attendance. The stand down that she received was

listed as 'continual disobedience' following a reprimand for truancy. School behavioural records

indicate that Destiny has had 13 recorded behavioural incidents in the 2013 school year to date.

The descriptions of behaviour and consequences for the behaviour described in Table 4.3 are

from school records and reflect the school's view of the behaviours.

Table 4.3. *Office recorded behavioural incidents for Destiny 2013*

Behaviour of Concern	Number of Incidences	Details of Offence	Actions Taken by School
Absentee Concern	2	At school but not attending class	Letter sent home Phone call home, referred to school counsellor
Smoking	1	Parent phoned to complain to school, student smoking on nearby road	Letter sent home
Continual Disobedience	2	Destroyed student's work and was disruptive of the learning of others On-going issues in class and truancy	Meeting with parents – family school conference Internal stand-down, attendance daily report Stand-down 2 days
Behaviour Unacceptable	2	Student ignored requests to stop eating in class and refused to clean up mess she was making. Refused to work and was disrupting class. "all requests were met with a poor attitude and plenty of lip" Refused to do science test because she "knew she wouldn't pass"	Referred to dean RJ chat with teacher involved – outcome student agreed to bring exercise book to class, do work set and sit assessment
Failure to Follow Instructions	1	Walked out of class and refused to return	Referred to Dean
Truancy	2	Walked out of class to go to toilet and did not return Had not attended her computer and other classes for 2 weeks. During this time she is often disruptive of other classes.	Referred to truancy officer Nothing recorded
Deliberate Defiance	1	Destiny "had deliberately refused to comply with the proper and reasonable requests of *teacher* to work in class. "	Referred to HOD
Abuse of Staff	1	Aggressive and abusive towards teacher	Dean discussed incident with her, she admitted to wrong doing Parent phoned

The deputy principal who was facilitating the case study interview reported that Destiny

was continuing to have issues with engagement and attendance, and in fact it took several visits

by the researcher to the school before Destiny was at school and an introduction to the researcher could be made. She was willing to share her stand-down an experience following a description of the study was provided, and consent forms were signed. Destiny also consented to the interview being audio recorded.

Destiny reported that prior to the stand-down that is the focus of the present study, she has been involved with other behavioural incidents involving fighting with other girls at Shermer, and estimated that she has been stood-down four or five times. She has been stood down once in 2013, though in Year Nine she was, in her words, "kicked out of school" and spent time at the Activity Centre[7]. When asked why she had been stood-down the last time, she thought that it might have been for her attendance.

Destiny reports that there are teachers she does not like, and because of this, she would avoid school. Sometimes she would specifically avoid the classes that were taught by the teachers she did not like, but did end up avoiding school altogether.

Leading up to her stand-down she was internally stood down and spent a day sitting in the interview room by the office doing work provided by the school. She reported that it was really boring and that the internal stand-down made no difference to her behaviour. She was subsequently stood down for three days. Destiny reported that she slept for much of the time she had off school and again thought that the stand-down had no impact on her attendance. She reported that her family was mad at her for getting in trouble at school, that they did not talk to her much because they were mad. During the stand-down she was at home with her mother, who is usually at home during the day.

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[7] Shermer High School has an off-site Activity Centre which provides an alternative education to students with behavioural difficulties that is impacting their learning. This centre is seen as a place that students can have a "time-out" for those who are not coping with school, with the aim of returning to Shermer within two terms. While at the Activity Centre, students complete work provided through the Correspondence School.

When asked if she was continuing to have issues with school attendance, she reported that, no, this was no longer a problem. When prompted to highlight what had changed, she stated that she needs her credits – she realised approximately three weeks prior to this interview that all her friends had more credits that her and she needed to work harder in order to achieve the credits she needed to get through school. When asked if her attendance had in fact improved since this realisation, she reported "a little bit" that she comes to school but does not attend some classes. Instead, she walks home and gets something to eat. School attendance data shows that Destiny's did improve slightly in term three, but has since declined and attendance concerns continue to be an issue.

When asked to be more specific about what her difficulties are with some specific classes, Destiny reported that she did not like her computers teacher, but she had been moved out of that class. Instead she goes to a study room supported by a student support teacher. Destiny also reported that she did not like her Food Technology teacher either, but also got moved out of that class and is taking geography instead. She says that her geography class is much better. It was discussed that for the two major issues she had with teachers and classes this year, she has been moved out of those classes and alternatives have been provided for her. Once this has happened, Destiny was asked, are there any other issues that are a problem at school now? Destiny replied that there were no more barriers that may be impacting her school attendance.

Destiny was asked why the stand-down did not change her behaviour. She replied "Because they were just days off. There wasn't any encouragement". However, by shifting Destiny out of the classes she wasn't attending and providing her alternatives that she finds acceptable, Shermer High School staff have listened to her concerns and have made attempts to accommodate her and increase her engagement at school. She was unable to think of anything

else that school could do to support her. She feels that it is now up to her to get the credits she needs.

Destiny was then asked describe her experience at the Activity Centre. She claims that it is "way better there" as "they talk to her a lot nicer" and that the teachers there support students. She spent a term at the Activity Centre and then applied to return to Shermer High School, and had an interview with the Principal with her mother also in attendance before she was accepted back at school. Although she preferred the structure of the Activity Centre, she wanted to return to mainstream school because all her friends are there.

The worst punishment that Destiny reports she has ever had at school is rubbish duty at lunch time. She felt it was humiliating and again, did not change her behaviour. If she was going to choose between an external or internal stand-down which would be most likely to change other students' behaviour, she thought that an internal stand-down would be the best choice. If she had a choice between an internal and an out of school stand-down for herself, however, she would choose time away from school.

Destiny's Mother: Sharon.

Destiny's mother was interviewed in a telephone conversation. She was explained the purpose of the study and provided verbal consent to giving her perspective on Destiny's stand-down and her behavioural issues at school. She reported that Destiny is bright girl, who can be good at anything she puts her mind to. Sharon says that Destiny is a very loving girl and is very good with her 2 year old brother. Destiny has had a tough couple of years, Sharon feels. Her parents split up, and both are with new partners. She lives on a two-week rotation between her parents' homes.

When asked what Destiny struggles with, Sharron spoke about her friends, and how she feels that Destiny has fallen in with the 'wrong crowd' and this is one source of Destiny's truancy issue. She has older friends who flat close to the school and sometimes she leaves school to go and spend time there. Sharon says that Destiny is difficult at home, as Sharon feels Destiny does whatever she wants and does not tell her mother what she is doing until after she has done it. As a result her mother feels powerless and unable to set parental boundaries at home. Sharon's impression is that Destiny is able to get away with things too easily both at home and school.

Sharon's first comments on Destiny's behaviour at school was that "it's not school's problem, it's her" at the root of the difficulties. She feels that Destiny has let herself down and because she gave a bad impression at the start and now she is not given a chance. When asked to elaborate on this comment, Sharon reports that Destiny is a bright girl who likes to have a joke with people. She connects with adults with whom she can have a bit of ribbing, but at school she tends to clash with teachers. Sharon feels that at school there is a lack of thinking outside the box and if teachers were less concerned about enforcing the rules and took some time to connect with Destiny she would be more engaged at school, and less likely to conflict with school staff.

Sharon feels that Destiny's time at the Activity Centre had been good, and that Destiny had thrived in that environment. In fact, Sharon reports that Destiny cried when she left. She feels that the centre director is a good man and that all the teachers there are great. At the Activity Centre Destiny had a more relaxed relationship with her teachers, which Sharon feels made her feel connected and engaged in her learning.

Sharon estimates that Destiny has been stood down approximately five times from Shermer High School. She describes the last stand-down to be "bizarre" – her daughter was stood down for not going to school. She does not feel that the stand-down changed Destiny's behaviour, but instead was a holiday and though she had to do some chores while at home, she basically slept in and cruised around. Prior to the stand-down Sharon was called to a meeting at the school which she reported was not helpful. She attributes Destiny not engaging as the reason the meeting was not useful in changing behaviour.

When asked if she had any thoughts or ideas on how to support Destiny to make some positive changes at school, Sharon reported that Destiny likes being a leader and having responsibilities. Sharon feels that because of the trouble she has been in at school, Destiny is not likely to be considered for leadership roles, but sees this as a key to re-engaging her daughter at school.

School's perspective – Destiny's Dean: Neil.

Neil is the Year 11 Dean, responsible for the pastoral care and academic achievement for the 150 year 11 students at Shermer High School. He reports that he is familiar with Destiny as he has addressed a number of Destiny's behavioural concerns throughout the 2013 school year. He reports that Destiny struggles academically but feels that there are a number of people at school who have worked hard to support her.

Neil reports that Destiny exhibits a number of attention-seeking behaviours, and does not want to sit in class and engage with lessons. He reports her to be very loud and stubborn and feels that often teachers with big classes and demands struggle with Destiny as he describes, "her tongue is sharp and she is not afraid to tell it like it is". He says that Destiny is quick to escalate when confronted by teachers. Ryan feels that this is the school's primary behaviour of concern this year, while her attendance could be used a lead in because it was a concrete piece of data that the school could use to say was things at school were not going well, and could have Destiny's parents in and begin to discuss her other behavioural concerns.

Prior to Destiny's stand-down for continual disobedience, Neil reports that the school had attempted a number of interventions to address her behaviour. This included placing her on contracts which involved her parents coming to meetings at the school. In fact, Neil estimates that he has had Destiny's parents in five or six times this year, which included arranging for individual contracts for food and nutrition and English. However, one particular meeting became especially difficult as tensions arose between the two parents, blaming each other for aspects of Destiny's behaviour. The contracts outlined attendance expectations, seating placement and general behavioural expectations, and used restorative conferencing with the teachers to establish the conditions.

Destiny continued to have behavioural difficulties, involving confrontations with teachers or truancy. Destiny had a one day internal stand-down, where she spent the day working independently. Neil reports that this is when the school realised that she works well in a one-to-one situation, although she did ask the office administrator a lot of questions and tried to sneak out windows and doors.

Neil reports that the school tried to set clear behavioural expectations and avoid a stand-down, but within Destiny's contract a 70% attendance rate was required, and she failed to fulfil this and was stood-down for two days. He feels that her time away from school was an opportunity for everyone to take a breath. While Destiny was stood-down Neil says that teachers reported that the class was easier to manage, they got lots of work done, and that some less confident students came out of their shell without the intimidation of having Destiny present. Neil explains "she is quite a scary girl, quite in your face".

Neil states that he is "not a huge fan of stand-downs", but feels that Destiny's stand-down may have helped in some way, including making the school aware of her individual needs to achieve and feels that school was successful in that she has made some academic achievement.

In the time since her stand-down, the school has removed Destiny from the classes in which she had the most behavioural difficulties, and has had worked independently on high interest subjects such as horticulture and geography. She was also switched into Neil's automotive class. In this class there are 31 boys and Destiny did not want to sit with them, so she began to go next door to the international teacher's offices and independently complete the work units. These units are all open-book assessments and Neil reports that she had completed them to a high standard. He highlighted the fact that she has ability in literacy even though that but that did not come through in her English class and other classes because of her inability to stay on-

task. She established a good relationship with one of the teachers in the office, and completed independent work there, so well, in fact, that she has completed the requirements and passed NCEA level one, which was beyond the expectations of the study school. Neil reports that the study school often attempts to engage priority learners and disengaged students with high interest study units, which allow students to gain credits through doing courses such as horticulture that requires reading and numeracy skills.

Neil says that he would like to see more restorative practices at Shermer High School, but at the same time feels that Destiny is not receptive to the restorative conversations he has attempted to have with her. He reflects on the restorative conference with her food technology teacher, facilitated by him, and reports that when the teacher stated her expectations, Destiny became defensive and the process did not strengthen the relationship between Destiny and the teacher. She was eventually removed from that class. Neil reflected on Destiny's time spent at the Activity Centre, and acknowledges the set-up there accommodates Destiny's learning style, with less pressure from teachers and having just a few key teachers supporting students, and a structure which allowed Destiny to work independently.

Male student: Tyson.

Tyson is a fifteen year old Māori male year 11 student. He began at Shermer High School halfway through last year when he moved from his parent's care in a major urban centre to live with his maternal grandmother. He now lives in a home with his Nan and 12 year-old female cousin. Prior to his move to Shermer High School, he reports that he was often truant and he asked his Nan if he could come and live with her as he did not feel settled at his family home. He reports that his Nan is much stricter than his parents. While he was allowed to wake up himself in his parent's home – which he reports was usually around 10:00 am, his Nan wakes him up at 7:00am every morning. He feels this has helped his attendance improve, although he states that his biggest struggle at school is time management. Tyson reports that he seems to walk really slowly to his classes and often stops and talks to his friends, making him late for school. He reports that he often gets in trouble at school for uniform violations, wearing hats and not responding to teacher requests. Sometimes, he reports that he can get in trouble in every class, and cited days that he forgets to wear shoes as an example of when this may happen.

School behavioural records indicate that Tyson has had 16 recorded behavioural incidents in the 2013 school year to date. The descriptions of behaviour and consequences for the behaviour described in Table 4.4 are from school records and reflect the school's view of the behaviours. They provide a summary of Tyson's behavioural record, but it is not information Tyson provided in his interview.

Table 4.4. *Office recorded behavioural incidents for Tyson 2013.*

Behaviour of Concern	Number of Incidences	Details of Offence	Actions Taken by School
Incorrect Uniform	8	Grey cap worn Grey cap worn again Wearing black cap Wearing black jacket Hat worn Black beanie worn Black beanie worn Defiance and arrogance when approached about uniform	Confiscated for week Confiscated for term Confiscated for year Confiscated for year Confiscated for term Confiscated for year Confiscated for year Parent/caregiver contacted
Unacceptable Behaviour	2	Caught up in disruptive behaviour Jumped out of window – dangerous actions and disrespect to staff	Referred to HOD, caregiver contacted Internal stand-down
Out of Bounds	1	Ran out of school grounds	None recorded
Absentee Concern	1	Caught hiding in bushes are front of school	Meeting with caregiver to discuss consequences
Failure to Follow Instructions	1	Walked out of class and refused to return	Referred to Dean
Continual Disobedience	1	On-going issues with "Not-Pot"	Stand Down for 4 days
Marijuana/Other Use	1	Smoking pot and bunking school	Meeting with caregiver Behavioural contract
Truancy	1	Caught bunking, asked to go to class, refused	Home contacted

Tyson reported that his four day stand-down was because he had an issue with synthetic cannabis, which is commonly called 'not-pot'. He recounts that he started using 'not-pot' once a week, but his usage increased to the point that he was smoking it before and sometimes during school hours. One day he and some of his peers went off the school site and smoked some 'not-pot' and one of friends began what Tyson describes as hallucinating and yelling. Tyson and his friends suggested to this student that he should go home to sleep off the ill-effects of the drug, but instead the student came with the rest of his peers back to school. He collapsed and began vomiting, and school staff became aware that the group of boys had all been smoking drugs. Tyson reports that six or seven students all got stood down as a result of the incident.

While on stand-down, Tyson reports that he spent time with his cousin who had also been stood down for the incident and continued doing what he describes as "dumb stuff". They

continued to smoke 'not- pot' together, and one day went to school to hang out in an area at the back of the school with their peers where students often congregate to smoke. Upon their return to school, the boys were required to attend a meeting with the Board of Trustees, and Tyson reports that this began his journey to recovery. A number of the members of the Board of Trustees knew his grandmother, and while Tyson says they all took turns speaking with the boys, that it "blew him away". He acknowledges the disappointment of his Nan, and recounts that he told the Board that he was going to quit.

Tyson stated that he began to recognise some physiological effects of the drug, specifically noticing that his skin was pale and pallid. He became aware that when on 'not-pot' he and his mates would sit for hours in a vegetative state and realised that his drug taking was becoming problematic. When asked if this meeting was what changed his behaviour, Tyson reports that Shermer High School took their intervention one step further by inviting a local kaumātua[8] to come in and speak with the boys involved in the incident. The kaumātua, who had been part of Tyson's reintegration meeting, works at the local hospital with youth who have struggled with drug addiction, and has specific knowledge and expertise with youth on 'not-pot'. This man reportedly told the boys that were involved in the drugs incident if they carried on their present path then he would take them into the ward and show them what the drugs will do to them. Tyson recalled that this man talked to the boys who were stood down in small groups of three or four and that hearing the hard facts from him and Tyson reports that he found his talk shocking. The combination of these two encounters - the shame of the Board of Trustees meeting that made Tyson know that he had disappointed his Nan, and the facts provided by the kaumātua that what he was doing was dangerous to his health are what prompted Tyson to quit 'not-pot'.

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[8] Māori elders

Tyson acknowledges the impact of both these interventions, and also recounted that at another time the school had an Alcohol and Drug counsellor from the local hospital come and speak to all students at an assembly. Again, this counsellor highlighted the long term effects of drug taking to youth's mental health. Although some of Tyson's friends giggled through the assembly, Tyson recognised this as another way that school could support other students involved in drugs.

Tyson has also been stood-down internally for a behavioural incident in class which involved him jumping out a second-story window of his classroom when being taught by a reliever. Three students were internally stood-down over that incident, and these students spent a day in separate interview rooms close to the office writing an apology letter to the teacher and completing work given to them by the learning support teacher. He does not feel that the internal stand-down changed his behaviour, but does acknowledge that he was at school working for that day rather than having the freedom to make poor choices like when he had time off school.

One of his closing comments during the interview was a reply to the question "did your stand-down change your behaviour?" His reply: "I'm not going to lie to you...no. Honestly, the days that I got stood down, we just went round to our mates and just kept going (smoking not-pot). Until that meeting we had – that gave me a shock."

Tyson's Nan: Maggie.

Tyson's maternal grandmother, Maggie, was interviewed on the telephone. She describes Tyson as a follower, not a leader, but states that he is a nice, very polite boy who helps out at home by doing chores such as mowing the lawns. She reported that she found it difficult living with someone who is using drugs, it is and she is thankful to the school for their part in getting Tyson back on track.

Maggie praised the principal of the school, whom she feels went to great lengths to support Tyson. There were a lot of meetings at school; she guesses approximately five, around Tyson's behaviour. She feels that the meeting with iwi, was a real turning point for her grandson. Tyson's parents came down following his stand-down expecting a difficult encounter, but instead found their son committed to getting and staying off drugs.

During Tyson's stand-down, he was left alone in the house as Maggie could not take time off work. She reports that he stayed at home for the three days of his stand-down. She does not blame the school for Tyson's stand-down. She feels that Tyson had to be responsible for his actions and the stand-down served as a wake-up call. She understands that school was unhappy with Tyson, and he needed to realise that the his drug use was a serious issue. She says she "takes her hat off to the school", and feels that Shermer High School is a lovely school.

School's perspective -Study school principal and whānau teacher: Craig.

The principal of the study school was in a unique position for his case study interview, as he is also Tyson's 'whānau' teacher. The whānau concept is similar to having a homeroom class, but in the study school's case almost all teachers at the school have a whānau class, so the class size is reduced to between 14-18 students, and students stay in this group throughout secondary school. The rationale is that this provides the opportunity for the whānau teacher to build strong relationships with the students and their families. The principal describes the relationship as a triangular model, centred on being in touch with families both pro-actively and positively, as well as catching up with families when something is not going well. The whānau teacher has the responsibility of organising each student's individual developments plan, a goal-setting plan developed with students and their families.

Craig reports that at the time of Tyson's stand-down "we were dealing with a drug, not a boy" and that during this school year there have been a number of issues with students using 'not-pot', which is of concern. In response to this drug issue which he felt peaked over a period of six weeks, Craig brought in two members of parliament to discuss the problems of the availability of synthetic cannabis, and had a drug and alcohol counsellor speak to the students at assembly. Craig had some concerns about having this counsellor speak to his students, saying that he struggled with having the counsellor speak to the entire school population. He reports that he was apprehensive that some of the information that the counsellor provided may be taken out of context or misinterpreted and that some parents may have felt that he was being too open about drug use. In fact, he was very pleased with both the counsellor's message and the response from students.

When the drug incident involving Tyson and a number of other students occurred, Craig reports that he did not want to suspend the students, but stood-down the students and organised a re-integration meeting run under kaupapa Māori[9]. A female member of the board of trustees identified some key people who came together to meet one-on-one with the students who had been involved with the incident. The people brought together were all Māori males with involvement with youth and/or the health sector, and were joined for the meeting by the principal and deputy principal. Craig reports that the people brought together were wonderful and conducted that meeting with a good mix between care, support and encouragement.

Each boy who had been stood-down was spoken to individually, but Craig feels that it was most successful with Tyson. He feels that Tyson was significantly challenged by these older kaumatua, and that Tyson had an understanding of who they were and what they represented. Craig also reported feeling that Tyson recognised that crisis point was reached in terms of his own involvement with drugs.

When asked if Tyson's stand-down changed his behaviour, Craig relplied that in this instance the stand-down did change Tyson's behaviour. However, Craig spoke about another boy who was involved in the same incident and re-integration meeting for whom the process was not successful in shifting his behaviour and discontinuing his drug use. Craig felt that this other student apologised because he had to, but did not change his behaviour as a result of the process, unlike Tyson. Since Tyson's stand-down, Craig feels that he is no longer involved in drugs activity, his uniform violations are improving yet his attendance at whānau time first thing each morning continues to be an issue.

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[9] A meeting respecting Māori traditions and protocol.

Analysis of Interview Data

In order to compare individual responses to the same stand-down event, interviewee responses were collated according to interview questions. This allowed direct comparison of data, and are presented in Tables 4.5 and 4.6.

Table 4.5: *Stand-down perspectives: male student*

Question	Student Response	School Response	Whānau Response
Participant background information	Lives in house with nana and 12 year old cousin Parents live in Auckland – he was with them until last year; 15 years old, year 11	Principal at study school, but also whānau teacher to student case study	Maternal grandmother Works at kura close to study school
Strengths of student	Te Reo Māori Plays league	Self aware	Very polite, helps out at home
Things student struggles with	Time management	Attendance, coming to school on time	"follower, not a leader"
Previous trouble at school	At previous school up north – ditching Uniform, wearing hats, not 'obeying' teachers	Uniform violations, truancy,	
Types of behaviours exhibited	Drugs (for present stand-down)	Using drugs during school time	Drug use
Types of interventions prior to stand-down	Has previously had an internal stand-down for another incident	One-of incident	Meetings at school
Details of event leading to stand-down	Increasing involvement with 'not-pot'	Number of students at school using 'not-pot' – big school issue	Tyson's involvement with drugs
Impact of stand-down on interviewee	Disappointed family		Left Tyson at home as she had to go to work
Impact of stand-down on student	Reintegration meeting with local iwi catalyst for change		'wake-up call'
Did stand-down change student's behaviour?	Discontinued drug use following re-integration meeting	Yes - Behaviour has improved, still coming to school late	Yes
Suggestions on how to encourage student to change?	Drug and alcohol counsellors, health workers speaking to students	Concerns over not=pot: had police, members of parliament, drug and alcohol counsellor in to discuss issue	Students have to realise that drug use is serious and not a joke
Further details?	Hung out with other stood down student and continued to smoke not-pot Discussions with health educators made impact, but it did not have an impact on his friend's behaviour, their drug use continues	Warrants changes in behaviour to student's self-awareness, ability to realise that the drug use was not a good thing. Same approach did not have successful outcome for others involved in same incident	Meeting with local iwi very effective Feels school did everything they could to support Tyson

Table 4.6. *Stand-down perspectives: female student*

Question	Student Response	School Response	Whānau Response
Participant background information	15 years old, year 11	Year 11 Dean – resp for pastoral care, academic achievement for approx 160 year 11 students	
Strengths of student	Maths	Can work hard, works well independently when out of class Natural leader – that can also be negative Ability in literacy Good one-to-one	Good at anything she puts her mind to Good with her 2 year old half brother
Things student struggles with	English	Academics Inability to stay on-task	Fallen in with 'wrong crowd' Tricky at home, does whatever she wants
Previous trouble at school	Fighting, have been kicked out of school, sent to activity centre	Argues with teachers Previous been to activity centre	
Types of behaviours exhibited	Attendance issues	Wagging, attention-seeking behaviour, truancy Loud, very stubborn Continual disobedience	Truancy, wagging, clashes with teachers
Types of interventions prior to stand-down	Internal stand-down Moved out of classes she didn't like Worst punishment: rubbish duty at lunch time – thought it was humiliating	Behaviour contract for two classes Parent meetings (5-6 times) Taken out of classes - provided with high interest study units Restorative meeting with teacher, led by dean Internal stand-down	Parental meeting "waste of time" Contracts
Details of event leading to stand-down	Didn't like teachers, did not attend class	Continual disobedience: used attendance as this could be "hard" evidence Set up conditions in behavioural contracts and she did not attend 70% or more	
Impact of stand-down on interviewee	None – slept all day	"Opportunity for everyone to take a breath" Teacher reported that they did much more work with class Shy students became more confident	None reported
Impact of stand-down on student	Family was mad		None – 'bizarre' to be stood down for wagging – just cruised around
Did stand-down change student's behaviour?	No "they were just days off, there wasn't any encouragement."	Behaviour and engagement did improve to a degree Has passed level 1 NCEA	No

Suggestions on how to encourage student to change?	Student realised she needed credits – friends had more than her	Keen to do more restorative work in general	Think outside of box, be less concerned with enforcing the rules and make a connection with student Likes being a leader– school could encourage this quality
Further details?	Liked activity centre – was "way" better, they talk to you nicer – came back because "all my friends are here" If she had to choose an internal or external stand-down for some other student, what would be more likely to change their behaviour? Internal	Worked harder with this student than some others Student loves it at school	

What occurred during the stand-down?

What the student did while stood-down was of relevance to the study, as research

suggests that students are likely to be left unsupervised (e.g. Meyer & Evans, 2012) while stood-

down and are likely to engage in illegal (e.g. Becroft, 2009) or harmful activities (e.g. Hemphill

& Hargreaves, 2010; Michail, 2011). To analyse this, a list was compiled that included the

negative aspects of stand-downs that researcher have cited, and examined to see if these case

study students matched the research claims and engaged in unsafe behaviours while away from

school. See Table 4.7: Risk Factor Analysis of Subjects' Stand-Downs.

Table 4.7: *Risk factor analysis of subjects' stand-downs.*

Behaviour/Protective Feature	Male Case Study Student	Female Case Study Student
Student's unsupervised at home	Yes	No
Increase in home stress	Yes – parents came to town	Yes – family meetings difficult
Increased academic difficulties	Unable to ascertain within study	Unable to ascertain within study
Anti-social behaviour rewarded	Yes – time off to continue drug use	Yes – school-sanctioned time off, did not have to truant
engage in substance abuse while stood-down	Yes	Not reported
Engage in crime while stood-down	Not reported, except drug use	None reported
Further incidences of behavioural difficulties following stand-down	Yes - Continued lateness	Yes - Continued attendance difficulties
Encourage peers to truant with them	Yes – went to school during stand-down	Not reported
Engage in harmful activities while stood-down	Yes – drug use	Not reported

As the table 4.7 shows, both the case study students engaged in a number of perceived negative activities while stood down. Tyson reported to be unsupervised while stood-down, continuing to use the drug that he was stood-down for, and going to school during his stand-down to spend time with his peers. Destiny reported that she primarily slept for the duration of her stand-down, but as her mother pointed out, she was stood-down for not attending school, which fulfils the function of the behaviour.

Steps the Target School Can Take to Reduce the Use of Stand-Downs and Intervene Early to Behavioural Issues (Research Questions 3 & 4).

As outlined in the introduction of this chapter, the Study School is actively working towards raising student engagement and achievement, including the introduction of School-Wide

Positive Behaviour for Learning in 2011, and training staff on restorative practices in 2012 and 2013. The school outlines within its charter their goal to use data to track priority learners and incorporate restorative practices into the PB4L: SW framework. Shermer High School also aims to increase communication with families, and has outlined within their goal to communicate with whānau in an effort to achieve high levels of attendance.

The initiatives highlighted in the literature review are evidence-based strategies that schools can take to both intervene early before behavioural incidences escalate, and ultimately reduce school stand-downs. These initiatives are presented in Table 4.8 as a process of analysing the initiatives the study school is presently utilising.

Table 4.8: *Analysis of Strategies to Reduce Stand-Downs*

Strategy	Key Features	Use at Study School
Improve School Culture: PB4L: School-Wide	Explicit teaching of behavioural expectations Tiered system of interventions Philosophy of teaching behavioural expectations rather than punishing	Second year of implementing PB4L:SW
Restorative Practices (RP)	Discuss incident, reach resolution of behavioural incident through discussion, hearing all sides of story	Staff training on RP Building on use of RP
Use of Data to shape decisions	Use records to highlight incidents in order to intervene early or to recognise "trouble spots"	Use of KAMAR data system provides individual data on student behaviour
Early Intervention	Manage behaviours before they escalate Assess function of behaviour and address accordingly	Use of behaviour contracts Meetings with parents

At present, the Study School is in the process of adopting a number of positive behaviour processes which include the use of the PB4L: SW framework and incorporating restorative practices into the disciplinary process. Behavioural data is collected on individual students, yet

the information provided on both Tyson and Destiny suggests that the school is not always using this data to shape interventions. Rather, the behavioural incidences recorded show similar responses to repeated behaviour, which did not illicit the change in behaviour that the Study School sought. For example, Tyson had eight recorded incidents of uniform violations, for each instance the piece of clothing was removed from him, and Destiny's absenteeism reports resulted in referrals to the dean, yet few specific interventions were indicated.

During the interviews, a number of behavioural interventions were discussed. Evidence of some tiered behavioural interventions exist: at tier one the whānau system is in place to develop close relationships between students, a key teacher and families. A whole school assembly was organised to address concerns over increasing use of synthetic cannabis, which reflecting on the high rates of stand-downs for drugs at the study school, indicates the school's responsiveness to relevant issues within the student population. Tier two interventions included the development of behavioural contracts for Destiny for classes where there were a number of behavioural concerns and contact with the student's family was evident in both students' computer behavioural records.

Most importantly, the interventions that eventually led to Tyson's discontinued drug use, and the increase in academic achievement which led to Destiny's attainment of Level 1 NCEA were both highly individualised interventions based on the specific needs of each individual. The key to reducing stand-downs at the study school is to examine how that these interventions can be developed without having a stand-down to catalyst an appropriate intervention.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This study sought to examine New Zealand's use of stand-downs in a secondary school context. It sought to gather perspectives on the stand-down process through a case study in one secondary school including interviews with students, their family and school staff around a specific stand-down event. The study also sought to make recommendations on ways that the study school could reduce time students spent time out of class, and intervene early in order to reduce behavioural incidences escalating to the point that a stand-down was necessary.

To review, the research questions in this study are:

- What are the rates of stand downs across secondary schools in New Zealand and do stand down patterns in the case study setting reflect national trends?

- In relation to two specific cases, what are the perspectives of the students, the students' parent or caregiver and school personnel regarding the present stand-down process?

- What steps can the target school take to reduce the use of stand-downs for students who display inappropriate behaviour?

- How can the target school intervene early to avoid or reduce behaviours that may lead to stand-downs?

Each question will be addressed in this chapter, drawing data from the present research and that from the literature review.

What are the rates of stand downs across secondary schools in New Zealand and do stand down patterns in the case study setting reflect national trends?

In 2012, 1.8% of the New Zealand student population stood-down as a result of behavioural difficulties. Within that data, a disproportionate number of low decile, male, and Māori students are stood-down. At the study school, 7.5% of the student population was stood-down in 2012. This indicates that the study school is standing down more students that the national average. The study school is a decile four school, which makes comparison of decile data irrelevant, but comparisons suggest that Shermer High School is following the national trend and standing-down Māori and male students more than any other cohort.

Shermer High School is standing down Māori students at a rate of 2:1 compared to NZ Europeans, mirroring the national rate of standing down Māori students. The trend of standing-down ethnic minorities has been documented internationally – in the United States a disproportionate number of African American students are stood-down (Losen & Gillespie, 2012) and in Great Britain, Black Caribbean students are more likely to be stood-down than any other ethnic group (Office of the Children's Commissioner, 2012). Reassuringly, this disparity has been highlighted and within New Zealand the Ministry of Education has recognised the need to ensure that all students have equal access to education. Through the Māori Education Strategy, Ka Hikitia – Managing for Success (MOE, 2008) the engagement and achievement of Māori students is highlighted as a priority. The challenge for schools is how to ensure that these priority learner are engaged.

The reasons that the study school stands-down students, shows variation compared to national norms, and may provide a key to why the school's stand-down rate is so much higher than the national average. Within New Zealand, the most common reason for being stood-down

is for physical assault on another student, while at the study school, the most common reason for being stood down is for drugs. The high incident of stand-downs for drugs could reflect two things: that there is a high rate of drug use at Shermer High School or that there is a very low tolerance for drug use at the school. Certainly, drug use is a likely behaviour that schools would implement a zero-tolerance policy for, hoping that the certain punishment for having or using drugs at school would have a deterrent effect (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). The concern with this type of response is that if students who are using drugs are sent home, they are often unsupervised (Meyer & Evans, 2012) and have more time to engage in dangerous acts, and are at-risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system (Advancement Project, 2010; Becroft, 2009; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009).

The Principal of Shermer High School expressed concern over the use of synthetic cannabis in his interview. He reported taking a number of pro-active responses to the use of synthetic cannabis by his students, including contacting local Members of Parliament to condone banning the sale of synthetic drugs, and inviting a drug and alcohol counsellor to speak with the student population about the safety risks involved with using these products.   It is clear that the school management has recognised the issue that they are having with drugs, and it is encouraging to see that these pro-active steps are being taken.

In relation to two specific cases, what are the perspectives of the students, the students' parent or caregiver and school personnel regarding the present stand-down process?

Stand-downs are often used by schools to provide temporary relief following a behavioural incident (BC MOE, 1999; Chin et al., 2012; Hemphill and Hargreaves, 2009; MOE, 2009). However, research suggests that by sending students away from the routines and

supervision school provides, schools are providing students who have shown to have difficulty managing their behaviour time off from academic instruction and too much freedom to engage in potentially dangerous acts (e.g. American Academy of Pediatrics, 2003; Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). In fact, some researchers argue that rather than improving student behaviour, stand-downs actually function as a reward (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009).

Internationally, studies on student's perspectives on stand-down view the process as ineffective or counter-productive (Centre for Social Justice, 2011; McClusky, 2008; Knipe, Reynolds & Milner, 2007; Michail, 2012). The present study supports these views with comments made by both the students in the study. The female student reported that her stand-down were just days off school, while the male student confirmed that while he was off school he continued his drug use. In both cases the students clearly state that the days off were not a punishment or a catalyst for change. In fact, their stand-downs did not reflect any negative feelings, and were likely reinforcing the negative behaviours that led to their time off school (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009).

Both interviews with family members reflected an opinion that the students' behavioural change was the responsibility of the students themselves. Neither family harbours bad feelings towards the school; in fact the male subject's grandmother holds the school in high esteem, stating that the school did all they possibly could to support her grandson. Although the female subject's mother feels that some of the processes the school went through did not result in positive change, she holds her daughter accountable for her own behaviour. The mother interviewed felt that the Activity Centre was an ideal work environment for her daughter as she was able to develop a good rapport with the teachers there. She wondered if school could capitalise on her daughter's leadership skills, a perspective that warrants investigation.

These reports from family members in the present study do not reflect earlier research by Smith (2009) that reported that families can feel marginalised or powerless regarding school stand-downs. The families interviewed in the present study recognised that there are issues with the students' behaviour, and acknowledged that managing their behaviour can be difficult. The family members felt that the school had done what they could, although one challenged that the school could look 'outside the box' and try to do things differently.

From the school's perspective, the whānau teacher and school principal reported that his stand-down was effective in changing behaviour. However, it was not the stand-down that was a catalyst for behavioural change, but the re-integration meeting upon the male subject's return following his stand-down did impact his behaviour. The dean acknowledged that he was not confident in the likelihood of a stand-down changing behaviour, but felt that the school needed a way to show the student that the school was serious about wanting her behaviour to change.

A point that was raised while interviewing the dean was that while the female student was stood down, the teachers felt that they were given a break, and the other students had a chance to participate fully in class. This comment can be challenged as it may give the school a false sense of justification that the stand-down provided relief to both staff and students: the stood-down student's main behaviour of concern was truancy: she was out of the class most of the time, so her two day stand-down was likely unnoticed by many in the class.

What steps can the target school take to reduce the use of stand-downs for students who display inappropriate behaviour?

Research conducted by the Office of the Children's Commissioner on Exclusions (2011) interviewed students on what an effective response to challenging behaviour might look like.

The students reported that a mixture of restorative practices, internal isolation and removal of privileges would be more likely to affect changes in student behaviour than stand-downs. The insight of these students is powerful, and their suggested interventions support international research on how to reduce stand-downs. Key initiatives that have shown to reduce stand-down rates include making shifts in school culture, and using restorative practices over more punitive responses to difficult behaviour.

School-Wide Positive Behaviour for Learning is currently being implemented in schools across New Zealand as it has shown that a positive, supportive school environment that focuses on teaching expected behaviour rather than punishing undesirable behaviour. This shift in school culture can be successful in reducing stand-downs (Bradshaw et al., 2010; MOE, 2013b). Shermer High School is in their second year of implementation of SW: PB4L, and the process of changing school culture takes time and cannot be expected to transform immediately. School staff are engaging in professional development with the Ministry of Education and the implementation of School-Wide principles will likely lead to addressing behavioural difficulties by providing teaching opportunities to teach appropriate social behaviours, which in turn will likely lead to creating a school culture that reduces disputes (Chin et al., Darlow, 2002; Skiba & Spraugue, 2008).

When faced with behavioural difficulties, the use of restorative practices is supported by research indicating that taking time to have an open discussion where all parties are heard and considered can shift away from a punitive approach in schools and lead to increased school engagement (Blood & Thorsborne, 2006; Corrigan, 2012a; Drewery & Keckemeti, 2010; Lennox, 2008; Meyer & Evans, 2012; Thorsborne & Vinegard, 2002). Staff at Shermer High

School have had training in restorative practices, and like PB4L: SW, the full implementation of restorative practices will take time to become embedded within the school culture.

Within the present study, the use of restorative practices had a significant impact on the male subject's behaviour. His reintegration meeting involving local iwi appealed to his sense of identity as a young Māori male, and helped him realise that his actions were not only harming himself, but bringing shame to his family. He listened to prominent members of his community state their points of view, and he respected what they had to say.

Internal stand-downs are promoted by researchers as an alternative to having students spend time away from school. By keeping students at school, a message is given to students that while their behaviour is unacceptable, they remain responsible for their learning (BC MOE, 1999; Meyer & Evans, 2012). Becroft (2009) supports internal stand-downs as a means of keeping students occupied during the day to reduce potential offending, while Meyer and Evans (2012) suggest that often families lack the capacity to support and supervise students while they are out of school. The present study supports this research, as while stood-down, the male subject engaged in further drug use and the female student was given time to sleep and avoid school, an outcome she was seeking with her truancy that led to her stand-down.

The resourcing required for in-school stand-downs may serve as an obstacle for some schools. This can be counter-argued in that if positive behaviour frameworks and restorative practices are embedded, the frequency of internal stand-downs can be kept to a minimum. If there is an extreme behavioural incident where the school feel that safety of staff or students may be compromised, then it could be seen as good practice for schools to expect at-risk students to be at school and engaging in academic work, but be kept away from other students for a 'cool-down' period (Meyer & Evans, 2012). If in-school stand-downs are kept to a minimum, it is

likely to be more manageable for schools to provide adequate supervision for students when necessary. In the case of the present study, the students interviewed acknowledged that when they had in-school stand-downs they completed work, and they did not have the freedom to engage in preferable, potentially risky behaviours of their choice.

In the case of the female subject, an alternative to mainstream classroom learning was preferable to both her and school staff. She reported having a positive experience at the Activity Centre two years ago, and the successful intervention developed by school this year involved her working independently on work units outside of the classroom environment. Having her out of the classroom reduced pressure on her teachers, her classmates and herself, and without the distractions that the classroom environment provided, she was able to achieve academic success. This suggests that there are times that schools could consider that alternatives to traditional classroom learning environments may be a way to support students who are not engaged. The Year 11 Dean, for example, explained in his interview that many at-risk students enjoy studying horticulture as it requires time outside of the classroom, yet incorporates both literacy and numeracy in the process. This process was not fully explored in the scope of the present study, but does warrant further consideration.

How can the target school intervene early to avoid or reduce behaviours that may lead to stand-downs?

A number of researchers highlight the use of preventative measures and early intervention processes rather than waiting to respond to behaviours when they peak. Smith and colleagues (2012) suggest that responding early and taking preventative measures is a much more effective approach to changing behaviour rather than using negative consequences. The

research conducted in the literature review highlighted a number of effective ways to intervene early to combat inappropriate behaviours, and the case study highlighted a number of these early interventions in action.

The tiered approach of PB4L: SW supports the process of teaching and supporting clear behavioural expectations for all students. Tier 1 involves measures that schools take and are considered whole-school and preventative (Corrigan, 2012b; MOE, 2012b). When universal behavioural expectations are in place, Tier 2 supports and specific interventions can be provided for students who are not responsive to whole-school expectations. The literature review suggested a number of Tier 2 interventions that have shown to be successful in supporting students who are having difficulty managing their behaviour before it peaks to a degree that stand-downs would be considered. These include creating Individual Behaviour Plans (BE MOE, 1999; Chin et al., 2012; Ryan & Zoldy, 2011) with students and parental involvement, and a check-in, check-out process to closely monitor and encourage positive behaviour (Ryan & Zoldy, 2011).

The use of data to inform school staff early of potential behavioural difficulties is a key to making early interventions successful (Sugai & Horner, 2009). This way, schools can respond quickly to potential problems by highlighting school trends, behavioural issues with specific members of staff or areas within the school where problems may arise. Spaulding and colleagues (2010) reported that with this data, schools feel more responsive to the needs of their students and are able to actively work to prevent problems rather than react when a problem occurs. As soon as data begins to indicate repeat incidences or trends, this data can be highlighted, discussed and managed.

An example of how the study school that could benefit from an early intervention is the male student's uniform violations. There are eight incidences recorded of uniform violations on the school behavioural data programme: he had hats and jackets confiscated seven times, some for the entire year, until on the eighth violation it is recorded that he was defiant and arrogant when approached about his uniform and his grandmother was contacted. If Shermer High School analysed and responded to the behavioural data it was collecting, it likely would not have taken eight almost identical uniform violations to determine that the only impact of confiscating the student's belongings was making him angry. The school's records show that confiscation is not changing the student's behaviour. On the contrary, evidence indicates that it is escalating it. Close monitoring of all students' behaviour can lead to the school seeking other responses that may be more successful in changing behaviour.

Early intervention can also be supported by whole-school, Tier 1 interventions. An excellent example of how the school demonstrated this was when there was a marked influx of synthetic cannabis use, the school arranged for a drug and alcohol counsellor to come in to speak with the entire school population. As drugs were highlighted as the most common reason for stand-downs at the study school on 2012, it is encouraging that they are making pro-active responses to this specific concern. Through having an assembly, every student, whether involved in synthetic cannabis or not, was provided with the same information and messages. The FRIENDS Youth programme is another example of school-wide early intervention, as studies have indicated that the programme can provide students with resiliency skills (Durlack et al., 2011) benefitting all students, and potentially providing skills to students that may reduce future behavioural difficulties.

Research suggests that when appropriate responses to behaviour are be made based on evidence, and a response is designed according to the function of each student's exhibiting behaviours, the intervention is more likely to be effective as they are developed based on individual need rather than blanket behaviour policies (Chin et al., 2012). If the study school uses data to highlight students who require Tier 2 interventions, then interventions such as individual behaviour contracts and check in, check out programmes could be implemented. These require close monitoring and reviewing once they are implemented to ensure they are responsive and flexible interventions that are followed through to ensure behavioural change. Following the tiered model, Tier 3 interventions would involve only a low number of students, and would likely require input from support teachers or outside agencies. If a student's behaviour is at a level that they are being removed from the educational setting, it is likely that outside agencies would need to be involved in a highly supported school intervention.

Review

Some key themes emerged from this research. Within New Zealand, stand-down rates are disproportionately standing down lower decile students, and more Māori students. The data collected within the present study supports this trend. The encouraging news is that there are systems and frameworks such as Positive Behaviour for Learning: School-Wide that has been successful in shifting school culture and supporting schools to reduce stand-downs. The use of data collection and using behavioural data to develop interventions to support positive behavioural change in students can allow for schools to intervene early when behavioural issues arise, and the tiered system of PB4L: SW can be an effective process to develop interventions that have been observed within this study to result in positive behavioural change. The use of

91

Restorative Practices has also shown within this study to be an effective catalyst towards positive behavioural change. Some key practices have been highlighted through this study, which can impact on how the study school manages behavioural incidents.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

Shermer High School stands-down students more than the average stand-down rate in New Zealand secondary schools. The present study investigated processes within the school, gathered perspectives from students, families and school staff on the stand-down process and examined literature that highlights evidence-based practices that have shown to reduce school stand-downs. Shermer High School has begun the process of adopting the PB4L: SW framework and restorative practices into their school policies, and have begun a journey that they hope can improve school behaviour and reduce stand-downs . The following recommendations acknowledge the efforts made by the school, and are presented as ways the school can further support their shift in practices.

Improve School Culture.

Research indicates that a key way to reduce stand-downs is to make a change to the overall climate of the school (e.g.: Bradshaw, Mitchell & Leaf, 2010; Skiba & Sprague, 2008). One way of doing so is the Positive Behaviour for Learning: School-Wide framework which is supported by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand. The framework supports schools to teach desired behaviours, rather than punish undesirable actions. A key feature of PB4L:School-Wide is the tiered approach it takes: tier 1 incorporating the entire student population, tier 2 supporting the small percentage of students who require some individual behavioural interventions, and tier 3 to highlight the few students who require intensive behavioural support or inter-agency support.

By taking a tiered approach and maintaining universal behavioural expectations, students are able to know exactly what is expected of them, and have these positive behaviours modelled by school staff and other students. Rather than punishing negative behaviours, positive behaviours are highlighted and praised. Researchers maintain that behaviour is more likely to be changed through positive approaches (e.g.: Smith, Bicard, Bicard & Baylot Casey, 2012), and PB4L: School-Wide endorses this approach.

Teach, Don't Punish.

A key message with positive discipline is to teach, not punish students who are exhibiting inappropriate or unsafe behaviours. Referring to the literature on adolescent development (American Psychological Association, 2008), it is natural and expected for students in secondary school to display social immaturity such as poor resistance to peer influence, attitudes towards the perception of risk, future orientation, and impulse control. Adolescents are more likely to take greater risks and to reason less about the consequences of their behaviour, and it is the responsibility of schools to teach and model the social skills they expect within the school setting. Some may argue that the role of school is to teach academics and families to teach social skills, but often at-risk students do not have the environment at home to support this social and emotional development. With research showing that a positive social climate raises engagement, which in turn raises academic achievement (e.g.: MOE, 2012), it is in schools' best interests to focus not only on teaching academics, but social and emotional skills as well.

Work From the Ground Up

The tiered system within PB4L: School-Wide classifies interventions so that some actions taken towards addressing behavioural expectations are targeted to the whole school. This allows for every student to be explained and taught the expectations schools have for all students. This consistency of expectations provides the groundwork that schools can build behavioural interventions on, and can ensure that the majority of students know what is expected of them behaviourally, and are demonstrating that appropriately. This way, there is an abundance of peers modelling expected behaviour, and getting positive feedback from staff members for doing so. Students who may require some additional support to use appropriate behaviour can be part of Tier 2 interventions such as a behavioural contract, accompanied by specific teaching and explaining of the behaviours expected. The small percentage of students for which tier 2 interventions are not effective with should be provided with intensive support, and can be referred to Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), Special Education or be supported by another appropriate outside agency.

The tiered system allows for clear expectations, peer modelling of appropriate behaviour, and support for students who continue to have behavioural difficulties have interventions put in place that are appropriate to the behaviour they are exhibiting. This is a much fairer and responsive way to address adolescent behaviour rather than have a blanket stand-down policy for certain rules being broken, in line with a zero-tolerance policy.

Provide an Intervention that Addresses the Behaviour.

Part of the process of positive behavioural responses is to consider the individual and their specific needs before making a decision on how to respond to a behavioural incident, or

worse, enforcing a blanket response such as violence at school always results in a stand-down. The model proposed by Chin et al. (2012), adapted to be more aligned with New Zealand school practices can provide senior management a decision-making guide that considers the function of the students' behaviour. When faced with a behavioural incident, Chin and colleagues suggest considering why the student is behaving in that way, and structuring the school's response to the behaviour in a way that will support the student to make better choices in the future. The following chart takes the Chin et al. concept, but has added further interventions that have been discussed in the literature review as having positive impacts on student behaviour. A suggestion for establishing a key staff member to foster a relationship with the at-risk student has also been added, as it was indicated in the student interviews that students feel more supported when they know that there is an adult who cares about them at school. See Figure 5.1 for the adapted version of the Chin et al model.

Within the Decision-Making guide, regardless of the function of a student's behaviour, parents are contacted and a behavioural contract is created which outlines which behaviours are impacting on the student's time at school. A key to facilitating behavioural change in secondary school-aged students is establishing a positive relationship with the student and nurture change rather than enforce it.

STUDENT ENGAGES IN UNDESISRABLE BEHAVIOUR	**De-Briefing and Reflection Assignment (Immediate)** At this stage, this can act an (a) an assessment for the school staff to understand the needs of the student and function of the behaviour, (b) a chance for the child to gain awareness of the function of their own behaviour	**Assess Function of Behaviour** Use information obtained from the (immediate) de-briefing and reflection assignment, in addition to as much data as can be obtained from (a) student interview, (b) student observation, (c) teacher interview, and/or (d) parent interview. Assess whether the behaviour is due to defiance/making bad choices, skill/ability deficit, or social/emotional need.

| Is the behaviour a result of: **Making Bad Choices?** ("won't do" versus "can't do", e.g. put graffiti on bathroom walls)	Is the behaviour a result of: **Skill/Ability Deficit?** ("can't do" versus "won't do", e.g. hitting children to get attention because they lack skills to initiate peer interactions)	Is the behaviour a result of: **Social/Emotional Need?** (e.g., manifesting anger toward parent divorce with aggression at school?)
Applicable Interventions: **Through Restorative Practices, develop with students:** **Behaviour contracts** (gives concrete outline of behavioural expectations) **Natural Consequences** (students learn how their behaviours affect others) **Self-Management Plan** (can facilitate student awareness and add motivating reinforcements) **Debriefing/reflection assignments** (learning component; students learn purpose of specific rules and consequences of not following rules) · **Reflection sheet :** Stating behaviour of concern, how student can put it right, how student can ensure that it doesn't happen again, goal setting **Parent Involvement** (various strategies discussed can hold parents accountable) **Check-in Check-out** system put in place to monitor and support **Establishment of key staff member** in school to foster nurturing relationship and to monitor **Consider Alternatives:** independent work units, support systems	**Applicable Interventions:** **TEACH necessary skill** **Self-Management Plan** (can facilitate teaching student appropriate behaviours) **Social emotional training** (formal teaching of behavioural expectations and social skills can fill the skill/ability deficit) • Depending on the situation, this can be done in whole-class setting or in small group **Parent Involvement** (curriculum/lessons can be shared with parents to facilitate generalization of skills; parent training for specific skills may also be influential) **Check-in Check-out** system put in place to monitor and support **Establishment of key staff member** in school to foster nurturing relationship and to monitor **Consider Alternatives:** independent work units, support systems	**Applicable Interventions:** **Counselling** (social/emotional issues can be addressed within the context of counselling; strategies can be discussed and referrals can subsequently be make if necessary) **Self-Management Plan** (can facilitate teaching student appropriate behaviours) **Parent Involvement** (appropriate referrals can be made for parent, family, and individual student resources) **Family Support through Outside Agencies**: e.g.: Parenting courses **Check and Connect** if available **Social Worker in School** if available **Referral to RTLB or Special Education** for Tier 3 behavioural support **Referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health** **SEASONS referral** if student has experienced loss or is grieving **SAFER Centre referral** if behavioural concerns are sexual in nature **Establishment of key staff member** in school to foster nurturing relationship and to monitor

Figure 5.1. *Decision making guide, New Zealand adaptation*

Using the Decision-Making guide, events prior to Destiny's stand-down could have

followed the process depicted in figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2. *Decision making guide in action*

```
┌─────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│ Truancy and     │  ⇒   │ Function of Behaviour:    │  ⇒   │ Behaviour Result │
│ confrontations  │      │ AVOID less preferred      │      │ of Making Poor   │
│ with teachers   │      │ teachers and academic     │      │ Choices -"Won't  │
│                 │      │ work                      │      │ Do"              │
│                 │      │ GAIN attention from peers │      │                  │
└─────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────┘
                                                                      ⇓
                         ┌────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                         │ Appropriate Intervention:                          │
                         │   • Maintain academic expectations                 │
                         │   • Remove attention of peers                      │
                         └────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                              ⇓
          ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
          │ Steps to Take:                                                     │
          │   • Restorative conversation which involves parents                │
          │     and teachers                                                   │
          │   • Clarify during restorative conversation the impact             │
          │     of both the truancy and confrontations                         │
          │   • Independent work – likely in international                      │
          │     teacher's office as Dean is in class next door and             │
          │     can monitor                                                    │
          │   • Check-in, Check-out so Destiny can have a                       │
          │     positive relationship with a teacher at school who             │
          │     can monitor and support.                                       │
          │   • Regular review                                                 │
          └──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Destiny's stand-down for poor attendance highlights the counter-productive function of

stand-downs. Destiny was truant because she wanted to avoid class, and her stand-down fulfilled

that function, as it provided school-sanctioned time to stay at home and sleep. Her other

behaviour of concern was confrontations with teachers. Rather than standing Destiny down,

restricting her social interactions yet maintaining academic expectations could have been accomplished by having Destiny work in the international teacher's office on independent work units, and taking breaks at times when other students were in class. This way Destiny could continue her academic work, and avoid adult conflicts. School did come to this solution, and as a result Destiny has passed her Level One NCEA, though following her stand-down.

Respond to Data

Part of the PB4L: School-Wide framework is collecting data and using this to make informed decisions about student behaviour and school policy. This is an area that Shermer High School can focus on to increase their responsiveness to student behaviour. At present behavioural difficulties are being recorded, but do not have clear definitions of behaviours. This can be seen in the stand-down data that was presented for this research. In one instance the number of stand-downs in 2012 was reported to be 56, while in the breakdown of behaviours it was 63. The breakdown of behaviours that lead to stand-downs duplicated categories, so in the reporting 'verbal assault on a staff member' was classified both as 'continual disobedience' and 'gross misconduct', and 'physical assault on other students' was listed as 'gross misconduct' and 'likely to cause serious harm'. The way the school is managing the data is at the very least difficult to interpret, but is also likely to be unreliable.

Shermer High School is presently using the KAMAR data system, and their usage of the programme indicates that it does not provide sufficient data to support the use of data analysis to guide behavioural interventions at the school. Often PB4L: School-Wide schools use the School-Wide Information System (SWIS), a computer data programme designed to support school-wide interventions. With the SWIS programme, all teachers are expected to complete an incident report involving behavioural incidences, which classifies each incident as major or minor, stating

the behaviour as well as where and when the behaviour occurs. The compilation of this data provides school with the ability to evaluate individual student behaviour, the setting of behaviours, and specific times in the day when problematic behaviour may occur. This specific data can then used to guide the school's interventions and focus. SWIS data can highlight specific students with problematic behaviour and have made interventions easier by showing where, when and why these behaviours occur. With this data, schools can be more responsive to the needs of their students and are able to focus on how to prevent further issues rather than respond when they occur. When the PB4L team meets, data from the SWIS programme can indicate who is receiving behavioural referrals, and know exactly why and when the incidents are occurring. That way, the school is able to highlight issues early, and respond to them on an individual basis, and collect useful and reliable data on student behaviour.

If the study school uses data to highlight students who require Tier 2 interventions, then appropriate responses to behaviour can be made based on evidence, and a response that is designed according to the function of each student's exhibiting behaviours is more likely to be effective as they are responded to based on individual need rather than blanket behaviour policies. Tier 2 interventions such as individual behaviour contracts and check in, check out programmes, require close monitoring and reviewing once they are implemented to ensure they are responsive and flexible interventions that are followed through to ensure behavioural change.

Ask For Help

If schools have behavioural issues that they feel necessitate a stand-down, it suggests that their students are exhibiting behaviours for which the current school systems cannot address. That is completely understandable, as the majority of teachers are not trained to manage high

level behavioural issues. The Ministry of Education does have systems in place to support students with high levels of behavioural difficulties. Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) are specifically trained to support Teir 2 interventions, and if behaviour is especially difficult, there are teams of educational advisors and psychologists across New Zealand working in Special Education who are available to support students with high behavioural needs and their teachers. In addition to Special Education, there are a number of additional outside agencies that may be able to help support students who experience difficulty with their behaviour. If schools are unaware of how to access these outside supports, RTLB or Special Education are able to help schools seek appropriate support.   When schools are having difficulties managing behaviour, it is vital that they seek this outside support for the sake of both the students and the school staff struggling to manage them.

Make a Connection, Not a Barrier

The comments of both Destiny and her mother indicate that Destiny liked to make a connection with her teachers, and she enjoys being able to have a relaxed relationship with them. While at the Activity Centre she was able to achieve this as there are limited numbers of both students and teachers, so the environment allows for a closer relationship between teachers and students. Mainstream secondary schools have a large number of students who moves between classes, so there is less opportunity for students and teachers to make meaningful connections.

Shermer High School has established whānau classes to provide the opportunity for a key teacher to have a close connection with the students and their families in their whānau class.. If there is a key person that can make a daily connection with students, then this system can be capitalised on. One of Tyson's comments during his interview indicated that some days he can get in trouble in every class if, for example, he does not wear shoes to school. The positive result

of having an at-risk student coming to class is being overlooked, and instead he could be welcomed and encouraged to engage, not told off about something that is unrelated to the subject he has arrived to class to learn. Shermer High School could look for alternative means to address minor behaviours such as uniform violations so subject teachers could then get on with what they needed to teach and not begin the class with a negative interaction with some or all of the students. That way, teachers are not risking the engagement of their students on minor disciplinary issues, and prime learning time will not be compromised.

Build, Maintain and Restore Relationships.

The study school has a whānau system in place that allows students, teachers and families to have a close and consistent relationship throughout the time each student attends Shermer High School. There are also school-wide expectations for whānau teachers to build and maintain relationships with their students' families. When there are behavioural issues that need to be resolved, school can use restorative practices to seek resolutions. Already the Year 11 Dean has indicated that he is keen to incorporate more restorative practices, and a likely support would be to use Corrigan's (2012b) tiered model of practice. This way, restorative conversations can become embedded in the school culture and used in a number of ways, not just full-blown restorative conferences for serious incidents. Use of Restorative Basics or Pumanawwatanga can promote a school-wide attitude of working with students and inclusive relationships between all staff and students, while Community Circles- Wā Rino: can enable structured group conversations with and between students to build relationships and communication. Both of these approaches can provide groundwork and familiarity with restorative practices for all students, with all staff using restorative language and conversations to solve problems.

When an issue does escalate and needs attending to by a dean or member of senior management, then Brief Restorative Interventions, or Classroom Conference Circles can be employed as a Tier 2 intervention. The more serious conflicts and behavioural incidents can be attended to through Restorative Conferences, which may be at a Tier 2 or 3 levels. By communicating and discussing behavioural incidences with students, the study school can use positive discipline processes and ensure that the students are clear about what harm or impact their behaviour is having, and be part of the process to make things right.

One of the issues raised by the Dean was that although he attempted to have a restorative conversation with Destiny and the food and nutrition teacher, he found it difficult to engage Destiny in the process. This can be addressed in several ways: when restorative practices are fully embedded in the school culture, the process will be more familiar to students and they will feel more comfortable with the process. Similarly, school staff leading these conversations will become more comfortable and skilled at leading this process. School leadership should consider this a point for professional development to consolidate the use of restorative practices: now that staff is aware of the process, the focus can be on how to ensure engagement.

Other issues raised through this study:

When presenting national stand-down data, the Ministry of Education tracks behaviours that lead to stand-downs in nine specified categories: continual disobedience, drugs, physical assault on other students, physical assault on staff, verbal assault on another student, verbal assault on staff, smoking or alcohol, theft, vandalism or arson; and an 'other' category which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, weapons and other dangerous or harmful

behaviour. If all New Zealand schools tracked their stand-downs according to these criteria, tracking stand-down data at each school would be relevant nationally.

Two areas of concern arise from a national perspective: clarification on the definition of 'continual disobedience' is required to ensure that stand-downs are not used in New Zealand as disciplinary measures for minor behaviour. As stated, a behaviour at one school may lead to a stand-down, while not at another. It is expected that with the adoption of positive behaviour frameworks, stand-downs will naturally decrease as students are more likely to be taught appropriate behaviour rather than be punished. However, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education to explore the term 'continual disobedience' and ensure that it is not being used as a generalised excuse for sending difficult students home.

The other suggestion that this study has realized is the generality of the 'other' category the Ministry of Education uses within stand-down data. In 2012 the 'other' category resulted in 11% of all stand-downs, a higher percentage than five other categories. Within the 'other' category is sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, which for the sake of each school community should be tracked in a separate category due to the potentially serious nature of these behaviours. Also listed under 'other' are weapon offences, that given the disturbing events involving weapons at schools overseas, should be a trend that should be closely monitored by the Ministry of Education. Finally, 'other harmful and dangerous behaviour' is part of this 'other' category. If verbal and physical assault of staff and students all have separate categories, it is unclear what this other behaviour could be, but raises the question of whether this 'other harmful and dangerous behaviour' could be to the stood-down student's themselves, in which case this behaviour should also be specifically tracked. This definition is a hypothesised one, but suggesting that schools could potentially be standing-down students that are self-harming or

threatening dangerous behaviour to themselves is a concern in itself. It is clear that this 'other' category must be broken down further to provide further data on these specific at-risk behaviours for the sake of all schools in New Zealand. This would extend the Ministry of Education's analysis to 11 specific behaviours if it were to include (i) sexual harassment and/or sexual misconduct; (ii) weapons; and (iii) harmful or dangerous behaviour to self.

Constraints of the study

The present study involved two stand-down events and interviewed the students, their family and school staff to gather different perspectives on the present stand-down process at the study school. The study was constrained by time, as the thesis project was required to be developed and completed within the academic year. Ideally, more students would have been interviewed, and the research would have sampled a number of secondary schools in order to provide an even more in-depth analysis of stand-downs in New Zealand. However, for the scope of this present study, the two students, two family members and two school staff members provided adequate data to inform the researcher of the present processes at the study school, and highlighted both strengths and constraints of the current process.

Future research examining the suspension process within New Zealand would be a helpful next step. Keeping students out of school by sanction of the Board of Trustees is another process which needs examination as suspensions can keep students out of school for much longer than a stand-down, and again impacts on the engagement and educational time students receive.

Review

As mentioned, this project originally set out to design an in-school stand-down system for the study school. Instead, it was suggested by my supervisor that it was important to first

105

understand the stand-down process at Shermer High School, and the case study was conducted to gain insight on stand-downs both within New Zealand and in the specific context of the study school. What the research process uncovered, however, was a much more ambitious challenge: a way to eliminate the need to stand students down. With a strong framework highlighting positive behaviour, responsive interventions based on individual behaviour within a tiered model and ingrained restorative practices throughout a school schools can address negative behaviours without a punitive response. The challenge is for schools is to embrace a positive disciplinary approach in practice, not just in theory, and teach their students not just academic content, but also support students' emotional growth, to allow the next generation of New Zealanders to fulfil their potential.

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Reducing School Stand-downs
Interview Schedule - STUDENT

Thank you for participating in this interview.
Follow consent form procedures including asking permission to audio-record.
Please note that the interview will be semi-structured, and will vary according to what the participants say, but will include:

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. How old are you and what year are you in?

2. Tell me a bit about yourself as a student.

What are you good at?

What do you struggle with at school?

3. Before your stand-down, had you been in trouble at school before?

If yes: How often?
What kinds of behaviours got you into trouble?
Did you get into trouble at primary or intermediate school?

4. Tell me about when you got stood down in DATE?

5. What effect did the stand-down have on you?

6. Did your stand-down have an effect on your family?

7. Did the stand-down change your behaviour when you returned to school?

If yes: How did it change your behaviour?
Why did it change your behaviour?

If No: why not?

8. You have shown some behaviours that are not ok at your school. Do you have any thoughts or ideas on how school could help you make some positive changes and get you more engaged at school?

9. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about what was happening around the time of your stand-down?

Reducing School Stand-downs
Interview Schedule - PARENT

Thank you for participating in this interview.
Follow consent form procedures including asking permission to audio record.
Please note that the interview will be semi-structured, and will vary according to what the participants say, but will include:

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. Who lives in the family home (gather sex and ages of children in home)?

2. Tell me a bit about yourself as a parent.
 What works well in your family?
 What do you struggle with in your family?

3. Tell me a bit about CASE STUDY STUDENT.
 What are their strengths?
 What do they struggle with?

4. Before the stand-down, had they been in trouble at school before?
 If yes: How often?
 What kinds of behaviours got them into trouble?
 Did they get into trouble throughout their schooling history?

5. Tell me about when they got stood down in DATE?

6. How did your stand-down impact you and your family?

7. How did the stand-down impact your child?

8. Did the stand-down change their behaviour when they returned to school?
 If yes: How did it change their behaviour?
  Why do you think it changed their behaviour?
 If No: why not?

9. Your child have shown some behaviours that are not ok at school. Do you have any thoughts or ideas on how school could help your child make some positive changes and get them more engaged at school?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about what was happening around the time of the stand-down?

Reducing School Stand-downs
Interview Schedule – School Staff

Thank you for participating in this interview.
Follow consent form procedures including asking permission to audio record.
Please note that the interview will be semi-structured, and will vary according to what the participants say, but will include:

1. Tell me about your professional role at STUDY SCHOOL.

2. Tell me about your involvement with STUDY STUDENT.

3. Tell me a bit about CASE STUDY STUDENT.
    What are their strengths?
    What do they struggle with?

4. Before the stand-down, had they been in trouble at school before?
    If yes: How often?
     What kinds of behaviours got them into trouble?
    What kinds of interventions were put in place to address these behaviours?

5. Tell me about when they got stood down in DATE?

6. How did the stand-down impact school?

7. How did the stand-down impact the student?

8. Did the stand-down change their behaviour when they returned to school?
    If yes: How did it change their behaviour?
    Why do you think it changed their behaviour?
    If No: why not?

9. STUDY STUDENT has shown some behaviours that are not ok at school. Do you have any thoughts or ideas on how school could help them make some positive changes and get them more engaged at school?

10. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about what was happening around the time of the stand-down?

23 May 2013

Carolyn White
169 Mangorei Road
NEW PLYMOUTH 4312

Dear Carolyn

Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 13/24
     Reducing school stand-downs

Thank you for your letter dated 20 May 2013.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nathan Matthews, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc   Dr Alison Kearney   Mr Hal Jackson
     Institute of Education   Institute of Education
     PN500   **PN500**

     A/Prof Sally Hansen, Interim Director
     Institute of Education
     PN500