Assisting Secondary Classroom Teachers’ Management of Student Behaviours: Effective Behavioural Management Policy and Managerial Support

A Thesis submitted to Charles Sturt University for the degree of

Doctor of Education

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Submitted

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Certificate of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged. I agree that this thesis be accessible for the purpose of study and research in accordance with the normal conditions established by the Executive Director, Division of Library Services or nominee, for the care, loan and reproduction of theses.

Signature: Joanne E. Huckel
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I dedicate my efforts to my beloved grandmother - Hellen Josephine Hampton (24 March, 1914 - 15 February, 2011) - whose unconditional love surrounds me still.
Within my qualitative investigation of a public secondary high school in rural New South Wales, I argue that discourse emphasising classroom teachers’ responsibility for student behaviour - one that can be traced to the current promotion of professional standards within Australia - has, in effect, worked to discount the need for development and implementation of supportive school-wide disciplinary/social practices in relation to management of ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom behaviours (fdsc behaviours). Using grounded theory and grounded action methodologies, I confirm that fdsc behaviours are categorically embedded in ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues; and, I extend this list of typologies to include, what I call, ‘impasse’ issues. I also confirm and extend the notion that misappropriation of teacher time - within and beyond the classroom - is a problematic derivative issue of systemically ‘unchecked’ fdsc behaviours. I demonstrate that the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary/social support in relation to management of fdsc behaviours has served to exacerbate the existing adverse impact of fdsc behaviours on both the teaching-learning environment and the wellbeing of its inhabitants; indeed, in the absence of systemic support, student verbal abuse of classroom teachers has intensified, and teacher morale has diminished.

Ultimately, I identify two problematic organisational variables from which this two-fold adverse impact on classrooms is derived - specifically, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours. However, my interviewees (teachers and executives) propose school-wide practices that, in effect, would serve to counteract the negative impact of these problematic organisational variables. Herein, in spite of their frank tone and/or evident demoralisation, their clear longing for school-wide practices that promote and/or prioritise relationships, teacher and student wellbeing, teacher authority, and shared responsibility for students’ socialisation - such as positive behaviour support and restorative justice - is heartening. Both student learning and student wellbeing are critically dependent on teacher wellbeing, and, in turn, teacher wellbeing is critically dependent on effective school-wide disciplinary/social support. Discourse in relation to shared responsibility for student socialisation must not be overshadowed by discourse in relation to teacher responsibility for management of student behaviour. It takes a village to raise a child.
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The Emergence of Operational Theory from Explanatory Theory
The hybrid curriculum of the professional doctorate is one which takes explicitly into account that, in the intersections between the university and the organisation in which typically a doctoral research project will be undertaken, new kinds of knowledge and new ways of producing knowledge will be developed. The task of the doctoral candidate is to conceptualise and reflexively represent the nature of that space, in relation to the knowledge that is to be produced through the research process. (Lee, Green, & Brennan, 2000, pp. 127)

The professional space in which I work, ‘the classroom’, has been known to me most of my life. I have vivid memories of a rural childhood in which I conducted ‘lessons’ on my grandparents’ front veranda. I competed for that space with scores of potted geraniums. Nevertheless, equipped with chalk, a free-standing blackboard, and scruffy bears who sat to attention on upturned wooden crates, I would prattle and scrawl before a seemingly captive, co-operative audience. ‘Teacher’, in my child’s mind, was an occupation to which all naturally aspired. As a student, the remarkable teachers I encountered possessed qualities that, I now realise, added force to my achievement. Beyond the enthusiasm and clarity with which the best delivered content, their uniform high expectations - both academic and behavioural - were keenly extolled and imbued. During the ‘bleak’ teenage years, in which my grades plunged and passive resistance became the weapon of choice, these high expectations weighed heavily on my being until, coerced and assured by them, I eventually emerged from a state of recalcitrance.

Decades later, as a secondary teacher armed with memories of my perceptions as a student, I remain convinced of the need for enthusiasm, clarity, strategy, and affirmation within teachers’ pedagogy. Moreover, I am keenly aware of the need for uniform (that is, school-wide) high standards/expectations in relation to student achievement and potential. Indeed, organisational practices that serve to safeguard both the core business and the inhabitants of the teaching-learning environment are essential. My research topic - “Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and management support” - was determined by my professional
experience as a secondary teacher within the Australian (NSW) public school system. As the African proverb so famously proclaimed, ‘it takes a village to raise a child’, and ultimately, in order to provide the best support for students, teachers managing secondary classrooms where the idea of either a captive or co-operative audience is commonplace can no longer be taken for granted. Hence, organisational practices that clearly emphasise shared responsibility for student socialisation are required. Current discourse within the Australian context rightly emphasises teacher quality (professional standards), however, the complementary need for school-wide practices that serve to contextualise and support teacher management of student behaviour must not be overshadowed.

Valuing student achievement equates with valuing the means by which student achievement is promoted. Organisational practice that safeguards the core business of the teaching-learning environment is the foundational means of promoting student achievement. Therefore, to ensure that student learning is not at risk, organisational practices that purport to minimise classroom disruption require both implementation and robust monitoring. In this study, my professional concern is focused on the identification of organisational behavioural management practices that are endorsed and desired by teachers as a means to counterbalance the adverse impact of what I am calling *frequent, disruptive student classroom behaviours* (fdsc behaviours). My focus is on one secondary school where - through careful, methodical, academic inquiry - I hope to build new knowledge that will contribute to my profession.

THE RESEARCH TOPIC AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

At the start of my teaching career, I took it for granted that my effectiveness as a teacher would require both pedagogical and behavioural management skills. However, as time progressed, I noticed that the extent of success of my disciplinary efforts (and that of my colleagues) in managing student behaviour in the classroom was largely dependent upon the nature of the larger context of organisational disciplinary/social support provided.
Over twenty-something years of teaching, therefore, the notion of the school as ‘village’ has been repeatedly reinforced; indeed, I consider shared responsibility for student socialisation to be a vital aspect of educational initiatives. My study here is premised on the contention that one of the greatest needs of classroom teachers is appropriate, adequate organisational disciplinary/social support in relation to social norms and relationships within the school. Thus, my research topic, framed as a question, was formulated:

How can organisational disciplinary/social practice best support classroom teachers’ needs in relation to the incidence of inappropriate classroom behaviour among secondary students?

Socio-economic forecasts insist that, in order to survive in the 21st century, upcoming student cohorts will require a set of prerequisite life skills - that is, communication skills, co-operative learning skills, and critical literacy skills (Rodgers, 2001). In order to optimise students’ life chances, the inherent nature of this skill-set implies the need for development and implementation of school-wide practices that serve to facilitate disruption-free teaching-learning environments. Yet there is clear evidence that the effects of student classroom misbehaviours - principally ‘high frequency’, ‘low status’ anti-social behaviours - currently pose significant problems within Australian and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) classrooms (Barmby, 2006; Little, 2005). Research indicates that systemic failure to appropriately address unrelenting classroom disruption yields detrimental socio-economic outcomes. Chief among these, as will be outlined subsequently, are: thwarted instructional goals; reduced student potential; threatened social wellbeing; and, teacher wastage. In turn, this situation is exacerbated by a lack of in-depth, qualitative research that gives active consideration to classroom teachers and their disciplinary support needs. Fundamentally, students’ future socio-economic survival is dependent upon systemic responses to classroom teachers’ needs in relation to current classroom conditions; the future is now.
Within the Australian context, frequent, disruptive student classroom (fdsc) behaviours are reported as having a significant negative impact on students’ acquisition of skills. Australian research indicates that “a substantial proportion of students in secondary school classrooms [are] engaging in behaviours that are interfering with their teachers’ ability to teach and the smooth running of the classroom” (Little, 2005, p. 376); and, classroom teachers’ core business is increasingly supplanted by ‘separate business’ wherein “up to 76% of secondary school teachers’ time is taken up with controlling the disruptive behaviour of students” (Infantino & Little, 2005, p. 493). This significant shift in teachers’ classroom focus has had implications for teachers’ instructional time, disciplinary workloads, and wellbeing. Indeed, obtaining student co-operation, tracking down evasive students, supervising detentions, conferencing with students, contacting parents, seeking executive assistance, and effecting bureaucratic paper trails are common examples of time-consuming teacher labour within workdays that are already constrained by bells, lesson preparation, lesson delivery, multiple classes, marking, record keeping, sport supervision, and a duty of care towards all students. Classroom learning time spent dealing with protracted anti-social behaviour cannot be recuperated. Notwithstanding the intensification of teachers’ work (discussed more fully in Chapter 2), my study suggests that a lack of systemic response to fdsc behaviours, which serves to intensify teachers’ disciplinary workload, is compromising the larger goals of school education.

In addition to thwarting instructional goals, unrelenting anti-social student behaviours also threaten teacher wellbeing and contribute to teacher wastage. Nowadays, Australian classroom teachers are expected to manage an increasing number of school-aged children who need support for mental health issues; and, most significantly, “more than one-third of all referrals [relate] to behaviour problems” (Infantino & Little, 2005, p. 491). In terms of teachers’ mental health, it has been known for some time that the best predictor of teacher stress is ‘disruptive student behaviour’ (Abel & Sewell, 1999) whilst teacher burnout is deemed a direct consequence of both ‘disruptive student behaviour’ and ‘a lack of social support’ (Brouwers &
Tomic, 2000). Generally speaking, therefore, in terms of organisational variables, impaired teacher wellbeing may be viewed as the product of inadequate organisational disciplinary/social practice in relation to fdsc behaviours. Here in Australia, the chief issues cited as persuading employed teachers to leave the profession, and dissuading trained teachers from entering the profession, are ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘workload’ (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). For those who are nonplussed by the quantity of recruits who nevertheless remain in the profession, an examination of the qualitative impact of recruits’ experiences rekindles concern; research in this area reveals that, too often, the initial, pervasive idealism evident in teacher education students recruited by Australian universities is eventually devastated by poor support for student behaviours and excessive workload (Ewing & Manuel, 2005). As Stroud (2018) has recently demonstrated in the public arena, these are compelling issues for the profession. Hence, in the bid to reduce teacher wastage and stem associated socio-economic costs, it is not surprising that the most highly rated suggestions for improvement proffered by veteran teachers are ‘support on pupil discipline’ and ‘reducing teacher workload’ (Barmby, 2006, p. 259). For the sake of teacher wellbeing - and, in turn, both student wellbeing and student learning - investigation of the supportive organisational disciplinary/social practices required by teachers relevant to their management of fdsc behaviours is rendered essential.

My thesis is that shared organisational responsibility for both the promotion of student engagement and minimisation of disruption within teaching-learning environments is required in order to: facilitate academic achievement; safeguard the wellbeing of teachers and students; and, stem teacher wastage. This shared responsibility, however, must commence with recognition that a presumption of shared values (both within and beyond the school) is no longer tenable. Indeed, the diverse and conflicting values evident within society at large play a role within school grounds, and they are further concentrated within the physical and social confines of the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to promote and enact school/community values that are congruent with school goals, often expressed as the school
'mission’. Development of effective school policies - goal congruence - requires “the joint efforts of teachers and a school’s leadership” (Hart, Conn, Carter, & Wearing, 1993, p. 5). Indeed, the field has long agreed that teacher efficacy is facilitated within environments “in which human relationships are supportive, where teachers share beliefs and values about the central mission of the school, and where they feel accepted and respected” (Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991, p. 204). In view of the diverse and conflicting values evident within society at large, careful attention to the establishment of school standards that serve to promote achievement, wellbeing, and responsible citizenship is required.

It becomes apparent that, in order to facilitate optimal teaching-learning environments, classroom teachers require organisational disciplinary/social supports that act as a buffer between themselves and the increasing pressures of diverse and contested social values. As I have suggested above, Australian research on teachers’ perceptions of problematic behaviours, their needs, and their preferred interventions continues to be seen as a significant research gap, with specific need for qualitative data to identify “the types of intervention teachers prefer and their reasons for these preferences” (Little, 2005, p. 375). Hence, the warrant for my inquiry into teachers’ endorsed/desired support needs - relevant to fdsc behaviours - seems clear.

In a similar sense, too, the warnings are clear - if classroom teachers’ organisational disciplinary/social support needs are neither identified nor addressed, then our children will suffer. Building on research that (1) alerts us to the fact that there are serious concerns around the world “about how to maintain an adequate supply of good quality teachers” (Barmby, 2006, p. 249), and (2) cautions us that “without a highly qualified, satisfied, experienced and reasonably stable teaching workforce, we risk an uncertain future in terms of the quality of our children’s education” (Manuel, 2003, p.4), I situate my inquiry within the context of current national discourse pertaining to teacher quality. As I argue here, the need for development and
The implementation of school-wide practices that serve to support teacher management of student behaviour must not be ignored.

THE PURPOSE OF THE INVESTIGATION

As indicated, the significance of my investigation is founded in the need to maintain a stable teaching workforce that, by and large, is contingent upon the meeting of classroom teachers’ support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours. In view of the gap in qualitative research pertaining to these support needs, the purpose of my qualitative investigation is to identify the fdsc behaviours for which classroom teachers indicate required support, and to draw attention to the school-wide interventions that teachers endorse/desire as a means of reducing the adverse impact of these behaviours on the teaching-learning environment.

My decision to focus on just one site (‘Huckville’ High School) pertains to issues of depth, data management, and relative generalizability. Specifically, as both sole researcher and full-time teacher at the time of this study, I desired in-depth elicitation of teachers’/executives’ viewpoints within my interviews. In addition, both this context (a high school within a large state system of schooling with one overarching administration) and my focus on generic variables (fdsc behaviours and whole-school disciplinary/social practices) serve to heighten the potential for recognition and acceptance of my findings by teachers in other schools and systems.

Within this targeted site, consistent with the core propositions evident within my research question, and on the basis of the substantial literature review presented in the next Chapter, I posed subsidiary research questions (SRQ’s) intended to define the scope and range of this study. Their purpose was to determine: the identity of fdsc behaviours; the school-wide practices currently in place in relation to management of these behaviours; and, school-wide practices that were seen as either working well or desirable. These subsidiary research questions are as follows:
To what extent do interviewees consider fdsc behaviours and/or organisational practice (related to fdsc behaviours) an issue of concern?

To what extent is there agreement amongst staff in terms of their perceptions of both the identity and organisational status of fdsc behaviours?

Are classroom teachers receiving appropriate, adequate school-wide disciplinary/social support in relation to fdsc behaviours?

How can organisational disciplinary/social practice more effectively support classroom teachers in relation to fdsc behaviours?

My intention, within a particular educational setting, was to draw attention to organisational practices that are validated and desired by teachers and executive staff members as a means of effectively addressing the adverse impact of fdsc misbehaviours on teaching-learning environments. Before outlining the stages of presentation of my argument, I now provide a short introduction to the policy context of the system and school in which my study has taken place.

THE POLICY CONTEXT OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.3.1 Educational Infrastructure

In Australia, the New South Wales Government Education and Communities (hereafter known as ‘the Department’) is administered by a Director-General who oversees two discrete offices managed by Chief Executives - the Office of Education and the Office of Communities. Within the jurisdiction of the Office of Education, the Deputy Director-General of Schools is in charge of multiple sections which manage public schooling. Each of these sections is supervised by executive directors and directors. Those responsible for a cluster of local schools are regionally based. At the present time, in more than 2,200 state locations, there are around 750,000 students attending NSW public schools - including preschools, primary schools, central schools, high schools, colleges, and specialist schools.

At the apex of the in-school hierarchy, the school principal is directly accountable to the Director-General for the educational leadership and effective management of his/her school. Within each public high school, the
hierarchy consists of a principal, one or two deputy principals, head teachers who are in charge of a particular faculty (Key Learning Area), and classroom teachers who tend to specialise in a particular subject or teach in a particular faculty (for example, English, Mathematics, Science, and so on). The principal and deputy principals are labelled ‘senior executives’ whilst head teachers - middle management - are labelled ‘executives’. The face-to-face teaching load is reduced as additional responsibilities are taken up upon ascension of the in-school hierarchy; hence, classroom teachers bear the heaviest teaching load in terms of the number of classes taught.

1.3.2 Departmental Expectations: High Behavioural Standards, Shared Responsibility for High Behavioural Standards, and an Intensification of Teachers’ Work

Whilst the focus of my research is classroom teachers’ support needs relevant to management of student behaviours, it is worth noting that this venture occurs within the context of an emergent performance structure that has served to increase and intensify teachers’ work. For Australian teachers, an imposed performance structure in combination with mandated inclusion policies has, at worst, served to produce an unsupportive work environment connected to excessive administrative (accountability) workloads; indeed, this state of affairs, detrimental to teacher wellbeing, is implicated in both teacher burnout (chronic emotional exhaustion and demoralisation) and teacher attrition (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Garrick, Mak, Cathcart, Winwood, Bakker, & Lushington, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Stroud, 2018). Teacher wellbeing is critical to both student wellbeing and student learning (The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, 2011, p. 18). A performance goal structure is indicated by an emphasis on grades, test scores, competition, and social comparison (both within and between schools) (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In the Australian context, specific indicators of a performance structure include: (1) the Common Grade Scale; (2) standardised testing (NAPLAN: National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy); (3) the ‘My School’ website (which compares schools’ performances on NAPLAN); and, most recently, (4) the introduction of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
In 2015, more than half of fully qualified teachers “who were in the paid workforce were not working in education jobs” (Gallant & Riley, 2017, p. 897). This statistic - denoting considerable loss in terms of both cultural capital and training expenditure (and, conceivably, thwarted aspirations) - begs questions relevant to teachers’ work conditions, and orduains responsiveness to their stated needs. As I will discuss more fully in Chapter Two, Garrick et al. (2017) indicate that teachers’ priority needs (relevant to their wellbeing) constitute “improved measures for student behaviour management” (my concern) followed by a reduction of their administrative workload (documentation) (p. 124).

In view of the threat posed by disruptive behaviours to both the achievement and wellbeing of classroom inhabitants, Departmental discourse indicates intolerance of disruptive student classroom behaviours (fdsc behaviours), and requires a shared commitment to an expectation of high behavioural standards. The Department expects students to develop responsibility for their own behaviour. Since 1987, when corporal punishment properly fell into disuse, NSW schools have been individually responsible for the development and regular revision of a Discipline Code (School Discipline Policy). The Department insists that school-derived Discipline Codes support three overriding priorities: “raising educational standards/achievement; the provision of quality education for all; and, the care and safety of the students in its charge” (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, Student Welfare Directorate, 1996, p. 3). The Department also insists that school-derived Discipline Codes support three essential components: “student welfare, good discipline, and effective learning” (p. 12).

‘Good discipline’, according to Departmental discourse, entails the evolution of organisational practices that provide students with genuine opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions (self-discipline). Departmental emphasis on student accountability proceeds from recognition of a number of premises that emerge from classroom dynamics. Firstly, teacher ‘capacity to teach’ is reliant upon individual students’ behavioural choices. Secondly, the capacity to both teach and learn is curtailed by disruptive students. Thirdly, student achievement is promoted by teachers
(and parents) who expect (and hopefully encounter) high behavioural and academic standards. As the following extract from this policy demonstrates, the emphasis on student self-discipline is a critical factor in the bid to protect the rights of employees (teachers) and clientele (students). Teachers (and parents) are effectively instructed to anticipate high standards:

A critical factor in achieving the goals of public education is the aspiration of students to do well. Real levels of achievement are greatly increased when teachers and parents expect high standards.... If the classroom is disrupted by the noisy and inattentive few, the learning of other students suffers. Each student’s right to learn depends on the capacity of teachers to carry out their professional responsibilities in the classroom free from disruption.... Students have a right to be safe and happy at school [and] a right to be treated fairly and with dignity. The same applies to teachers who on occasions are subjected to levels of harassment which would not be tolerated in any other workplace (NSWDET, 1996, p. 4)

In view of teachers’ right to teach and students’ right to learn without disruption, NSW public schools, including Huckville itself, have requirements of all students which include: sustained application to learning; respect for others and their property; peaceful resolution of conflict; and, compliance with all school rules. In view of these requirements, parents are expected to help their children to assume responsibility for their attitudes and behaviour. Indeed, the parent-teacher partnership is charged with the responsibility “to create in children an understanding of appropriate public behaviour” with the hope that “such understanding should lead the student to develop a responsibility for his or her own behaviour” (NSWDET, 1996, p. 3).

1.3.2.1 School Discipline Policy: Promoting Student Self-Discipline

In order to promote student self-discipline, the Department guidelines for School Discipline Policy, which have been used at Huckville, include: identification of endorsed standards; identification of escalating disciplinary consequences for persistent breaches (known as the Level System); provision of authentic opportunities for conflict resolution (such as restorative justice practice); and, provision of student removal as a means of safeguarding classroom and school environments.

Intended to be developed and endorsed collectively by students, staff, parent organisations, and the school council, policy relating to school rules specifies responsibilities and rights, along with expected standards of
classroom behaviour. Policy involving “strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviour” must be set out as a graded set of practices whereby ‘further breach’ and ‘serious cases’ attract escalating disciplinary consequences (NSWDET, 1996, p. 7). In order to provide students with authentic opportunities to ‘clear the air’, convey their needs, and/or ‘make amends’, Departmental guidelines encourage the provision of school programs that aim to develop “self-discipline, self-evaluation, communication and conflict resolution skills” (NSWDET, 1996, p. 7). Above all, Departmental guidelines recognise that student removal and/or restitution are among the strategies required to deal with behavioural breaches:

For minor breaches, consequences could include reprimand, short detention, loss of privileges, in-class isolation. In more serious cases formal after school detention or in-school suspensions can be used. Should a further breach occur, the foreshadowed consequences are to be effected. Consideration can be given by schools to establishing isolation rooms [and] introducing strategies that allow for restitution.... (NSWDET, 1996, p. p. 8)

The customary purpose of an isolation room is to isolate and supervise disruptive students who have been removed from the classroom. Before the establishment of such a facility, however, the Department insists that community consultation “be thorough and broad acceptance gained” (NSWDET, 1996, p. 8). Issues such as “duration, frequency of use, development of reintegration strategies, adequate supervision, and monitoring and evaluation” also need to be addressed. “Restitution”, according to Departmental directives, “should be a collaborative problem solving process in which the student concerned faces the consequences of his or her action and focuses on ‘making things right’ or redressing damage” (NSWDET, 1996, p. 8).

1.3.2.2 School Discipline Policy: Student Suspension

Invested with the highest authority within a school, the Department holds school principals responsible for the establishment of optimal teaching-learning environments. The principal’s chief role, therefore, is to facilitate a school culture that permits both teaching and learning to flourish. In order to carry out this responsibility, the principal is also invested with the authority to
remove students whose behaviour threatens teaching-learning environments:

The character of a school can depend crucially on the educational leadership.... [The Principal's] management responsibility involves ensuring the provision of a safe and harmonious work environment for students and staff and, in particular, an effective learning environment. In this context ... principals have the authority to suspend, or exclude or recommend expulsion.... (NSWDET, 1996, pp. 10-11)

Principals of public schools in New South Wales have authority to suspend any student who commits the following offences: possession of a suspected illegal substance; possession of a weapon; violence; criminal behaviour; and, persistent disobedience. Illicit behaviour aside, the Department signals its intolerance of persistent disobedience:

The relationship between student and teacher should be based on mutual respect. Students who, in their relationship with staff, are persistently disobedient, insolent or engage in verbal harassment and abuse, are to be suspended. (NSWDET, 1996, p. 9)

‘Disrupting other students’ is among the behaviours listed as a reason for the imposition of a short suspension (up to and including four days). The list also includes: refusal to obey staff instructions; defiance; hostile behaviour; bullying; and, verbal abuse (NSWDET, Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures, 2011, p. 7). If the issue of inappropriate behaviour remains unresolved, principals are instructed to consider further suspensions (either short or long) or alternative educational programs:

If behaviour management programs and short suspensions have failed to resolve the issue of inappropriate behaviour, strategies such as further short suspensions, a longer suspension or alternative educational programs must be considered.... (NSWDET, 2011, pp. 7-8)

A principal is permitted to impose a long suspension (up to and including 20 school days) for behaviour that “interferes with the rights of other students to learn or teachers to teach”; however, if a principal imposes more than two long suspensions within one annual period then s/he is required to seek approval from superiors:

Principals may impose a long suspension for persistent or serious misbehaviour. This includes, but is not limited to: repeated refusal to follow the school discipline code; making credible threats against students or staff; behaviour that deliberately and persistently interferes with the rights of other students to learn or teachers to teach.... (NSW DET, 2011, pp. 8-10)
Ultimately, Departmental discourse indicates that the capacity of teachers to carry out their professional responsibilities in the classroom, free from disruption, requires: leaders who insist upon, and enforce, high standards; an emphasis on student accountability; and, parental cooperation. Whilst holding principals responsible for the provision of effective learning environments - a responsibility which may turn on the imposition of a student suspension - Departmental discourse indicates that remediation of unacceptable student behaviour is, first and foremost, a parental responsibility:

Suspension highlights for the student and the parents the unacceptability of the student’s behaviour and the parents’ responsibility for remediation of that behaviour.... The school is not by itself responsible for, or equipped to develop, socially acceptable behaviour by students. That is a shared responsibility of parents and students in partnership with teachers.... (NSWDET, 1996, pp. 9 & 11)

With this overview of the systemic and school policy context that has framed my study I present a summary of the organisation of the thesis to conclude this introductory chapter.

ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 of my thesis indicates: (1) my research topic (“Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and management support”); (2) the significance of my research topic (the need to maintain a stable teaching workforce which, by and large, is contingent upon the meeting of classroom teachers’ support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours); and, (3) the purpose of my research topic (to address the gap in qualitative research pertaining to classroom teachers’ support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours). In addition, Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of Departmental and school expectations in relation to student behaviour. Within this chapter, I highlight that, in order to protect the teaching-learning environment, the Department requires that stakeholders’ expect high behavioural standards, and assume shared responsibility for high behavioural standards.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I present the research basis on which I developed an approach to answering my research questions. In Chapter 2 -
the literature review - I explore evidence-based research that is relevant to the field of my investigation. Such research includes: research on fds c behaviours; research on teacher burnout and attrition; research on school climate; research on desirable leadership behaviours; and, research on 'best/endorsed' practice relevant to whole-school management of fds c behaviours. Chapter 3 addresses issues of methodology, methods, analysis, and limitations attached to the case study approach. Here, I discuss the means by which I investigated my topic of research, namely, through use of grounded theory/action (a constructivist approach). The practical and philosophical goals of my investigation are complemented by grounded theory/action. Using purposive and theoretical sampling within a targeted site, I interviewed staff members in order to gather information pertinent to my investigation. The inductive approach to data analysis - through use of constant comparison - facilitated both loyalty to individuals’ perspectives and emergent group phenomena. The ethical considerations regulating my investigation included: obtaining special permission, obtaining consent (written, informed, and ongoing), providing full disclosure, ensuring freedom from coercion, ensuring anonymity, ensuring confidentiality, and a duty of care.

My research and findings are contained within three linked chapters - Chapters 4, 5, and 6. These chapters reveal my substantial reliance upon the voices of my participants - classroom teachers and executives - in order to approximate a faithful representation of their perceptions of both fds c behaviours and organisational disciplinary/social support relevant to management of fds c behaviours. Across Chapters 4 and 5, collated individual voices, from two samples (classroom teachers and executives), serve to reveal two problematic organisational variables relevant to the management of fds c behaviours - namely, the low organisational status of these behaviours, and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for them. In Chapter 6, proposals for desired organisational disciplinary/social practices largely represent a reversal of these problematic organisational variables - namely, prioritisation of the organisational status of fds c behaviours, and organisational promotion of shared responsibility for
management of fdsc behaviours. The emphasis on relationships-based approaches, desired by the bulk of participants, reinforces the literature that presently informs the field, and highlights the need for stronger systemic attention to relationships-based approaches.

Chapter 7, as my concluding Summary, reviews the study in terms of its scope and achievement (as doctoral research for the profession). Ultimately, my research experience has led me to value practitioners’ primacy in the codification and validation of practice knowledge, and to value the role of the professional-cum-researcher as producer of new kinds of knowledge. As Lee et al. (2000) note:

The professional doctoral researcher formalises a relationship of work as learning, and of the workplace as both site for the production of new knowledge and as object for reflexive analysis. The conceptual space of the ‘hybrid curriculum’ is therefore a space where the workplace, work practice, and the professional self come into a new and reflexive relationship with the academy. (pp. 127-128)

While I feel that my positioning as a school-based, professionally-focussed, teacher-researcher produces a particular relationship with the academy and its norms, the opportunity to work in this ‘hybrid space’ highlights the need for practitioner research to be heard, understood, and valued within the larger educational research academy.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

At the heart of my research is the conviction that effective teaching-learning environments are critically dependent on sound student-teacher relationships. These, in turn, are critically dependent on whole-school attitudes, discourses, behaviours, roles, relationships, and practices that serve to challenge and minimise the incidence and negative effects of fdsc behaviours, and on systemic disciplinary practices and leadership behaviours that serve to minimise the negative effects of ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom (fdsc) behaviours. I demonstrate that inadequate systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to fdsc behaviours poses a serious risk to both educational purpose (teaching and learning) and the wellbeing of teachers and students as individuals. Indeed, I am able to demonstrate that inadequate systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to these particular behaviours (typologies) contributes significantly to both teacher burnout and teacher attrition. Hence, within a targeted site, my investigation of teachers’ needs relevant to whole-school management of fdsc behaviours constitutes both a practical and an ethical concern.

In developing my argument, this chapter provides an exploration of representative samples of research literature relevant to: (1) the identity (typologies), impact (derivative issues), and derivation (conflicting social values) of fdsc behaviours; (2) the nature of key contributory factors in both teacher burnout and teacher attrition; (3) the influence of leadership on school culture, and the sorts of leadership behaviours identified as desirable for schools today; and, (4) an overview of systemic disciplinary interventions currently considered ‘best/endorsed’ practice.

Essentially, my aim here is to answer the following questions in terms of the existing knowledge base:

- Does research identify specific student classroom behaviours known to be both ‘frequent’ and ‘disruptive’ (fdsc behaviours)? Are these behaviours recognised and specifically targeted in 21st century Australian schools? Who is responsible for managing these behaviours? How are they managed? What systemic supports/practices are required by classroom teachers who are struggling to
manage these behaviours? What derivative issues, if any, emerge from these fdsc behaviours?

- Assuming that teachers who are unable to manage fdsc behaviours are unlikely to be happy in their work, what key contributory factors have been identified as leading to both teacher burnout and teacher attrition? To what extent are these factors embedded in the issue of fdsc behaviours?

- What does research indicate about the implications of school leadership behaviour in both the development and maintenance of school/classroom culture? What leadership behaviours are considered advantageous/vital? Are there leadership behaviours explicated in connection with the management of fdsc behaviours?

The value of naming and exploring known typologies has a twofold purpose. First, it provides a baseline for valid teacher expectations. Indeed, it is reasonable for classroom teachers to understand and be prepared to manage known fdsc behaviours. In turn, the staff of a school should expect systemic support in relation to persistent/extreme manifestations of fdsc behaviours. Second, such expectations beg questions in relation to attitudes, discourses, behaviours, roles, relationships, and practices within the school as a workplace.

Identification of the main reasons for teacher dysfunction and teacher wastage is relevant to the need to acknowledge that (1) fdsc behaviours and (2) inadequate systemic disciplinary/social support (relevant to fdsc behaviours) are significantly implicated in the slippery slope to both teacher burnout and teacher attrition. Indeed, both teacher burnout and teacher attrition pose threats to the education of students. Such identification lends weight to the importance of my investigation.

Identification of the key leadership behaviours that impact on school culture is relevant in that such knowledge facilitates my qualification of leadership behaviours in relation to systemic management of fdsc behaviours. Indeed, the interactive power of these two variables - leadership behaviours and disruptive behaviours - is at the heart of classroom functioning.

‘Disruptive behaviour’, as the focus of my study, is defined as “offending student behaviour that interrupts the class” (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, p. 123). For the purposes of this study, ‘student bullying of teachers’ is defined as “aggressive behaviour in which there is an imbalance of power
between the aggressor [student/s] and the [victimised] teacher; students’
aggressive acts are deliberate and repeated, and aim to harm the [victimised
teacher] physically, emotionally, socially, and/or professionally” (De Wet,
2010, p. 190). ‘Disruptive behaviour’ and ‘student bullying of teachers’ are
understood as ‘anti-social behaviours’ in that both forms of conduct are
opposed to the values/principles underlying schools/society.

Identification of systemic disciplinary interventions considered ‘best’
and ‘endorsed’ practice is relevant in terms of the controversy surrounding
primary responsibility for fdsc behaviours - indeed, studies vary in terms of
their emphasis on either ‘teacher responsibility’ or ‘student/systemic
responsibility’ for disruptive behaviours. My evaluation of evidence-based
research leads me to support promotion of student responsibility through
shared responsibility (the ‘village’). Within my own study, the particular
disciplinary approaches advocated by interviewees/practitioners are framed
within this literature.

2.2 FREQUENT, DISRUPTIVE STUDENT CLASSROOM
BEHAVIOURS: TYPOLOGIES & ASSOCIATED SOCIAL
FACTORS

2.2.1 Overview: Anti-Social Student Behaviour

‘education cannot compensate for society’, but schools that aspire to be
‘incubators of democracy’ have a moral duty to try”. The maintenance of
classroom functioning requires the presence of particular social values and
behaviours, yet the infiltration of conflicting social values/behaviours - such
as fdsc behaviours - makes this very difficult in some contexts. In these
instances, targeted systemic support and protection of all the inhabitants of
the teaching-learning environment is needed. Typologies of fdsc behaviours
attest to the long-term entrenchment of ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, and ‘bullying’
issues. State (NSW) statistics reveal that the incidence of student bullying is
highest for junior secondary students; and, whilst ‘bullying’ issues are
traditionally situated as a peer-related phenomenon, evidence-based
research demonstrates that ‘student bullying of teachers’ constitutes an
existent, delineated, problematic phenomenon. Within Rigter’s (2000)
Australian study, teachers are characterised as victims of student violence (bullying). Subsequent to the pervasiveness of mobile phones, iPods, and classroom laptops, ‘technology’ issues joined the ranks of these typologies. And, within my own study, ‘impasse’ issues (student refusal to move) are sufficiently prominent to qualify as an emergent typology. The misappropriation of teacher time - within and beyond the classroom - is a prominent derivative issue of fdsc behaviours. As it happens, both teachers and students vehemently object to (1) fdsc behaviours, and (2) the misappropriation of teacher/class time afforded by them. Generally speaking, fdsc behaviours have been represented as a product of, or exacerbated by, conflicting social values, social dysfunction, and the absence of social support. In Australia and elsewhere, the systemic need for legal recourse against ‘irresponsible’ parents serves to highlight the extent of the conflict/tension between school and home. Indeed, when the education system itself is compelled to seek the assistance of legal coercion, then the social assistance required by individual teachers is wholly manifest. Ultimately, it is the unacceptable risk that fdsc behaviours pose to both teacher wellbeing and student potential that generates my concern, and provides the warrant for my inquiry here. Further, as I will argue in later chapters, such concern renders the implementation of effective systemic disciplinary support an ethical necessity. In the following sub-sections, I outline and review the literature that is relevant to my study.

2.2.2 Frequent, Disruptive Student Classroom Behaviours: Typologies

A typology is a classification of the representative possessor of a quality. Research indicates that there are particular student classroom behaviours that have been and continue to be identified as possessing the qualities of being (1) disruptive and (2) disruptive on a frequent basis. At the time of writing, research indicates that ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues constitute typologies in relation to fdsc behaviours. These are the issues/behaviours that require particular targeting, monitoring, and whole-school management.
2.2.2.1 Typologies

A study of Victorian secondary teachers (Little, 2005) found that both ‘talk’ and ‘commitment’ issues constitute the student classroom behaviours considered to be ‘most frequent’ and ‘most troublesome’; moreover, the misappropriation of teacher class time afforded by frequent disruption is identified as a derivative issue of concern. Little's (2005) investigation involved a survey in which 148 secondary teachers (94 women and 54 men) identified ‘talking out of turn’, ‘idleness’, ‘hindering others’, and ‘disobedience’ as the most frequent and most troublesome classroom behaviours (Little, 2005, p. 373). The mean number of troublesome students per class was estimated at 5.3 (SD=3), which borders on 20% of the class, and males were reported as particularly “problematic”, with 68% of respondents reporting that they “spend more time on issues of order and control than they believe they ought” (Little, 2005, p. 373). Whilst corroborating the identity of issues that constitute two typologies (‘talk’ and ‘commitment’ issues), this study also exposes misappropriation of teacher/class time as a derivative issue of concern in relation to fdsc behaviours. Ultimately, Little (2005) expressed concern about these issues “due to the implications [they] may have on classroom functioning and teacher stress” (p. 376).

Victorian secondary students’ intolerance of disruption in the classroom (relevant to ‘talk’ issues), and their intolerance of the misappropriation of teacher/class time (due to disruptive talk), are revealed in an investigation conducted by Infantino and Little (2005). Within this investigation, participants indicated that: both “talking out of turn” and “talking back” constitute the “most disruptive” and “most troublesome” classroom behaviours; and, more than 20% of classroom inhabitants in each class were considered troublesome (Infantino & Little, 2005, p. 502). In view of the scholastic and social power of verbal interaction within the classroom, it comes as no surprise that students who seek to co-operatively engage consider verbal interference and verbal intimidation to be distracting and/or menacing. Whilst the majority of students (54%) within this study objected to the consumption of class time afforded by disruption, “more females than
males objected to the consumption of time afforded by disruptive behaviours” and “more females than males identified a greater range of disruptive behaviours” (Infantino & Little, 2005, pp. 497 & 499). These findings suggest that males are more likely than females to tolerate and/or perpetrate behaviours that effect disruption. Indeed, Infantino and Little (2005) relate that “female students are often left to wait while the teacher attempts to control male students who are being disruptive” (p. 503). Whilst clearly corroborating the identity of one typology ('talk' issues), Infantino and Little (2005) have exposed secondary students’ intolerance of both ‘talk’ issues (verbal interference and verbal defiance/insolence) and the misappropriation of teacher/class time due to disruptive talk. Also within this study, both the notion of ‘talk’ as an instrument of ‘bullying’ (verbal defiance/insolence) and the persistence of taken-for-granted male privilege as a problematic phenomenon are indicated. Indeed, questions are raised in relation to systemic tolerance of disruptive behaviours in general, and so-called gendered behaviours in particular.

Almost a decade later, Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, and Conway (2014) investigated teachers’ perceptions of student behaviour, finding that ‘talk’, ‘technology’, and ‘commitment’ issues constitute the disruptive student classroom behaviours considered ‘most frequent’, ‘most unproductive’, ‘most challenging’, and ‘most difficult to manage’ - ‘bullying’ issues are implicated. Although these researchers separately categorised so-called low-level disruptive behaviours and aggressive/anti-social behaviours, it is reasonable to assume that the alleged frequency and nature of the latter behaviours have the propensity to either cause or contribute to classroom disruption. Whilst confirming the identity of the bulk of issues that constitute typologies ('talk', ‘technology’, and ‘commitment’ issues) - and exposing the frequency of ‘bullying’ behaviours - Sullivan et al. (2014) reference the typologies that constitute a relentless managerial challenge for teachers within both primary and secondary sectors.

Rigter’s (2000) investigation of Australian primary school teachers revealed that: student ‘bullying’ constitutes teachers' greatest concern; teachers are the victims of student violence; and, mental health issues are
implicated for both the perpetrators and the victims of student ‘bullying’
behaviours. This study required participating teachers to identify and rank
‘disruptions’ that occurred in their classrooms. Participants indicated that the
‘most worrying’ behaviours included: “baiting, tormenting, tantrums, knocking
children out of chairs, physical violence to solve simple problems, verbal
abuse, sexual harassment [and] bizarre behaviour from disturbed students”
(Rigter, 2000, pp. 10-11). These behaviours were officially categorised (by
the school) as ‘hindering others’. Five years subsequent to this study,
Infantino and Little (2005) announced that “the number of school-aged
children attending mental health clinics [in Australia] has risen with more than
one-third of all referrals related to behaviour problems” (p. 491). Rigter
Moreover, in view of the mental health issues implicated in Rigter’s (2000)
study, and in view of the subsequent rise in mental health referrals of school-
aged children in Australia (Infantino and Little, 2005), it is clear that
problematic student behaviours may not only exceed the professional
capacity of teachers, but they may also serve to victimise teachers.
Consequently, teachers require both appropriate systemic disciplinary/social
support and the support/intervention of health professionals.

Research from diverse national contexts (England, South Africa, New
Zealand, and the USA) corroborates the existence, nature, and detrimental
impact of the phenomenon distinguished as ‘student bullying of teachers’
(Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor,
Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry,
1998). Terms used to identify ‘student bullying of teachers’ include ‘cross-
peer abuse’ (Terry, 1998), ‘educator-targeted bullying’ (De Wet, 2010), and
‘teacher targeted bullying’ (Pervin & Turner, 1998). The student behaviours
constituting ‘student bullying of teachers’ typically include: (1) verbal
abuse/intimidation (profanities, insults, unacceptable name-calling and
comments, deliberate and repetitive insolence, threats, and the spreading of
vexatious rumours); (2) significant public challenges to teacher authority
and/or deliberate and repetitive non-co-operation/ignoring; (3) physical abuse
and/or threats; and, (4) damage to/theft of targeted teachers’ private property
and/or damage to targeted teachers’ classrooms (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Given that teachers’ potential power is relative to students’ usable power (Terry, 1998), student capacity to erode and/or subjugate teacher authority can negatively impact teacher functioning, student learning, and vital school community relationships (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Ultimately, research on student bullying of teachers asserts and/or implicates the need for practice that both acknowledges and purports to challenge this injurious phenomenon (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998).

Conception of power as both ‘usable’ and ‘relative’ serves to rationalise the existence of ‘cross-peer’ abuse; and, acceptance of the intrinsic similarity of behaviours relevant to both peer-related and cross-peer bullying serves to consolidate such rationalisation (Terry, 1998). Conducted in England (the North Midlands), Terry (1998) surveyed the teaching staff (101 participants) of seven urban high schools in order to investigate the notion/issue of student bullying of teachers (p. 255). Terry (1998), who coined the term ‘cross-peer abuse’, found that bullying “may manifest across the peer divide”, and that student bullying of teachers is “more pervasive than anticipated” (p. 255). Subsequent to his findings, Terry (1998) called for removal of the restrictive term ‘peer relationship’ as a defining feature of the concept of bullying and, in view of both the destructiveness and incidence of student bullying of teachers, advised the need for further investigation (pp. 259 & 266).

Terry’s (1998) investigation is justified on the basis of a line of reasoning that explains how and why ‘student bullying of teachers’ can occur. Put simply, teachers’ potential power is relative to pupils’ usable power; therefore, if pupils’ usable power manifests as teacher-targeted, persistent acts of aggression (a behaviour founded in learned disrespect),
then teachers’ power can be eroded (if not subjugated). Terry (1998) explains:

Bullying is characterised by persistent, repetitive acts of physical or psychological aggression…. It occurs when an uneven balance of power is exploited and abused by an individual or individuals who in that particular circumstance have the advantage…. Any social interaction that includes all of these factors strongly implies the existence or potential existence of bullying…. Thibaut & Kelley (1959) argued that power within relationships could be separated into two pertinent elements, which they referred to as relative power and usable power. Usable power they define as that which the individual finds ‘is convenient and practicable for him [or her] to use’…. The power invested in the teacher by the state, and [socially assumed] due to greater maturity for example, is potential power relative to the pupil. [However], if a pupil learns not to show respect for [his/her teachers] then this element of [teachers’] potential power may no longer be effective…. When one includes kudos [from bullies like-minded peers] and aggressive parents who are willing to intrude into the discipline structure of the school, [then] it becomes entirely possible that the power equation in certain circumstances may swing in favour of the pupil. (Cited in Terry, 1998, pp. 258-259 & 261)

Having justified the notion of student bullying of teachers (cross-peer bullying), and embraced the behaviours that customarily constitute bullying, Terry (1998) revealed both the existence of the phenomenon (“teachers are bullied by their pupils”) and the “sufficiently disturbing” incidence of the phenomenon (p. 266). According to Terry (1998), the forms and the incidence of student-bullying of teachers are as follows:

Viewing items individually, 32.7 per cent of respondents cited ‘verbal abuse’ as the means by which they were bullied, 26.7 per cent reported ‘deliberate and repetitive insolence’, 23.8 per cent reported ‘unacceptable name calling’, and 21.8 per cent reported ‘deliberate and repetitive non-co-operation’. Physical threats against the respondent and theft of belongings were reported by 11.9 per cent of all respondents…. The following results were reported by teachers when asked if they had been bullied by a pupil or pupils during the preceding term: at least once (56.4%); sometimes or more (35.6%); and, several times a week (9.9%)…. 28.7 per cent … indicated that they had experienced [abuse from students] outside of the school premises. (Terry, 1998, pp. 263-264)

Notwithstanding these findings, Terry (1998) also referenced both the function and the object of teachers’ work environment in order to emphasise this environment’s ‘potentially higher risk’ of abuse:

Abuse is a destructive aspect of human interaction, [and] it must be recognised that there is a potentially higher risk in work environments where the function of that work entails long and socially confined contact with individuals who themselves form the objects of that work. [Indeed], the employee is potentially at risk from two ‘fronts’ - bully abuse by peers and superiors, as well as bully-abuse by the functional object of their work. (p. 267)
De Wet’s (2010) qualitative investigation of the notion/issue of educator-targeted bullying (ETB): (1) validates the existence of cross-peer bullying (that is, student bullying of teachers); (2) identifies the forms of student behaviour that constitute ETB; (3) reveals the detrimental impact of ETB on teacher functioning, student learning, and crucial relationships; (4) emphasises the need for recognition of the existence of ETB by all role-players; and, (5) promotes the need to “fight” educator-targeted bullying. Conducted in South Africa, De Wet (2010) made use of in-depth personal interviews and qualitative content analysis to explore the notion/issue of ETB from the perspectives of seven victimised educators (p. 189). De Wet’s (2010) sample displays considerable heterogeneity (male/female, rural/urban, primary/secondary, and classroom/head teachers and senior executives) and, as it turned out, consists of experienced (veteran) educators: “The average years in the teaching profession for the participants was 27. 29 years (SD = 6.34) [and] the mean age of the participants was 50.86 years (SD = 6.71) (p. 192). It is worth noting that these educators “were afraid of possible disclosure”; indeed, three potential participants “cited fear of being identified and the consequent intimidation and/or victimisation as reasons for their refusal” to participate (De Wet, 2010, p. 192)

Notwithstanding alteration of the typical victim’s identity (that is, ‘teacher’ as victim rather than ‘student’ as victim), De Wet’s (2010) fidelity to the salient characteristics of time-honoured definitions of bullying (specifically, the behaviour, the intention, the incidence, the impact, and the means) serves to define the notion of student bullying of teachers:

Olweus (1994:9) defines bullying as follows: “A student is being bullied or victimised when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions by one or more students”. Olweus (1994:82) explains the term negative actions as follows: “a negative action is when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another”. Bullying is characterised by the following: (1) It is aggressive behaviour or intentional “harm doing” (2) which is carried out “repeatedly and over time” (3) in an interpersonal relationship characterised by an imbalance of power (Rigby, 2004:288). [Consequently], ETB is defined as aggressive behaviour in which there is an imbalance of power between the aggressor (learner/s) and the educator. The aggressive acts are deliberate and repeated and aim to harm the victim physically, emotionally, socially and/or professionally. Acts of bullying may be verbal, non-verbal, physical, sexual, racial and/or electronic. Bullying can be viewed along a continuum of seriousness (adapted from James et al., 2008 Rigby, 2004; Olweus, 1994). (Cited in De Wet, 2010, p. 190)
De Wet (2010) confirms the notion that students have the capacity to disempower their teachers, and divulges the means by which students disempower their teachers. It is widely and unreservedly acknowledged that (some) students actually wilfully challenge their teachers’ authority; yet, acknowledgement of the actuality that teachers’ power is “potential power relative to the pupil” is, at worst, either non-existent or rejected (Terry, 1998, p. 258). Unfortunately, failure to acknowledge the provisional nature of teachers’ power (relevant to students’ power) serves to underscore the mistaken notion that student behaviour is entirely within teachers’ control, hence teachers’ remit. De Wet (2010) asserts that students are able to make adroit use of both particular behaviours (disruption and insubordination) and multiple allies (such as peers, parents, and school executives) to effect: (1) disempowerment of their teachers; and, (2) disintegration of teaching, learning, and crucial relationships. De Wet (2010) explains:

Disruptive behaviour and insubordination [develop] into ETB if the misbehaving learners are wilfully challenging the educators’ authority in order to disempower them…. Perpetrators even [use] their parents and principals to reprimand victims who lashed out at them after being relentlessly mocked and/or ignored…. ETB may lead to the disintegration of teaching and learning, [and] a collapse of trust and communication between the victims, management and parents…. Victims of ETB often feel isolated and unsupported, and [unable] to act assertively [for fear of student retribution]…. (pp. 196-199)

Subsequent to qualitative content analysis of transcribed interviews, De Wet (2010) qualified her participants as victims of ETB - they had been “exposed repeatedly over time to verbal, non-verbal, psychological, and physical abuse [by students] during and after school hours” (p. 189). De Wet (2010) provides examples of these abusive, bullying student behaviours:

Participants described … verbal (e.g. “he started shouting at me” and “he swore at me”) and non-verbal (“he made vulgar signs” and “she laughed at me”) abuse…. Painted on the classroom door of one of the participants [whose] room was also trashed [was the message]: “Life is a bitch and so are you”. After the message was painted over, the next challenging message was written on the door: “What do you think of me now?” A number of participants were victims of emotional abuse. [One participant] described [how] a group of Grade 12 girls [would] constantly disrupt his classes, chatting with one another or back chatting and/or ignoring him…. The [student] practice of mocking and humiliating their educators [was] emphasised….. Participants received threats of violence (e.g. “he told me he was going to stab me”).…. Educators had objects thrown at them [and] they were slapped in the face…. Both principals [were] attacked in their offices…. Grade 11 [students] threatened to kill [one participant’s] child…. Educators’ classrooms were trashed
with water and/or spray-painted, and their cars were scratched and the tyres slashed…. The participants referred to … bullies who told them that they would “get” them or “waited” for them “in the street”…. Mention was also made of [students] throwing stones and eggs at the educators’ homes, trashing their private property and defacing it with graffiti. (De Wet, 2010, pp. 194-195)

De Wet’s (2010) findings reveal the detrimental influence of ETB on three levels - the personal, the institutional, and the societal levels. Psychological distress - including, but not limited to, feelings of powerlessness - typified the influence of ETB on victims’ personal lives:

ETB results in victims showing symptoms of psychological distress, presenting classical responses of shame, lacking in assertiveness, feeling guilty, and being unable to control their anger. Participants said that they suffered from, among other things, headaches, sleep deprivation, eating disorders, stress and burnout…. The participants present … feelings of powerlessness … self-repulsion … embarrassment … a lack of self-esteem … fear … and withdrawal from others…. The feeling of powerlessness is also illustrated in the victims’ inability to control their anger and their lack of assertiveness. (De Wet, 2010, p. 196)

The disintegration of victims’ teaching - which threatened both their reputations and their students’ learning - typified the influence of ETB on the institutional level:

Victims of ETB [eventually] lowered their expectations [of students] and turned a blind eye to [student] misbehaviour. Dealing with bullying behaviour often took up valuable teaching time…. [Hence], ETB may lead to mediocrity … a lack of enthusiasm [and] disciplinary problems…. ETB negatively influenced [victims’] reputations. Victims were, for example, criticised by their principals and senior staff for turning a blind eye to misbehaving bullies [and they] were ridiculed by learners whom they were not able to discipline…. Victims of ETB thus often feel isolated and unsupported. (De Wet, 2010, pp. 197-199)

The disintegration of the home-school relationship - evident within ‘bullying’ parents’ joint reinforcement of their offspring’s ETB - typified the influence of ETB on the societal level:

Several participants made mention of the negative attitude of [some] parents towards educators; therefore, reporting ETB to [these] parents was a waste of time. On the contrary, bullies ‘used’ their parents to bully educators…. (De Wet, 2010, p. 198)

Ultimately, De Wet (2010) adeptly situates educator-targeted bullying as an outcome of multilevel circumstances that exceed teacher capacity/power; and, in doing so, reinforces the need for both
acknowledgement of, and appropriate remedial action in relation to, educator-targeted bullying:

The relative defencelessness of the victims of ETB as a result of the imbalance of power implies that the victims rely on others to intervene…. An acknowledgement of the existence of ETB in schools, a better understanding of what constitutes ETB, and an acceptance by all role-players that such abuse is not merely the symptoms of bad teaching and/or the inability to discipline misbehaving learners, but the outcome of individual, institutional, and community circumstances, make it necessary to fight ETB. (pp. 199-200)

Pervin and Turner’s (1998) qualitative investigation of the notion/issue of teacher targeted bullying: (1) emphasises the need for comprehensive recognition of the existence of teacher targeted bullying (TTB); (2) identifies the forms of student behaviour that constitute teacher targeted bullying; (3) reveals the detrimental impact of teacher targeted bullying on teacher functioning and, in turn, student learning; (4) rejects over-simplification of teacher-targeted bullying as a product of teacher incompetency; and, (5) promotes the need for managerial redress of teacher targeted bullying. Conducted within a London co-educational secondary school (1303 students), Pervin and Turner (1998) made use of a methodical questionnaire to assess the perceptions/experiences of staff members (84 teachers - 81% of staff) in relation to the notion/issue of teacher targeted bullying. According to their findings, student behaviours that constitute ‘teacher targeted bullying’ include: (1) verbal abuse/intimidation; (2) challenges to teacher authority and/or non-cooperation and/or ignoring; (3) physical abuse/threats; and, (4) damage to/theft of teacher property (Pervin & Turner, 1998, p. 4). These particular behaviours serve to impair both teacher functioning (specifically, intensified stress and demoralisation, reduced expectations in relation to student behaviour and student performance, and impaired teacher performance) and student learning. Essentially, bullying students have the power to hold a classroom to ransom. Pervin and Turner (1998) report:

Many (71 per cent) teachers claimed that they mainly suffered verbal abuse; they also indicated that their requests were frequently ignored by pupils and that their property was often damaged. In addition, 15 per cent of teachers had been subjected to physical abuse…. Nearly half (47 per cent) said [that TTB] gave them some grounds for concern…. Bullying caused [stress]…. [As a result of continual bullying], some TTB victims dreaded lessons (18 per cent) and 3 per cent found the TTB to be severe and unbearable…. As a result of persistent TTB, 15 per cent of
teachers had lowered their expectations of pupil behaviour, [and] 32 per cent of staff said they had to restrict certain types of activities [because] they could not rely on [students'] co-operation…. 15 per cent of teachers who had reported the TTB said they did not receive any support, or that the help they received was unsatisfactory…. These teachers [found] that reporting the problem had been to their detriment…. (pp. 5-6)

Ultimately, Pervin and Turner (1998) classified teacher targeted bullying as an existent, “widespread” problem that poses unacceptable risks (both immediate and abiding) to teacher functioning, teacher retention, and the quality of student learning. Hence, they promoted the need for both managerial acknowledgement and inclusive redress of this problem. Furthermore, they explicitly denounced the propensity for automatic attribution of the problem to teacher incompetence. Pervin and Turner (1998) state:

The results indicate that TTB is a problem which is quite widespread…. Teachers who suffer from TTB should not be simply dismissed as being incompetent…. If this situation is not ameliorated, the teaching profession may lose quality teachers [due to dissatisfaction], or we will have schools where there are low expectations of children, with the quality of learning impaired…. Senior management [needs] to formally acknowledge the complexity and existence of the problem. Staff [members] who are suffering TTB must be made to feel that their problems are being taken seriously, and finally, whole-school strategies involving teachers, pupils, and parents aimed at dealing with TTB need to be sought. (pp. 6-8)

Benefield’s (2004) focus on bullying’s fundamental trait (aggression) and bullying’s ultimate intention (to cause distress to others) facilitates: (1) verification of the existence of cross-peer bullying; (2) identification of the forms of student behaviour that constitute ‘student bullying of teachers’; (3) repudiation of the notion that teacher inexperience constitutes the salient, causative factor in relation to these forms of student behaviour; and, (4) awareness of the need for school policies/practices that “afford respect and dignity to both adults and students” (pp. 21-22). Benefield’s (2004:2) recognition of the notion of cross-peer bullying is founded in the view taken by instrumental practitioners: “Psychologists and behaviour specialists maintain that … students bully teachers” (Conn, 2004).

Benefield (2004) reports on a New Zealand study in which no less than 195 different schools were surveyed in relation to the nature, frequency, and sources of bullying behaviours either experienced or witnessed by staff -
587 questionnaires were returned (pp. 3-4). Findings indicate that “by far the most bullying and harassment reported by teachers was from students” (Benefield, 2004, p. 6). According to calculations, “the average teacher can expect to be confronted with 85 incidents of some kind of bullying or harassment per year…. 42 of these can be expected from students, 32 from management staff, 7 from other staff, and 4 from parents” (Benefield, 2004, p. 7). Benefield (2004) reports that, over a year, the different forms of student bullying behaviour most reported by teachers, and the percentage of teachers reporting on these different forms, were: verbal abuse (81.6%); significant public challenges to teacher authority (69.3%); verbal intimidation/threats (48.7%); verbal sexual harassment (26.1%); written or electronic bullying (20.1%); acts of vandalism (55.9%); physical intimidation (48.6%); and, physical assault (15.5%) (p. 8). The notion that ‘teacher inexperience’ constitutes the salient, causative factor in relation to student behaviours deemed ‘student bullying of teachers’ - a notion that serves to emphasise teacher culpability - was also challenged. Within this study/survey, student bullying of teachers was most reported by the oldest and most experienced teachers (50 years+) (Benefield, 2004, pp. 12-13). Pointed reference to examples of students’ overt ageism highlights student devaluation of older teachers. Such devaluation enhances the propensity for implicated students to ignore and/or to demean older teachers; moreover, older teachers’ alleged (albeit apt) ‘higher expectations’ of students may only serve to exacerbate the derisory responses of such students:

[It was] the oldest and most experienced teachers who most reported both cumulative [50 years+] and significant [60 years+] bullying, particularly from students…. [It was revealed] that some students harass older teachers specifically in relation to their age with comments such as: “Are you still here?” and “Aren’t you past it?” Others comment that older teachers have higher expectations on students in regard to familiarity, language and respect…. (Benefield, 2004, pp. 12-13)

Ultimately, Benefield (2004) revealed the ‘particularly hazardous’ environment in which teachers work. Specifically, whilst findings indicate that teachers are highly susceptible to “aggression and violence … from students”, findings also indicate that “most school policies and practice” are “primarily if not exclusively aimed at dealing with violent situations between,
and bullying and harassment of, students rather than adults” (Benefield, 2004, pp. 21-22). The need for recognition of student bullying of teachers as a detrimental phenomenon and the subsequent need for development and implementation of school policies/practices that purport to “afford respect and dignity to both adults and students” are emphatically indicated (Benefield, 2004, pp. 21-22).

As demonstrated, research from diverse national contexts corroborates the existence, nature, and detrimental impact of ‘student bullying of teachers’ (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Beyond common recognition of ‘bullying’ as a behaviour that is perpetrated by students, conception of power as ‘relative’ and ‘usable’ (Terry, 1998) either explicitly or implicitly constitutes a compelling rationale for both generation and acknowledgement of these diverse examples of research. Students have the capacity to bully their teachers by means of verbal abuse/intimidation, overt/covert challenges to teacher authority, physical abuse/threats, and property damage/theft; and, it is through such evidence-based means that students have the capacity to jeopardise teaching, learning, and relationships (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Practice that serves to acknowledge and challenge this phenomenon is endorsed (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Hence, guided by the rationales and revelations of researchers cited at this juncture - and borrowing from the likes of De Wet (2010), James et al. (2008), Rigby (2004), and Olweus (1994) - for the purposes of this study, ‘student bullying of teachers’ is defined as “aggressive behaviour in which there is an imbalance of power between the aggressor [student/s] and the [victimised] teacher. Students’ aggressive acts are deliberate and repeated, and aim to harm the [victimised teacher] physically, emotionally, socially, and/or professionally” (De Wet, 2010, p. 190). Evidence-based groupings of the student behaviours deemed ‘aggressive’ include: verbal abuse/intimidation;
overt/covert challenges to teacher authority; physical abuse/threats; and, property damage/theft (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James, Lawlor, Courtney, Flynn, Henry & Murphy, 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). On an institutional level, the notion of ‘systematic abuse’ is pertinent to this study (Smith & Sharp, 1994). ‘Systematic abuse’ suggests that “the abused individual is under some potent social constraint that precludes escape as a means of terminating the abusive interaction” (Terry, 1998, p. 257). Beyond the physical confinement of a teacher and his/her students afforded by classroom walls, the potent social constraints that preclude teachers’ escape from student abuse stem from: (1) discourse that restricts responsibility for the management of student behaviour to classroom teachers; and, (2) ascendency of the notion that removal of a student from the classroom by his/her teacher, regardless of the student’s disruptive and/or insubordinate behaviour, may constitute a breach of a student’s human rights. Indeed, this expectation and this notion have the singular and combined potential to obstruct development and implementation of supportive whole-school disciplinary/social practices.

Whilst evidence-based studies from diverse contexts indicate that ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues constitute problematic fdsc behaviours within secondary and primary schools, USA findings serve to confirm the robust endurance of these very issues/behaviours well into tertiary level. Hoffman and Lee (2014) developed a typology of fdsc behaviours in which participants both identified and adamantly opposed ‘frequent, disruptive’ behaviours constituting ‘talk’, ‘technology’, ‘commitment’, and ‘bullying’ issues among their peers. Specifically: ‘talk’ issues involved side discussion, domination of discussion, and off-topic discussion; ‘technology’ issues involved student misuse of laptops, phones, and iPods; ‘commitment’ issues involved late arrival, lack of preparation for class, and poor attendance; and, ‘bullying’ issues, which fell under the label of ‘miscellaneous’, were, I argue, also implicated in ‘domination of discussion’ (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, p. 119). Intolerance of these issues/behaviours is justified in terms of the risks posed to both student learning and student relationships:
Side chatter disrupts students’ ability to concentrate and it impedes their ability to ask questions and be engaged with the instructor. Technology issues create distractions for fellow students as they draw their focus and attention away from the instructor. When one student repeatedly dominates class discussion, the other students often ‘shut-down’ their own participation and become increasingly aggravated with the dominant student. [Commitment issues] not only [disrupt] the specific classroom session, but the entire experience of the course. (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, p. 122)

Hoffman and Lee’s (2014) study serves to highlight both the tenacity and universality of fdsc behaviours which, at the very least, threaten both student learning and student relationships within the teaching-learning environment. Ultimately, the tenacity of these typologies within and across educational sectors constitutes a socio-economic issue - systemic protection/support of classroom inhabitants’ wellbeing and potential for advancement is implicated.

2.2.3 ‘Frequent, Disruptive’ Behaviours: A Social Problem

In order to function effectively, classrooms require the shared acceptance and presence of socially desirable values/behaviours. However, conflicting social values evident within fdsc behaviours have served to frustrate students and impair classroom functioning. At school level, a conflict of social values between parents and ‘school’ can serve to inhibit - if not prevent - successful resolution of student disciplinary matters. At national level, within Australia and elsewhere, the need for establishment of legal recourse against ‘irresponsible’ parents has served to highlight both the seriousness and predominance of conflicting social values. As conflict between school and home is essentially social in nature, it is imperative for schools to clarify and embrace the social standards they seek to imbue, and it is imperative for schools to implement practices that purport to support these standards. Indeed, according to Departmental policy, “all students and staff have the right to be treated fairly and with dignity in an environment free from disruption, intimidation, harassment, and discrimination” (NSWDET, 2011, Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures, p. 2).

Neither social abandonment nor toleration of social victimisation is acceptable; and, as this subsection demonstrates, effective systemic social support is required in order to offset social conflict, and in order to support/guide implicated parties.
2.2.3.1 Conflicting Social Values

Social values constitute the human behaviours and attitudes that operate within, and impact, human relationships. Social values come into conflict when the behaviours/attitudes of an individual (or set of individuals) are incompatible with the behaviours/attitudes of others. As social values are tied to context and purpose, values such as self-discipline, respect, cooperation, attentiveness, diligence, and turn taking are considered enabling social values within the context of the teaching-learning environment. Therefore, such values are prized and encouraged. Likewise, values in opposition to these - such as self-indulgence, selfishness, disrespect, unruliness, inattentiveness, idleness, and grandstanding - are considered disabling within the school context, and are therefore resisted and discouraged. Ultimately, the presence of social conflict within classrooms serves to validate: the need for establishment of systemic behavioural standards; the need for behavioural interventions that seek to understand students’ reasons for oppositional behaviour; and, the need for behavioural interventions in accordance with prevailing social values.

Coslin (1997) attributed disruptive student behaviour to students’ poor social skills (a discourse of deficit), and exposed the intense frustration and resentment felt by the bulk of secondary students in relation to disruptive behaviours. Coslin’s questionnaire used disruptive scenarios to isolate adolescents’ judgements of (1) the seriousness of disruptive behaviour, and (2) the level of sanction appropriate for dealing with disruptive behaviour. He found that ‘estimations of seriousness’ and ‘sanction attributions’ made by ‘non-agitator’ students were much higher than those made by ‘agitator’ students. This finding suggests a conflict in social values between non-agitators and agitators. In addition, Coslin found that non-agitators’ ‘sanction attributions’ were higher than their ‘estimations of seriousness’ for ‘non-physical’ classroom disturbances, a finding that suggests that, although ‘physical’ disturbances are generally considered more serious than ‘non-physical’ disturbances, the likely greater incidence of ‘non-physical’ classroom disturbances has tested non-agitators’ patience to the limit.
Hence, non-agitators’ demand for rigorous sanctions in relation to ‘non-physical’ disruptive student classroom behaviours is rendered comprehensible. Whilst Coslin (1997) demonstrates that “disruptive pupils are more tolerant than non-disruptive pupils … in their ideas about sanctions”, the most salient finding is that ‘frequent, disruptive’ (non-physical) student classroom behaviours are a significant cause of ‘non-agitator’ frustration (Coslin, 1997, p. 707). Ultimately, agitators’ fdsc behaviours not only serve to impair classroom functioning, but also represent a conflict in social values/behaviours, which serves to intensify non-agitators’ enduring experience of an adverse emotional/mental state (frustration):

Impulsive and provocative, the [agitators] are not skilled socially [and] have difficulties in understanding and processing information concerning the social context of the class or school. (Coslin, 1997, p.714)

In view of the adverse impact of fdsc behaviours on both classroom functioning and students’ (non-agitators’) frustration levels, Coslin’s study clearly supports the need for robust systemic behavioural standards (desired social values) and effective social interventions.

In relation to ‘commitment’ issues, efficient socio-economic functioning requires the inculcation of social values that reflect a sound work ethic, however, student-teacher conflict embedded in this requirement exerts considerable pressure on, and student reproach of, classroom teachers. Australian studies by both Infantino and Little (2005) and Little (2005) exposed teacher-student conflict in relation to the concept, and valuing, of a ‘work ethic’. Infantino and Little (2005) asked students from three different secondary schools to “rank in order of perceived effectiveness different deterrents and incentives” (p. 496). Their findings indicate that student-preferred incentives - namely, ‘receiving a good mark’ and ‘a favourable report’ - are both unrealistic and problematic: “It is not feasible for a teacher to give a student a good mark or a good academic report just to encourage them to behave appropriately” (Infantino & Little, 2005, p. 504). In effect, this study revealed that some students simply do not comprehend that ‘good’ marks and ‘good’ reports are a product of demonstrated, sustained effort and respect. Moreover, whilst Little’s secondary teachers considered student
idleness (‘commitment’ issues) a classroom behaviour which is ‘most frequent’ and ‘most troublesome’ (Little, 2005), secondary students within Infantino and Little’s (2005) investigation “did not identify distracting others and idleness” as problematic behaviours (p. 502). In view of systemic directives that compel teachers to expressly encourage and maintain ‘high expectations’ of both students’ academic performance and their conduct (Hemmings, 2012; Wildy & Clarke, 2012), this student-teacher ‘disconnect’ (relevant to effort and idleness) has the potential to ignite and perpetuate teacher-student conflict within the classroom. Ultimately, students with ‘commitment’ issues demonstrate social values/behaviours that are in conflict with educational expectations; and, in such circumstances, a teacher’s simple instruction to ‘start work’ may serve to trigger student reproach. In view of some students’ perception that idleness is neither problematic nor instrumental in relation to success and accolades, and in view of the conflict in social values between students with ‘commitment’ issues and schools’ endorsement of diligence, student-teacher conflict in relation to ‘commitment’ issues seems unavoidable. Subsequently, in order to minimise this particular form of student-teacher conflict, the need to promote ‘commitment’ as a worthwhile value/habit, and the need to investigate reasons for ‘commitment’ issues, are implicated.

2.2.3.2 The Absence/Withdrawal of Parental Support

The absence/withdrawal of parental support (of the school) contributes to, and exacerbates, problematic student classroom behaviour; hence, social conflict between home and school implicates the need for even greater systemic disciplinary/social support of classroom teachers. Home-school relations can be thwarted and negatively exacerbated by family dysfunction that stems from social dysfunction of many types, including “substance abuse [and] violence in the home” (Squelch, 2006, p. 248). Teacher-student relations can be directly and significantly undermined by the absence of parents’ and caregivers’ support (Rigter, 2000). As I argue from two studies relating to this issue, the systemic need for legal coercion of
parental responsibility for children’s behaviours confirms the systemic need to bolster social support of classroom teachers (Squelch, 2006).

Within Rigter’s (2000) Australian study, participating primary school teachers attributed the perceived increase in classroom violence to poor home-school relations and, at worst, parental complicity in the encouragement of student defiance. Herein, the discourse of deficit is evident:

[We encounter] more students from dysfunctional backgrounds and unstable home lives. Parents [fail] to require children to take responsibility for their actions…. There seems to be less respect for teachers in the community, and some parents now appear to encourage children to ‘give ‘em heaps’. (Rigter, 2000, pp.11-13)

Indeed, parental failure to ‘require children to take responsibility for their actions’ has compelled educational systems to pursue legal coercion of parental responsibility. In Australia, responsible parenting agreements (modelled on UK parenting orders) have been introduced in order to legally oblige parents and caregivers to assume responsibility for their children’s behaviour (Squelch, 2006). ‘Commitment’ issues are particularly implicated in the UK need for legal coercion: “Half of all truants apprehended by police are accompanied by their parents” (Squelch, 2006, p. 251). However, whilst systemic recourse to legal enforcement highlights the permeating, undermining force of differing social values (in homes and schools) and social problems, the need for systemic social support of classroom teachers’ managerial efforts in response to anti-social student behaviours is clear.

2.2.3.3 Systemic Negligence?

According to Fish, Finn, and Finn (2008), low systemic prioritisation of fdsc behaviours (1) conflicts with students’ stated, greatest need for the minimisation of student disruption within the classroom, and (2) appears to facilitate an increasing issue of concern - namely, student verbal abuse of teachers. These claims emanate from the long-term discrepancy between students’ and administrators’ prioritisation of problem identification within the United States (Fish et al., 2008). Using longitudinal data from studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics, Fish et al. (2008) noted that school principals cited ‘tardiness’ and ‘absenteeism’ as ‘the
student misbehaviours of greatest concern’ (in 1990 and 2002) whereas a high and increasing percentage of students cited ‘student disruption within the classroom’ as ‘the student misbehaviour of greatest concern’. Flanking this discrepancy in problem identification is the problem for which the greatest increase in ranking is observed over a twelve-year period - namely, ‘verbal abuse of teachers’:

In both 1990 and 2002, a high percentage of students reported that other students often disrupt class, 71.7 and 75.9 per cent, respectively, which was a significant increase over the 12-year period (z = -5.12, p < .0001). In all three school locations (urban, suburban, and rural), verbal abuse of teachers was rated as a more serious problem in 2002 than in 1990. (Fish et al., 2008, pp. 71-72)

Herein, systemic failure to both prioritise the status of fosc behaviours and keenly target such behaviours served to ignore the stated greatest need of students (an optimal social learning environment) and, in all likelihood, served to contribute to the increasing victimisation of teachers through increasing student verbal abuse of teachers. Fosc behaviours constitute and produce social conflict within the classroom and, in turn, implicate the compensating need for systemic social supports/practices.

2.2.3.4 Teacher Wellbeing: The Larger Context of a Performance Structure

The research cited thus far touches upon the more serious implications of unchecked fosc behaviours as a phenomenon. But as I noted in Chapter One, whilst the focus of my research is classroom teachers’ support needs relevant to management of fosc behaviours, this venture occurs within the larger context of a an emergent performance structure that has served to increase and intensify teachers’ work in general. This performance structure in combination with mandated inclusion policies has, at worst, served to produce an unsupportive work environment connected to excessive administrative (accountability) workloads; indeed, this state of affairs, detrimental to teacher wellbeing, is implicated in both teacher burnout (chronic emotional exhaustion and demoralisation) and teacher attrition (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Garrick, Mak, Cathcart, Winwood, Bakker, & Lushington, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Stroud, 2018). I have already noted Gallant & Riley’s (2017) finding that, in Australia, in 2015, more than
half of fully qualified teachers “in the paid workforce were not working in education jobs” (p. 897). Garrick et al. (2017, p. 124) have indicated that teachers’ priority needs (relevant to their wellbeing) constitute “improved measures for student behaviour management” (my concern) followed by a reduction of their administrative workload (documentation). Since teacher wellbeing is critical to both student wellbeing and student learning (The MCEEDYA 2011, p. 18), the need to address teachers’ priority needs is also critical. Before focussing more specifically on my research issue of fdsc behaviours, I contextualise these priority needs within the larger framework of work intensification that characterises the Australian teaching profession.

The performance goal structure emphasises teachers’ responsibility and accountability for grades, test scores, school competition, and social comparison both within and between schools (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). In the Australian context, specific indicators of a performance structure include: (1) the Common Grade Scale; (2) standardised testing (NAPLAN: National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy); (3) the ‘My School’ website (which compares schools’ performances on NAPLAN); and, most recently, (4) the introduction of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Stroud, 2018).

Skaalvik and Skaalvik’s (2017) analysis of teachers’ perceptions of school goal structure revealed that “a performance structure predicted higher motivation to leave the profession” whereas “a learning structure predicted lower motivation to leave the teaching profession” (p. 152). A total of 760 Norwegian teachers (from 22 elementary and middle schools) participated in this study which involved the use of questionnaires, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, p. 154). According to these researchers, a performance goal structure - indicated by an emphasis on grades, test scores, competition, and social comparison (both within and between schools) - serves to increase teachers’ workload and exacerbate teachers’ emotional exhaustion. Regrettably, the publication of state-wide/nation-wide standardised test results, in spite of integrated references to socio-economic difference, is ordinarily followed by
‘gestures’ (such as media reports, and feedback to staff) that purport to either congratulate or censure teachers (and students and schools), thus positioning teachers (and students and schools) as either winners or losers in an interminable competition for which it is inadvisable to ‘rest on one’s laurels’:

Schools with a strong *performance* goal structure emphasise achievement and test scores rather than effort and improvement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). In such environments, success is often conceptualised as doing better than others do, which may lead to competition, not only between students and teachers, but also between schools.... [This] goal structure tends to increase the use of achievement tests in school and, therefore, also to increase the amount of paperwork, reports, and social comparison. This may lead to an increase of workload and emotional exhaustion. (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, pp. 153-154)

In contrast, a *learning* goal structure - indicated by an emphasis on individual student improvement, and a safe and inspiring learning environment - values individuals’ efforts, and purports to take the ‘sting’ out of making mistakes (a necessary feature of the learning process). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) explain:

Schools with a strong *learning* goal structure emphasise understanding and improvement, recognise student effort, and consider mistakes to be a natural part of the learning process (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2013). Therefore, in such environments, success is defined as improvement, and ability judgements tend to be based on goal attainment and improvement rather than on social comparison (Ames, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Sproule, Wang, Morgan, McNeill, & McMorris, 2007; Urdan & Turner, 2005). (Cited in Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017, p. 153)

Ultimately, this study found that an emphasis on a performance goal structure is detrimental to teacher wellbeing and implicated in teacher attrition. As teacher wellbeing (reflected in teacher retention) is “critical to student wellbeing and student learning” (MCEECDYA, 2011, p. 18), prioritisation of education as an economic enterprise, to the detriment of education as a social enterprise, appears to be a flawed (if not grievous) arrangement.

A study conducted by Garrick et al. (2017) found that Australian teachers need both “improved measures for student behaviour management” and a reduction of their administrative workload (documentation), in order to better support teachers’ mental wellbeing (p. 124). These researchers made
use of data derived from a focus group (teachers) then posed an online survey which asked participants to rank options (in order of importance) from a list of seven changes that could be made in Australian schools. The majority of participants (N = 960) worked in government-owned schools (96.7%). These researchers note that, in the Australian context, inclusion policies have served to intensify classroom teachers’ systemic support needs relevant to student behaviour management. Further, they argue that policymakers’ bid to “force the education system to serve the economy”, by means of greater accountability and performance demands, “clashes with the ideology of teachers who are concerned with the support of their students” (Garrick et al., 2017, p. 124). Hence, in view of the detrimental impact of deteriorating student behaviour and accountability/performance demands on teacher stress - which, in turn, threatens the quality of education provided to students - Garrick et al. (2017) consider the imposition of standardised testing (and alike) to be counter-intuitive. Nevertheless, in response to evidence that Australian students’ results on OECD measures have consistently fallen over the past decade (Tovey & Patty, 2013), recent governments have attempted to address such evidence through measures such as national standardised testing and curricula (Donnelly, 2011). The pressure on teachers is mounting:

The OECD has found that the most important influences on student learning that are open to policy influence are teacher-related factors (OECD, 2005). For teachers working in Australia, some of the reasons for current increasing job stress include rapid curriculum change, extra tension caused by notional literacy and numeracy testing, and deteriorating student behaviour - including physical attacks on teachers (Hiatt, 2010).... Teacher stress can have serious implications for the healthy functioning of the individual, the school, and the quality of education provided to students (Yong & Yue, 2007). (Cited in Garrick et al., 2017, p. 117)

In essence, the important changes desired by Australian teachers represent an appeal for (1) managerial supports (at sector-level and school-level) that would serve to curb the detrimental impact of disruptive student behaviours on teaching and learning (‘smaller class sizes’ and ‘improved measures for managing student behaviour’), and (2) a reduction in administrative workload that would serve to facilitate teacher capacity to focus on more contemplative
preparation for their students’ learning needs. Garrick et al. (2017) reflect on their findings:

“Smaller class sizes” was selected as the most important change overall, with over half of the sample (51%) ranking this option as the first or second most important change. “Improved measures for managing student behaviour” was the second most frequently chosen option, ranked first or second by just under half of the sample (47.2%). “Improved school-level management” and “reduced workload” were ranked first or second by approximately 30% of the sample… A large class may increase teacher stress in several ways, such as making it more difficult to manage student behaviour and provide adequate attention to all students…. [In the Australian context], inclusion policies are resulting in more children with significant intellectual, physical, and psychological difficulties being brought into mainstream classroom, without providing necessary resources or professional development measures (McMillen, 2013; Timms et al. 2007)…. (Garrick et al., 2017, pp. 121-123)

In addition, they argue that the intensification of teachers’ work is increasingly recognised as a problem for education, noting that among the factors identified as “critical for effective school management” is “placing reasonable demands on staff”:

Our findings indicate that there is a need to provide further training and potential assessment of school managers in Australia…. Australian teachers face increasing workloads [which include] increased documentation…. The high levels of non-paid work that teachers are required to complete outside of work hours is detrimental to staff mental health by reducing opportunities to detach from the mental stress of work (Sonnentag & Kruel, 2006; Timms et al., 2007)…. High workload is also related to decreased time available for teachers to interact with each other at work, in order to share ideas and support one another (Easthope & Easthope, 2007). (Cited in Garrick et al., 2017, pp. 121-123)

Also in the Australian context, subsequent to interviewing five (male) early career teachers (ECT’s) who left the profession, Gallant and Riley (2017) found that “new public management practices were the major contributor to [these teachers’] early exit” (p. 896). Prior to this case study, Gallant and Riley (2017) examined workforce data by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) which alerted them to the percentage (~53%) of qualified teachers working but “not working in education” - indeed, the substantial loss to the profession, in terms of both cultural capital and training costs, is accentuated:

Using their most recent data, ~53% of fully qualified teachers who were in the paid workforce at the time of data collection were not working in education jobs (ABS, 2015)…. The ABS figure is a combination of attrition from all levels of education…. It also includes those who qualified but never took up the teaching profession.
However, the figure does not include late stage career teachers who retire early. (Gallant & Riley, 2017, p. 897)

Gallant and Riley’s (2017) participants (four of whom were secondary school teachers) idealistically perceived their profession as a social enterprise “requiring a strong relational component” (p. 901). However, in practice, these ideals were frustrated by the emphasis on education as an economic enterprise wherein performativity and accountability are prioritised, and a lack of trust and restricted autonomy are entailed. Essentially, these teachers encountered, and felt threatened by, an unsupportive environment connected to excessive workloads. Gallant and Riley (2017) explain:

Survival was a common self-positioning strategy…. All the teachers were shocked to encounter a system that they interpreted as emphasising education as a commodity rather than as a public good (Tolofari, 2005). The teachers were frustrated by their perception of being in a market-driven system, positioned as agents by the structures of employment, performativity and accountability…. Their sense-making highlighted a lack of trust and restricted autonomy…. Sahlberg (2015) provides evidence that when trust diminishes in education systems, it is replaced with rules and checklists…. ‘School’ [was] interpreted negatively as an unsupportive environment connected to excessive workload…. Many administrative tasks [were] interpreted as inefficient practices that inhibited their ability to plan during working hours, resulting in growing resentment about having to work in their personal time, at home…. They all interpreted professional development as an act of compliance rather than a genuine opportunity for improved pedagogy [and] school meetings were often perceived as ‘irrelevant’. (Gallant & Riley, 2017, pp. 900-902 & 910)

Chronically exhausted and ultimately defeated by a performance structure, Gabbie Stroud - Australian author of the memoir “Teacher” (2018) - resigned from the teaching profession in view of the pressure of ‘incessant accountability’ (administrative workload) which prevented her from “teaching children according to their needs and talents”. The administrative workload detailed in this memoir relates to accumulating pressures from (1) the Common Grade Scale, (2) standardised testing (NAPLAN: National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy), (3) the ‘My School’ website (which compares schools’ performances on NAPLAN), and (4) the introduction of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. In NSW schools, the Common Grade Scale (A-E) is used to report student achievement. In terms of paperwork, teachers are required to establish rubrics for individual assessment items - that is, identify the outcomes being assessed, and create descriptors for five levels of achievement in relation to
selected outcomes. Stroud represents this paperwork as unreasonably time-consuming and draining, and notes the emerging emphasis on education as a commodity (economic enterprise):

The grid had taken ages, transferring outcomes from the syllabus and slotting them into tiny boxes, then creating descriptors of achievement, each slightly worse than the one before. Excellent / good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory / poor…. ‘Listen.’ The Principal’s voice was lower now, calmer. ‘We are accountable to our students and to our stakeholders. They’re our clients. We provide a service and they’re entitled to receive good service. We need to provide evidence of what we are doing here. Every day.’ ‘You make it sound like we’re a business,’ I said, fatigue overriding my verbal filter. ‘Well, what else are we?’ ‘A school?’ But I could tell it was the wrong answer. (pp. 218 & 222)

The National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) involves annual standardised testing of Years Three, Five, Seven, and Nine. The website ‘My School’ makes use of NAPLAN results to inform the general public about how a school is performing compared to similar schools (in literacy and numeracy). Stroud bemoans the consumption of time - the testing ad nauseam - devoted to preparing for these two tests. Moreover, whilst Stroud perceives the results as a general reflection of socio-economic status, she expects that public perception of the data will be grievously limited to “Good school, bad school. Good teachers, crap teachers.” (p. 272). Indeed, her principal’s congratulatory response to some ‘above average’ scores (for the Year Three cohort) serves to bear out her expectation of the public perception:

‘And this is a credit to Gab and Jody,’ the Principal said. He had flicked on to a new graph. It compared the results of our Year Three cohort with the state. We were slightly above in almost all areas….

‘No, I’m sorry,’ I said, shaking my head and tightening my arms across my chest….. That’s a joke really, because we’d only been teaching them for a few weeks before they sat the exam. Credit should go to the teachers they had in Kinder and Year One and Year Two. Credit should go to their parents and their preschools. Credit should go to the students. I can’t be sure I’m responsible for these results.’…. I was out on a limb and filled with doubt but memories were flooding back to me: league tables in England and news reports on performance-based pay…. [My daughter] was from a loving home where both parents worked, her mother had a tertiary education. They could guess that there would be more than one hundred books in her home and that she had been read to almost every day since birth. Her ‘good’ results were a forgone conclusion…. I turned the idea over again in my mind. No! The school didn’t want her results, I realised. They wanted her cultural capital, the data her socio-economic status would bring. (pp. 273 – 277)
With the intensification of workload following the introduction of NAPLAN, Stroud knew that she was facing “the beginning of the end” (p. 302). Thereafter, the introduction of Australian Professional Standards for Teachers constituted the straw that broke the camel’s back for Stroud. Now taking anti-depressants, and seeing a psychologist, she “woke up every morning feeling scared” (p. 310). Ultimately, for Stroud, chronic emotional exhaustion (and demoralisation) manifested as physical symptoms (chest pains). In effect, the performance structure she encountered ensured that she couldn’t teach again (pp. 321-330). 'Managing student behaviour', a responsibility for every teacher under the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011), is embedded in this larger context of a performance structure.

2.2.3.5 Teacher Wellbeing: Refocusing on FDSC Behaviours

The research cited thus far - relevant to fdsc behaviours - touches upon the more serious implications of unchecked fdsc behaviours as a phenomenon. Herein, risks to both teacher wellbeing and student potential are represented as constituting a major, enduring socio-economic problem (Benefield, 2006; Coslin, 1997; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; Hoffman & Lee, 2014; Infantino & Little, 2005; James et al., 2008; Little, 2005; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Rigter, 2000; Sullivan et al., 2014; Terry, 1998).

Both impaired teacher wellbeing and impaired student learning are represented as direct consequences of ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom violence (non-physical) within Coslin’s (1997) investigation of disruptive student classroom behaviour:

Forms of violence such as noise, chaos, insults and threats between children or toward teachers should not be neglected. These behaviours are so frequent and repetitive that most teachers see them as a major educational problem and indeed, for some teachers, they lead to considerable personal distress.... (p.708)

Disturbing details of the considerable personal distress experienced by primary teachers - a direct consequence of fdsc behaviours - are exposed within Rigter’s (2000) investigation, where the symptoms of both psychological and physiological impairment are evident:
[Teachers] discussed their emotional distress - anger, depression, grief and feelings of inadequacy. Others indicated physical stress such as increased heart rate, sleeplessness, weariness, shakiness and tears. Several discussed some feelings of fear of safety and unpleasantness, and avoidance of the violent child….

The risks posed to both teacher wellbeing and student potential - as a consequence of unchecked fDCF behaviours - are also referenced by Infantino and Little (2005) and Little (2005). Little (2005) expresses concern about disruptive students’ misappropriation of teacher class time “due to the implications this may have on classroom functioning and teacher stress” (p. 376). Infantino and Little (2005) assert that the bleak trajectory of entrenched student ‘idleness’ (‘commitment’ issues) - minus effective social intervention - has negative implications for both students and teachers:

A negative relationship exists between disruptive behaviour, motivation, social skills and academic performance…. If intervention is not implemented early, then an adolescent may be at risk of developing more serious problems, which are likely to become increasingly maladaptive not only for the student but also for the teacher…. (Infantino & Little, 2005, p.494)

The risks posed to teacher wellbeing, teacher functioning, student potential, and critical relationships - as a consequence of ‘student bullying of teachers’ - are corroborated by a number of researchers from diverse contexts (Benefield, 2006; De Wet, 2010; De Wet & Jacobs, 2006; James et al., 2008; Pervin & Turner, 1998; Terry, 1998). Indeed, according to Terry (1998), the very nature of teachers’ work and teachers’ work environment puts teachers at ‘potentially higher risk’ of abuse:

It must be recognised that there is a potentially higher risk in work environments where the function of that work entails long and socially confined contact with individuals who themselves form the objects of that work. (p. 267)

Beyond secondary schooling, the risks posed to both student potential and student wellbeing are indicated within Hoffman and Lee’s (2014) investigation. Whilst students’ ability to engage is inhibited by ‘talk’, ‘technology’, and ‘commitment’ issues, student domination of class discussion promotes both student withdrawal (“shut-down”) and student frustration (they “become increasingly aggravated”) (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, p. 122).
In summary, research clearly serves to implicate the need for rigorous systemic disciplinary/social support of classroom inhabitants in relation to fdsc behaviours. Findings from diverse contexts confirm: (1) the identity of fdsc behaviours (namely, ‘talk’, ‘technology’, ‘commitment’, and ‘bullying’ issues); (2) the high level of intolerance expressed by both teachers and students in relation to these anti-social behaviours; (3) evidence of the withdrawal of parental social support (which serves to undermine school effectiveness in relation to tackling fdsc behaviours); and, (4) the identity of derivative issues of concern in relation to these behaviours (namely, the misappropriation of teacher/class time, teachers as victims of student violence, impaired teacher wellbeing, student frustration, and impaired student learning). Meanwhile, two serious outcomes of unchecked fdsc behaviours - namely, teacher burnout and teacher attrition - put students’ futures at risk.

The value of naming and exploring known typologies, as noted at the start of this chapter, lies in the baseline it has provided for my judgement and consideration of teachers’ expectations in this study. In addition, it has usefully contextualised questions about attitudes, discourses, behaviours, roles, relationships, and practices associated with the management of fdsc behaviours. In the next section, I turn to the literature base that identifies reasons for both teacher burnout and teacher attrition in order to establish external support for my argument that fdsc behaviours - and inadequate systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to fdsc behaviours - are significantly implicated in both teacher dysfunction and teacher wastage.

2.3 ISSUES OF STUDENT MISBEHAVIOUR, LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, DISCIPLINARY POLICY, & TEACHER WORKLOAD

2.3.1 Overview: Teacher Dysfunction & Teacher Wastage

In view of the considerable socio-economic costs associated with teacher burnout and teacher attrition, researchers have been compelled to investigate the causes of these phenomena. Findings from diverse contexts corroborate the claim that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership
support’, ‘ineffective disciplinary policy, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ are key contributory factors in both teacher burnout and teacher attrition. These key factors seriously undermine teachers’ greatest satisfaction - their students’ achievement in the classroom. Within the most current literature surveyed, ‘disruptive student behaviour’ (fdsc behaviours) has attained the status of ‘top contributory factor’ in teacher attrition, and the vital role of leadership in the minimisation of teacher burnout is emphasised. Findings in relation to the impact of these organisational variables on both teacher burnout and teacher attrition not only indicate the need for adequate preparation of candidates for teaching and executive roles, but also indicate the need for practice/policy that effectively supports (and monitors) positive social relationships in school settings.

2.3.2 School Culture: Teacher Burnout & Teacher Attrition

The issue of ‘burnout’ emerged as a social problem rather than a scholarly construct. Development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) by Maslach and Jackson (1981) introduced the start of systematic empirical inquiry into employee burnout. In the 1990’s, developments included conceptualisation of burnout as “an individual stress experience that is embedded in a context of social relationships” (Maslach, 1999, p. 215). Burnout as a distinctive construct with respect to both time (“prolonged exposure to chronic job stressors”) and domain (“specificity to the social and organisational context of the job setting”) meant that organisational (social) variables, rather than individual pathology, could be implicated (Maslach, 1999, p. 217). The three components of burnout were distinguished – emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1999). Emotional exhaustion is considered the core component of burnout in view of its conduciveness to the development of other dimensions. Thus, practice that induces chronic emotional exhaustion is rendered suspect. Teacher burnout also involves reduced teacher efficacy, which is defined as “the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance” (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000, p. 240).
2.3.2.1 Empirical Recognition of Burnout: Implicated Organisational Variables

Both teacher burnout and reduced teacher efficacy - where teachers feel chronically exhausted, detached, and inept - have direct and negative implications for both teacher wellbeing and student learning:

Emotional exhaustion is the core element of burnout. [It] is described as a lack of energy and a feeling that one's emotional resources are used up.... Depersonalisation indicates indifference to clients, co-workers and the organisation.... It is mainly viewed as an immediate reaction to exhaustion [and] might hamper learning processes.... Reduced personal accomplishment reflects a decline in feelings of job competence, and successful achievement in work and interactions with people.... This feeling is likely to surface in work situations where individuals already feel exhausted or detached from other people.... Teacher feelings of inefficacy have previously been shown to inhibit student learning. (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015, p. 95)

Both teacher burnout and reduced teacher efficacy are established as ‘signposts’ on the pathway to teacher attrition (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015), and teacher efficacy is embroiled in teacher-student relationships:

The demands made on secondary teachers consist to a substantial extent of emotionally charged relationships with students. Teachers with a low sense of efficacy are also found to be the ones most likely to drop out of the teaching profession. (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000, pp. 239 & 241)

Teacher attrition is “an important educational challenge worldwide” (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015, p. 95). In order to stem both teacher dysfunction and teacher wastage, it is necessary to identify and address their organisational (social) antecedents.

2.3.2.2 Teacher Burnout: Student Misbehaviour + Inadequate Leadership Support + Ineffective Disciplinary Policy + Excessive Teacher Workload

Both turn of the century and recent findings indicate that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constitute key organisational antecedents to teacher burnout. Over time, researchers from diverse national contexts (Australia, Britain, Canada, Belgium, the United States, and the Netherlands) have corroborated the significant impact of these factors on (1) the reduction of teacher self-efficacy (which is embroiled in teacher-student relationships) and (2) the promotion of teacher burnout
(Abel & Sewell, 1999; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Dorman, 2003; Fernet, Guay, Senecal, & Austin, 2012; Hart et al., 1993; Lens & De Jesus, 1999; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). British researchers Lens and De Jesus (1999, p. 199) claimed that “many teachers feel handicapped by [disciplinary problems] because they know that in many cases they will not be supported”. This scenario, which is the antecedent to teacher burnout, remains current. Given that “leadership both defines and designs teachers’ reality” (Fernet et al., 2012, p. 523), the need for both effective systemic disciplinary support and the monitoring of teachers’ disciplinary workloads is rendered vital.

In the Australian context, Hart et al. (1993) found that ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘ineffective discipline policies’ were the key stressors contributing to teachers’ psychological distress. Using structural equation analyses on questionnaire data from 1,160 primary, secondary, and TAFE teachers, Hart et al. (1993) explored “the relationship between 11 different aspects of school organisational climate and a teacher’s level of morale, psychological distress, and overall quality of work life” (p. 1). They also identified the key characteristics of effective disciplinary policy - essentially, such policy is endorsed, standardised, appropriate, predictable, and consistent (p. 9). In view of the key factors identified as contributors to teachers’ psychological distress, the most pertinent implication of this study, from my perspective, is that disciplinary policy/practice must be grounded in the promotion of student-teacher relationships in order to achieve effectiveness.

In the USA, Abel and Sewell (1999) identified ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘teacher workload/time pressures’ as significant predictors of teacher stress/burnout. They used the MBI (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) to investigate sources of stress and symptoms of burnout in 51 rural and 46 urban secondary school teachers across school systems in Georgia and North Carolina:

Self-reported stress from pupil misbehaviour and time pressures was [significant] for both rural and urban school teachers.... Time pressures and poor working conditions [workload] were the best predictors of burnout for rural school teachers, and pupil misbehaviour and poor working conditions [workload] were the best predictors of burnout for urban school teachers. (Abel & Sewell, 1999, p. 292)
In response to these findings, these researchers recommended an investigation of school culture as a source of teacher burnout, implicating the need for systemic disciplinary practice/policy that: promotes student-teacher relationships; minimises disruptions to teacher time; and, optimises teacher action in relation to behavioural management.

In the Netherlands, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) found that 'student misbehaviour' and 'ineffective disciplinary policy' were concurrent key antecedents of teacher burnout. This study made use of the Dutch version of the MBI (Schaufeli & Van Horn, 1995), and found that, in the face of unrelenting and unchecked disruptive student behaviour, “the more emotionally exhausted teachers are, the poorer their performances will generally be” (pp. 248-249). In view of the organisational source of teachers’ emotional exhaustion, these researchers diverted their attention from teacher practice to systemic practice, and concluded that teachers’ emotional exhaustion “may not be influenced directly” by interventions confined to teacher practice (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000, p. 250). Further investigation of systemic disciplinary practice as a source of teachers’ emotional exhaustion was recommended. Whilst the need for teacher competency (in terms of both pedagogical and relational skills) remains, the most pertinent implication of this investigation is that ineffective systemic disciplinary practice serves to undermine both teacher performance and teacher wellbeing. The need to implement school-wide disciplinary practices that serve to promote student-teacher social relationships is once again implicated.

In Queensland, Dorman (2003) found that both ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constitute the key antecedents to teacher burnout. This investigation of teacher burnout in primary and secondary private schools concluded that: ‘student classroom misbehaviour’ impacted both emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation; ‘role overload’ impacted emotional exhaustion; and, ‘role conflict’ predicted depersonalisation. Over time, teacher exhaustion led to reduced teacher efficacy. Dorman’s characterisation of role conflict as “a potent negative predictor of school environment” begs questions in relation to the extent and nature of teachers’
disciplinary responsibilities (p. 44). Having substantiated cause-effect relationships between particular organisational variables and all components of teacher burnout, Dorman (2003) claimed that viewing teacher burnout as a product of individual pathology was no longer feasible: “Such a narrow set of predictors has suited employers who do not wish to accept any moral or legal responsibility for burning out teachers through poor organisational and managerial processes” (p.45). Once again, in order to stem teacher burnout, the need for effective systemic social support in relation to student misbehaviour and teacher workload (in particular, their disciplinary workload) is implicated.

Conducted in Canada, using a version of the MBI, Fernet et al. (2012) found that ‘disruptive student behaviour’, ‘principal leadership behaviours’, and ‘teacher workload’ were key factors in all dimensions of teacher burnout. Hence, in order to avoid burnout, teachers require the support of leaders to both minimise the effects of disruptive behaviours and contain teacher workload:

[Over the school year], changes in teachers’ perceptions of students’ disruptive behaviours and school principal’s leadership behaviours are related to changes in self-efficacy, which in turn negatively predict changes in all three burnout components.... Changes in teachers’ perceptions of classroom overload and students’ disruptive behaviour are negatively related to changes in autonomous motivation, which in turn negatively predict changes in emotional exhaustion. (Fernet et al., 2012, p. 514)

The need to continually monitor and address the standard of executive support relevant to both disruptive student behaviour and teacher workload (in particular, their disciplinary workload) is implicated.

In Belgium, Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015) found that ‘disruptive student behaviour’ is the most significant factor in teacher burnout, whilst ‘leadership support’ (teacher-principal trust relations) fulfils the most significant role in the prevention of teacher burnout. Using the Dutch version of the MBI for teachers (Schaufeli & Van Horn, 1995), Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015) investigated teachers’ trust in principals, students, and colleagues, and how this associates with distinct components of teacher burnout. According to findings, the teacher-principal trust relationship appears most predictive of teachers’ emotional exhaustion. In view of the fact that emotional exhaustion is conducive to the development of other burnout
dimensions, this finding renders principal/leadership support a vital factor in the prevention of teacher burnout (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015, pp. 93 & 104 & 109-110).

This range of studies indicates that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constitute the key organisational antecedents of teacher burnout. In effect, teachers’ social relationships are bound up in teachers’ managerial needs. Unless there are practices, policies, and supports that serve to promote teachers’ social relationships, the capacity for teachers to focus on and reach instructional goals is at stake. And without the capacity to focus on and reach instructional goals, the job of teaching is rendered meaningless, often leading to the loss of valuable human capital through teacher attrition (Manuel, 2003).

2.3.2.3 Teacher Attrition: A Hole in a New Bucket

The key factors that contribute to teacher burnout are the same key factors that contribute to teacher attrition - ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ (Barmby, 2006; Dinham, 1995; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fetherston & Lummis, 2012; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Garrick et al., 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017; Stroud, 2018). Teacher attrition is currently considered “an important educational challenge worldwide” (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015, p. 95). High rates of attrition among ‘beginning’ teachers are considered particularly alarming (Barmby, 2006; Dinham, 1995; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fetherston & Lummis, 2012). In view of the considerable socio-economic threats and costs associated with teacher attrition - put simply, students need teachers and the profession requires replenishing - researchers have been compelled to investigate its causes (Barmby, 2006; Dinham, 1995; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fetherston & Lummis, 2012). The long-term corroboration of findings in relation to the impact of organisational variables on teacher attrition has several implications: (1) the need to ensure adequate preparation for administrative
roles; (2) the need to implement effective systemic disciplinary/social supports (such as restorative justice practice); (3) the need to monitor teachers’ support mechanisms; and, (4) the need to implement procedures that harness teachers’ articulation of both organisational problems and solutions to organisational problems.

In Australia, twenty years ago, Dinham (1995) found that ‘student classroom misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constituted key factors in teacher attrition. Dinham issued a warning in relation to the rising average age of teachers: “If those who resign are, in the main, younger teachers with more marketable skills, then the observed ageing of the teaching population may well become critical” (p.74). Utilising interview data from two research studies, Dinham’s aim was to “propose strategies designed to improve the quality of education through improving teacher satisfaction and reducing teacher dissatisfaction” (p. 65). According to Dinham (1995), teachers’ greatest satisfaction stems from “pupil achievement” in the classroom (p. 65). On the other hand, teachers’ greatest source of dissatisfaction stems from both excessive teacher responsibility for challenging student behaviours and indeterminate support mechanisms (p. 70). Within his sample of resigned teachers, ‘student classroom misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ were associated with impaired teacher wellbeing:

Generally, those interviewed had experienced fluctuating yet mounting levels of mental stress, which in a number of cases had resulted in physical illness. Less experienced teachers were more stressed by their workload, and their inability to discipline their classes. Efforts to alleviate stress were found to be left to the individual. (Dinham, 1995, pp. 68-69)

Ultimately, Dinham (1995) indicted organisational variables for teacher attrition:

It seems highly questionable to allow [teachers] simply to walk out the door, particularly if they are leaving owing to job dissatisfaction, the sources of which will remain on their departure. (p. 67)

This investigation indicates that, in order to offset teacher attrition, systemic disciplinary policy/practice needs to share responsibility for guiding student behaviour (avoid excessive teacher responsibility), be appropriate (support
student-teacher relationships), and be predictable (provide clear support mechanisms).

On the basis of findings from teacher retention studies in which they had been separately involved (Ewing & Smith, 2002 & 2003; Manuel, 2003; Manuel & Brindley, 2002), Ewing and Manuel (2005) found that both ‘poor student behaviour’ and ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’ are key factors in ‘beginning’ teachers’ decision to resign from teaching. These researchers argued that the ‘orientation’ stage of teacher practice was typically associated with problems stemming from student classroom misbehaviour and decreasing teacher efficacy - participants “had no idea that some classes could be this bad” and felt “a sense of anxiety about professional competence” (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 7). The ‘establishment’ stage was typically associated with problems stemming from challenging teacher-student relationships and elusive systemic support mechanisms - participants expressed “anxiety about relationships with students that are not proceeding smoothly, uncertainty about lines of authority for the discipline and management of disruptive students, [and] a sense of being ‘set adrift’” (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, p. 9). The ‘consolidation’ stage was typically associated with the unrelenting challenge of classroom behaviour management - that is, “a preoccupation with discipline and behaviour management, [and] growing awareness of the classroom as a complex social crucible” (Ewing & Manuel, 2005, pp. 9-10). Ultimately, in order to offset teacher attrition, this investigation, like Dinham’s, indicates the need for systemic disciplinary policy/practice that is supportive of student-teacher relationships, and clearly predictable in terms of required teacher action.

In Britain, Barmby (2006) also found that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’, and ‘teacher workload’ constituted key factors in teacher attrition. Prior to Barmby’s (2006) investigation, Troman and Woods (2000) expressed concern about the financial cost associated with the dramatic rise in teacher resignation due to stress-related illness. Noting that teacher wastage had become a serious international problem, Barmby’s investigation of teacher attrition found that more than a
quarter of the newly-qualified teachers sampled were considering resignation. Reasons for wanting to leave teaching included student misbehaviour, stress, and workload (Barmby, 2006, pp. 256-257). When teachers were asked to rate suggestions that purport to stem teacher attrition, the two most highly related suggestions were “support on pupil discipline” and “reducing teacher workload” (Barmby, 2006, pp. 258-259). Hence, in order to stem teacher attrition - particularly that of ‘beginning’ teachers - systemic disciplinary practice/policy that serves to both promote student-teacher relationships and share responsibility for student behaviour is required.

In Western Australia, Fetherston and Lummis (2012) also found that ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’ - predominantly experienced by teachers as a form of bullying - were key factors in attrition among newly recruited secondary teachers:

The teachers in this study were abused by students, parents, senior colleagues and/or the ‘system’.…. School administrations were seen to be supportive of (or at least complicit in) all instances of bullying described by interviewees. (Fetherston & Lummis, 2012, pp. 2 & 6-7)

Fetherston and Lummis (2012) point out that the traditional way of obtaining leadership positions in Australian schools follows a promotional path “for which [candidates] have usually received little preparation” (pp. 10-11). Stereotypical, under-prepared administrative behaviours include those that ‘lay down the law’ and exhibit ‘negative power’. Teachers’ encounters with negative administrative power, which offer very little in the way of support, instigate the pathway to teacher resignation. Fetherston and Lummis (2012) found that teachers who brought student behavioural problems to unsupportive administrators became, themselves, the subject of reproach - that is, staff were effectively repositioned as the ‘problem’, and treated “like students” (p. 11). Hence, in the absence of systemic social support relevant to unrelenting anti-social student behaviours, teachers’ decisions to leave the profession - a self-protective measure - are rendered both prudent and logical. The findings in this study indicate that ‘student misbehaviour’ and ‘inadequate systemic disciplinary support’ - factors implicated in teacher attrition - can qualify as systemic bullying of teachers. Therefore,
professional development relating to human resource management needs to be part and parcel of appointment to an executive position.

Research verifies that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ are the key predictive factors of both teacher burnout and teacher attrition. In order to offset these detrimental predictive factors, research indicates the need for development of systemic disciplinary/social practice that serves to promote: shared responsibility for management of student behaviour (students, teachers, executives, and parents); supportive student-teacher relationships; human resource management skills (teachers and executives); and, predictable pathways relevant to teacher disciplinary action. Taken as a whole, leadership promotion of a positive school culture is required. Indeed, leadership plays a vital role in the development of school culture.

2.4 SCHOOL CULTURE: THE VITAL ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

2.4.1 Overview: School Culture

A school culture in which both teacher wellbeing and student achievement can flourish is spearheaded by a leadership that exhibits five desirable behaviours - namely, shared vision, high expectations, trust, inclusivity, and support. Research indicates that a significant, positive relationship exists between principals'/supervisors' influence on school culture on the one hand and both teacher-related work outcomes and student achievement on the other. Exploration of the concept of ‘school culture’ serves to highlight the necessity of founding a school culture in what Maslowski (2006) calls ‘shared meaning’ (that is, ‘shared vision based in shared values’). A school culture founded in ‘shared meaning’ is both positively and significantly associated with teachers’ psychological empowerment, teachers’ job satisfaction, and teachers’ job commitment. Offering collective direction and purpose, shared vision serves to unite, motivate, commit, and reassure organisational members. A culture of ‘high expectations’, which serves to promote student responsibility, enhances both
teacher-related work outcomes and student achievement. A culture of trust, particularly vital for subordinates, serves to promote effective, meaningful work relationships. Whilst trusting supervisor-subordinate relationships are positively associated with teacher-related work outcomes, a betrayal of teacher trust, by supervisors, has the capacity to jeopardise both teacher wellbeing and teacher commitment and, in turn, student achievement. A facet of trust, genuine inclusion of teachers in decision-making and problem-solving serves to promote both teacher motivation and teacher commitment. Moreover, genuine inclusivity is a means of ensuring that school leadership is in touch with, and responding to, the school community’s values and needs. As Stroud (2018) emphasises, when all is said and done, teachers just want to ‘do their job’ - that is, teach. Therefore, leadership behaviours and systemic practices/policies that work to minimise distraction are implicated. Indeed, the literature reviewed in this section indicates that such behaviours, practices, and polices are vital.

2.4.2 School Culture: The Direct & Indirect Influence of Leadership

2.4.2.1 Shared Meaning: Empowered Teachers and Enabled Students

Examination of a model of school culture suggests that school success is greatly reliant upon a culture founded in ‘shared meaning’ (Maslowski, 2006). School culture is defined as “the unwritten beliefs, values, and attitudes that become the style of interaction between students, teachers, and administrators” (Hernandez & Seem, 2004, p. 257). ‘Meaning’, a psychological cognition, refers to “a fit between the needs of one’s work role and one’s beliefs, values and behaviours” (Lee & Nie, 2014, p. 68). In view of the significance of teachers’ sense of ‘meaning’, the establishment and maintenance of ‘shared meaning’ about the goals and norms of their workplace serve to enhance both teachers’ sense of psychological empowerment and teachers’ work-related outcomes - in turn, student achievement is promoted. Principals/supervisors directly and positively influence school culture through the harnessing of teachers’ ‘shared meaning’, and indirectly and positively influence student achievement.
through the promotion of school culture. Principals’/supervisors’ role in the development of school culture, therefore, is vital.

Schein’s (1985) model of school culture, adopted by many scholars, argues the need for ‘shared meaning’ to form the basis of a school culture which intends to flourish (Maslowski, 2006). Within the school context, an assortment of beliefs, values, and attitudes informs behaviours exhibited, behavioural expectations, and responses to others’ behaviour. Contention within both ‘student-teacher’ relationships and ‘teacher-administrator’ relationships invariably springs from this assortment. Schein’s (1985) model consists of three layers that differ in terms of their degree of visibility and their degree of consciousness. The core of school culture consists of basic assumptions - that is, taken-for-granted beliefs that remain unconscious until challenged (Maslowski, 2006). The second level of school culture consists of values and norms - values refer to “what teachers believe to be good, right or desirable”, and norms are “unwritten rules according to which others are expected to behave” (Maslowski, 2006, p. 8). The third level consists of artefacts (role models and school symbols) and practices (‘the way we do things around here’) that are the visible upshot of dominant assumptions, values, and norms. However, if existing practices are not endorsed by all, then the assumptions, values, and norms that dominate may be considered a product of political imposition rather than ‘shared meaning’. When political imposition is evident, school culture will in all likelihood be suffering. Indeed, the detrimental impact of the experience of ‘political imposition’ is related by Stroud (2018) in her memoir ‘Teacher’. In the absence of a school culture founded in ‘shared meaning’, teachers’ psychological empowerment, teachers’ work-related outcomes, and student achievement are all at risk (Lee & Nie, 2014; Maslowski, 2006; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).

In Singapore, Lee and Nie (2014) found that principals/supervisors directly and positively influence school culture through the harnessing of teachers’ ‘shared meaning’.

[Leadership empowering behaviours include]: delegation of authority, providing intellectual stimulation, giving acknowledgement and recognition, articulating a vision, fostering collaborative relationships, providing individualised concern and support, and providing role-modelling.... (Lee & Nie, 2014, p. 68)
Statistical analysis revealed that teachers’ sense of ‘meaning’ was the most significant dimension in terms of psychological empowerment, and psychologically empowered teachers are more likely to “experience a heightened sense of job satisfaction”, “be more enthusiastic”, “be more committed”, and “impact on classroom improvement” (Lee & Nie, 2014, pp. 68 & 70-71). Ultimately, in view of principals'/supervisors' direct and positive influence on school culture through the harnessing of teachers’ ‘shared meaning’, it is imperative that leadership both identify and fashion a school culture that is based on ‘shared meaning’.

Similarly, Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that the most significant, positive, indirect influence of school leadership on student achievement is through promotion of school climate. Across schools, these researchers found that principal leadership was related to the overall quality of instruction and student achievement through one primary mechanism - the school’s learning climate. Across teachers within the same school, Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that principals influenced teachers’ instructional quality through a school climate embedded in high expectations:

The positive relationship of principal leadership and instruction through the school learning climate carries through to explain differences in student achievement across schools.... Teachers who feel there are strong expectations [are] more likely to report high academic demands, whereas teachers who feel the school is safe are more likely to report having orderly classrooms. (pp. 642-644)

These findings indicate that student achievement is a product of a school climate in which high expectations are attached to both student scholarship and student conduct. Subsequently, in order to promote student achievement, leaders need to focus their efforts on the promotion of school climate by means of high expectations.

Taken together, these findings (Lee & Nie, 2014; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012) indicate that school climate, which leaders influence, has a significant impact on teacher empowerment, teacher job satisfaction, teacher commitment, and student achievement. And, whilst principals’ positive influence on school culture commences with the harnessing of ‘shared meaning’, maintenance of a successful school culture implicates the
need for systemic attention to the development of desirable leadership behaviours.

2.4.3 School Culture: Desirable Leadership Behaviours

Transformational leadership behaviours have become increasingly topical. Research indicates that desirable leadership behaviours include: (1) the development of shared vision through shared values; (2) the maintenance of high performance expectations; (3) the establishment of relationships of trust; (4) the creation of structures for participation in school decisions; and, (5) the provision of individualised support. In Alberta (Canada), Parsons and Beauchamp’s (2012) exploration of the behaviours of principals from five “highly effective” elementary schools provides an exemplar for all of these leadership behaviours. Herein, according to reports: the principal and staff “speak the same language” (shared vision); the principal “engaged people” (inclusion); the principal “expected the best from teachers and students” (high expectations), and “assumed the best in them” (trust); the principal shielded teachers from both aggressive parents and disruptive children (support); and, the principal “walked around” and “regularly checked in” (support) (pp. 704-708). Ultimately, transformational leadership behaviours grounded in shared meaning should resonate with both disciplinary practice and policy.

2.4.3.1 Shared Vision

Shared vision based in shared values serves to promote a positive school climate - providing collective direction and purpose, it serves to unite, motivate, commit, maintain, and support members of an organisation (Evans, 1992; Finnigan, 2012; Hemmings, 2012; Lee & Nie, 2014; Maslowski, 2006; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Zhu, Devos, & Li, 2011). Leadership action in relation to the development of a safe and orderly school culture involves specific groundwork and upkeep, namely: explicit identification of desirable shared values; explicit identification of a consensual definition of school violence; stakeholder inclusion in the creation of a code of conduct; development of systemic disciplinary supports which serve to uphold shared
Three studies are worthy of mention in terms of their substantiation of shared vision as a means to promote a positive school climate. In the USA, Hemmings (2012) observed the positive transformation of a low-performing, urban, public high school by way of shared vision; and Finnigan’s (2012) investigation of the link between desirable leadership traits and teacher motivation highlighted “the vision or direction they provided, the articulation of expectations, and the consistency [provided] during stressful and uncertain times” (p. 187). In China, Zhu et al. (2012, pp. 325-326) found that shared vision constituted a vital ingredient in the promotion of teacher commitment, teacher wellbeing, and student achievement.

Ultimately, school leaders’ promotion of ‘shared vision based in shared values’ facilitates development of a positive school culture in which teacher motivation, teacher commitment, teacher wellbeing, and student achievement can flourish. Once identified, ‘shared vision based in shared values’ is maintained by an effective code of conduct that works to consistently reinforce ‘high expectations’ (Hernandez & Seem, 2004).

2.4.3.2 High Expectations

Establishment and reinforcement of ‘high expectations’ in relation to student conduct, student performance, and student responsibility provides impetus for both enhanced teaching and enhanced student learning. Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd (2007) indicate that “leaders in higher performing schools are reported as giving more emphasis to communicating goals and expectations” (pp. 9-10). A culture of high expectations positively influences teacher efficacy which is vital to both student learning and student achievement (Price, 2012). Desirable norms - structurally sustained by the promotion of student responsibility - serve to “help students learn and keep them from failing” (Price, 2012, p. 69). Codes of conduct that stimulate students’ internal locus of control promote positive social development as
such stimulation serves to weaken the antecedents of violent student behaviour (Hernandez & Seem, 2004). From the point of view of Hernandez and Seem (2004), school violence is “any behaviour that violates a school’s educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression, disruptions and disorder” (p. 257). Herein, representation of fdsc behaviours as a form of violence serves to emphasise their gravity.

Two studies are noteworthy in terms of their substantiation of ‘high expectations’ as a means to promote a positive school climate (Hemmings, 2012; Wildy & Clarke, 2012). Wildy and Clarke’s investigation of a small, remote Australian school revealed a culture of low expectations which served to maintain low levels of student achievement. Consistent with the belief that leaders influence school culture, Wildy and Clarke recommended the need for development of Principals’ competencies and traits which include: a ‘contextually literate’ perspective; the ability to distinguish desirable and insupportable behaviours; and, the determination to commit to words and actions that support high expectations (Wildy & Clarke, 2012. p. 71). In Hemmings’ (2012) study, the researcher observed the positive transformation of a low-performing, urban, public high school which, spearheaded by strong leadership, resulted in the rejection of ‘defensive teaching’. ‘Defensive teaching’, which is a pessimistic symptom of low expectations, is characterised by eliminated and watered-down curriculum, mindless tasks, and lax discipline (Hemmings, 2012).

Senge (2008) asserts that effective leadership is about “how we shape the futures that we truly desire, as opposed to try as best we can to cope with circumstances we believe are beyond our control” (cited in Cherkowski, 2012, p. 59). School leaders’ efforts to develop a culture of inquiry (high expectations) rather than endure a culture of acceptance (low expectations) are thereby encouraged. Ultimately, systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours (a culture of acceptance) not only serves to threaten the potential and wellbeing of classroom inhabitants, it also serves to erode the basis for social order - namely, relationships of trust.
Within schools, trusting supervisor-subordinate relationships promote a positive school culture which, in turn, boosts student achievement. A ‘taken-for-granted’ phenomenon that incorporates both inclusion and support, relational trust appears to be a more critical factor than educators’ professional qualifications - ‘certification’ - in terms of student outcomes. Trust is the basis for social order: “Maintained by the existence of habitual rules and social norms, routine life would not be possible without an implicit and unconsidered trust that everyday life does not carry major threats” (Troman, 2000, p. 335). Moreover, as trust is considered more salient for the subordinate than it is for the supervisor, supervisors who betray teachers’ trust may directly jeopardise teacher commitment, and indirectly jeopardise student success.

Bryk and Schneider (2003) found that principals’ actions “play a key role in developing and sustaining relational trust”, and that relational trust serves to “advance the education and welfare of students” (pp. 44-45). These researchers linked changing academic performance (in reading and mathematics) with survey results on school trust:

Elementary schools with high relational trust were much more likely to demonstrate marked improvements in student learning…. Most significant was the finding that schools with chronically weak trust reports … had virtually no chance of improving… (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, pp. 43-44)

Within this study, four key features of relational trust emerged - respect, personal regard, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity. Principal action commensurate with these four key features was found to facilitate both development and maintenance of relational trust:

Principals establish both respect and personal regard when they acknowledge the vulnerabilities of others, actively listen to their concerns, and eschew arbitrary actions. Effective principals couple these behaviours with a compelling school vision [and] consistency between their words and actions affirms their personal integrity. Then, if the principal competently manages basic day-to-day school affairs, an overall ethos conducive to the formation of trust will emerge. (Bryk & Schneider, 2003, p. 44)

Indeed, Bryk and Schneider’s (2003) characterisation of relational trust as “the connective tissue” that promotes both students’ education and students’
welfare serves to emphasise the primacy of trust relationships within the school context (p. 45).

Price (2012) claims that trust relations appear to be more critical than educators' certification (that is, professional qualifications) for both school improvement and student success; and, Gavish and Friedman (2011) claim that the ‘taken-for-granted’ status of relational trust serves to accentuate its primacy. Price’s (2012) analysis revealed that trusting supervisor-subordinate relationships contributed greatly to school improvement, whereas ‘certification’ of teachers and principals was not a ‘significant’ feature in terms of student success: “Teacher certification and schooling consistently explain little to no variation in student achievement, [and] the effects of principal certification and experience are even paltrier” (Price, 2012, p. 43). Gavish and Friedman’s (2011) investigation of novice teachers’ expectations revealed the ‘taken-for-granted’ salience of trust relations - novice teachers implicitly trusted that both principals and parents would provide assistance, support, and backing “in the overall responsibility of providing services to students” (p. 463). Consequently, both teacher wellbeing and student achievement are threatened by a school environment in which low-trust relations exist between supervisors and subordinates.

Low-trust relations also serve to impair both teacher motivation and teacher wellbeing (Finnigan, 2012; Troman, 2000). Troman’s (2000) analysis of reports pertaining to UK teachers whose impaired wellbeing had been clinically diagnosed (as a direct consequence of workplace conditions) revealed low-trust workplaces characterised by (1) a lack of support from superiors and (2) teacher exclusion from genuine decision-making. Within this investigation, teachers indicated that they “could not work effectively without the support of their head teachers” (Troman, 2000, p. 342). Finnigan’s (2012) investigation of low-performing probationary schools revealed the negative impact of low-trust relations on school success. One principal’s “lack of trust”, and another principal’s destabilising behaviour (“undermining the authority of teachers in front of students”), served to weaken teachers’ motivation to “work toward school improvement” (Finnigan, 2012, pp. 191 & 197). Hence, low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations,
characterised by neglect and exclusion, are implicated in reduced teacher commitment, reduced teacher wellbeing, and, in turn, reduced student achievement.

In summary, it seems well established that trusting supervisor-subordinate relationships within schools serve to enhance both teacher commitment and student achievement (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Price, 2012). Conversely, low-trust relations serve to undermine both teacher commitment and student achievement (Cherkowski, 2012; Finnigan, 2012). At worst, low-trust relations within schools impair teacher wellbeing (Troman, 2000). The perception that trust relations within schools can be taken for granted emphasises both their fundamental significance and their fundamental impact upon betrayal (Gavish & Friedman, 2011). Indeed, the significance of trust relations is highlighted within Price’s (2012) finding that ‘confidence in others’ outweighs ‘evidence of aptitude’ (certification).

2.4.3.4 Inclusion

Research has established that the inclusion of teachers in both decision-making and problem-solving provides (1) evidence of relational trust and (2) a significant impetus for school improvement/success. The degree to which individuals can influence outcomes and support their own efforts is a significant dimension of psychological empowerment. Moreover, sustained organisational success requires genuine inclusivity in order to identify, challenge, and overcome problems (Mutchler, 2011). Indeed, the fostering of collaborative relationships is an enabling behaviour - it is desirable leadership behaviour.

Although more than two decades old, the Canterbury Boys High School case study (Sydney, Australia), conducted by Carosi and Tindale (1995), compellingly substantiates the claim that organisational success is contingent upon the genuine inclusion of stakeholder input. Carosi and Tindale (1995) tracked school community involvement in the successful restructuring of policy and practice relevant to student behaviour management. Prior to this restructuring, both learning and morale were
undermined by a hostile school climate; specifically, enrolments were declining, high teacher absenteeism (due to ‘poor health’) was compounded by casual teachers’ refusal to ‘bridge the gap’, and student frustration emerged from both ‘rampant’ FdSc behaviours and the absence of effective systemic intervention relevant to these behaviours:

Teachers were not allowed to teach.... A pack mentality existed amongst the students [who] humiliated and intimidated many teachers.... The poor health of the teaching staff was nothing short of abysmal.... On a normal day it would be around eight to ten out of forty-five away. On many occasions, casual staff specifically requested not to be called again.... Student numbers were rapidly declining.... 70% of students believed that disruptive students were not adequately dealt with [whilst] 80% of those surveyed believed that this disruptive behaviour made it difficult to learn. (Carosi & Tindale, 1995, pp. 27-30)

Following a failed attempt at restructuring by school leaders, a welfare committee was formed to find out what students, staff, and parents believed to be both the major problems and the best solutions to these problems. Anxious teachers were most concerned about disruptive classroom behaviours, frustrated students believed that “disruptive students were not adequately dealt with”, and concerned parents indicated that “discipline should be stricter” (Carosi & Tindale, 1995, pp. 30-32). Stakeholder input eventually led to development and implementation of a disciplinary approach that emphasised ‘student responsibility’; essentially, students at this school were “confronted with the notion that they had choices to make about their behaviour that carried positive or negative consequences” (Carosi & Tindale, 1995, p. 34). Disruptive student classroom behaviour would not be tolerated any longer; it was a case of “work it out or stay out of class” (Carosi & Tindale, 1995, pp. 34-35). Eventually, over a couple of years, the number of students reaching the final stage of the discipline system decreased, staff absenteeism decreased, and student enrolment increased (Carosi & Tindale, 1995). Whilst demonstrating that organisational success is dependent upon genuine inclusivity, this case study also demonstrates that a concerted commitment is required in order to reverse the negative impact of FdSc behaviours on: teachers’ capacity to teach; students’ capacity to learn; teacher and student wellbeing; and, for that matter, a school’s reputation. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates that organisational success is
dependent upon both genuine inclusivity and effective systemic social support.

2.4.3.5 Support

A range of studies has shown that the provision of effective systemic social support is positively linked to teacher efficacy, teacher performance, teacher motivation, teacher commitment, and teacher wellbeing. Teachers both want and need to “focus their attentions, energies and efforts on student learning and achievement” (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012, p. 701). In order to optimise student success, therefore, whole-school practice that aims to minimise teacher distractions is rendered vital.

Suber’s (2011) investigation of the characteristics of US principals who governed ‘high poverty, high-performing’ schools revealed that these leaders assumed responsibility for the structural elimination of classroom distractions:

The teacher is [considered] the most significant component to student achievement. Lessons with little or no loss of time to administrative duties, disciplinary interventions, and instructional transitions are imperative to improving student results. It is the responsibility of the principal to monitor and ensure that these practices are occurring. (Suber, 2011, p. 8)

Similarly, Finnigan’s (2012) investigation of a US school that moved beyond probation (sooner than the other schools on probation) indicated that the principal was someone teachers “could go to for support and ideas when they faced classroom challenges” (Finnigan, 2012, p. 197). Still in the USA, in a large-scale study involving 8,488 secondary teachers, Lee, Dedrick, and Smith (1991) found that leaders who supported their teachers by protecting them from social pressures served to promote socially viable classroom environments. In view of this finding, Lee et al. (1991) concluded that “principals [must] protect the core from potentially hostile and disruptive forces” (pp. 202-204).

Effective systemic social support facilitates the capacity of teachers to focus on the job of teaching by structurally minimising teacher distractions and social pressures. According to Parsons and Beauchamp (2012),
teachers “want to do their jobs [and they] value principals who help them achieve those ends” (pp. 705-706). Ultimately, behaviours, practices, and policies that “facilitate the capacity of teachers to ‘do their job’” are considered most supportive (Cherkowski, 2012, p. 63).

In summary, there is strong support in the literature for the claim that school principals/leaders exert considerable influence on school culture, teacher-related work outcomes, and student achievement. Leaders who seek to identify and cultivate ‘shared meaning’ seek to establish a strong foundation for school culture, and leaders who exhibit desirable behaviours - namely, shared vision, high expectations, trust, inclusivity, and support - are better equipped to develop and maintain a successful school culture. Whilst all of these leadership behaviours are desirable, school improvement also requires promotion of desirable teacher and student behaviours (Cherkowski, 2012; Hemmings, 2012; Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Price, 2012; Wildy & Clarke, 2012). As I explore in the next section, research indicates that school success is dependent upon: promotion of student responsibility through shared responsibility (the ‘village’); promotion of effective teacher skills relevant to classroom behaviour management; and, promotion of effective systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to teacher management of disruptive behaviours.

2.5 ‘BEST/ENDORSED’ PRACTICE: AN EMPHASIS ON STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

2.5.1 Overview

Managerial practice that isolates classroom ecology from the wider social ecosystem - thereby transferring full responsibility for student behaviour from students to teachers - serves to thwart student social development, classroom climate, and teacher wellbeing. Whilst some students (and some teachers) who are disrupted clamour for ‘aggressive’ punishment of disruptive students, experts opt for an ‘assertive’ approach. Research indicates that an emphasis on ‘punishment’ tends to exacerbate
student rebellion whereas an emphasis on ‘discipline’ is more likely to foster student sociability. Consequently, systemic approaches that emphasise ‘discipline’ rather than ‘punishment’ are endorsed. ‘Positive behaviour support’ and ‘restorative justice practice’ are acclaimed/endorsed disciplinary approaches that serve to promote (1) student responsibility, (2) orderly classroom climates, (3) positive student-teacher relationships, and (4) teacher wellbeing. However, whilst student-teacher conferencing is considered to be a vital feature of these disciplinary approaches, research within the Australian context indicates that student-teacher conferencing constitutes a substantially underutilised practice. In turn, underutilisation of student-teacher conferencing serves to ‘make easy’ the propensity for students to refuse to take responsibility for their problematic behaviour. Exploration of this literature facilitates my evaluation of the disciplinary protocols advocated by interviewees/practitioners within my own study.

2.5.2 Responsibility, Discipline, Consequences, and Justice

In this section, I review studies that either underscore or challenge the notion of teacher responsibility for student behaviours. Indeed, the existence of controversy in relation to this issue indicates that it is not possible to assume implementation of adequate, effective systemic disciplinary/social support of classroom teachers. I argue that three entwined misconceptions appear to underscore cited researchers’ emphasis on teacher responsibility for student misbehaviour: (1) the notion that individual classrooms constitute impervious, self-contained social entities; (2) the notion that the locus of control within this impervious, self-contained social entity conclusively resides in the teacher; and, (3) the notion that students lack autonomy (Sullivan et al., 2014). Next, in support of research that emphasises the need for greater systemic/student responsibility in relation to student behaviour (Rigter, 2000; Squelch, 2006), I counter with four entwined considerations: (1) the claim that external factors “impact on school ecology” (Sullivan et al., 2014); (2) the claim that “student behaviour does not exist in isolation” (Sullivan et al., 2014,); (3) the claim that, state-wide, the chief perpetrators of anti-social/violent behaviours are junior secondary students (New South
2.5.2.1 Teacher Responsibility vs. Student Responsibility

Little’s (2005) investigation of teachers’ preferred forms of assistance relevant to management of FDSC behaviours attests to teachers’ need for interpersonal/social assistance in relation to student misbehaviour. Within this study, participating teachers were limited to ranking a list of five designated interventions which they ranked as follows: (1) advice from teachers; (2) staff in-service; (3) tip sheet; (4) consultation with psychologist; and, (5) book (Little, 2005, p. 374). Whilst whole-school disciplinary practices are evidently beyond the parameters of this study, it is reasonable to assert that teachers’ preference for ‘advice’ implicates their need for interpersonal social assistance and/or socially supportive protocols relevant to management of student misbehaviour. In turn, an open-ended investigation of teachers’ preferred forms of assistance relevant to student misbehaviour is implicated.

Sullivan et al. (2014) accentuate teacher responsibility for student behaviour by suggesting that an over-emphasis on student responsibility for behaviours exhibited may be, by and large, ‘unfair’ to students:

When a student exhibits behaviours that are deemed inappropriate, teachers tend to locate responsibility for the behaviour with the student rather than consider other factors that might contribute to the behaviour. (Sullivan et al., 2014, p. 43)

Like the quotation from Basil Bernstein that opens this chapter, Sullivan et al. (2014) note that:

Student behaviour does not exist in isolation.... Outside factors (home, socioeconomic, political, cultural/racial/religious) impact on the ecology of the school.... (pp. 46-47)
Herein, acknowledgement of the influence of social factors beyond teachers’ control, combined with acknowledgement of the notion that ‘behaviour does not exist in isolation’ (and is produced in interaction), serves to position classroom ecology as a microcosm of the larger social world. Here, I argue, the need for individuals’ self-development in relation to the inculcation of positive social values/skills remains in force, even though, as Sullivan et al. (2014) insist:

Student behaviours have more to do with factors within a teacher’s control than with those located within the student.... Teachers could benefit from understanding how the classroom ecology influences student behaviour, rather than focusing on ‘fixing’ unproductive behaviours.... (Sullivan et al., 2014, pp. 43, 47 & 54)

Indeed, teachers must take steps to provide an environment that is conducive to learning. And teacher failure to address students’ ‘unproductive’ behaviours does constitute negligence of responsibility. However, to suggest that individual teachers have greater responsibility for controlling student behaviour than students themselves is simply untenable. In view of (1) the influence of wider social variables on student behaviour, and (2) the need for development of self-control as a pre-requisite to social functioning, the primary responsibility for social behaviour should reside with individuals themselves. Ultimately, teachers require both effective behaviour management skills and effective systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to shared management of Fdsc behaviours.

Both particular teachers’ skills/traits and appropriate systemic disciplinary/social support constitute contributory factors in the development of teachers as effective classroom managers. Effective teacher skills/traits are identified in upcoming discussion - and the good news is that effective behaviour management skills (and associated discursive practices) can be learned. Within my appraisal of the step system (escalating systemic consequences for classroom behaviours deemed inappropriate), I contend that notions of appropriate systemic social support are inextricably tied to notions of survival. Such support, therefore, is inevitably grounded in prioritisation of responsiveness to majority needs/rights. However, whilst the step system is notionally grounded in the prioritisation of majority needs/rights, the step system, in terms of process, provides spaces for
dialogue in which individuals’ needs, rights, and perceptions can be discretely aired and addressed. Therefore, in order to facilitate student learning, teachers require: particular skills/traits; certainty in relation to action to be taken; and, systemic support that endeavours to ensure that “no student … be allowed to hold a classroom to ransom by repeatedly disruptive behaviour in the course of a lesson or activity” (Rogers, 2007, p. 143).

Whilst Sullivan et al. (2014) uphold the notion that fdsc behaviours (‘talk’ and ‘commitment’ issues) are sources of both impeded student learning and considerable teacher stress/exhaustion, their absence of an explicit challenge to reviewers’ bland representations of these behaviours/issues (“relatively trivial” and “somewhat minor”) serves to conceal the need for prioritisation of systemic action/support relevant to fdsc behaviours. Indeed, in view of the impact of fdsc behaviours on other classroom inhabitants, remedial action that commences with prioritisation of group needs is rendered prudent. Sullivan et al. (2014) report:

A team of South Australian researchers (Adey, Oswald, & Johnson, 1991) conducted a series of surveys on [5,000 South Australian] teachers’ views of discipline in schools…. The most common [student] misbehaviours included idleness and work avoidance, hindering others, and talking out of turn…. The authors concluded that, although the actual behaviours seemed somewhat minor, they impeded learning and their repetitive nature was a major source of teacher stress (Johnson, Oswald, & Adey, 1993)…. Beaman and Wheldall (1997) agreed that the high frequency of these behaviours make them ‘irritating and time-wasting and, over time, ultimately exhausting and stressful’ (1997, p. 53)…. Beaman, Wheldall, and Kemp (2007) [confirmed that] these behaviours happened so often that they ultimately caused considerable stress for teachers. (Cited in Sullivan, Johnson, Owens, & Conway, 2014, p. 44)

Focused on the individual, these researchers’ critique of step systems is grounded in concerns about perceived ‘structural’ emphases on student compliance (as opposed to engagement) and student culpability (as opposed to problematic external influences). Specifically, Sullivan et al. (2014) view step systems as an example of mainstream practices that: (1) “invariably locate ‘the problem’ within individual students”; (2) “exercise power and promote obedience [but] do not necessarily engage students in their learning”; and, (3) ultimately serve to promote a ‘discourse of concealment’ (p. 45). Herein, asking students to account for their behaviour is situated as a form of systemic practice that may promote student compliance, but neither
guarantees student engagement nor considers the influence of contextual factors on student behaviour (Sullivan et al., 2014, p. 47). Ultimately, Sullivan et al. (2014) denounce step systems, and support “the importance of creating classroom conditions that promote academic engagement” (p. 47).

However, whilst promotion of academic engagement is crucial, the need for student co-operation (‘compliance’) constitutes a key feature of this paramount goal; hence, implemented appropriately, the step system is rendered indispensable. By and large, the step system is grounded in the needs of the majority (the bulk of classroom inhabitants). This grounding can be justified in terms of notions of survival wherein group needs take precedence over individuals’ needs. Hence, the individual who impacts on the majority - either favourably or unfavourably - becomes the logical (if not instinctive) focus of attention. In terms of process, however, the step system provides authentic spaces for dialogue in which the opportunity to address an individual’s rights, responsibilities, needs, and perceptions is evident. And, within such spaces, shrewd, solution-oriented managers of behaviour are obliged to give consideration to external influences on student behaviour. In terms that are both simplistic and polarised, either the student is the problem or the student is influenced by an external problem. Regardless of where the problem resides, reference must be made to the student who constitutes the focus of attention in order to facilitate solutions.

In order to optimise both classroom conditions and spaces for dialogue, it is necessary to optimise educators’ skills relevant to group behaviour management. At the same time, for the sake of both teacher wellbeing and teacher certainty, leadership needs to ensure that protocols/practices relevant to use of the step system are clear, consistent, timely, well-known, fair, and respectful. In NSW public schools, over the course of a day, secondary teachers address multiple groups of students - a maximum of thirty students per group of secondary juniors - within time-bound sessions. This reality - the need to address multiple groups within time-bound sessions - implicates the need for sound teacher pedagogical skills, sound teacher managerial skills, and student co-operation. At the same time, the inherent nature of this group reality poses unavoidable risks
to individuals’ needs. Hence, although perceived by some as ‘censuring’ and/or ‘reactive’, judicious use of the step system facilitates detection of individual students whose needs and perceptions may otherwise go unnoticed within the group reality depicted. In addition, any number of students may need adult assistance in terms of their articulation of their needs and/or perceptions. So long as secondary teachers are expected to address multiple, sizeable groups within time-bound sessions, whole-school responsiveness in the form of a step system is somewhat fixed.

According to Rogers (2007), the effective teacher displays particular core values (he/she is respectful, fair, caring, encouraging, self-confident, patient, and good-humoured), and his/her pedagogical routine (content, content delivery, and associated activities) is organised, appropriate, understandable, explicitly justified, relatable, engaging, and monitored (pp. 103-115). Rogers’ (2007, pp. 103-115) explanation of the desirable pedagogical routine is paraphrased as follows:

- The teacher is organised (content and activities), and ensures the appropriateness of the learning activity/task.
- The teacher communicates clearly - explanations and instructions are clear and pitched at a level likely to ‘connect’ in terms of student understanding, needs, and comprehension.
- The teacher explains the purpose and relevance of what they are teaching and the particular learning tasks that flow from them.
- The teacher relates content to experience (their own and students’).
- The teacher makes both positive and varied use of questioning to motivate and monitor students’ understanding and raise the level and quality of students’ thinking.
- The teacher monitors the progress of a given lesson, and makes appropriate adjustments.

Along with such values and routine, effective teachers require group management communication skills that can be learned:

A common belief is that group management skills are simply a natural gift. You either have it or you don’t. Our evidence does not support this belief. Its most damaging feature is that teachers who have difficulty controlling classes tend to put this down to personal inadequacy rather than a lack of particular skills that can be acquired through training or advice from colleagues…. The majority of teachers can become more effective classroom managers as a result of the right kinds of training, experience, and support. (Elton Report, 1989, p. 69)

According to Rogers’ (2007) framework for effective management and discipline of student behaviour, teachers’ language use needs to be assertive, confident, respectful, and as brief as possible; and, teachers’
language skills need to reflect both knowledge and appropriate use of least-to-most intrusive language skills (pp. 75-83 & 91). Rogers’ (2007, pp. 78-91) least-to-most intrusive language skills are paraphrased as follows:

- Tactical ignoring - to avoid unnecessary consumption of class time.
- Tactical pausing - to emphasise the need for student attention.
- Non-verbal cueing - to carry an unspoken communication.
- Incidental language - to allow students to process implied expectations.
- Take-up time - to allow students sufficient time to co-operate.
- Behavioural direction - to obtain required behaviour in a direct, brief manner.
- Rule reminder - to briefly emphasise behavioural expectations.
- Prefacing - to focus on ‘positives’ before engaging discipline.
- Distraction/diversion - to redirect unwanted behaviour.
- Direct questions - to direct students to their responsibility through ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘how’ or ‘where’ questions.
- Directed ‘choices’ - to indicate conditions (e.g., when/then).
- ‘Choice’/deferred consequences - to indicate the consequences of a choice.
- Blocking - to ignore a procrastinating argument by resorting to the original communication.
- Partial agreement - to both acknowledge and redirect.
- Assertive comments/directions/commands - to clearly indicate serious breaches of behavioural boundaries (such as abusive language or threats to safety) through focused language that is firm, clear, decisive, and assertive.

However, as stated, in addition to particular teacher skills/traits, appropriate systemic disciplinary/social support constitutes a contributory factor in the development of teachers as effective classroom managers. Investigators maintain that “the majority of teachers can become more effective classroom managers as a result of the right kinds of training, experience, and support” (Elton Report, 1989, p. 69). For example, Rogers’ (2007) counsel emphasises the need for development and implementation of systemic protocols that serve to prioritise/promote safety, order, and respect. Rogers (2007) insists that teachers have/take the opportunity to “re-establish working relationships with [a disciplined] student as quickly as possible”, and he stipulates that classroom teachers “should never ignore any repeatedly disruptive behaviour, safety issues or harassment behaviours” (pp. 77-78). Indeed, Rogers (2007) not only advocates zero tolerance of “repeatedly disruptive [student] behaviour”, he also claims that such behaviour may actually constitute harassment which constitutes a breach of teachers’ and other students’ rights:

No student should be allowed to hold a classroom to ransom by repeatedly disruptive behaviour in the course of a lesson or activity. Nor should we ever convey the message to students that we will ever tolerate [such behaviour].... Harassment involves those intentional, selective, and repeated behaviours of an individual or a
A tacit acceptance of some expressions of hostile or verbally challenging [student] behaviour … may also mean an acceptance of psychological harassment of teachers. Worse, if we categorise harassing behaviour as merely ‘disruptive behaviour’ that the teacher cannot control, we may then, too easily, blame the teacher for the harassing behaviour of the students. Harassment is an abuse of fundamental rights. [It] can include the non-verbal suggestions that students use to refer to a teacher’s sexual preference, or body shape, or clothing or ‘anything’ they can pick on that will give ratification to their exercise of power. (Rogers, 2007, pp. 143 & 205-206)

Sullivan et al.’s (2014) findings in relation to the nature and frequency of students’ ‘aggressive/anti-social’ behaviours - serious behaviours that are largely borne out in student-student relationships - serve to substantiate the need for promotion of student rather than teacher responsibility for student behaviours. Within this investigation, the specific aggressive/anti-social student behaviours, and the percentage of teachers who claimed to address these behaviours at least ‘1 or 2 days per week’, include: ‘excluding peers’ (67%); ‘spreading rumours’ (62%); ‘verbally abusing other students’ (57%); ‘physical aggression towards other students’ (55%); ‘erratic behaviour’ (55%); ‘sexually harassing other students’ (28%); ‘verbally abusing teachers’ (26%); and being ‘physically destructive’ (21%)(Sullivan et al., 2014, p. 50).

The seriousness of these behaviours implicates the need for rigorous systemic social support at least, and the need for mental health interventions at most. Factors within a teacher’s control are often undermined by those located within the student.

Rigter (2000) and Squelch (2006) argued the need for more intensive support of classroom teachers relevant to management of student behaviour. Teachers’ constant pleas for additional human resources, additional systemic disciplinary strategies, and sturdier systemic behavioural standards, indicate both the extent of their responsibility and their need to lessen the burden of that responsibility. Rigter’s (2000) study facilitated teachers’ nomination and narration of desirable interventions which included: immediate managerial assistance when difficulties arise; adult assistance within the classroom (aides); removal of persistently disruptive students for the sake of classroom functioning; and, systemic development of more rigorous behavioural standards. Rigter (2000) states:

There was a [repeated] call for increased human resources to assist the classroom teacher and help manage the child in immediate incidents…. Other avenues to
explore would be ‘quiet rooms where children could go to calm down’ [and] a ‘good watertight school behaviour management program’. (Rigter, 2000, p. 13)

Indeed, in view of the nature and scope of anti-social student behaviour, Squelch (2006) insists upon the need for both increased systemic support (human resources) and increased systemic responsibility: “In the school context, [vital resources] should include more school counsellors, educational psychologists, social workers, teachers’ aides and relevant intervention programmes” (p. 264).

My argument is that, in order to promote student social development for the sake of social functioning, students must be assisted to take responsibility for their behaviours and attitudes. Advocacy of shared responsibility for student behaviour - embedded in relationships-based approaches and appropriate discursive practices - is evident within Australian research that recognises the multiple pressures exerted on classroom teachers (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Johnson & Sullivan, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Mansfield, Beltman, Weatherby-Fell, & Broadley, 2016). Johnson and Sullivan (2016a) identified the multiple pressures on teachers that serve to threaten relational ties: external performance demands; taken-for-granted ways of doing schooling (defined content, learning deadlines, defined assessment, and assessment deadlines); the complex ‘ecology’ of the classroom; professional role conformity; and, heightened responsibility and accountability (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016a, pp. 34-35). Arbuckle and Little (2004) found that the need for behaviour support in secondary schools was rendered more pressing in view of the increase in disruptive and aggressive behaviours exhibited by junior secondary students:

There may be variables other than management strategies that are causing the change in behaviour. These may include … developmental changes, transitional stress, and other environmental variables (such as increased demands, family pressures, etc.)…. Peer group pressures become evident [in secondary school]; furthermore, an increase in teasing and bullying is often observable throughout the middle years…. (Arbuckle & Little, 2004, pp. 59-60 & 67-68)

Mansfield et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of supporting teachers’ relationships subsequent to their finding that teacher resilience is “an ongoing process occurring as a result of interactions in particular contexts”
rather than “a fixed quality that can be measured at one point” (p. 226). Drewery and Kecskemeti (2010) noted the adverse effects of the abrogation of moral responsibility by students and/or parents (p. 108). These researchers claim that facilitation of shared responsibility obligates (1) teachers’ and managers’ use of ‘respectful inquiry’, and (2) teachers’ and managers’ respectful disruption of discourses of blame and entitlement:

[The teacher] needs our support to … resist being called into the position of the one who needs to ‘fix it’ as well as the one who is solely responsible for problems…. Being able to name and unpack the discursive context distributes the burden of problems, and relieves the impact of blame and stress on teachers, who are only a small part of the whole picture…. (Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010, pp.109-111)

And, whilst Clunies-Ross et al. (2008) highlighted the need for promotion of positive teacher talk in order to promote student engagement, they also underscored teachers’ need for effective systemic social support in view of the time-consuming and competing demands of classroom behaviour management.

In summary, the existence of controversy in relation to responsibility for student behaviour suggests that the operation of effective systemic disciplinary/social support of classroom teachers can neither be assumed nor considered a fait accompli. Support for an emphasis on student responsibility for student behaviour is founded in: (1) the notion of behaviour as an interactive phenomenon (in which self-control ranks as a pre-requisite to social functioning); (2) the infiltrating impact of “external factors” on school ecology; (3) the emergence of serious, high frequency ‘bullying’ behaviours at secondary level; and, (4) the notion that teachers’ power is relevant to students’ usable power. Indeed, both teachers and researchers appeal for greater human and systemic assistance in relation to the management of anti-social student behaviours. And, in order to assist students in their social development, a systemic focus on student discipline - as opposed to student punishment - is implicated.

2.5.2.2 Discipline vs. Punishment

There is a clear distinction in the literature between discipline that supports and structures the learning of individuals in classrooms, and
punishment that negatively impacts students’ relationships with both their teachers and their schooling. Hoffman and Lee’s (2014) investigation of fdsc behaviours led to their support of an assertive approach to student discipline - an approach in which both the problem and the associated need are calmly, clearly, and civilly stated. Within their investigation, calls from affected students for aggressive ‘punishment’ of the perpetrators of fdsc behaviours revealed affected students’ intense frustration. Collated student feedback opted for public gestures involving censure, humiliation, removal, and physical punishment of disruptive students:

Ask offenders to leave, ‘call them out’, embarrass disruptive students, corporal punishment, cut off fingers, drag students out.... (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, p. 121)

Both Dickensian and medieval in flavour, advocacy of these forms of punishment testify to both the highly charged emotional nature and impact of fdsc behaviours. However, as Hoffman and Lee (2014) argue, policy that sets the tone for a viable, enduring learning culture emphasises an assertive, disciplinary approach rather than an aggressive, punitive approach. Aggressive approaches such as concerted public humiliation of disruptive students negatively impact student-teacher relationships; passive approaches, such as teacher attempts to ignore and ‘plough through’ sustained disruption, inevitably penalise all but the perpetrator. But ‘assertive approaches’ are claimed to deliver effect with integrity:

The recommended ‘assertive approach’ is to deal with the problem calmly and clearly by stating the problem and expressing what the instructor wants - ‘Your side discussion is distracting to the class ... please stop.’ Delivered without sarcasm or aggression, the instructor’s reputation and credibility stay intact. (Hoffman & Lee, 2014, pp. 123-124)

An assertive approach to disruptive student classroom behaviours implicates the need for development of student self-discipline both within the moment and within the social world of the school at large.

The development of systemic approaches emphasising ‘discipline’ (that is, action that purports to promote positive student behaviours) rather than ‘punishment’ (that is, action that directly resorts to zero tolerance of student misbehaviours) is responsive to the concept that ‘discipline’ tends to foster student sociability whereas ‘punishment’ tends to compound student
rebellion. An Australia-US study by Hemphill, McMorris, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, Catalano, and Mathers (2007) revealed strong cross-national alignment in the emergence of anti-social student behaviour but indicated considerable variation in terms of cross-national responses. Whilst one school system emphasised escalating 'discipline' in order to keep youth connected to school, the other emphasised ‘punishment’, resulting in greater numbers of both student suspensions and student arrests:

The Victorian school system code of conduct [includes] the withdrawal of privileges, temporary removal from the classroom ("time-out"), detention, and discipline meetings of school staff and parents to define the issues, set goals, and agree on tasks and responsibilities. In contrast, a zero tolerance approach (e.g., school suspension or expulsion) toward preventing school violence characterises Washington State (consistent with other areas of the United States).... School suspensions and police arrests [were] more frequent in Washington State. (Hemphill et al., 2007, pp. 304-309)

Utilising data from this cross-national study, Hemphill and Hargreaves (2009) went on to find that a concerted punitive approach to anti-social student behaviour (such as sole reliance on student suspension) was essentially counterproductive:

[Suspended students] were 50% more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour and 70% more likely to engage in violent behaviour at 12-month follow-up. (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009, p. 10)

In view of these findings, Hemphill and Hargreaves (2009) called for the development of systemic disciplinary practices that serve to reinforce students’ social relationships within the school by means of an emphasis on student self-discipline (student responsibility). I discuss the key facets of relationships-based approaches to student discipline in the next section.

2.5.3 Acclaimed/Endorsed Systemic Disciplinary Interventions: Positive Behaviour Support & Restorative Justice Practice

Positive behaviour support is an acclaimed disciplinary approach that seeks to enhance student responsibility by way of clear behavioural standards and clear behavioural consequences. It involves consistent, resolute encouragement of student self-discipline, and the explicit teaching of indispensable social skills. Reduced discipline problems, improved learning climates, and positive home-school relations are all associated with positive
behaviour support, thus emphasising that a genuine concern for the future of all students rests upon systemic behavioural interventions that seek to enhance student responsibility.

Evidence for the success of positive behaviour support is apparent within the intervention developed by Närhi, Kiiski, Peitso, and Savolainen (2014). Conducted in Finland in 28 middle school classrooms, this study reports on an intervention designed to maximise organisational action, reduce disruption, and improve learning climates. The salient features of this intervention included: clear behavioural expectations; behaviour-specific praise; quantification of disruptive behaviours; and, pre-determined systemic responses to inappropriate behaviour. Within this intervention, students who exceeded a set percentage of negative goal evaluations attracted lock-step, systemic responses in the form of conferencing, and conferencing involved a focus on behavioural expectations (student responsibility):

When a student exceeded the limit for the first time, a discussion with his/her parents was arranged.... If a student exceeded the limit again, discussions with a team of teachers and possibly other school personnel were arranged. (Närhi et al., 2014, p. 4)

Subsequent teacher and student evaluations of this systemic intervention indicated “significant improvements” within the classroom. Improvements were associated with: reduced student disruption; reduced teacher-time managing disruption; reduced teacher-experienced strain; reduced teacher isolation; increased teacher opportunity (time to teach); and, increased teacher certainty. Staff rated the acceptability of the intervention as “very high” (Närhi et al., 2014, pp. 6-8). While there are, to date, no longitudinal results, within the space of two months, this intervention, founded in a systemic emphasis on student responsibility, yet demonstrating care and interest in the disruptive student, served to significantly enhance both learning climates and teacher-wellbeing (Närhi et al., 2014).

Restorative justice practice is an endorsed disciplinary approach that, through conferencing, seeks to enhance student responsibility, student engagement, and student relationships with significant others (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; Lewis, Romi, & Roache, 2012; Mutch & Collins, 2012;
Sullivan et al., 2014). Described as ‘less punitive’ and solution-oriented, whole-school restorative practice endeavours to: highlight student accountability; restore relationships (typically, student-teacher relationships); and, reintegrate the student into the school community (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009). The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) endorses restorative justice practice as a means to (1) support classroom teachers, and (2) promote safe schools (MCEECDYA, 2011). Endorsement of restorative justice practice is reflected in parental commitment to, and valuing of, such practice. For example, in New Zealand, an investigation by the Education Review Office in over two hundred schools found that both parents and whānau (families and extended families) valued restorative justice practice as “a process that reflected the ideals of a real partnership” (Mutch & Collins, 2012, p. 181).

Within this literature review (2.3 and 2.4), the need to implement practice that serves/seeks to support and monitor student-teacher relationships (such as restorative justice practice) is either indicated or implicated in diverse evidence-based research pertaining to (1) teacher burnout/attrition, and (2) ‘desirable’ leadership behaviours. Specifically, both teacher burnout and teacher attrition are situated as adverse products of inadequate disciplinary/social support relevant to management of student misbehaviour; and, the five ‘desirable’ leadership behaviours deemed necessary for promotion of a ‘successful’ school culture (namely, shared meaning/vision, support, inclusion, trust, and high expectations) are commensurate with the need to implement practice that serves/seeks to support and monitor student-teacher relationships. Last but not least, within my own study, executives with experience of restorative justice practice rated the outcomes of such practice as ‘reasonably successful’, ‘very positive’, and indispensable. Also within my own study, teachers especially expressed a desire for practice that provides them with the opportunity to air and address unresolved student-teacher issues (conflict). Herein, the opportunity to air and address problematic issues is, by itself, valued; and the notion that success is contingent upon opportunity is assumed.
In order to mitigate both the reproach and disengagement of students, restorative justice practice (conferencing) is considered vital at the time of post-exclusion re-entry of students to the classroom. Lewis et al. (2012) insist upon the need for teacher-student ‘conversations’ following any incident involving student exclusion from the classroom. A common practice within high schools, temporary student exclusion from the classroom serves to remove unwarranted, persistent distraction; however, such practice may also initiate student alienation from schooling (Lewis et al., 2012). Whilst student classroom disruption cannot and should not be tolerated, and short-term student exclusion from the classroom remains a defensible option, Lewis et al. (2012) assert the need for teachers to “challenge students’ actions and help them see the impact that their behaviour has on others” (p. 872). Post-exclusion conferencing facilitates both student development and student-teacher relationships, and the absence of this practice tends to allow both student reproach of teachers and student disengagement to fester (Lewis et al., 2012).

Engaging in conversation at the time of post-suspension student re-entry is also seen to mitigate student relinquishment of responsibility, student reproach of others, and student disengagement. Lewis et al. (2012) revealed that excluded students perceived their implicated teachers as both hateful and blameworthy. In their study of 302 excluded students from eight Victorian secondary schools, Lewis et al. (2012) found that “less than half of the exclusions [were] followed by a talk” and “students who do not accept responsibility for being excluded think that their teachers are to blame” (pp. 870 & 877). Indeed, the most frequently student-selected reason for exclusion was that “the teacher hated them and picked on them” (Lewis et al., 2012, p. 873). In view of these findings, Lewis et al. (2012) concluded that, to avoid alienation, students who experience exclusion must be convinced of the need to accept responsibility for their acts. Student-teacher conferencing is implicated.

The need for both development and greater utilisation of systemic support in relation to teacher-student conferencing is also highlighted by Sullivan et al. (2014). Teachers reporting the use of an escalating ‘step’
system as “the most effective behaviour management strategy” noted that the ‘final’ step - that is, teacher-student conferencing - was actually among “the least used behaviour management strategies” (Sullivan et al., 2014, p. 52). Sullivan et al. (2014) provide details:

The most common behaviour management strategy used by teachers was reasoning with a student in the classroom setting. The next most commonly used strategies were using a ‘step’ system involving an escalation of actions if behaviour does not change…. 33.3% of teachers reported using a ‘step’ system as the most effective behaviour management strategy. The least used behaviour management strategies [included] initiating a conference to discuss a student's behaviour…. (Sullivan et al., 2014, p. 52)

Successful utilisation of restorative justice practice requires explicit systemic fortification. Whilst teachers commonly resort to in situ “reasoning with a student” in order to curb unacceptable behaviour, and student refusal to either see reason or be reasonable attracts systemic escalation, the need to reason with a student whose belligerence continues to manifest remains in force. Indeed, underutilisation of warranted conferencing would serve to undermine student-teacher relationships.

As I have demonstrated, an emphasis on ‘discipline’ rather than ‘punishment’ does appear to foster student sociability. Systemic failure to commit to a disciplinary emphasis on student responsibility constitutes neglect of both students’ social development and classroom inhabitants’ needs. Both overburdened teachers and frustrated students clamour for systemic disciplinary interventions that purport to mitigate the detrimental effects of fdsc behaviours. Ultimately, enhancement of students’ responsibility, co-operation, engagement, and relationships requires: systemic provision of clear behavioural standards; clear and escalating behavioural consequences; and, solution-oriented conferencing that harnesses teacher input.

2.6 CONCLUSION

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, my review of literature relevant to my research topic has been presented in several sections. First,
proffering support for the current study, core propositions within the cited literature on fdsc behaviours were highlighted in order to show that protection of the teaching-learning environment requires systemic interventions that serve to minimise the incidence/impact of fdsc behaviours within/on classrooms. The review has highlighted research findings indicating that the fdsc behaviours that most require redress include 'talk', 'technology', 'commitment', and ‘bullying’ issues. Both unchecked ‘bullying’ and the misappropriation of teacher class time afforded by disruption are particularly prominent and unsettling issues within secondary and primary schools. Fdsc behaviours signify the infiltration of social values that conflict with educational values, and they pose socio-economic risks to teacher wellbeing, student wellbeing, and student learning. Consequently, effective classroom functioning requires robust systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to teacher management of fdsc behaviours. In the chapters that follow I will present participant reports that include and extend both the typologies and the derivative issues pertaining to fdsc behaviours noted in cited literature. In addition, I will highlight the relationship between student abuse of teachers (a ‘bullying’ issue) and other typologies. My argument for the continual monitoring of teachers’ needs in relation to systemic management of fdsc behaviours will be constructed on this base.

Second, core propositions within the cited literature on teacher burnout and teacher attrition indicate that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constitute the key organisational antecedents to both teacher burnout and teacher attrition. These key organisational antecedents pose direct and indirect threats to student education, and serve to seriously undermine teacher satisfaction, teacher wellbeing, teacher retention, and teacher livelihood. Whilst teacher burnout is implicated in teacher attrition, leadership has a vital role to play in the minimisation of all dimensions of teacher burnout. Teachers, therefore, must be involved in the articulation of both organisational problems and the solutions to organisational problems.

Thirdly, core propositions within the cited literature on school culture indicate that particular leadershipbehaviours have the power to promote
both teacher-related work outcomes and student achievement by way of their influence on school culture. Principals/leaders have a significant influence on the quality of school culture - they directly influence teacher-related work outcomes, and they indirectly influence student achievement. Desirable leadership behaviours include shared vision, high expectations, trust, inclusion, and support. A culture of shared meaning (shared vision based in shared values) is fundamental in terms of positive teacher-related work outcomes. A culture of ‘high expectations’ serves to enhance both teacher-related work outcomes and student achievement, and a culture of trust is similarly positively associated with teacher-related work outcomes and student achievement. A culture of inclusion promotes teacher motivation, maintains connection with community values, and facilitates both identification and confrontation of problems. A culture of support serves to minimise teacher distraction, facilitate teacher capacity to ‘do their job’, and facilitate teacher satisfaction (student achievement). As I will go on to argue, participant reports emphasising the relationship between leadership behaviours and management of fSCC behaviours indicate the interactive power of these two variables in classroom functioning.

Finally, core propositions within the cited literature on disciplinary approaches indicate that ‘best/endorsed’ practice is commensurate with a systemic emphasis on student responsibility by way of clear behavioural standards, clear behavioural consequences, and solution-oriented conferencing. However, controversy in relation to responsibility for student behaviour indicates that the realisation of effective systemic disciplinary/social support of classroom teachers cannot be taken for granted. It does seem clear that an emphasis on student ‘discipline’ rather than student ‘punishment’ serves to promote students’ social development. Both positive behaviour support and restorative justice practice are disciplinary approaches that serve to enhance student responsibility, student engagement, student-teacher relationships, classroom learning climate, and teacher wellbeing. However, within the Australian context, student-teacher conferencing appears to be an underutilised practice in schools.
As the cited literature has demonstrated, effective school maintenance (or improvement) requires: desirable leadership behaviours; teacher skills relevant to group behaviour management; an emphasis on student responsibility; high behavioural standards; judicious use of escalating disciplinary consequences; solution-oriented conferencing; and, most notably, both promotion and protection of student-teacher relationships.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I introduce the methodological frameworks that have supported my research. As outlined in Chapter 1, my aim in this study has been to discover classroom teachers’ organisational disciplinary/social support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours, and my choice of methodologies (grounded theory and grounded action) supports this aim.

Both grounded theory and grounded action methodologies value social perspectives of social processes by means of an inductive approach to data - philosophically, consensus is regarded as the mainspring of ‘truth’ and ‘reality’. I was drawn to these methodologies as they are commensurate with both the means and the objective of my research project - namely, identification, through elicitation, of classroom teachers’ organisational disciplinary/social support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours. Grounded theorists are particularly interested in the protection of individuals who collectively function as workers within an organisation; and, grounded theory methods are “particularly well suited to making a contribution to the efficient and humane functioning of modern bureaucratic systems” (McLeod, 2002, p. 89).

My adoption of a constructivist approach to grounded theory/action gave me the freedom to acknowledge that I am responsible for the overarching narrative in which the shared experiences of participants are assembled and secured as data. In short, I have sought educators’ perspectives of social processes in relation to anti-social behaviours, and I have given shape to the issues emerging from these voices in order to argue my thesis.

In outline, upon gaining approval to access a public secondary school in rural New South Wales as the research site, recruitment of participants involved a general verbal invitation to all staff at a routine staff meeting; and participant selection involved staggered, written personal invitations to all teaching staff. I allowed a year to lapse between classroom teacher
interviews (purposive sampling of the critical reference group) and executive interviews (both purposive and theoretical sampling).

Data collection involved the use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews, which worked to focus interviewees on relevant issues (the semi-structured element) and procure their perspectives (the open-ended element). Three broad areas of inquiry facilitated: indirect positioning of the research topic within the investigated site; a situated assessment of existing organisational disciplinary practices (relevant to fdsc behaviours); and, identification of endorsed and/or desired disciplinary/social practices (relevant to fdsc behaviours). In order to obtain rich and relevant data, I took great care in the construction of interview questions. The finalised interview questions: (1) directly emanated from core propositions within the overarching research question; (2) worked to focus, probe, and empower participants; and, (3) took into consideration the respective social spaces occupied by two sets of interviewees and interviewer.

My analysis of data - an iterative and recursive process - was achieved using procedures that are common in grounded theory methods, as I will detail below. As sole researcher, I was responsible for interviewing participants and transcribing audio recordings. My acquaintance with the data, therefore, was thorough. The rights of my participants have been, and have remained, paramount throughout the conduct of my research. Ethical considerations that particularly applied in this context are related to the need to maintain a duty of care to both participants and other members of the research site. In this chapter, I detail the process summarised above, and reflect on the methodological issues and complexities that I encountered.

3.2 METHODOLOGY: THE STRENGTHS AND PHILOSOPHICAL TENETS OF GROUNDED THEORY AND ACTION

Both grounded theory and grounded action methodologies complemented my aim of establishing classroom teachers’ disciplinary/social support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours. Open-ended, semi-structured interviewing constituted the means by which I elicited rich and relevant data.
The derivation of relevant theory - explanatory and operational - hinged upon the elicitation of participants’ perspectives relevant to endorsed and/or desired organisational disciplinary/social practices that do/would serve to protect and promote the teaching-learning environment. Essentially, my aim was to induce a sense of participants’ reality from their data in order to produce relevant theory. The resulting account, for which I am inevitably and openly responsible, serves to represent both the shared experiences and shared desires of these participants.

3.2.1 The Strengths of Grounded Theory/Action

I was drawn to an inductive approach to qualitative data analysis in view of my desire to better understand the impact of organisational disciplinary processes on the daily lives of classroom teachers. Developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960’s, grounded theory involves a systematic inductive approach to qualitative data analysis in order to generate both relevant theory and knowledge. Essentially, these pioneering researchers sought theory that expressed data (represented humanity) rather than theory that reshaped data (distorted humanity). For Glaser and Strauss, acquisition of representative theory requires the securing of individuals’ perspectives in order to approximate the truth of individuals’ realities. Glaser (1998) notes:

A grounded theory that is faithful to everyday realities of a substantive area is one that has been carefully induced from diverse data.... Only in this way will the theory be closely related to the daily realities ... of substantive areas, and be highly applicable to dealing with them. (Cited in Marvasti, 2004, p. 85)

For interview data, the inductive approach commences with data deconstruction (where ‘meaningful units’ are identified and coded) and, through use of constant comparison, continues with data reconstruction (where similar ‘meaningful units’ are grouped). This fracturing and restructuring of data facilitates the ongoing analysis of emergent group phenomena which, in turn, gives rise to pertinent explanatory theory:

The focus initially is on unravelling the elements of experience. Inquiry is grounded in study of the transcribed interviews sentence by sentence, coding of each sentence or phrase, sorting the codes, making comparisons among the categories, and ultimately constructing a theory.... (Moustakas, 1994, p. 4)
The emergence of *pertinent* explanatory theory is highly dependent upon the resistance of presumption. Therefore, in order to avoid presumption about the research problem, the interview process should commence with temporary suspension of the action problem. Simmons and Gregory (2003) give counsel:

> You do not begin the study by "working" the action problem…. The action problem [may be] a property of the discovered core variable, not the core variable itself…. (Simmons & Gregory, 2003, pp. 26 & 29)

An inductive approach to data - wherein data is prioritised, and presumption is avoided - serves to facilitate the emergence of valid explanatory theory.

A key premise of proponents of grounded theory as methodology is that action that is not 'grounded' is destined to fail. Therefore, subsequent to the construction of explanatory theory, the construction of operational theory is triggered (grounded action). Both grounded theory and grounded action are systematically and directly generated from data that is fractured and restructured. However, whilst grounded theory makes use of consensus to approximate *what is going on* in action scenes (the problem/s), grounded action gets at *what is to be done* (the relevant solution/s) in response to identified problem/s. Simmons and Gregory (2003) differentiate grounded theory (explanatory theory) and grounded action (operational theory):

> Grounded action is the application and extension of grounded theory for the purpose of designing and implementing practical actions [that] address organisational and social problems and issues…. The explanatory theory is the core variable for grounded theory…. The operational theory is systematically generated from and grounded in the explanatory grounded theory…. (pp.1 & 11)

The need for researchers to avoid presumptions about the identity of the research problem/s is rendered crucial in view of the nature of the relationship between explanatory and operational theory. According to Simmons and Gregory (2003), relevant, sustainable, optimal action can only be derived from comprehensive consideration of the 'real' action problem/s as understood and articulated by participants:

> Analysis for generating an operational theory consists of constantly comparing all major components of the explanatory theory to all relevant properties and dimensions of the action problem, looking for indicators in the explanatory theory as to possibilities for optimal and sustainable actions toward mitigating the action problem…. (pp. 32-33)
Together, through meticulous reliance on group data/narratives, grounded theory and grounded action facilitate the construction of both valid theory and relevant practical knowledge. At the end of the day, these methodologies are concerned with providing real people in real settings with input that is both appropriate and helpful. Glaser (1992) attests to the intrinsic rigour of grounded theory:

There is a continuing search for evidence that can disconfirm the emerging theory. It is driven by the data in such a way that the final shape of the theory is likely to provide a good ‘fit’ to the situation.... (Cited in Hawker & Kerr, 2007, p. 96)

McLeod (2002) concurs:

The recursive process of testing categories rigorously within the data [constitutes] a robust method for the generation of practical knowledge that is particularly well suited to making a contribution to the efficient and humane functioning of modern bureaucratic systems. (pp. 87 & 89)

Ultimately, the methodological strength and appeal of both grounded theory and grounded action emanate from their systematic facilitation of theories (explanations) and operations (actions) that apply to particular situations. Moreover, regard for the voices of individuals who are embedded in, and affected by, these situations constitutes the principled core of emergent theories and actions that ‘fit’.

3.2.2 The Philosophical Tenets of Grounded Theory/Action

The philosophical tenets of symbolic interactionism are implicated in both grounded theory and grounded action, and the veracity of these tenets is maintained by the constructivist approach to the research process. Symbolic interactionism maintains that people act toward things based on the meaning that those things have for them, and these meanings are derived from social interaction and modified through interpretation. Significance, therefore, is attached to the subjective, experiential ‘lifeworld’ of human beings wherein perceptions and interpretations of both ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ are bound to attributions of meaning (Burns, 1998). As social beings, constructivists acknowledge that they cannot be extricated from this paradigm.
As noted above, particular perceptions of reality and truth pervade the raison d'être of the inductive approach. These perceptions maintain: that reality is socially constructed (negotiated between people); that shared meaning is socially influential; that truth is derived from consensus; and, that reality is constantly evolving (Payne, 2007; Richards & Morse, 2013). It follows, therefore, that, in order to expose social processes, grounded theorists must pose questions that are designed to elicit individuals’ perspectives of a shared ‘reality’:

Grounded theorists feel able to draw conclusions about the state of mind of individuals on the basis of their talk.... Descriptions are taken to represent a ‘real’ account of experiences and are seen as indicative of feelings at the time of the experience.... (Payne, 2007, p. 75)

However, since the creation of grounded theory methodology, two somewhat different approaches/positions have evolved - namely, constructivist and objectivist. Within the research process, constructivists admit to intervention (a constructed reality - one of many that may be experienced by an individual in different groups - is represented) whereas objectivists deny intervention (an extant reality is recorded). Charmaz (2003) elaborates:

The constructivist approach sees both data and analysis as created from the shared experiences of researcher and participants.... Objectivists [assume] an external reality awaiting discovery and an unbiased observer who records facts about it.... (p. 313)

Objectivists’ denial of intervention is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it contradicts a fundamental tenet of grounded theory methodology - that reality is both socially constructed and socially negotiated. Secondly, it dismisses the notion of procedural agency - that grounded theorists harvest, reposition, and impose a line of reasoning upon collected data. Ultimately, objectivists appear to be intimidated by the positivist paradigm which (1) positions data as a means to “test the truth value of theoretical propositions” (Seale, 1999, p. 91), and (2) attempts to deny the mediation of veiled, privileged perspectives. Liberated from positivist intimidation by the pivotal tenet that reality is socially constructed and negotiated, constructivists are free to naturalise the inescapability of their contributions to constructions, and free to acknowledge that their interpretation of the studied phenomenon is, in
itself, a construction. Therefore, the principal issue remaining for both constructivists and objectivists, in terms of researcher intervention, is the degree of researcher integrity and frankness in relation to data selectivity, data rearrangement, and data reckoning.

Ultimately, my research purpose, method, and methodologies are commensurate. As stated, the purpose of my research is to identify classroom teachers’ systemic disciplinary/social support needs relevant to fdsc behaviours. Open-ended, semi-structured interviewing allowed me to elicit teachers’ and executives’ perspectives of both disciplinary practices and disciplinary needs. Grounded theory and grounded action are methodologies that underscore respect for individuals’ perspectives of organisational/social processes - in particular, the perspectives of individuals who are directly implicated in, and directly affected by, these processes. I was influenced and guided by the representation of truth (consensus) that emerged from teachers’ and executives’ constructions, and I was manifestly responsible for the depiction of reality that I constructed from their data. This depiction, however, is circumscribed by the robust authority of multiple subjective voices. As a secondary English teacher, I am captivated by storying as a means of achieving a deeper understanding of life. Indeed, the combination of a paradigmatic (categories) approach with a narrative (voices) approach not only serves to value storying but represents “a powerful rhetorical strategy” (McLeod, 2002, p. 81).

In summary, grounded theory and grounded action methodologies have served me well in terms of achieving my aims in this study. Indeed, the philosophical tenets of grounded theory/action constitute the raison d’être of the inductive approach to qualitative data. Adoption of the constructivist approach aligns with my philosophical position, as well as my acknowledgement of the inescapability of the researcher’s overarching narrative control of collected data. Ultimately, my use of a systematic inductive approach to the analysis of interview data served to facilitate the generation of theory with explanatory power and operational relevance. The account produced in the chapters that follow has served to disclose the
shared experiences and desires of concerned, forthright participants. Faucheux (1999) insists that “we have to become responsible for ourselves … therefore we have to participate actively in the debates about what we should be doing” (p. 42). Consequently, in order to make a contribution to the efficient and humane functioning of the profession in which I am both embedded and affected, it was necessary for me to get involved, value subjective voices, and commit to a faithful representation of these voices.

3.3 PARTICIPANTS: ACCESS, RECRUITMENT, AND SAMPLING

In order to conduct research on classroom teachers’ disciplinary support needs, I needed to locate a relevant secondary school and gain access to the perspectives and lives of both the classroom teachers and executives therein. The site I investigated is a government secondary school in a regional city of New South Wales. My pseudonym for this school is Huckville.

3.3.1 The Investigated Site: Description, Access, and Recruitment

According to data obtained from a government website (My School), statistics relevant to Huckville (a rural, NSW government secondary school) reveal a generally unremarkable school with downward trends in student enrolment, student attendance, and student educational advantage during the years in which I collected interview data (2010-2011), and for the two years subsequent to data collection (2012-2013). My interest in Huckville arose from testimony connected with an earlier, unpublished, small-scale qualitative investigation (Master’s coursework) in which I compared and contrasted teacher stressors amongst a handful of teachers from both private and public secondary schools.

In 2010, the year in which I commenced staff interviews, Huckville had 873 students and employed 65 teaching staff (classroom teachers and executives). Numbers gradually dropped to 841 students in 2013, then rose again to 898 students in 2016. In 2010, 5% of the student population
identified as Aboriginal students, and 4% of the student population came from a language background other than English. In 2016, 8% of students identified as Aboriginal, and 6% came from a language background other than English. In 2008, two years before the commencement of staff interviews, the student attendance rate was fixed at 93%. By 2013, the student attendance rate had gradually dropped to 85%. Attendance rates are not recorded on the website beyond 2013.

The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA), a scale of socio-educational advantage computed by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, 2015), indicates that Huckville’s value of 1033 in both 2008 and 2009 approximated the median value of 1000 for all schools. This value (1033) gradually dropped to a value of 984 in 2012, and gradually climbed to a value of 988 in 2016. In view of the typical range of these values, the ICSEA values recorded for Huckville from 2009 to 2016 may be considered relatively stable. However, the downward trend in student enrolment, student attendance, and student socio-educational advantage coincides with the two years of interview data collection (2010-2011) and the two years subsequent to this (2012-2013). During 2010-2011, the overwhelming bulk of interviewees - both classroom teachers and executives - reported considerable concern and/or stress in relation to systemically unchecked fdsc behaviours. In 2012 and 2013, according to available data, the lowest student enrolment figures, the lowest student attendance rates, and the lowest ICSEA values are indicated. At the very least, this coincidence of staff concern/stress relevant to fdsc behaviours with the downward trend in student enrolment, attendance, and student educational advantage should be noted.

The recruitment process involved the targeting of potential participants whose experiences could reveal rich detail about the phenomenon under investigation (Adams & Schvaneveldt, 1991; Bourne, 2009; Robson, 2002). As a teacher in the NSW public school system, my access to the school as a research site required special permission from the NSW Department of Education and Training, and the Principal of the chosen school site
I required explicit permission from the Principal to recruit participants (classroom teachers, head teachers, and senior executives) and access pertinent documents (for example, student behaviour notifications and disciplinary policies). Be it known that there are participants within my study with whom I have had personal and/or professional interactions prior to my investigation. In August, 2010, I delivered a power-point presentation about my intended research to staff during a general staff meeting. I provided overviews of: the purpose of my research project; the acceptance and interview process; the different sets of initiating questions for classroom teachers and executives; and, the ethical protocols put in place to protect participants’ anonymity, confidentiality, and ongoing consent.

3.3.2 Selection of Participants: Purposive Sampling

As the objective of my investigation involved an assessment of whole-school disciplinary responses to fdsc behaviours, I needed to purposefully target subjects whose experiences would inform this objective. Within the NSW secondary school context, student disciplinary protocols are embedded in a chain of command - that is, classroom teachers bring disciplinary matters to the attention of school executives. Therefore, obtaining a comprehensive picture of whole-school disciplinary practice required input from two sets of participants - classroom teachers and executives (head teachers and senior executives). Essentially, all teaching staff constituted potential research participants. However, whilst both sets of participants constituted purposive sampling, the executive group also satisfied the requirements of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling involves the inclusion of individuals whose roles, perspectives and/or experiences may differ, yet such individuals are fully implicated in the same social arena as the group/s selected for purposive sampling. Theoretical sampling serves to substantiate both findings and theory. Payne (2007) explains:

Samples are selected purposively because it is believed that they can contribute to the topic under investigation…. As the research question becomes refined, the sampling strategy may be modified to include others who may contribute different perspectives or experiences…. (p.74)
Minimisation of disturbance to both school schedules and staff personal time was a strict condition imposed on my access to the Huckville site. Consequently, I was limited to ‘one-off’ interviews (that is, there was no ‘going back’ to participants). I commenced my research with the classroom teacher interviews (purposive sampling) then, after a period of time, extended the data collection with executive interviews (purposive and theoretical sampling). I deliberately sought to elicit data from both subordinates and supervisors (status variation) in order to obtain a comprehensive picture of organisational disciplinary/social processes relevant to management of fdsc behaviours.

Classroom teachers constituted the critical reference group (CRG) within my investigation - they comprised “the particular stakeholder group whose experience and knowledge is unknown or perhaps subjugated” (Genat, 2009, pp.105-106). First and foremost, it was their experience and their interpretation of particular phenomena (the nature and impact of fdsc behaviours, endorsed systemic disciplinary/social supports, and desired systemic disciplinary/social supports) that I sought to learn more about.

3.3.3 Issuing Invitations & Scheduling Interviews

It took just over one month to schedule appointments and complete classroom teacher interviews. Selection of participants began when I made use of staff pigeonholes to issue staggered invitations, responses to which were returned to an assigned pigeonhole (Appendix 2). At no time did I personally approach staff members in order to secure their participation. In view of the larger size of the classroom teacher population in relation to the executive population, I issued batches of invitations to classroom teachers at weekly intervals (9-12 invitations), ensuring that each batch targeted different faculties, and conformed to the site’s gender ratio (2/3 female and 1/3 male). I employed this strategy in an intuitive attempt to avoid a gender imbalance, and to avoid pursuing an entire faculty at an inopportune time.
Upon the return of invitations indicating initial consent to participate, I personally approached prospective (consenting) participants in order to schedule an interview. At the commencement of each interview, participants were verbally informed that (1) their participation was voluntary, (2) they could withdraw their participation at any time, and (3) their objections/corrections were welcome. Participants were also informed that audio-taping was optional - notes would be taken if they objected to being audio-taped. None did, and I sensed that the provision of initiating interview questions within invitations, to alert participants to the substance and scope of the interview, both prepared and took the pressure off willing participants. Participants had time to gather their thoughts before the interviews and, based on their subsequent input, appeared appreciative of the opportunity to speak about their work world.

3.3.4 Sample Characteristics

In order to highlight bias and representativeness within a sample, it is important to record sample characteristics as they grow. According to Hawker and Kerr (2007), the purpose of recording sample characteristics is “to delve into the breadth of experiences around the phenomenon being investigated” (p. 90). In 2010, the eventual classroom teacher sample consisted of 40% of the classroom teachers employed at Huckville - 21 teachers, 16 females and 5 males. This sample reflects the gender proportions evident within the school and in the teaching profession generally (2/3 female and 1/3 male). Within this sample, the average age of classroom teachers is 42 years old (range = 23-56 years old), and the average number of years of teaching experience is 16 years (range = 1-34 years of teaching experience). The teachers within this sample range from early to mid to late career, and the majority of faculties (7 faculties) are represented. Pseudonyms mask teachers’ identities. In 2011, the executive sample consisted of 60% of the executives working in the school - 7/12 executives, 3 females and 4 males. This executive sample reflects the gender proportions evident within the school (5/12 females and 7/12 males) and is indicative of the lower proportion of females in management roles in the teaching
profession generally. Within this sample, the average age of executives is 46 years (range = 32-56 years), and the average number of years of teaching experience is 20 years (range = 7-33 years of teaching experience). The executives within this sample range from early to mid to late career, and the majority of faculties (5 faculties) are represented. Both middle management (head teachers) and the senior executive are represented.

Ultimately, both homogeneity and heterogeneity are evident in my sampling, and all participants proffered rich data/narratives which served to facilitate emerging constructs. Bong (2002) asserts that “homogeneous and heterogeneous samplings provide a richer base for the development of categories towards theory building or thematic links of categories” (p. 19). In terms of homogeneity, the shared criterion among the 28 interviewees is their experience as managers of a given set of students within the same secondary school site. Each of these interviewees is called upon daily to negotiate with students in terms of students’ behavioural choices. This is counterbalanced by the heterogeneity of the sample - with variation evident in terms of gender, age, years spent teaching, faculty, and positions within the school hierarchy (21/40 classroom teachers, 5/9 head teachers, and 2/3 senior executives). Whilst satisfying the demands of homogeneity and heterogeneity, I found that the high level of corroboration between teachers (the core reference group) and executives (the theoretical sample) served to substantiate the trustworthiness of the data. None who committed to participate withdrew and, in the end, twenty-eight participants (40% of classroom teachers and 60% of executives) shared their experiences of a working life in which enduring management of fdsc behaviours is implicated.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION: INTERVIEWING

Interviews are a most appropriate method of collecting data for grounded theory analysis. ‘Talk’, according to grounded theorists (constructivists), is the conduit through which individuals construct their versions of both ‘truth’ and ‘reality’:

Talk is seen as representing the contents of people’s minds and providing direct access to thoughts and emotions. Descriptions are taken to represent a ‘real’
account of experiences ... although it is clear that the interview presents a retrospective account of experiences. (Payne, 2007, p. 75)

My use of open-ended, semi-structured interviewing particularly complemented the process of emergent theory as it facilitated an in-depth exploration of an aspect of life about which interviewees have substantial experience and considerable insight (Creswell, 2003). Carefully-designed initiating questions (the semi-structured element) allowed me to explore and obtain pertinent substance whilst open-ended questioning allowed participants’ ideas, issues, and solutions to emerge. Ultimately, open-ended, semi-structured interviewing permitted the unfolding of an illuminating, communal story from which, I argue, valuable lessons may be learned and applied:

This unfolding story arises as interviewer and participants together explore the topic and imprint a human face upon it. It may tumble out when participants hold views on their experience but are not granted voices to express those views or audiences to hear them.... Grounded theory interviews are used to tell a collective story that has explanatory and predictive power. (Charmaz, 2003, pp. 326-327)

As interviewer and classroom teacher, my understanding and acknowledgement of (1) topical control, (2) the functions of questioning, (3) different social spaces, (4) shared identity, and (5) the value of objection served as essential preparation for the elicitation of an illuminating, communal story.

3.4.1 Preparation for Data Collection: Topical Control, Social Spaces, Social Identity, and Objections

In the world at large, speakers in interaction are “orientating towards the questions, concerns, assumptions, interpretations and judgements of others in producing their talk” (Firth & Kitzinger, 1998, p. 317); therefore, neutrality and interactivity constitute an unsustainable binary (Watson, 2006). Within the social space of a semi-structured, open-ended interview, the interviewer has overarching topical control. Initiating questions contain directives to produce an answer on a particular topic, intermediate (probing) questions contain directives to produce more information about a particular topic, and even concluding questions (which ostensibly serve to empower the interviewee) are limited to the particular topic at hand (Rapley, 2001).
Beyond acknowledgement of topical control, the onus is on the interviewer to construct interview questions that indicate an awareness of the implications arising from social differences and social similarities between different sets of stakeholders, and between interviewer and interviewees. In view of such awareness, questions that facilitate the ease with which interviewees may object - regardless of their stake - serve to elicit responses that better approximate interviewees’ ‘truth’ and ‘reality’. Ultimately, the questions posed are required to encompass the scope of the research topic (initiating questions), prevent sequential gaps in the collection of data (intermediate questions), and elicit participants’ solutions to the problems that they, themselves, encounter (concluding questions).

As interviewer, I had overarching topical control of the interview process - I directed talk in accordance with my knowledge of the different functions of questioning. The two sets of stakeholders - namely, teachers and executives - insinuated the need for different yet complementary initiating questions. As an educator interviewing educators, I was duty bound to make use of probing questions that indicated resistance to the temptation to ‘fill in gaps’. Whilst initiating and probing questions facilitated my understanding of the ways in which the occupants of different social spaces (supervisors and subordinates) labelled phenomena, my concluding question needed to provide closure for, and empowerment of, all participants. Specifically, both teachers and executives were given the opportunity to confirm and/or propose supportive organisational disciplinary/social strategies relevant to the management of fdsc behaviours.

My preparation for interviews involved careful consideration of the different social spaces in which the two sets of interviewees are positioned. Genat (2009) asserts that it is absolutely essential to recognise the relative social spaces occupied by different groups of stakeholders within a given social arena as “each of these groups has an interest, or ‘stake’, in how particular phenomena are labelled, known about, represented, and understood within and beyond the immediate social arena” (p. 104). This ‘heightened sensitivity to the participants doing the labelling of phenomena’
both prompted and substantiated my decision to construct distinct yet complementary initiating questions for the two sets of interviewees (see Appendices 1-3).

‘Shared identity’ rendered preparation for probing (intermediate questioning) a vital feature of my research - the bulk of my interviewees and I identify as secondary classroom teachers. Presumptions of shared identity, which take for granted both shared knowledge and shared understanding, tend to moderate (stifle) explanations (Gunasekara, 2007). Hence, to counter the moderating influence of shared identity, my commitment to familiarisation with typical open-ended, probing (intermediate) questions prior to interviews, and my conscious resistance of the temptation to ‘fill the gaps’ during interviews, were essential aspects of both interview preparation and interview conduct. This conundrum of ‘naïve versus informed’ research practice, relieved by researcher self-consciousness, was further alleviated by McLeod’s (2002) differentiation of professional ‘insiders’ and professional ‘outsiders’ on the basis of conceptual experience:

The use of grounded theory by professionals studying their own profession ... is possibly quite different from the experience of sociologists such as Glaser and Strauss, who would typically find themselves studying people and situations for which they had no specialist or insider professional or theoretical concept system. (p. 80)

In addition, a researcher/interviewer is in a position to learn more about interviewees if the latter are explicitly reassured of their freedom to object, and objections are dealt with in an appreciative manner. Interviewer attentiveness to interviewee objection (or hesitation) can allow for a fruitful, perhaps more honest, exploration of the subject at hand - moreover, the validity of an interviewer's interpretations is at stake if objections are not dealt with (Tanggaard, 2008). Before every interview I conducted, participants were explicitly encouraged to object and correct. During interviews, I used the lexical formulation ‘Let me check my understanding - did you just say that (my interpretive summary)?’ This formulation positioned interviewee objection as a positive prerequisite to my understanding, thus facilitating the ease with which interviewees could either object to, or supplement, my understanding.
Ultimately, as professional insider and interviewer, my overarching control of the interview process dictated the need for considerable care in both the construction and use of questions that would elicit relevant, comprehensive, and clear detail. As dialogue produced the data upon which my research relied, it was crucial that I sought to “understand (verstehen) the other participants as well as possible” (Van Beinum, 1999, p. 14). Armed with knowledge of the functions of questioning, and armed with knowledge of the implications of both relative social spaces and shared identity, I was able to elicit what Ladwig (1994) calls ‘socially recognizable’ evidence of the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, my provision of substantial ‘socially recognizable’ evidence served to moderate what is perceived as the possible limitations of the case study method.

3.4.2 Three Areas of Inquiry for Data Collection: Positioning the Research Topic, Existing Organisational Practice, and Confirmed/ Desired Organisational Practice

In order to facilitate the emergence of staff data/narratives that would permit a rigorous assessment of the central propositions within my research question/s (the nature and impact of fdsc behaviours, existing organisational disciplinary/social practices, and endorsed and/or desired organisational disciplinary/social practices), three broad areas of inquiry were developed:

- Identification of teachers’ ‘greatest stressors’, and identification of executives’ perceptions of student misbehaviours of ‘most concern’ (indirect positioning of the research topic within the investigated site);

- Assessment of the appropriateness/adequacy of existing organisational disciplinary practices according to both teachers and executives (relevant to fdsc behaviours); and,

- Identification of confirmed and/or desired organisational disciplinary practices according to both teachers and executives (relevant to fdsc behaviours).

These three areas of inquiry dictated the formulation of subsidiary research questions (SRQ’s) and, in turn, two sets of interview questions (one set for teachers and the other set for executives). Table 3.1, which follows, sets out the areas of inquiry, the emergent subsidiary research questions, and the two sets of emergent interview questions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Inquiry</th>
<th>Subsidiary Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions (Teachers)</th>
<th>Interview Questions (Executives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ ‘greatest stressors’ &amp; executives’ ‘greatest concern’ (relevant to student misbehaviour)</td>
<td>SRQ.1. Without prompting, do classroom teachers identify fdsc behaviours and/or organisational disciplinary (social) practice relevant to fdsc behaviours as their ‘greatest stressor/s’?</td>
<td>Q.1: In this school, what are your greatest stressors as a classroom teacher?</td>
<td>Q.1: What student misbehaviours exhibited in this school most concern you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SRQ.2. To what extent do classroom teachers’ ‘greatest stressors’ overlap with executives’ perceptions of the student misbehaviours causing ‘most concern’?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of existing organisational disciplinary (social) practices</td>
<td>SRQ.3. Are classroom teachers receiving appropriate/adequate organisational disciplinary (social) support relevant to fdsc behaviours?</td>
<td>Q.2: What do you view as the most frequent, disruptive student classroom behaviours?</td>
<td>Q.2: What is your perception of classroom teachers’ responsibilities relevant to student classroom behaviour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Q.3: For what fdsc behaviours have you actively sought executive assistance?</td>
<td>Q.3: In general, for what student behaviours has your assistance been actively sought by classroom teachers?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Q.4: What is your assessment of executive support relevant to fdsc behaviours?</td>
<td>Q.4: In practice, what difficulties/problems arise when classroom teachers seek your assistance relevant to student classroom misbehaviour?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of endorsed and/or desired organisational disciplinary (social) practices</td>
<td>SRQ.4. What organisational disciplinary (social) supports relevant to management of fdsc behaviours are endorsed and/or desired by participants?</td>
<td>Q.5: What school-wide strategies/changes do you confirm/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of fdsc behaviours?</td>
<td>Q.5: What school-wide strategies/changes do you endorse/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of student behaviours?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first area of inquiry - deliberately broad in order to avoid directing and/or limiting participants' concerns - served as a means by which participants could unwittingly position the relative import of my research topic (supportive organisational disciplinary/social practices relevant to fdsc behaviours) within their workplace. Classroom teachers were asked to identify their greatest stressors, and executives were asked to identify the student misbehaviours that most concerned them. The second area involved an explicit focus on the perceived appropriateness and/or adequacy of the existing organisational disciplinary/social support provided for teachers relevant to fdsc behaviours - perceptions of roles were particularly implicated in this area. The final area sought participants' confirmation of and/or recommendations for supportive organisational disciplinary/social practices relevant to management of fdsc behaviours. This opportunity facilitated closure for, and empowerment of, all participants. Hart et al. (1993) assert that goal congruence is most likely to be achieved by developing school policies through the joint efforts of teachers and executives. Hence, the final question, posed to all, sought to provide a sound basis for (grounded) action.

3.5 ANALYSIS OF GROUNDED THEORY DATA

My analysis of grounded theory data was achieved through the use of components that are considered common to grounded theory analysis. These include: the pursuit of emergent themes; identification of social processes; and inductive construction of abstract categories that explain and synthesise social processes. This involves sampling (to test and refine categories), and, finally, the integration of categories into a theoretical framework specifying the causes, conditions, and consequences of the social processes explored (Charmaz, 2003). In order to facilitate the emergence of theory from data, transcription and analysis took place immediately after the conduct of each interview. Throughout the process of analysis, constant comparison facilitated my identification of themes. Memo writing guided me in terms of 'staying on track' in relation to mounting data. Open coding involved the deconstruction of data within transcripts into meaningful units of text (creating categories). Subsequent to data saturation from the critical
reference group (classroom teachers), selective coding involved the reassembly of similar concepts across multiple interviews (building categories).

Theoretical sampling (executives’ data) facilitated extension, testing, and refinement of the categories that had been constructed from the classroom teachers’ data. Axial coding permitted refinement of major categories in relation to each other. In the final stage of analysis, my identification of two core categories with major explanatory power facilitated the development of explanatory theory and, in turn, operational theory (grounded action). Thereafter, both explanatory theory and operational theory were validated against segments of text, and links were made to existing theory. Although I present the procedures I used as a series of simplified stages, it is important to understand that grounded theory analysis is an iterative and recursive process. That is, “while each stage informs the next stage, all stages are revisited as the research project progresses” (Hawker & Kerr, 2007, p. 88).

3.5.1 Transcription: The Spoken and Written Word

Transcription - the transformation of spoken language into written text - is the first stage in the interpretive process. Prior to undertaking any type of qualitative analysis, ‘raw’ spoken data need to be transformed into a textual format. This typically involves the transcription of audio recordings into written text. In grounded theory analysis, it is usual to transcribe both the speech of the researcher and the participant but not usual or necessary to transcribe prosodic, paralinguistic or extra-linguistic elements (Payne, 2007). Within my research, all interviews were personally conducted and audio-taped. Thereafter, I transcribed the audio recordings verbatim. An arduous but worthwhile task, each audio recording took approximately an average of seven hours to transcribe. I sat at my desk in front of my laptop with a small cassette player, speech recognition software (Dragon Naturally Speaking Version 11), and headphones. I started, stopped and rewound recordings. I listened carefully and typed. My acquaintance with the raw data was assisted
by constant exposure to each participant’s spoken discourse (*in situ* and on tape). Before poring over written transcripts innumerable times, Payne (2007) suggests that it is very important to *hear* the conversations between interviewer and interviewee in order to take note of exceptional elements of spoken language and extra-linguistic features that may be either muted or lost in translation. Within my data, there were instances where interviewees used an ironical tone, faltered in their speech, began to cry, and accompanied their testimony with telling physical gestures. These elements and features were duly noted within the transcripts for the sake of greater accuracy in researcher interpretation.

Management of large volumes of textual data requires consistent and reliable systems (Payne, 2007). Transcripts of entire interviews have been maintained in one Microsoft Word document. A second copy of full transcripts was used for editing (coding). Thereafter, I constructed a table that captured interviewees’ responses (intelligible ‘units of meaning’) to interview questions. Reading across this table, I was able to take in the refined commentary of a particular interviewee in relation to all interview questions. Reading down this table, I was able to take in the refined commentary of all interviewees in relation to one particular interview question. This tabulation was used as a reminder of the context (question-response), but not used to constrain meaning. At the touch of a button, access to the full transcript facilitated my ability to check meaning within the full context of a particular interviewee’s dialogue.

### 3.5.2 Constant Comparison, Memos, and Reflexivity

Constant comparison, maintenance of intelligible ‘units of meaning’, memo writing, and reflexivity were all employed as a means of ensuring the integrity of my grounded theory analysis. As grounded theorists are “co-producers of the data” (Payne, 2007, p. 85), an acknowledgement readily made by constructivists, these procedures facilitated a sense of self-awareness in relation to both my cognitive processes and my narrative role.

Constant comparison involved ongoing identification of matching and competing units of meaning (codes) within and across succeeding texts - it
was the key to emergent theory. As succeeding texts revealed ‘the known’, ‘the contradictory’, and ‘the new’, my use of constant comparison lead to both changes in, and eventual consolidation of, coding (and categories). Coding, therefore, constituted a reiterative rather than a linear process:

The use of constant comparison ... means that coding may need to be revised and categories relabelled, merged or split to take account of new insights.... This is characterised ... as a ‘flip-flop’ between data and conceptualisation. (Payne. p. 80)

This ‘flip-flop’ between data and conceptualisation was part and parcel of the process of ensuring that theory was driven by data. In order to achieve ‘goodness of fit’ - that is, “theory [that] accords with the data that generated it” - I was required to respond to the indispensable demands of both new and moderating data (Hawker & Kerr, 2007, pp. 93-94).

The integrity of coding is best upheld through maintenance of intelligible ‘units of meaning’, use of memos, and methodological conscientiousness (reflexivity). Fidelity to participant meaning requires the inclusion of sufficient text segments, and intimate knowledge of one's data. Within my own research, decontextualized segments of text were, at the very least, full sentences. Use of full sentences ensured the inclusion of at least one meaningful proposition per segment of text:

Coding with reflexivity is essential.... Segmenting one's data can unwittingly lead to "losing the phenomena" when de-contextualised units of meaning are unintelligible. (Bong, 2002, pp. 31 & 34)

Constant use of memos facilitated my conscientious interaction with data. Memos - a note to oneself about an idea or observation - support faithfulness to data-at-hand, and function as an ‘audit trail’ for tracking thought processes (Payne, 2007). As Charmaz (2003, pp. 322-323) notes:

Memos join data with researchers’ original interpretations of those data and help researchers to avoid forcing data into extant theories.... Through memo writing, the researcher ... avoids becoming overwhelmed by stacks of undigested data.

My use of memos began with the first transcript entered on my laptop, and continued with each successive transcript thereafter. Herein, memos were italicised in order to separate them from transcribed interview data. With each successive transcript, a web of links to prior memos instigated the construction of analytic commentary that evolved in tandem with the data on
hand. Originals of each transcript were regularly referred to in order to check both the integrity and trajectory of my interpretations. A methodology based in constant comparison, and accompanied by memos, facilitated the reflexivity required to produce “theory derived from, and grounded in, the data” (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 64).

3.5.3 Open Coding, Saturation, and Selective Coding

Technically, grounded theory analysis begins with coding which is a form of data itemisation intended to distil meaning. The aim of initial coding is “to capture the detail, variation and complexity of the source data” (Payne, 2007, p. 79). This ‘systematic noticing’ facilitates movement from data description towards data conceptualisation. In turn, data conceptualisation facilitates the exposure of processes that affect individuals or specific groups. In order to ensure that themes remain emergent within a grounded theory study, transcription and analysis should take place immediately after each interview (concurrent activities). Having emerged in an era of scientism, grounded theory coding is renowned as a three-step process involving open (initial) coding, selective (focused) coding, and axial (relationships) coding. Whilst I wholeheartedly concur with the notion that constant comparison is the key to emerging theory, within the conduct of my own research, the inherent meanings of the different technical terms facilitated my sense of making progress. For me, open coding involved initial coding to the point of saturation, and selective coding involved the refinement of open coding (reassemble of similar codes).

Open coding involves the creation of ‘puzzle pieces’ (conceptual boundaries). According to Charmaz (2003), the process of open coding begins when the researcher asks, “What is this about?” Thereafter, in a process akin to free association, meaningful units of text (words, phrases or sentences) are identified and labelled. The resulting labels are referred to as categories. The actual codes used, whether they be objective (e.g., “years of teaching experience”), abstract (e.g., “classroom as battlefield”) or in vivo (e.g., “no consequences”), are a matter of preference. However, in order to facilitate consistency across transcripts, it is essential to record the meaning
of the codes (Hawker & Kerr, 2007). With the analysis of each new transcript, acknowledged categories and new-found categories emerge:

As more data are accumulated, further instances of the same and new meaningful units are coded in each transcript. This results in numerous categories and subcategories. (Payne, 2007, pp. 79-80)

Open coding and data collection can cease when saturation occurs. According to Payne (2007), this is achieved when “certain categories occur frequently in the data and coding of new data yields fewer and eventually no new examples” (p. 79). I found that saturation of the critical reference group (21 classroom teachers) occurred well before all participants were interviewed. However, as I was only permitted to interview each participant once (‘one-shot’ interviews), I welcomed the opportunity to interview as many classroom teachers as possible, and deemed it inappropriate to exclude any teacher who had accepted an invitation to participate. Once categories were saturated, reconstruction of the puzzle pieces could commence.

Selective coding, which follows open coding, involves reassembly of similar concepts across multiple interviews - “the open codes that are generated around an issue are collapsed into groups containing codes with similar qualities” (Hawker & Kerr, 2007, p. 93). The effect of reducing the possible universe of meanings makes the large number of codes more manageable (Marvasti, 2004). The aim of selective coding is “to construct concise and meaningful definitions of the properties and dimensions of each category” (Payne, 2007, p. 80). Over time, progression from a broad categorisation of the data (open coding) to more abstract codes (selective coding) aims to capture social meaning. Both time and patience are required during this sorting and synthesis process. Glaser (1978) provides counsel:

Generating grounded theory takes time.... Significant theoretical realisations come with growth and maturity in the data, and much of this is outside of the analyst's awareness until it happens.... It is therefore vital that the analyst learn to take the quality and kind of time it takes to do the discovery process.... (Cited in McLeod, 2002, p. 85)

Through constant comparison, data derived from my critical reference group (21 classroom teachers) underwent both identification and a phase of refinement prior to theoretical sampling (executives). Axial coding (relationships between categories) followed theoretical sampling.
3.5.4 Theoretical Sampling and Axial Coding

My executive sample - my theoretical sample - more than sufficed to test, confirm, and extend the categories that emerged from classroom teacher data. Executive staff members are implicated in the chain of disciplinary procedures in all school settings - they are the ones to whom teachers turn for direction, assistance, and backing when it comes to student disciplinary matters. Satisfying the need for data diversity within a given social arena (Seale, 1999), the executive sample constituted an appropriate theoretical sample:

Participants are now selected according to their ability to shed further light on our research problem and see how useful our developing theory is for explaining the similarities and differences in these additional accounts. (Hawker & Kerr, p. 96)

As with the classroom teacher sample, my analysis of the executive sample included open and selective coding (constant comparison) as a means to develop categories. Saturation was also achieved for the sample of executives interviewed. Agreement within and between both of my samples - that is, the critical reference group (classroom teachers) and the theoretical sample (executives) - dominated.

Axial coding refers to thinking about major categories in relation to each other - it involves “examination of each category to discover linkages, relationships, redundancy, and new patterns” (Payne, 2007, p. 80). This refinement through comparison of data from two different sets of stakeholders facilitated the transformation of my descriptive account into a theory building enterprise (Payne, 2007).

3.5.5 Theoretical Integration (Explanatory and Operational Theory)

In the final stage of my analysis, further refinement of codes and categories revealed two core categories with major explanatory power. These two categories became “the thread or the storyline of the research” (Hawker & Kerr, p. 95). In accordance with the evidence-based literature cited in Chapter 2, both teacher wellbeing and student learning emerged
from the interview data as having been put at risk due to the twofold adverse impact of (1) the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, and (2) the organisational assignment of onerous teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours. Subsequent to the consolidation of explanatory theory (‘what is going on’), the construction of operational theory began (‘what is to be done’). Herein, participants’ suggestions for action - elicited within the interview process - were reflected upon in relation to emergent explanatory theory. Indeed, in order to be relevant, sustainable, and optimal, action must be derived from comprehensive consideration of the real action problem/s (explanatory theory).

Comprehensive, focused questions constructed by Simmons and Gregory (2003) were used to assist in my analysis of data for the development of operational theory (see Appendix 4). Emphasising both role assignment and achievable action, these questions facilitated an evaluation of the feasibility of desired change (participants’ suggestions) in strict connection with emergent explanatory theory (the real action problem/s):

- What is the real action problem according to the explanatory theory?
- What are the desired outcomes of the real action problem from the perspective of participants?
- What does the explanatory theory inform us about assigning priorities to identified outcomes?
- In order to bring about desired change, what does the explanatory theory indicate about aspects of the action problem that need to be successfully addressed?
- According to the explanatory theory, what needs to be done in order to mitigate particular aspects of the action problem?
- How would roles need to change in order to bring about the desired results?
- What is possible, given the current circumstances?
- What are the likely outcomes of implementing the operational theory?

As Simmons and Gregory (2003) assert, “anything that prevents, breaks, or derails the grounding of explanations in data will diminish the opportunity to devise truly optimal and sustainable change. The organisations may survive, but their goals and purposes remain elusive targets” (pp. 47 & 50). Organisations should do more than just survive - they should thrive.
My choice of a case study means that the limitations of such an approach must be explored and understood. The possible limitations of a case study centre on the particularity and specificity of individual cases, and the difficulty that a single case has to assert the knowledge it produces as valid and generalizable. In this section I discuss the issues of validity and generalizability as related to my use of grounded methodology (outlined above) before briefly explaining the decisions that have shaped the writing up and presentation of the case. Gray (2017) asserts that the issues of validity and reliability are “probably of particular importance for the case study method because of the reliance on data that is generated from either limited or particular samples or situations” (p. 279). I have certainly taken steps to ensure the validity (‘construct’, ‘internal’, and ‘external’) of my case study; however, like Stake (1982) and Ruddin (2006), I believe that the generalizability of my findings is crucially dependent upon the use that others make of them. Case study research explores an issue “through detailed, in-depth data collection of one or more cases within a bounded system (i.e., a setting, a context)” (Creswell, 2007, pp. 73 & 75). A case study is not so much a methodology but “a bid to maximize both relevance and practicality” through (1) the delimitation of context, and (2) the provision of comprehensive description and analysis (O’Leary, 2014, pp. 195 & 198). Gray (2014) advises use of a case study “when a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked”, and believes that “a detailed examination of a small sample” can “prove invaluable [in] increasing conviction about a subject” (pp. 266-267). My research topic is posed as a ‘how’ question: How can organisational disciplinary/social practice best support classroom teachers’ needs in relation to the incidence of inappropriate classroom behaviour among secondary students? I have posed this ‘how’ question in order to assist secondary classroom teachers in relation to their management of fdlc behaviours. My investigation - a case study - is limited to 28 in-depth interviews of school staff (classroom teachers and executives) who work in one site (one public secondary school, one leadership model, and one
community group within a rural setting). In a concerted bid to thwart issues pertaining to both ‘separation’ and ‘independence of findings’, I have made use of methodologies (grounded theory and grounded action) that serve to (1) facilitate the emergence of group phenomena, and (2) suppress the influence of researcher presumption.

Construct validity refers to “the extent to which the study investigates what it claims to investigate” (Gray, 2017, p. 279). According to Gray (2017), problems associated with construct validity can be avoided if the researcher (1) defines concepts, (2) selects appropriate, multiple data sources, and (3) establishes a chain of evidence (p. 279). I defined the parameters of my case study - namely, classroom teachers’ systemic support needs relevant to inappropriate student classroom behaviours. However, in view of my use of grounded theory methodology, I relied upon participant consensus to define both ‘inappropriate student classroom behaviours’ and ‘systemic support needs’ (relevant to these behaviours). As a researcher positioned ‘inside’ one of the two groups of participants (here, classroom teachers), there is always a danger that my interpretations of classroom teachers’ views could be privileged. In view of this danger, both classroom teachers and school executives constituted appropriate data sources for my investigation; multiple interviews were conducted (21 classroom teachers and 7 executives) in order to facilitate and strengthen the emergence of both explanatory and operational theory; relevant documentation and evidence-based literature were sourced, and my report (findings and recommendations) is commensurate with my data (participant commentary).

Measures for enhancing internal validity include clear demonstration, from multiple perspectives, “that variable x leads to outcome y” (Gray, 2017, p. 280). Constant comparison (systematic scrutiny of textual data) enables researchers to probe for cause and effect, which, upon discovery, increases the potential for generalizability (Hawker & Kerr, 2007; Seale, 1999). Within my case study, causal attributions (internal validity) are strengthened by the use of theory (both explanatory and operational) that has emerged from interview data. At the same time, the duplication of case study data as case
study report serves to display (if not fortify) researcher interpretation. Here, the balance of participants’ perspectives is highlighted. Within my investigation, multiple participant voices - indeed, almost all classroom teachers and executives - clearly and articulately demonstrate that two organisational variables (namely, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours) have led to classroom teachers’ need for greater (and particular) systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to the management of fdsc behaviours.

External validity refers to the generalizability of an investigation. Gray (2017) asserts that “one of the most problematic issues faced by the case study approach is whether [or not] its findings can be generalized beyond the study itself” (p. 280). Hence, apart from the need to provide evidence of both construct validity and internal validity, measures for enhancing the external validity of a case study include (1) the provision of evidence of the representativeness of sample characteristics, and (2) the provision of substantiating evidence-based literature. Gray (2017) explains:

The problem faced is that the data collected in the case study may not be representative of the population as a whole (or merely representative of those features that are the focus of the research). Nevertheless, Gomm et al. (2000) advise that researchers can improve the empirical generalizability of a case study by providing evidence about the ‘fit’ of key characteristics between the sample and the population…. Dooley (2002) advises that external validity can be strengthened by relating the findings from one or multiple cases back to the literature…. According to Lieberson (2000), a defensible solution for generalization occurs where one variable is constant across all cases…. (Gray, 2017, pp. 280-281)

In order to enhance the external validity of this case study, I provide in Chapters 3 and 5 evidence of the representativeness of both my sample of classroom teachers and my sample of executives. In addition, Chapter 2 provides discussion and analysis of evidence-based literature from diverse and multiple contexts.

Gray (2017) asserts that “conditions for reliability are met if the findings and conclusions of one researcher can be replicated by another researcher doing the same case study” (p. 281). Essentially, replication is the
ultimate means by which the reliability of a study can be tested, and for qualitative studies the conditions for replication require that the study in question contains conscientiously documented procedures. Replication of my study is facilitated by the provision of, and justifications for, questions posed (both research and interview questions).

As stated earlier, I believe that the generalizability of my findings is crucially dependent upon the use that others make of them. However, in order to facilitate reader judgement, my responsibility extends to the fortification of both construct and internal validity through the use of substantial contextual detail. Ruddin (2006) defends the cumulated wisdom of the case study, and explains the shift from researcher liability to reader judgement as a feasible product of ‘naturalistic generalization’:

The idea of naturalistic generalization ... advocates a realignment of the responsibility to generalize away from the researcher toward the reader.... The researcher's liability is to afford sufficient contextual information to facilitate the reader's judgement.... We could regard such views of generalization as empowering or democratizing. The conclusion that Stake drew is that what is required of case study researchers is not that they provide generalizations but rather, that they illustrate the case they have studied properly.... (Cited in Ruddin, 2006, pp. 797 & 804)

Moreover, phronesis, a form of wisdom relevant to practical things (such as teaching and behaviour management) dictates that context-bound cases (concrete examples of human social behaviour) precede and shape both the production of knowledge and theory. Essentially, ‘universals’ are properly derived from a foundation of contextualised ‘particulars’:

Case studies are possibly the basic method of science.... When Socrates asked about general principles, the responses he received frequently took the form of concrete examples, that is, cases. He cast aspersions on these responses. [Unlike Socrates], Aristotle saw an influential role for cases and context in the understanding of human behaviour: “[Phronesis] is not concerned with universals only,” Aristotle said, “it must also take cognizance of particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 70). (Ruddin, 2006, pp. 800-801)

Within the process of this case study, the writing-up and presentation of my analysis involved: (1) identification of fdsc behaviours (known and new typologies): (2) discussion of the two core categories and their relationship
(the status of, and responsibility for, these behaviours); and, (3) participants’ suggestions for action that would serve to offset the adverse impact of these behaviours. Excerpts of data (participants’ voices) were used to validate these categories, and links were made with existing theory and research literature. Graphical representations of conceptual categories and their relationships were constructed in order to assist reader comprehension (Payne, 2007).

Ultimately, the potential for generalizability of my research (a case study) is strengthened by: my research methodologies (grounded theory and grounded action); my research context (a public high school within a state system of schooling that is overseen by one administration); the representativeness of my samples (both classroom teachers and executives); my exploration of generic variables (fdsc behaviours, and whole-school disciplinary/social practices relevant to these behaviours); my provision of substantiating evidence-based literature; and, last but not least, my use of substantial contextual detail.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It wasn’t until the late 1960’s that professional organisations began to publish guidelines and require that researchers submit their plans to special committees for ethical evaluation:

No longer was the individual researcher’s ‘need to know’ considered adequate justification for any and all research practices. Nor was the argument of ‘benefit to humanity’ sufficient to overrule the rights of individual subjects. (Saslow, 1982, p. 390)

The rights of subjects are paramount, and I have had an ethical responsibility to the participants in my study, and to the school in which they work, both during my investigation and as I have prepared this dissertation text. As a constructivist grounded theorist, I have fully acknowledged that I am implicated in the research process, and that my values lie at the heart of the validation process. As Clifford (1994, p. 104) explains, the author “is accountable for the methods used and the knowledge claimed - they do not
exist at some neutral value-free point outside the framework, but are part of the social action”. The ethical considerations that have had particular application to my research have included: obtaining special permission; obtaining consent (written, informed, and ongoing); providing full disclosure; ensuring freedom from coercion; ensuring anonymity; ensuring confidentiality; and, an overarching duty of care.

3.6.1 Special Permission

My investigation required special permission. As a doctoral student at Charles Sturt University, I was required to submit a research proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee. As my prospective participants are employed within a public secondary school, I also needed to submit a research proposal to the NSW DET State Education Research Approval Process (SERAP). I was also required to seek permission from the principal of the secondary school in which I intended to conduct my investigation. As shown in Appendix 1, my letter to the Principal included information relating to the nature, procedures, methodology, recruitment, subjects, rights, purposes, outcomes, uses, and ethical considerations of my investigation.

3.6.2 Consent & Full Disclosure

The individuals who volunteered to participate in my research project were required to indicate their consent in writing; however, this written consent was only obtained once prospective subjects were given “adequate and accurate information about all features of the research that might be expected to influence their willingness to participate” (Saslow, 1982, p. 390). Beyond providing information at a general staff meeting, prospective subjects received a clear and comprehensive information sheet about the proposed investigation in order to ensure that their consent would be informed consent. Ongoing consent was also obtained, with participants’ right to withdraw from my project at any time and without penalty indicated in writing (see Appendices 2 and 3). A verbal reminder relevant to ongoing consent was given at the commencement of each interview.
Full disclosure by the researcher is a pre-requisite for informed consent. Saslow (1982) warns that “if with full disclosure you are afraid of angering or disillusioning your subjects, then you probably shouldn’t do the research” (p. 392). In order to satisfy the requirements of full disclosure within my investigation, information sheets accompanying consent forms were issued to prospective subjects. As the Appendices show, these indicated: the purpose of my investigation; the open-ended initiating interview questions to be posed; the voluntary nature of participation (non-participation would not affect a subject’s relationship with the school); protection of participant confidentiality; protection of participant anonymity; and, participant freedom to withdraw from my project at any time.

3.6.3 Freedom from Coercion

According to Saslow (1982), subjects should have the freedom to choose not to participate or to withdraw from participation - that is, subjects have a need for freedom from coercion. In order to avoid direct or implied coercion, I deliberately chose to recruit subjects via a letter drop in their pigeonholes (information sheets and consent forms). This indirect communication was my means of avoiding coercion of potential subjects. The freedom to withdraw from participation in the investigation (at any time and without penalty) has been explained above. As Appendices 2 and 3 indicate, the information sheet issued to both classroom teachers and executives contained the following information about participation:

Participation is voluntary. If you do decide not to take part or withdraw from the project at any time, such action will not result in any penalty or discriminatory treatment. If you change your mind about taking part, even after the study has started, just let the researcher know and any information already collected will be destroyed. Withdrawal simply involves contacting the principal researcher by phone, in person or in writing.

3.6.4 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Piper and Simons (2005) indicate that the two concepts require separate consideration:

Confidentiality is a principle that allows people not only to talk in confidence, but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might harm them
in any way. Anonymization is a procedure to offer some protection of privacy and confidentiality…. (p. 57)

Saslow (1982) reminds researchers that subjects “may have given you permission to obtain information for your purposes, but that doesn’t mean they have given permission to anyone else” (p. 392). Researchers should not publish information that is traceable to a particular individual or, in some cases, even to a particular group of individuals. In my investigation, not only did I need to ensure that individual participants (teachers and executives) remained anonymous, but I also needed to ensure that the identity of my chosen site (‘Huckville’) remained anonymous. For methodological and analytical reasons, I provided interviewees with pseudonyms, choosing to work my way through the alphabet and selecting gender-specific names not in excess of four letters. I also checked to ensure that assigned pseudonyms bore no resemblance to actual participants’ names. References to documents that had the potential to identify the school were changed (for example, behaviour notifications had a label peculiar to the school).

3.6.5 Duty of Care

Finally, in keeping with the concept of full disclosure, I was obliged to inform both classroom teachers and executives that my status as a researcher did not make the communications privileged in a legal sense (Saslow, 1982). For example, as educators, all participants - including me - have a duty of care in relation to the welfare of students. The information sheets and consent forms I provided clearly referred to this matter:

Only the researcher will have access to this information, except when students are identified as being at risk of harm from themselves or others. In this case, the names of these students will be given to the school principal.

It was also my responsibility to ensure that participants were not subjected to physical or mental stress that would “yield any effects outlasting the research” (Saslow, 1982, p. 393). My awareness of my overarching topical control underscored this accountability and responsibility. Truman and Humphries (1994) note that “the context in which research is conducted, the social characteristics of researched and researcher, methods, strategies, conclusions all result in power and control of the research by the researcher”
As detailed above, interviewees were informed of their right to refuse to answer any question or to object, and I provided all prospective participants with initiating interview questions so that they would be aware of the scope and sequence of the interview. All intermediate questions remained customary and open-ended. The concluding interview question was designed to provide closure for, and empowerment of, the interviewee. During the interviews, in which two of the interviewees broke down in tears, I immediately stopped the tape and genuinely offered to discontinue. On both occasions, however, having framed the interview as a ‘sought-after’ opportunity to have their voices heard on this highly emotional topic, these particular interviewees explicitly insisted upon proceeding.

In relation to ethical considerations, I have incorporated Shank’s (2002, pp. 98-99) advice into my own investigation:

First of all, do no harm. Make sure the people you work with do not suffer in any way from your research. Informed consent is the keystone of ethical conduct. Are you being fair to all parties concerned? Are you careful to protect identities? Have you shared your interpretation with others?

Second, be open. Do not tell people you are doing one thing, when you are really doing something else. If people ask you what you are doing, tell them. Remember that the data always belong to them.

Third, be honest. Do not lie to people or use material without permission. Just as importantly, be honest to yourself. Do not delude or deceive yourself. If you were wrong, or you have changed your mind, say so.

Finally, be careful. Make sure that you have documented your work so that others can follow what you have done. All of this documentation, of course, should not compromise the confidentiality of your sources or settings.

The purpose of this project was the elicitation and synthesis of ‘best/endorsed’ practice knowledge pertaining to organisational management of fdsc behaviours. Such knowledge may inform practice aimed at facilitating and buttressing the efforts of teachers to successfully manage disruptive student behaviours. Ultimately, I hope that my concern for the maintenance of disruption-free classrooms constitutes a pro bono publico initiative.
3.7 CONCLUSION

The foci and philosophical tenets of grounded theory methodology were amenable to the purposes of my study. My investigation unearthed considerable consensus in terms of classroom teachers’ organisational disciplinary/social support needs (met and unmet) relevant to fdsc behaviours. My use of purposive and theoretical sampling worked to acknowledge the input and perspectives of the adults implicated in the disciplinary chain - both classroom teachers and executives. Whilst the use of open-ended, semi-structured interviewing enabled me to focus interviewees and procure their perspectives, my awareness of issues pertaining to social identity and interactional talk contributed to the construction of interview questions that procured rich, relevant, and substantiating data. During my pursuit of emergent theory (both explanatory and operational), it was coding by means of constant comparison, in conjunction with memos, that kept me faithful to the data-at-hand. Participants’ quotes and links to existing theory have been used to validate both explanatory and operational theory. Having fully acquainted myself with the ethical considerations that apply to my investigation, I have endeavoured to protect the rights of participants at all times. Ultimately, my choice of research topic, methodologies, and methods has reflected my ardent desire to make a contribution to the efficient and humane functioning of schools as modern bureaucratic systems.

With this discussion of my methodological approach and practice, I am now able to turn to the display and analysis of my data. Section II consists of three chapters which, in turn, sequentially elaborate the findings of my study in terms of the research questions I have sought to answer.
In the previous section, I have indicated and justified the methodology and methods I used to explore fdsc behaviours, and I have reviewed research literature pertinent to my exploration of these. In this chapter (Chapter 4), I explore the identity, impact, and interrelationships of the fdsc behaviours identified and discussed by my interviewees at Huckville. In the next chapter (Chapter 5), I go on to discuss the impact of (1) the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours on school culture, and (2) the organisational emphasis on classroom teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours. Thereafter (Chapter 6), I outline the systemic support needs advocated by my interviewees, and subsequently propose practices that take into consideration both advocated support needs and implicated parties (students, teachers, executives, and parents/caregivers). Ultimately, teachers’ and executives’ descriptions of fdsc behaviours implicate the need for development and implementation of practices that serve to prioritise and/or promote: the status of fdsc behaviours; social cohesion within the classroom; teacher wellbeing; student responsibility; and, above all, teachers’ relationships with students, executives, and parents.

Before presenting my research and findings, renewed acquaintance with my interviewees is worthwhile (see Tables II.i, II.ii, and II.iii). I interviewed 21 classroom teachers - 16 females and 5 males - who represent 7 faculties. These include teachers in their 20’s, 30’s, and 50’s, with an average age of 42 years. For teachers, the average number of years of teaching experience is 15.5 years, with participants in their first, second, third, and fourth decade of teaching. Clearly, novice and veteran teachers are well represented in this sample. I also interviewed 7 executives - 3 females and 4 males - who represent both middle management (head teachers) and the senior executive (the principal and a deputy principal). These executives are in their 30’s, 40’s, and 50’s, with an average age of 46 years, and were similarly in their first, second, third, and fourth decade of teaching. The average number of years of teaching experience for these executives, at 20 years, is higher than the average for teachers.
Throughout my discussion, I rely heavily on direct quotes from participants, and, in order to distinguish my two samples, only the first letter of classroom teachers’ pseudonyms is capitalised whereas the entire pseudonym assigned to executives is capitalised. The following three tables summarise the demographic details relevant to the participants (classroom teachers and executives). The asterisk in Tables II.i and II.ii indicates the nine participants (8 teachers and 1 executive) who left Huckville within 1 to 2 years following the completion of interviews. Table II.iii lays out the range and differences among the participants in terms of their career progression:

Table II.i: Classroom Teachers’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Yrs Teaching</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ava*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bea</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cora</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Di</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex*</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eve*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fay</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ita*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Col</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meg</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nina</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug*</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olga*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed*</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table II.ii: Executives’ Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Yrs Teaching</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FRED</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUY</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAL</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROSE</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUE*</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TESS</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAN</td>
<td>m</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table II.iii: Years of Participants’ Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Stage</th>
<th>Classroom Teachers</th>
<th>Executives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early (1-11 years)</td>
<td>2 x males</td>
<td>2 x males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 x females</td>
<td>1 x female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid (12-22 years)</td>
<td>1 x male</td>
<td>1 x male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late (23-33+ years)</td>
<td>2 x males</td>
<td>1 x male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 x females</td>
<td>2 x females</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frank tone of my participants’ commentary, rendered into print, may startle readers. I believe that my interviewees felt hard-pressed enough, and safe enough, to pull no punches. However, context - both social and methodological - serves to rationalise interviewees’ frankness. Both the interviewees and I are practising secondary school teachers. As such, presumptions of shared identity have the propensity for interviewees to view me as an ‘insider’ ('one of them'), thereby, perhaps too comfortably, facilitating a level of candour based in taken-for-granted understanding (Gunasekara, 2007). In addition, my assurances of both anonymity and privacy would have served to facilitate candid conversation. Moreover, the questions I posed invited interviewees to focus on, and mull over, both their greatest stressors/concerns and their judgements of practice. Such focusing has the propensity to render the use of emotive language both usual and unavoidable. I contend that my interviewees’ frankness, by and large, resonated with the symptoms/components of teacher burnout (Maslach, 1999). Herein, emotive language is commensurate with emotional exhaustion. Finally, regardless of my interviewees’ tone, as a proponent of grounded theory I am compelled to represent my data as stated.
The discursive nature of the interview process means that the data I selected to underpin and support my conclusions is also discursive - hence, the chapters in this Section are long. Essentially, in order to underline my argument about the range and depth of feeling both teachers and executives have displayed, I have made the decision to include a wider rather than just a representative range of data.

A reminder about the investigated site is also worthwhile. Huckville is not an exceptional school, and as a public secondary school in a rural city in New South Wales, in many ways could be seen as fairly ‘average’. When I commenced interviews (2010), the school employed 65 teaching staff (classroom teachers and executives), and the school population consisted of 873 students. In 2010, 5% of the student population identified as Aboriginal students, and 4% of the student population came from a language background other than English.
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH & FINDINGS - ‘FREQUENT, DISRUPTIVE’ STUDENT CLASSROOM BEHAVIOURS (FDSC BEHAVIOURS)

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a demanding profession - particularly, it seems, for secondary teachers in terms of student behaviour. Suspension statistics relating to NSW public schools (New South Wales Department of Education & Communities, 2013; New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2016) indicate that secondary teachers must cope with: (1) behavioural challenges from junior secondary students (7-10) whose anti-social behaviours present most frequently/persistently relevant to other year bands (K-6 and 11-12); and, (2) intensified anti-social student behaviours that include violence, aggression, verbal abuse, defiance, threats, bullying, and disruption.

Long suspension statistics for NSW public schools indicate that both physical violence and persistent misbehaviour are most prevalent amongst junior secondary school students (7-10). In 2012, NSW public schools registered a total of 18,186 long suspensions (up to twenty days in duration); ‘persistent misbehaviour’ ranked as the most predominant reason for long suspension (48% - 8,692 cases), and this was followed closely by ‘physical violence’ (39% - 7,093 cases) (NSWDEC, 2013, p. 1). In terms of Year bands, 74% of long suspensions applied to junior secondary students (7-10), and 82% of long suspensions applied to secondary students (7-12) (NSWDEC, 2013, p. 1). These two trends were again reflected in statistics for 2015 (NSWDET, 2016, pp. 5-6). According to Departmental policy, “physical violence” is categorised as behaviour “which results in injury or which seriously interferes with [others’] safety or wellbeing”, and “persistent or serious misbehaviour” is categorised as behaviour that includes, but is not limited to, defiance, disruption, and threats (New South Wales Department of Education and Training, 2011, pp. 8-9). In both 2012 and 2015, the region in which Huckville is situated registered below average for the total number of
long suspensions imposed by all regions (NSWDEC, 2013, p. 2; NSWDET, 2016, pp. 5-6).

In 2012 and 2015, in NSW public schools, aggressive student behaviour, which includes student verbal abuse of teachers and/or students, registered as the predominant reason for the imposition of short suspensions (up to four days). NSW public schools registered a total of 53,323 short suspensions in 2012 (NSWDEC, 2013, p. 5), and a total of 47,622 short suspensions in 2015 (NSWDET, 2016, p. 1). The two criteria for the application of a short suspension are ‘aggressive behaviour’ and ‘continued disobedience’. The criterion “continued disobedience” includes, but is not limited to, defiance and disruption; and the criterion “aggressive behaviour” includes, but is not limited to, verbal abuse, bullying, and hostile behaviour (NSWDET, 2011, p. 7). Whilst regional dissections for short suspensions were not provided for 2012, statistics in relation to 2015 reveal that the region in which Huckville is situated registered below average for the total number of short suspensions imposed by all regions (NSWDET, 2016, p.3).

Essentially, policymakers’ endorsement of suspension as a response to anti-social student behaviours is grounded in the perceived need to protect both the safety/wellbeing of school/classroom inhabitants and the core business of schooling (teaching/learning). However, Departmental suspension policy recognises that socialisation is a process - children will push the boundaries. For example, use of the term ‘continued disobedience’ within suspension policy highlights the presumption that disruptive student behaviour is not unusual. At the same time, student verbal abuse of others, which need not be ‘continued’ in order to attract a suspension, is often associated with student disruption/defiance (‘disobedience’). Hence, in view of the presumption that children will ‘push the boundaries’, in view of the equivocal nature of the term ‘continued’, and in view of low tolerance for verbal abuse, the need for implementation of clear, consistent, and supportive whole-school behaviour management practices seems manifest. Huckville High School, my chosen site for research, is situated in a region that has registered ‘below average’ statistics for the total number of suspension statistics. At first glance, this finding may suggest either relative
conservatism in terms of the imposition of suspensions or relative
compétence in terms of in-school behaviour management practice. Either
way, it is clear that the anti-social behaviours manifested by students -
particularly junior secondary school students -  constitute a state-wide
concern. To begin with, these statistics beg questions in relation to the
identity of fdsc behaviours.

Within my study, the expression ‘frequent, disruptive’ student
classroom behaviours (fdsc behaviours) refers to student behaviours that,
according to interviewed teachers and executives, disrupt the teaching-
learning environment on a frequent basis. The fdsc behaviours identified
within cited research literature (Chapter 2) include ‘talk’, ‘commitment’,
technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues (Coslin, 1997; Fetherston & Lummis, 2012;
Fish et al., 2008; Green, 2006; Hoffman & Lee, 2014; Infantino & Little, 2005;
Little, 2005; Pearce, 2011; Rigter, 2000; Squelch, 2006; Sullivan et al.,
2014). Within my own study, using the analytic process detailed in Chapter 3,
procured data indicates that the bulk of interviewed staff members see these
issues/behaviours, as well as ‘impasse’ issues (student refusal to move), as
constituting teachers’ greatest stressor and executives’ greatest concern
(see Table 4.1 below).

Whilst ‘talk’ issues rank as a typology of fdsc behaviour within
research literature (Hoffman & Lee, 2014; Infantino & Little, 2005; Little,
2005; Sullivan et al., 2014), my study reveals that some forms of student
‘talk’ can be seen as an instrument of intimidation (‘bullying’). Whilst
‘commitment’ issues rank as a typology within research literature (Hoffman &
Lee, 2014; Infantino & Little, 2005; Little, 2005; Sullivan et al., 2014), my
study reveals the extent of the disruptive power of a lack of student
commitment to learning, such as failure/refusal to bring/unpack essential
equipment. Indeed, some teachers’ efforts to curb off-task student behaviour
are regularly met with student aggression (‘bullying’). In addition, whilst
‘technology’ issues are classified as a typology within the research literature
(Hoffman & Lee, 2014; Sullivan et al., 2014), my study reveals that some
teachers’ mandated attempts to deal with student misuse of technology
Table 4.1.1: Teachers’ & Executives’ Greatest Stressor/Concern.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FDSC Behaviours (Issues)</th>
<th>Teachers (21) (Stressors)</th>
<th>Executives (7) (Concerns)</th>
<th>Total (28)</th>
<th>Percentage of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Talk’</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Commitment’</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Technology’</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Impasse’</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Bullying’</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(mobile phones, iPods, and laptops) particularly serve to spark student verbal abuse of teachers (‘bullying’). Personal technology, it seems, has become an inextricable appendage of the adolescent student body. And whilst ‘student refusal to move’ (an ‘impasse’ issue) is not ranked as a typology within the research literature cited, the reports of both teachers and executives in my study indicate that ‘refusal to move’ constitutes an emergent fdsc behaviour. Importantly, as this chapter argues, whilst a number of researchers highlight ‘bullying’ issues (Fetherston & Lummis, 2012; Fish et al., 2008; Hoffman & Lee, 2014; Infantino & Little, 2005; Little, 2005; Rigter, 2000; Sullivan et al., 2014), ‘student verbal abuse of teachers’ is both an fdsc behaviour and a regular emergent student response to teachers’ efforts to curb any of the fdsc behaviours identified.

Figure 4.1.1: Emergent FDSC Issues: Defiance and Abuse
As for the interrelationships of FDSC behaviours, I found that ‘talk’ and ‘commitment’ issues tend to overlap, and ‘commitment’ and ‘technology’ issues tend to overlap. I also found that ‘impasse’ issues tend to emerge from teachers’ efforts to curb ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues; and student verbal abuse of teachers tends to emerge from teachers’ efforts to curb ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, ‘bullying’, and ‘impasse’ issues (see Figure 4.1.1).

At Huckville, therefore, some classroom teachers are being defied and verbally abused by students for what these teachers see as ‘doing their job’. And, in view of what I have identified here as the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary/social support in relation to FDSC behaviours, the level of student aggression (defiance and abuse) directed at these teachers - and systemically tolerated - has flourished. Indeed, as revealed in later chapters, in this case, the inadequacy of organisational social support for FDSC behaviours in combination with the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for FDSC behaviours has produced a school climate in which student socialisation, student learning, teacher wellbeing, supervisor-subordinate trust relationships, and last but not least, teacher-student relationships, are not optimal.

4.2 IDENTIFICATION OF FDSC BEHAVIOURS

4.2.1 Typologies: ‘Talk’ Issues

‘Talk’ issues constitute the most ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom behaviour at Huckville. I have defined ‘talking over’ as: students verbally interrupting a teacher in the act of addressing the class; students verbally interrupting a peer who has been nominated by the teacher to speak; students sustaining loud, off-task conversations; and, students proffering unsolicited commentary and/or calling out. Persistent disobedience in the form of ‘talking over’ obstructs both communication and understanding, and, in turn, delays steadfast progression through the syllabus. Some staff members perceive persistent ‘talking over’ as a deliberate act of student aggression which serves to intimidate and silence others. Beyond the
intimidation wrought by language as an instrument of aggression, ‘talking over’ and/or excessive noise levels are deemed responsible, by teachers, for detrimental physical and mental symptoms (for example, voice strain, headaches, resentment, and anxiety).

According to all interviewed classroom teachers (21/21), and consistent with the literature, ‘talking over’ ranks as the greatest obstruction to both core business and the development of social cohesion - it is the most ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom behaviour. ‘Talking over’ is typically represented as a ‘constant’ form of student disruption, and some teachers indicate that their requests for disruptive talk to cease are ‘typically ignored’ by students:

Cora: They refuse to stop talking. I'm constantly saying: *We all need to listen to each other!*

Pam: I'm out the front of the classroom trying to present some material.... As soon as I start talking, they start talking....

Ita: I do ask them to be quiet [but] they just ignore me.... They're [constantly] talking loudly and yelling across the classroom....

Col: They continue talking and totally ignoring instructions....

Nina: I have to continually tell them to stop talking - *I'm speaking now and I need you to listen!*

Jan: They'll talk over you - they'll ignore the instruction and do what they want!

Meg: They continually talk over me!

Bob: My Year 10 group is frequently calling out across the room.

Fay: I hate that class! Constant talking! You can't get them to shut up so that you can give a lesson.

Gina: I have to remind them on a daily basis, several times within a lesson, that one person talks at a time....

Ed: In my classes one kid disrupts another kid - and then the whole class goes....

According to teachers’ reports, both teachers and students are aware that persistent ‘talking over’ has served to thwart academic progress. Specifically, both the quality and the rate of learning is considered to be hampered by: (1) the obstruction caused by ‘talking over’ to both hearing and being heard; (2) the need for piecemeal repetition as a consequence of
disruptive talk; and, (3) the refocusing of teacher attention on disruptive talkers to the detriment of co-operative students. Teachers maintain that the perceived selfishness of ‘talking over’ is palpable; and that the fragmented, slower pace brought about by disruptive talkers has served to both frustrate and incense co-operative learners:

Pam: Co-operative students know that they’re learning at a much slower pace. They know that they’re getting behind or that so much time is being wasted. They’re quite frustrated by it....

Bea: The talking drives [co-operative students] barmy: Miss, can you just remove them? We are not getting anything done! We are spending all of our time dealing with negative behaviours....

Leah: [Kids are] stopping other students from working because they’re talking....

Gina: [Talking over] interrupts whatever is being said or trying to be communicated....

Eve: I get very angry because [talkers] are not showing consideration or respect for others. It does slow down the lesson....

Persistent ‘talking over’ has served to thwart academic progress in view of the difficulty posed to both hearing and being heard:

Jan: They will talk - and that stops other kids from hearing....

Ava: [Talkers] make it hard for the kids to understand what I’m talking about.... The kids might hear some explanation....

Kate: I can’t effectively teach [because] nobody can hear the explanation. [The talkers] don’t hear the explanation - then they complain: I don’t understand this work!

Cora: They refuse to stop talking.... I can’t hear what [nominated speakers] are saying! It gets frustrating....

The demand for piecemeal repetition, a negative consequence of disruptive talk, is explicitly represented as a teacher stressor:

Hope: My greatest stressor as a teacher is repetition.... They speak out of turn [and] speak over the top of you.... My Year 9 class won’t let me give a general explanation to the room....

Cora: They’re not listening [so] I’ve got to go over it again.... That’s the origin of the stress.... You waste a lot of time....

Meg: I have to repeat [myself] three or four times.... They continually talk over me!
Both co-operative students and the focus of lessons are effectively abandoned as a consequence of ‘talking over’ - disruptive talkers, rather than willing learners, become the focal point of teacher attention and the consumers of teacher/class time:

Gina: [Talking over] stops the lesson.... All attention is placed on that student....

Cora: They're not listening.... You waste a lot of time on these particular kids.

Eve: [Co-operative kids] become unnoticeable because you are constantly putting out spot fires....

Ava: [Co-operative kids] have to listen to three minutes of me telling other kids to shut up.

In addition to at-risk academic progress, teacher reports indicate that the wellbeing of both students and teachers is a direct casualty of ‘talking over’. Indeed, students who habitually sustain loud ‘conversations’ upon entry to the classroom are perceived, by many, as particularly aggressive. Within this scenario, lessons are effectively sabotaged from the outset. The aggression inherent in sustained ‘talking over’ is substantiated by the reported reticence and/or inability of co-operative students to speak up and engage. It seems that co-operative students are subdued by aggressors whose weapon of choice - ‘talking over’ - dictates the ascendancy of an intimidating, anti-academic atmosphere:

Jan: The [Year 9] boys are particularly aggressive towards me and other kids.... They will come in and just continue on with their conversations.... They don't want to learn - they just want to rule the classroom.... They will talk, and that stops other kids from hearing.... They'll talk over you - they'll ignore instructions....

Olga: [The classroom’s] a complete battleground.... All we hear is the absolute defiance, yelling, swearing at others, and putdowns....

Cora: [Co-operative] kids want to contribute but they feel that they can’t.... I find this really sad. [Talkers] ruin everyone’s education.

Whilst incessant talk interspersed with abusive content has served to intimidate classroom inhabitants, excessive noise levels have also served to physically and mentally affect teachers. Teachers report strained vocal chords, headaches, considerable resentment, and pronounced anxiety:
Bea: There have been occasions when I have raised my voice to screaming pitch.... The power lies with the students who are outspoken and loud....

Nina: Even in some of my better classes, I almost have to yell because they're 'talk, talk, talk'. That becomes really stressful. [It's] speaking inappropriately at loud levels....

Gina: My greatest stressor is the kid who is yelling, shouting, and talking over....

Eve: My Year 9 class ... gets louder and louder because they're all trying to talk over the top of each other.... I get very angry.... Because of the noise I can walk out of there with a headache.

At Huckville, the predominance of 'talking over' as an fdsc behaviour is corroborated by the majority of interviewed executives (6/7). In general terms, executives perceive 'talking over' as an act of student defiance in the face of reasonable teacher requests; indeed, this student behaviour elicits sympathy from executives for teachers. Executive awareness of student aggression as an aspect of 'talking over' is substantiated by the use of terms such as 'argumentative' and 'talking back'. Executives confirm the notion of 'talking over', at worst, as an act of student aggression:

FRED: As head teacher you don't always witness the extent of the 'talking back' that students obviously do to classroom teachers.

SUE: It's defiant behaviour. It's talking back - being argumentative [and] speaking over others!

HAL: They're being disruptive - 'talking over', yelling across the room.... It's defiant behaviour.

GUY: I think the biggest one for us is failure to follow a reasonable instruction: Please be quiet! [It's] not talking when they're being spoken to....

ROSE: It's failure to follow reasonable instructions - talking over the teacher.

As this commentary demonstrates, 'talking over' is reported as the greatest obstruction to both core business (teaching/learning) and the development of social cohesion within Huckville’s classrooms. This student behaviour is characterised by interviewees as unrelenting, insubordinate, and aggressive. Moreover - in view of obstructed hearing, piecemeal repetition, and diverted teacher attention - this student behaviour is deemed chiefly responsible for thwarted academic progress. An anti-social behaviour, 'talking over' has served to stress, intimidate, frustrate, enrage, and
physically impact its victims. Ultimately, both learning and wellbeing are threatened within a social environment that fails to adhere to the most obvious, indispensable rules of effective communication. Meanwhile, ‘talking over’ as an fdsc behaviour often overlaps with another fdsc behaviour - ‘commitment’ issues.

4.2.2 Typologies: ‘Commitment’ Issues

‘Commitment’ issues rank as the second most ‘frequent, disruptive’ student classroom behaviour at Huckville; moreover, discourses of blame are particularly associated with this typology. The bulk of classroom teachers (19/21) identify ‘commitment’ issues as a stressor, and the bulk of participating executives (6/7) identify ‘commitment’ issues as a matter of concern. Teacher reports indicate that students with commitment issues impact the pace, purpose, productivity, and congeniality of a lesson. During class time, teacher time is consumed by: (1) efforts to address/remedy student failure/refusal to bring/unpack essential equipment; (2) efforts to encourage student participation; (3) efforts to quell the aggression that is, at times, exhibited by off-task students; and, (4) efforts to inform students (who have been absent) about missed subject content. Beyond the classroom, as a consequence of student commitment issues, teacher time is consumed by the need to ‘chase’ students, supervise mandated detentions, file associated paperwork, and contact parents. A number of Huckville’s teachers and executives perceive Departmental policy as ‘too generous’ in relation to both student attendance and student performance - indeed, these teachers claim that such policy serves to confound the attempts of both schools and teachers to curb problematic student ‘commitment’ issues. Whilst some staff accuse Departmental policy of exacerbating problematic student ‘commitment’ issues, the Principal’s suggestion that student commitment is proportional to teacher competence serves to heighten the issue of teacher responsibility for student commitment to learning.

Teacher reports indicate that both student engagement and student persistence are problematic:
Leah: It’s difficult to engage them....

Kate: I am constantly saying [to Year 8]: *Please get your books out!* Nobody appears to be interested in learning.

Ed: You expect students to be passionate about an elective subject. Unfortunately … they’ll just talk about the weekend.

Hope: [Many seniors] don’t keep handouts. They can't work on any ongoing task.... They have no will to continue.

Eve: They want good marks but if it involves anything that vaguely resembles work they're not interested. They want everything to be given to them....

Teacher reports indicate that student aggression is part and parcel of student commitment issues:

Meg: Asking them to do something will spark them off!

Pam: Because they don't want to work, they get annoyed with me for trying to get them to work....

Teacher reports indicate that teacher workload is exacerbated by student commitment issues:

Nina: I can't manage the number of students who are being completely lazy in relation to their work.... I have to chase kids, ring parents, and send letters.

Student refusal/failure to either *bring* or *unpack* essential equipment constitutes a particularly disruptive behaviour in terms of both the consumption of teacher/class time and the impairment of class congeniality. Teacher/class time is consumed by the need to: (1) replace essential equipment (pens, rulers, texts, paper, handouts and so on); (2) counteract student aversion; and, (3) address outbursts of student aggression. Furthermore, teachers’ harried provision of essential equipment does not necessarily bring about on-task student behaviour. Teacher reports explicitly substantiate the consumption of teacher time (and pocket money) afforded by students with these particular commitment issues:

Bob: I've sought assistance for a number of junior students who have *actively* refused to do the work.... Fifty per cent of my time was spent on those kids....

Cora: You waste a lot of time on these kids. You've got to say: *Get your book out!* They say: *I haven't got a pen.* They usually don't have a pen.... Too many don’t have a work ethic....
Di: Last year half of my [Year 7] class didn't have a pen [so] I bought pens and gave every kid a pen....

Teacher reports substantiate the proclivity for students with commitment issues to exhibit aggressive, defiant, disruptive behaviour:

Ita: They don't bring their schoolbooks, won't have a pen, won't have a pencil. They don't want to get their books out! Some kids have not had a pen all year.... There's no intention to work! The ones who aren't working are generally very disruptive....

Gina: Beginning work is often where the defiant behaviour comes in.... The defiance is about getting out a piece of paper or a pen....

Alex: [Many Year 9 students] have no interest in learning.... It's failure to bring work, failure to bring books [and] refusal to work.... How dare you ask me to work!

Olga: It's just total refusal to participate.... Who are you to tell me what to do! Laptop - It's at home! Who comes to school with a pen? And it's the teachers' problem - not their problem....

The majority of interviewed executives (6/7) corroborate the predominance of student ‘commitment’ issues as an fdsc behaviour of concern. Like classroom teachers, they express concern about: (1) student failure/refusal to bring essential equipment; (2) student refusal to unpack essential equipment; (3) student disruption to, and consumption of, class time in view of commitment issues; and, (4) student aggression towards teachers in view of commitment issues. Whilst executives note student resistance to both the act of writing (putting pen to paper) and the development of perseverance (task size/demands), some commend teachers’ strategic attempts to ‘circumnavigate’ such resistance. Rose is incensed by students' lack of commitment and the associated disruption to classroom proceedings:

ROSE: [It's] not bringing books or pens or laptops, and not getting their books out [whilst] talking over the teacher! I find it offensive!

Tess indicates that student ‘commitment’ issues inevitably compel her intervention:

TESS: They're not interested in doing any work, disrespectful, and destructive. The issue is: I have asked them to stop talking and to get their books out - and they won't. That's when I'm called.

Guy has direct experience of student resistance to written work:
GUY: [Commencing work] often creates an issue.... It becomes quite difficult for us when doing theory [in so-called practical subjects]. However, in spite of the practical challenge posed by students’ commitment issues, teachers’ determination to extract some work from challenging students is praised by some executives:

FRED: [Juniors] just don’t deal with working towards a bigger goal. [The teachers] are feeling their way around the students and trying to get them to complete tasks the best way that they can.

SUE: [It’s] refusal to do work.... The teacher [of the Year 9 class] has worked really hard at breaking those tasks down because the boys don't have a big attention span. Writing is [minimal].

Whilst the majority of interviewees consider ‘commitment’ a student responsibility, an executive and a number of teachers believe that problematic student commitment issues have been exacerbated by what they perceive as ‘lenient’ Departmental policy relevant to both student attendance and student performance. According to NSW Departmental policy, public school principals have the authority to grant exemption from school attendance “totalling up to 100 days in a twelve month period for any one student”; and, “the next most senior delegate” has the authority to grant exemption from school attendance “for periods exceeding 100 days or more in a twelve month period for any one student” (NSWDEC, Public Schools NSW Exemption from School Procedures: School Attendance Policy, 2015, p. 3). It is worth noting that 100 school days is equivalent to half a school year, which, if taken, amounts to a considerable period of absence from the classroom. In terms of students’ academic performance, according to the principal, only ‘some’ course outcomes need to be met by students, and ‘repeating’ is a matter for parents/guardians to decide. In 2011, (17/05), an email from Huckville’s principal to all staff members sought to clarify the issue of ‘repeating’ for staff who, it may be assumed, either queried or objected to the advancement of students whose combined productivity and attendance were considered ‘paltry’ (by staff). Ian writes:

Progress for many students can be patchy.... If a student is meeting ‘some’ of the outcomes of a course it is not impossible, but it is difficult, to make a case. I have explored this aspect with the Board, and have [also] been told that a poor attendance record may not disqualify a student.... I have pursued the matter of a student ‘repeating’ with families in the past, and I will do so in the future, but I want
staff to understand that if a family says no [to their child repeating] then the matter is closed…. Keep building the case through ‘N’ letters….

The deputy principal vents her frustration over Departmental requirements that, from her point of view, sanction a reduction in both student productivity and student attendance. Her comments below reveal that she is offended by student idleness, exhausted by associated paperwork, and critical of perceived Departmental indulgence of implicated students:

ROSE: Here is a pile of letters I wrote today about Year 9 students not fulfilling course outcomes. That’s taken most of the day! A kid can be absent, according to the Board, and still do ‘enough’ work to fulfil course outcomes.... I don’t think [they] deserve it!

Like Rose, some classroom teachers consider Departmental requirements to be particularly indulgent in relation to both student productivity and student attendance. Ava and Hope assert that the ‘customary’ progress of unproductive students into the next Year level serves as proof of undermining Departmental standards. Hope registers offense on behalf of co-operative students who ‘have a go’ yet anticipate advancement alongside idle, defiant, disruptive peers:

Ava: There’s no consequence for laziness. [Students] know they’ll just go onto the next grade, and, so, they can sit in class and just do nothing.

Hope: [Kids eventually] realise that we can't make them accountable. The most contemptuous [kids] sit with their feet on the desks, are absolutely defiant every lesson, won't get out any work at all, and absolutely ignore me - I know they will be moving into Year 10. It is offensive! It dishonours the kids who do work.

In addition to perceived Departmental ‘indulgence’, participants mention both school culture (executives’ low expectations) and teacher traits (apathy and incompetence) as exacerbating student commitment issues. According to Alex, a classroom teacher with considerable head teacher experience (in the private sector), executives’ low academic and low behavioural expectations have served to undermine order and productivity within the classroom. Whilst Alex’s discursive position resonates with perceptions of social class variance, he maintains that ‘appalling’ school standards have served to normalise both student indolence and student aggression:
Alex: I've been told by [my head teacher] and the deputy that it's a win-win situation if I can keep [my Year 9 students] in the class, they haven't killed each other, and they've done a minimum of work. And I am talking three or four lines [of writing]! That's all we can expect! And I just find that appalling!

Meanwhile, Hal, a head teacher, characterises student disengagement as a direct consequence of lacklustre teachers/teaching. Interestingly, Hal’s depiction of classroom teachers (“a lot of teachers”) as completely lacking in “enthusiasm” unwittingly suggests the presence of symptoms relevant to both teacher burnout and reduced teacher efficacy (namely, emotional exhaustion, detachment, and an overriding sense of reduced personal accomplishment/effectiveness):

HAL: I think there are a lot of teachers who - there is no enthusiasm! And that brings upon itself a lack of enthusiasm in the students.

Ian, the principal, also holds classroom teachers responsible for student disengagement. Unlike all other interviewees, Ian did not identify any fdsc behaviour as an issue of concern. When prompted about student ‘commitment’ issues, Ian confined his response to teachers’ neglect of students’ passive resistance. Ian makes use of the term ‘good’ to define teachers who succeed in maintaining student engagement; therefore, the notion of student responsibility is seemingly dismissed, and the notion that student disengagement constitutes exclusive evidence of ‘bad’ teachers and/or teaching holds sway. He uses a ‘sport’ metaphor to reinforce the notion that both student disengagement and student defiance are consequences of ‘a teaching workforce that drops the ball’. From the Principal’s general point of view, therefore, it seems that fdsc behaviours (disruption, defiance, disengagement) are more so the product of teacher incompetence (personal traits) than the product of the culture at large:

IAN: Passive resistance is incredibly difficult to shift.... And good teachers know that that is a matter of massaging the kids along and hopefully covering the body of knowledge..... Kids, these days, are demanding more from us - I’m not just here to roll along and soak up everything you give me! Teachers have got to be doing things which will take kids’ attention. If [teachers] don’t then you get into those behaviours like defiance and disengagement.... And it’s where you’ve got, I believe, a teaching workforce that drops the ball with [gaining student attention] that you can start getting disengagement in the room.... If you really want to change things then you … work on pedagogy....
At Huckville, most interviewees consider student ‘commitment’ issues to be obstructions to core business and social cohesion, some interviewees consider student ‘commitment’ issues to be products of lenient systemic and /or school standards, and two executive interviewees consider student ‘commitment’ issues to be products of lacklustre/poor pedagogy. The most prominent student ‘commitment’ issue (student failure/refusal to bring/unpack essential equipment), which constitutes a direct student responsibility, is characterised by interviewees as time-consuming, sabotaging, and particularly associated with outbursts of student aggression. As a behaviour to be managed, commentary by interviewees references teacher action that includes: explicit personal encouragement; extra teacher time and assistance (within and beyond the classroom); dissection of tasks into manageable chunks; purchase/replacement of essential equipment; referral to specialised assistance; teacher-supervised detentions (in order to address unattempted or incomplete work); mailing missed work home; and, contact with parents (‘N’ Award Letters). Meanwhile, interviewees lament increasing student misuse of infiltrating twenty-first century personal technologies (mobile phones, iPods, and laptops) which has served to further exacerbate both off-task and aggressive student classroom behaviours.

4.2.3 Typologies: ‘Technology’ Issues

Student misuse of personal technology - as opposed to student use of personal technology - constitutes an fdsc behaviour at Huckville; indeed, student misuse of personal technology overlaps with ‘commitment’, ‘impasse’, and ‘bullying’ issues. Almost half of the participating classroom teachers (10/21) identify student misuse of technology as a stressor, whilst the majority of participating executives (5/7) identify this as an issue of concern. By and large, task avoidance associated with technology manifests as: (1) repeated student failure to either bring or charge laptops; (2) repeated student misuse of laptops (for example, playing games instead of attempting assigned tasks); (3) repeated, sustained preoccupation with texting on mobile phones; and, (4) repeated ‘selective’ use of iPods (for example, drowning out teacher explanation/instruction and class discussion). Both
Departmental and school policy allow for confiscation of student property. Whilst some teachers report that their efforts to address student misuse of personal technology have served to unleash both vitriolic student verbal abuse and disruptive classroom standoffs, other teachers report that inadequate and/or inconsistent systemic consequences relevant to student misuse of technology have achieved little in terms of both challenging the behaviour and supporting mandated teacher action. Consequently, for some teachers, each new day brings the same time-consuming, disruptive battle with the same students in relation to misuse of personal technology.

In NSW schools, confiscation of student property constitutes a problematic issue in view of the tension between students’ assertion of legal rights (that is, common law rights relevant to personal property) and schools’ dependence upon legislative protections (which includes confiscation of ‘inappropriately used’ student property). As it stands, disciplinary guidelines indicate that if a mobile phone or iPod is being “inappropriately used” by a student then a teacher may “ask to confiscate” the implicated student’s property; however, common law indicates that “a student does not necessarily have to comply with such a request” (D’cruz, 2017, pp. 1-2). D’cruz (2017) elaborates:

It is acceptable … for a teacher (school) to ask to confiscate from a student inappropriate property or property being “inappropriately used”. The NSW policy defines “inappropriate use” as being used in a way that is: contrary to any applicable school rules; disruptive to the school’s learning environment; a risk to the safety or wellbeing of [others]; contrary to any reasonable direction given by school staff about the use of the item; and, illegal or otherwise of a nature that causes significant concern for staff. It is important to note that a student does not necessarily have to comply with such a request. However, if the request is reasonable and falls within the scope of a school’s disciplinary policy, the student could receive a sanction for failing to follow the request…. It is essential that staff members are aware that they may ask students to hand over items but they should never take them by force or remove them directly from the student’s possession. Actions such as this could result in charges being brought against the teacher. (pp. 1-2)

In view of this ‘clash’ between law and policy, the power equation within the classroom can swing in favour of the noncompliant student whose capacity to effect classroom disruption - through misuse of personal technology - constitutes a repetitive threat to classroom conditions. This ‘repetitive threat’ is rendered of even greater concern in view of the propensity for ‘technology’ issues to overlap with the bulk of fdsc behaviours (namely, ‘commitment’,...
‘impasse’, and ‘bullying’ issues). Ultimately, student misuse of personal technology, which serves to threaten both teaching and learning, is effectively buoyed and sustained by students’ legal right not to comply with educational policy relevant to confiscation. At the same time, both the authority and wellbeing of classroom teachers are threatened.

Research supports the notion that the distraction caused by student use of mobile phones (within the context of the classroom) serves to pose risks to both students’ academic performance and their wellbeing. Utilising surveys and administrative data to investigate schools in four English cities, Beland and Murphy (2015) found that students’ performance in examinations - particularly that of low-achieving students - significantly increased subsequent to a ban on student mobile phones. In view of these findings, Beland and Murphy (2015) called for a ban on mobile phones “as a means of reducing educational inequality” (pp. 17-18). Other researchers (Junco, 2012; Lepp, Barkley, & Karpinski, 2014; Nguyen, Rosicki, Rowe, & Schoenberger, 2015; Rosen, Lim, Carrier, & Cheever, 2011) indicate that the distraction caused by mobile phones (within the context of the classroom) serves to pose risks to both student performance (decreased human information processing) and student wellbeing (increased anxiety levels).

As stated, both Departmental and school policy allow for confiscation of student property by school staff under certain conditions. This authorisation indicates policymakers’ awareness of the need for ‘responsive learning environments’. Departmental policy is framed as follows:

Principals have the authority to maintain discipline in schools and provide safe, supportive, and responsive learning environments for both students and staff. To give effect to this authority, if any property or item is being used inappropriately by a student, principals and staff have the power of confiscation…. ‘Inappropriate use’ includes [personal property] being used in a way that is contrary to any applicable school rules [and] using it in a way that disrupts an individual’s learning…. Examples of property or items that may be confiscated if used inappropriately by students include … phones, iPods, laptops, recording devices, and play items…. (NSW DEC/Legal Issues Bulletin/Confiscation of Student Property, 2018, pp. 1-2)

The same Departmental document prescribes the action to be taken if a student refuses to hand over the item or property in question. Specified actions include detentions, referrals to the principal/executives, and parent-school interviews:
Action should be taken to refer the student to the principal or other relevant school executive. A refusal to comply with a reasonable request to hand over any item or property will result in the matter being dealt with under the school’s student discipline policy. This may result in detention or other forms of disciplinary action. If the circumstances warrant, parents may be asked to attend the school.... (NSWDE, 2018, p. 3)

Consistent with Departmental policy, Huckville policy holds with the view that student misuse of technology can lead to unacceptable disruption of teaching and/or learning. Consequently, the school prescribes disciplinary consequences for student misuse of technology that range from detention to suspension. Indeed, according to school policy, “repeat offenders” should not anticipate the return of their property at the end of the school day; instead, they should anticipate “return [of their property] to a parent in a meeting with a senior executive”. School policy reads as follows:

When technologies are misused by students they can be very disruptive to teaching and learning.... Students are to switch off mobile phones during lessons, assemblies, and any other meeting or school related learning activity. The use of a mobile phone at these times may be dealt with: by confiscation by a teacher; by confiscation and placement with a Deputy Principal with return at the end of the day for first time offenders; by confiscation for repeat offenders and sent to the deputy principal with return to a parent in a meeting with a senior executive.... Students must not use mobile phones or other devices to disrupt the learning environment.... Such activities may incur disciplinary action including suspension. This includes the use of iPods and MP3 players. (Huckville High School: Student Welfare Support, 2009, p. 24)

However, whilst ‘repeat offenders’ are threatened with consequences such as suspension and parent-school meetings, teacher reports bear no witness to escalations of this magnitude for ‘repeat offenders’. Instead, teacher reports indicate that the confiscated property of ‘repeat offenders’ (phones, iPods, and MP3 players) is invariably returned by executives to students either before or at the end of the school day. Consequently, experience has taught ‘repeat offenders’ to anticipate the swift return of their personal property, and experience has taught classroom teachers to anticipate the same ongoing battles with the same ‘repeat offenders’ in subsequent lessons. Reports indicate that this farcical three-way development has: facilitated proliferation of student misuse of personal technology; fuelled the flames of student vitriol towards teachers; and, contributed to the frequency and intensity of disruptive, aggressive, off-task student classroom behaviours. Hence, when teachers protest about the lack of consequences in relation to student misuse of technology, they are
lamenting the lack of more serious consequences for abusive ‘repeat offenders’ as outlined within both Departmental and school policy.

Since the introduction of laptops to the classroom, the temptation to play games instead of focusing on assigned tasks has noticeably contributed to problematic ‘commitment’ issues. Games, as a means of learning, have not been rejected by teachers; but problems arise when students fail to use their laptops for the task at hand. According to some teacher reports, a number of students surreptitiously resort to playing games on their laptops instead of attempting assigned tasks (for example, conducting research on a particular topic). Herein, active teacher ‘patrolling’ can be easily out-manoeuvred by students’ swift push of a laptop key. Ultimately, ‘commitment’ issues relevant to laptops include failure to bring/charge them, and failure to use them for the task at hand:

Hope: They're not working - they are playing games [on their laptops]! By the end of the lesson they've done nothing! If you challenge them they will ignore you. I can take the computer [but] that makes it my fault that they can't do any work.

Olga: And these kids with their beautiful laptops: It's at home, I didn't charge it. And it's the teacher’s problem, not their problem.

Students who are constantly preoccupied with texting on their mobile phone and/or listening to their iPods are neither focused on teacher explanation/instruction nor engaged in class discussion. Whilst school rules compel teachers to challenge student misuse of technology (off-task behaviour), it is students’ persistent refusal to either put away or relinquish their phones/iPods that produces protracted disruption in the form of a teacher-student standoff:

Fay: [They're] on their phone texting or using their iPod - and not removing it! I actually have to get a head teacher to intervene....

Gina: They listen to their iPod, refuse to move, and refuse to do anything. They'll turn their back to you or turn their chair around.

Pam: They refuse to hand over a phone when they've been texting! They don’t want to work!

Kate: Last week there was an issue with a student refusing to hand over [a mobile phone]....

Di: The phones are an issue - put it away, turn around, back out!
Alex: It's: I've got my iPod in! How dare you ask me to take it out! I'm halfway through a song!

Eve: They're off task - they're playing with their iPods and their phones!

Bea: [They] get the phone back out or put the iPod back in....

Concerned executives - including a senior executive - proffer corroboration of both the disruption and confrontation generated by students’ misuse of personal technology:

ROSE: Refusal to hand over mobile phones creates a huge issue in the classroom....

GUY: Mobiles and iPods are a big thing.... Johnny is listening to his iPod and won't give it to me!

SUE: Refusal to work and misuse of technology [are huge issues] - mobile phone usage, not taking [iPod] plugs out of their ears, and refusal to do any work.

TESS: They won't put away their phones and they won't hand them over.... I take [the student] out of the room....

However, whilst a number of interviewees express concern about the classroom disruption associated with student misuse of personal technology, the Principal’s commentary, relevant to the misuse of technology, is limited to the impact of offensive content (social networking) on student-student playground violence.

As alluded to in previous discussion, in spite of the number of behaviour notifications that teachers forward, and in spite of the number of times that students’ confiscated phones and iPods have made their way to the deputy’s office, it appears that implicated students are swiftly reunited with their personal property, and just as swift to reoffend. The relentless conflict associated with student misuse of technology is captured within one teacher’s reference to “constant battle”. Another teacher’s indignation is evident within her commentary about executive inconsistency in relation to student misuse of personal technology:

Kate: Last week there was an issue with a student refusing to hand over a mobile phone. I was teaching [in a classroom] out of faculty because my classroom was being used for an exam. Once the head teacher of this faculty found out that this [student’s refusal to put away/hand over her phone] was a regular occurrence in my class, he took it further. This is despite me writing behaviour notifications [in my own
faculty] and nothing ever happening. [A student] is sitting outside the deputy's office at the moment on an in-school suspension. She is playing on her mobile phone.

Fay: Some kids will have [a phone/iPod] sent down to the deputy three or four times over a few days [but] they've got it in the next lesson! It's a constant battle....

A twenty-first century ‘commitment’ issue, student misuse of personal technology within Huckville’s classrooms has served to place heavy demands on both teacher monitoring and teacher intervention. In addition, the corresponding inadequacy/inconsistency of systemic disciplinary consequences for student misuse of technology has further served to undermine on-task student behaviour, classroom order, and teacher authority. Whilst students appear to perceive personal technology as an ‘indispensable appendage’, the commonplace misuse of personal technology within the classroom has provided occasion for both increased off-task behaviour and increased student-teacher conflict. Indeed, at worst, teachers’ efforts to curb off-task student behaviours have triggered ‘impasse’ issues which serve to showcase student defiance of all levels of school authority.

4.2.4 Typologies: ‘Impasse’ Issues

Evident at Huckville, yet absent from the typologies identified in cited research literature, ‘student refusal to move’ (herein deemed an ‘impasse’ issue) constitutes a highly disruptive form of student resistance in terms of its magnitude - at worst, classroom proceedings grind to a halt, executive intervention is obligatory, and student resistance to all levels of authority (including senior executives) is played out in full view of an entire classroom. In my study, one third of participating classroom teachers (7/21) identify ‘student refusal to move’ as a stressor whilst the majority of participating executives (5/7) identify ‘student refusal to move’ as an issue of concern. Within my study, student refusal to move constitutes a defiant student stance that invariably emerges from teachers’ efforts to curb other fdsc behaviours.

Endorsed by Departmental policy, and subject to conditions, time-out strategies are used by classroom teachers in order to: support student self-calming; support student regulation of their behaviour; support on-task
behaviour; minimise disruption; and, provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their actions. In addition, time-out strategies need to be incorporated as part of a continuum of behavioural interventions in the school discipline policy:

Time-out strategies include isolation in the student's classroom, another teacher's room or with an executive member of staff, or the use of a dedicated time-out room.... A time-out strategy should be used only for the minimum period of time necessary for the student to regain enough composure to be able to return safely to class.... Procedures for the use of time-out strategies should include clearly articulated steps to be followed if a student does not comply with the time-out strategy, or if the use of the time-out strategy has not been successful in managing the behaviour of the student.... Training should be provided to school staff in the appropriate implementation of time-out procedures. (NSWDEC, Guidelines for the Use of Time-out Strategies Including Dedicated Time-out Rooms, 2011, pp. 3-4)

Teacher commentary related to 'student refusal to move' reveals: (1) the widespread disruption afforded by this behaviour (classroom proceedings stop, and executives are required to intervene); (2) student defiance of all levels of authority (teachers, head teachers, and deputies) in full view of an entire class; and, (3) the exacerbation of teacher stress levels as a consequence of both the behaviour and the attendant lack of systemic consequences/follow-up. Student refusal to move is both highly disruptive and highly disconcerting. Classroom teachers comment:

Nina: Recently, some kids refused to sit where I indicated [within the classroom]. They disturbed the whole class. In the following lesson they refused again - they defied the head teacher. I had to call for the deputy. They just sat there until [the deputy] hissed in their ear: Move now! This is stressing me because I know that those kids are going to turn up to my next lesson and we are going to have the same fight again....

Fay: You try to get them to move [but] they will ignore you.... Half the time, the head teacher actually has trouble trying to move them.... I find that very stressful because all the other kids in there are just watching....

Hope: The kids who are most contemptuous of me ... become defiant. They ignore you! They won't get out their books, they won't move, and they won't leave the room!

Gina: When students refuse to leave the room, I will leave the room and get [an executive].... I'm just at the point where there is nothing more I can do....

Di: I've had to seek executive assistance because they won't move or they won't go....
Pam: The head teacher will ask a kid to leave the room and the kid refuses to leave for her....

Ava: It’s refusing to move [and] having a three-minute argument about said movement....

Executive commentary represents ‘student refusal to move’ as an obstinate form of student behaviour that compels their intervention:

GUY: The biggest one for us is [student] failure to follow a reasonable instruction which then builds up to: No, I’m not going to go to the head teacher!

TESS: You’ll ask them to move, and more of them now are saying no - just straight out no!

SUE: Usually a child won't leave [the room] so then it's a case of me having to go: With me - now!

HAL: The only time I ever really get called is when a student refuses to come to me.... It's mandatory that if they get sent to me, they get put on detention [by the classroom teacher]....

IAN: I had to physically remove [one boy] from a room. Two of us had to hold him....

As Ian continues below, his representation of a removal incident as “water off a duck’s back” tends to minimise the disruptive, disconcerting impact of this student behaviour on both teachers and classroom proceedings. At the same time, his acknowledgement of increasing defiance, which he attributes to an increasing number of students with ‘significant issues’, implicates the need for increased systemic social support of teachers:

IAN: He was kicking me and hitting me - basically, water off a duck's back to me. I think the emergence of kids with significant issues in mainstream settings has exacerbated that [absolute defiance stuff].

At Huckville, ‘student refusal to move’ constitutes an fdsd behaviour that showcases student defiance of all levels of authority, and brings classroom proceedings to a halt. However, the burden of disciplinary responsibility for ‘student refusal to move’ (an ‘impasse’ issue) and other fdsd behaviours has been largely placed on classroom teachers’ shoulders; and, in the absence of strategies and practices that serve to protect/promote student-teacher relationships, student ‘bullying’ of teachers has intensified. Indeed, in my study, student verbal abuse of teachers - reported as a direct consequence of teachers’ efforts to address ‘talk’, ‘commitment’,
‘technology’, ‘bullying’, and ‘impasse’ issues - has served to impair teacher wellbeing. Moreover, the absence of systemic strategies/practices that purport to protect/promote student-teacher relationships has served to exacerbate impaired teacher wellbeing.

4.2.5 Typologies: ‘Bullying’ Issues

Whilst research literature indicates that ‘bullying’ constitutes a problematic student-student behaviour, my study demonstrates that student verbal abuse of teachers is implicated as a direct consequence of teachers’ efforts to address fdsc behaviours (‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, ‘impasse’, and ‘bullying’ issues). At Huckville, the bulk of participating classroom teachers (19/21) identify ‘bullying’ as a stressor, and the bulk of participating executives (5/7) identify ‘bullying’ as an issue of concern. Teachers’ references to systemic inaction in relation to verbally abusive students allude to perceptions of the school’s reticence to impose suspensions, and/or the absence of systemic social support subsequent to incidents of abuse. Ultimately, whilst exacerbating the lack of both social cohesion and respect within classrooms, ‘unchecked’ student verbal abuse of teachers has served to intensify teacher demoralisation, and impair teacher wellbeing. Indeed, teachers feel that they are not cared for.

Policymakers consider teacher wellbeing a crucial factor in both student learning and student wellbeing - essentially, student success is contingent upon teacher wellbeing. The National Safe Schools Framework (2011), produced by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), prioritises practice that supports both promotion/maintenance of teacher wellbeing and promotion of student responsibility. Endorsed practices include both positive behaviour management and restorative justice sessions. Whilst MCEECDYA identifies the characteristics and practices of a safe school environment, the promotion of staff wellbeing is considered ‘critical’:

[School leadership should exhibit] acceptance of responsibility for the development and maintenance of a safe, supportive, and respectful learning and working environment for all members of the school community…. Staff wellbeing is promoted, as it is critical to student wellbeing and student learning…. Teachers
take responsibility for developing and maintaining a positive and supportive relationship with all students. The school has established structures that provide a systematic and coherent focus on staff wellbeing to identify appropriate actions and interventions. All members of the school community are aware of the right to seek help to resolve situations of aggression, discrimination and bullying. The school considers approaches to whole-school behaviour management [such as] positive behaviour support, restorative practices, and programs that focus on recognition of pro-social behaviour and clear consequences for negative behaviour. [This includes] encouraging students to accept greater responsibility for their actions. (MCEECDYA, 2011, pp. 18, 21-24 & 30)

At Huckville, a number of teachers’ routine efforts to address ‘commitment’, ‘talk’, ‘technology’, and ‘impasse’ issues have rendered them the victims of student verbal abuse. The student-posed rhetorical question ‘Who do you think you are?’ illustrates the tenor of one student’s contempt for teacher authority. Teachers’ straightforward requests for students to stop talking, remove backpacks, take out essential equipment, and ‘do some work’, have served to elicit vitriolic profanities and/or homophobic slurs from implicated students. Teachers’ straightforward requests for students to hand over misused technology (school rules) and/or physically relocate have also served to elicit student verbal abuse:

Eve: It’s straight up: I’m not fucking doing it!

Meg: Asking them to do some work will spark them off: Fuck this! Cunt! You’re gay! They can do and say whatever they like, and get away with it....

Alex: I asked a student the other day to take his work out and get started and he said: You fuck off! I’m talking to another student! This resulted in a behaviour notification and he’s back in class today!

Kate: Fuck off! Shit! Mother-fucker! Bitch! Get fucked! [This is the response to]: Please get your books and equipment out! Please turn around and stop talking! I’ll write [a behaviour notification] even though I know that nothing’s going to happen....

Ita: They are swearing constantly at me and at other students - screaming and not paying attention. All they want to do is talk and muck up: I hate this shit! I don’t want to do this crap! This is gay! I have had kids call me a bitch and tell me to fuck off. I’ve been called a fat cunt.... I would do a behaviour notification and put them on detention. But nothing else happens.

Cora: I asked [a Year 9 girl] to take her bag off her back: Fuck off! I don’t have to take my fuckin’ bag off if I don’t want to! [Recently] a boy told me to ‘fuck off’ and simply refused to do any work. The head teacher just said: He’s not usually like this, is he? Usually it starts with asking them to take their bag off their back, asking them to take out their book.... They end up telling me to fuck off. It’s happened numerous
times.... I was asking [a Year 7 boy] to do his work - a drawing - something as simple as that. He called me a fucking cunt.

Pam: They refuse to hand over a phone when they've been texting: Get fucked! Ahh!

Ava: I get sworn at: I'm not fucking doing this! Fucking bitch! Last week there was a girl who swore at me - she wouldn't move. She said: I'm not fucking doing as you say!

Fay: I told a student that I was going to take her phone and she said: Fuck you! You can't touch that! Who do you think you are? And I couldn't even move her in class. She just refused.... I did a behaviour notification [but] that was the last I heard of it. It's a constant battle....

Teachers’ efforts to deal with fdsc behaviours have also elicited reputational threats/insults and sexual harassment for which greater development of systemic social support for teachers is implicated. These student behaviours have served to exacerbate teacher distress, teacher vulnerability, and teacher demoralisation:

Cora: Recently, I put a Year 8 girl outside the classroom because she called me a 'fucking dog'. She said: I'm going to spread rumours about you and get you fired! It made me cry. [The male deputy] did nothing about it.... You feel unsafe.... There's no support for the teachers - none whatsoever.

Ava: [Some girls] on detention were overheard [by the head teacher] saying: How about we tell the deputy that this teacher hit us? Say that she hit us! This was never dealt with.... They can say what they want....

Hope: My Year 9 class won’t let me give a general explanation to the room.... They will then attack me because I’ve checked their persistent misbehaviour: You're a crap teacher! You're mad! We are humiliated and belittled on a personal and professional level every day....

Ita: Three Year 10 boys ... were calling [another female teacher and me] useless bitches, drawing penises on paper, and saying that we had ‘camel-toe’ [which] is the outline of your vagina through your pants. They said: As if you'd know what a dick looks like! [The deputy] told me not to worry about it.... I certainly feel very demoralised - and I don't want to be a teacher anymore.

Whilst “parents are expected to support the school in the implementation of the school discipline policy” (NSW Department of Education: Student Discipline in Government Schools Policy, 2017, p. 2), some teachers indicate that their efforts to challenge fdsc behaviours have been undermined by the withdrawal of parental support and/or parental
aggression. Teacher reports indicate that parental aggression has included verbal abuse, accusations of racial prejudice, physical intimidation, and threats of legal action. In addition, vague warnings issued by executives to teachers about “problem” parents (“be very careful”) have only served to exacerbate teacher uncertainty in relation to ‘untouchable’ students. Indeed, in the absence of clear systemic protocols that serve to safeguard teacher-parent relations, it is the combination of both student and parent contempt for teachers that has led to a climate in which some teachers are: (1) “frightened to take kids on”; (2) disinclined to contact parents for fear of anticipated abuse; and, (3) robbed of their ability to efficiently function as managers of student behaviour. The teachers comment:

Di: A teacher in my staffroom rang a parent. [She] got such an amount of verbal abuse hurled at her - she was in tears.... She had to go home.... She tried to come back but she had to be driven home [again].... It didn’t worry the mother that her daughter had been foul-mouthed and revolting.... I don’t like phoning! What if I got somebody who is really abusive?

Di: Two kids walked off on me. One of them had those strappy bag things. I just tugged it. All I wanted to know was who they were. [She] went off! [She said] she was going to ring her dad and get him to come up and bash me. Her dad did actually go straight to the police and wanted to have me charged with assault.... He has physically intimidated [the female deputy].... That kid wasn’t made to apologise to me or anything else.... We’ve become frightened to take kids on because the Department won’t back you, the parents won’t back you.

Eve: I put a kid in the prep room [for verbal abuse]. He [then] stole matches and lit bins out the front of the school.... He swears at people in the classroom and I won’t have it.... Now, I don’t chase [him] because his mother calls the race card quite regularly.... I’ve heard the deputy say: Be very careful with [this mother and son] - the mother is causing a problem! We are being told: Do not have any high expectations of this child! I don’t want the thugs in charge! I find the whole [school] culture actually quite repulsive....

Whilst the principal’s stated greatest concern is student-student physical violence in the playground, teacher reports indicate that student physical violence (and/or the threat of student physical violence) is also a classroom issue. Reported classroom physical violence perpetrated by students includes: hitting students over the head; tackling students off their chairs; shoving teachers and students to the floor; ‘shaping up’ to teachers; throwing objects across/near teachers’ faces; throwing chairs across the
classroom; throwing chairs out/through classroom windows; and, destruction of school property. The threat of physical violence is contained within verbal statements (“I’m going to snot someone in a minute!”), use of voice (yelling, shouting, talking over, swearing), and body language (“standing over” others). In the apparent absence of system-wide protocols that aim to procure restorative justice, both low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations and damaged teacher-student relations are evident. Alex is prepared to physically defend himself, Eve is at the end of her tether, Col is sick and tired of the constant need to be on high alert, and Fay is unable to do ‘pracs’ with students in view of her perception of threatened safety. Whilst aggressive students ‘exhibit wildly’ and ‘rule the classroom’, and implicated teachers feel unsafe and/or anxious and/or angry, the strength of language such as ‘hate’ and ‘ugly’ serves to capture teachers’ embittered attitudes toward abusive, aggressive students. The teachers comment:

Alex: [The male deputy] has a nice, pleasant chat with them. [He] doesn't see them in the pack mentality.... I don't send them to [the deputy] anymore. I've already had a couple of Year 9 kids shape up to me [and] I've actually replied: I don't have to be here so you'd better make the first one a good one because I will hit back!

Eve: I had one kid getting quite violent during a practical. The kid basically said to the deputy: We were just mucking around! And then it gets back to me: They were just mucking around! It was a serious bullying event between two boys! My attempts to maintain discipline and a safe work practice were…. [Eve growls]. It's too hard!

Olga: More and more [students] are either suppressing their anxieties or throwing chairs - they exhibit wildly.... My aides have students blatantly swearing at them [and] standing over them....

Jan: There’s such animosity between kids! It’s the bullies! My Year 9 boys were particularly aggressive towards me and other kids. They didn’t want to learn! They just wanted to rule the classroom!

Col: All I got [from one Year 9 boy] was aggression - I'm going to snot someone in a minute! [Another boy] is a time and energy soak.... The moment I walk away [from him], BANG, what was that? He's wrecked something, pushed somebody over!

Pam: I had a chair thrown out of my window here some weeks ago. It's just dreadful! Ugly!

Ita: In my first week here, two girls ranted and raved and threw a chair across the room. They stormed out saying: This is fuckin' gay! You're a fuckin’ dog! And nothing happened....
Fay: I hate that [Year 10] class! You dumb bitch! You slut! One will go over to another kid and hit him in the head or tackle him off his seat.... I couldn't do a prac with them because I didn't trust them - and I didn't feel safe.... I felt tense and anxious.

Nina: I had some kids on detention and another bunch of kids tried to stir up trouble.... I was holding on to the door and the four of them shoved until I flew halfway across the room....

Teacher wellbeing (if not teacher retention) has suffered as a consequence of the absence of systemic disciplinary/social support following incidents of student verbal abuse/violence. The tables at the start of this section indicate those teachers who left Huckville in the 1-2 years following the completion of interviews. Teacher reports clearly identify adverse psychological/physiological symptoms that include: depression, anxiety, distress, revulsion, vulnerability, hyper-vigilance, dread, panic, feelings of resentment, feelings of inadequacy, increased heart rates, disturbing dreams, wakeful nights, and mounting aggression. The teachers comment:

Ed: Disrespect and humiliation! Swearing is something that we need to deal with in this school....

Doug: You assume that if you get sworn at then [kids] get ‘sent’ - but it just doesn’t happen.... There's a lot of frustration [and] disillusion... Morale's down in the whole school. You're getting treated like shit here and not getting any support....

Ita: One of my Year 8 girls went off tap - Fuck this! Fuck you! She stormed out, slammed the door. Five minutes later, she came back in with a note from [the deputy] saying: I’m dealing with K - let this slide.... I went down to speak to [the deputy] about it and he said: I’m dealing with it. He put his hand up. He didn’t look at me at all. And I assumed that that was my indication to exit, which I did. I actually feel that I can’t go and speak to him about students anymore....

Kate: Fuck off! Shit! Mother-fucker! Bitch! Get fucked! I'll just write it up even though I know that nothing's going to happen.... I'm worthless. I've been thinking about leaving teaching.... It's abuse.... I'm not being allowed to do my job....

Nina: I've asked students to move or [start] work and they've replied with ‘fuck off’ or ‘fucking bitch’.... I've ended up down in the deputy's office in tears just saying: I have been sworn at over and over again and I report it and nothing happens! If you want to make teachers feel like crap, [then] this is the way to do it!

Fay: You dumb bitch! You slut! One will go over to another kid and hit him in the head or tackle him off his seat.... When I get stressed my heart rate increases and the baby kicks a lot, and whenever I had [this particular class] the baby was usually going pretty strong.... I dreaded going to that class.
Alex: Typical behaviour? I asked a student the other day to take his work out and he said: *Well, you fuck off! I'm talking to another student!* I've been away from teaching for three or four years and then to come back into this has been…. (*Alex chokes*). It's the first time I've ever dreamt about kids at school - I wake up from a [disturbing] dream. With my heart condition, I can feel the stress on my heart…. I was either going to belt someone or be ill! I felt ill!

Col: I was really disillusioned [when the deputy sent a verbally abusive kid straight back to my classroom]…. The deputy said: *Don't worry about that*…. He just walked off…. [Kids have] told me to get fucked and called me a faggot - there was no support there whatsoever! Some girl called [my colleague] a dumb, fat, fucking slut. The person who runs [the behaviour committee] went: *We'll note that.* Other committee members said: *You're kidding!*

Pam: There is a group of kids in this class who are like a [merciless] hunting pack…. They just keep ranting and raving at me…. Ah, hell! (*Pam commences crying*). It is hell! I hate it! I absolutely hate it! (*Pam continues crying. Interview stopped. Pam insists on continuing*)…. They refuse to leave the room…. It is so stressful…. I can no longer cope with teaching…. I've applied for a job that is $20,000 less a year and I'm hoping I get it…. I get no joy out of teaching.

Head teacher reports corroborate the inadequacy and/or absence of system-wide social support protocols for teachers who have been victimised by student abuse/violence. Together, Sue and Guy corroborate the presence of ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘impasse’, and ‘technology’ issues as antecedents to the incidence of student abuse/violence. Three male head teachers consider the level of student verbal abuse hurled at teachers to be intolerable (“horrendous”). Hal believes that abusive students “should be removed” from the classroom (if not the school), and Guy insists upon “serious consequences” for abusive students. Fred bemoans the absence of both systemic consequences for verbally abusive students (“nothing’s happened”) and systemic social support for teachers who have been verbally abused by students (“not being supported”). Whilst Guy insists that he’d be personally “marching” implicated students to the deputy’s office, Hal’s need to ‘monitor’ proceedings between the deputy and implicated students implies his lack of faith in the deputy’s handling of incidents relevant to student verbal abuse of teachers:

SUE: *[The] swearing irks me…. [It’s] refusal to do work then standing up to the teacher and acting in a threatening way. It's intimidating behaviour and inciting others to disrupt…. I've been called an overbearing bitch by a Year 11 girl because I told her to put her*
mobile phone away. One of my first year [female] teachers has been told: Just leave me fuckin’ alone! I hope you get raped by a dog! This is when they were asked to write three lines....

GUY: The kid who’s been in trouble then told to stand outside for two minutes says: No, get fucking! I don’t tolerate any verbal abuse of a teacher! And I’d be marching them up to [the deputy] and expecting to see some fairly serious consequences....

HAL: If a teacher is sworn at by a student, [then] that student should be removed so that everybody else in that class knows that’s unacceptable behaviour! [Hal commences thumping his desk with a closed fist]. I’ll say [to the deputy]: This student has sworn at a teacher! Here are the circumstances that led to the student swearing at the teacher! We know that that’s unacceptable! I don’t leave [the office]....

FRED: I hate the swearing! [It] really upsets me.... So, if you swear at a teacher - you [should be] out the door! Some of the things that the students say and do are quite horrendous.... It feels like what used to be occasional is now the norm.... I’ve heard students swear at a teacher and nothing’s happened. And you’re like: What the hell - I’m not being supported! And it makes me angry - and it makes my staff angry.... I don’t necessarily agree with the way [that the deputy] handles things.

TESS: The swearing grates - students are being malicious. [There are] pockets of kids who are out of control - a pack mentality.... [There are] students telling teachers to get fucking.... Teachers are having difficulty getting on with their teaching and getting through content because you’ve got kids in there who are virtually bullying the whole room....

Head teacher reports indicate that parents' explicit support of their children's defiance of teachers has resulted in both sustained student audacity and executive inertia:

TESS: Recently, one of our quietest members of staff phoned a parent to let her know that her daughter was not in class. The parent proceeded to tell [this teacher] that [the girl] wouldn't be going to her class anymore. The parent was saying: It's your fault! You're the one she can't get on with! [This Year 7 student] has had suspensions [and] the matter still hasn't been resolved.... I went looking for [this girl] the other day.... She said: My mother told me not to go to that teacher's class! Totally unfounded!

Thus far, discussion has established that student verbal abuse of teachers at Huckville: has not been uncommon; has typically emerged from teachers’ efforts to manage/curb fdsc behaviours; has served to impair teacher wellbeing; and, has not been met with follow-up practices that serve to support and/or restore student-teacher relationships. Indeed, in view of the
absence/inadequacy of system-wide social supports, teachers’ efforts to
curb/manage fdsc behaviours are effectively rendered ‘risk-taking’
behaviours - yet the overriding emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc
behaviours still prevails. For example, although Hal substantiates the
prevalence of student defiance and admits to the presence of student
‘bullying’ of teachers, he remains exasperated by what he perceives as
teacher failure to challenge student defiance:

HAL: [During lesson time] I see students outside in the quadrangle who are
clearly not where they’re meant to be, and teachers walking straight
past them and not challenging them! I think this abdication of
responsibility by teachers is coming about because students are
defiant - there are some students who bully teachers....

Hal’s personal experience with student vindictiveness, outlined in the excerpt
below, serves to illuminate possible reasons for some teachers’ reserve in
relation to ‘challenging’ students. Indeed, in view of Hal’s personal
experience with vindictive students, teacher ‘failure’ to challenge defiant
students is rendered pragmatic behaviour:

HAL: Yeah, a lot of kids hate my guts and I’ve paid a price for that.... Our
letterbox was blown up last year with gelignite. [A neighbour] got a
numberplate. Kids drove up to our house during the middle of the day
[and] blew up our letterbox.... Last term I had a rock, half the size of a
brick, thrown through the front lounge room window.... Bits of glass
were embedded [in] our hardwood coffee table..... And I know who
blew up our letterbox [but] that [student] was never punished. So,
yeah, you pay the price for drawing the line in the sand....

Meanwhile, in spite of the deleterious effects of student verbal abuse
on both student-teacher relationships and teacher wellbeing, and in spite of
the school’s mission statement and core rules/values, the principal’s
dismissal of swearing as ‘class-bound’ discourse constitutes a minority
stance. Huckville’s mission statement asserts that the school “aims to
provide a safe and happy environment”. Core values in relation to respectful
communication are clearly indicated:

- Be friendly and polite - use manners (please, thank you)
- Listen to others - respect the speaker
- Use a respectful tone when speaking to others
- No swearing - always use appropriate, polite language
- Accept correction of behaviour
- Solve disagreements with respectful language
Nevertheless, the principal asserts that placing restraints on students who ‘naturally’ swear is somewhat unfair, unrealistic, and restrictive:

IAN: You have kids that you pull up for swearing, and [talk] to their parents, and [realise] that’s exactly how they talk at home. And here we are putting parameters on them and expecting them to conform when naturally the way they converse outside the place is like that. So you’re putting some unnatural things in place….

He also claims that departmental suspension categories do not cater to isolated incidents of verbal abuse:

IAN: When Little Johnny says “fuck off” … it doesn’t sit there! [It is not] ‘persistent disobedience’.

However, according to Departmental policy, ‘verbal abuse’ constitutes an example of ‘aggressive behaviour’ which is not required to be ‘persistent’ (‘continued’) in order to attract a short suspension:

Continued disobedience includes, but is not limited to … refusal to obey staff instructions; defiance; disrupting other students…. Aggressive behaviour includes, but is not limited to … hostile behaviour … bullying (including cyber bullying); verbal abuse and abuse transmitted electronically…. (Suspension and Expulsion of School Students: Procedures 2011, p. 7)

At best, the principal’s stance may be interpreted as an effort to appear inclusive in relation to so-called ‘class-bound’ discourses. However, whilst executives have debated and prevaricated over policy in relation to students’ use of ‘bad’ language, heightened intimidation (‘bullying’), impaired relationships, and impaired wellbeing have resulted. Essentially, misplaced notions of ‘inclusion’ have served to damage relationships, and they have also served to thwart practice that aims to restore damaged relationships:

GUY: It got debated at length last year - in executive [meetings] - about tolerating bad language in the school…. I don’t think the discussion ever got resolved….

At Huckville, student verbal abuse of teachers has typically emerged from participating teachers’ efforts to manage/curb fdsc behaviours; indeed, straightforward teacher requests - ‘take out your books’, ‘listen to each other’, ‘start working’, ‘put your phones in your bags’, ‘turn around’, ‘move to the front’ - have been met with insults, profanities, and public humiliation. The bulk of participants have expressed incredulity in relation to the absence of
both systemic consequences and systemic social support following incidents that involve student verbal abuse of teachers. Teacher-student relationships have suffered. Moreover, according to reports, some participating teachers’ health conditions (heart disease, burnout, foetal distress, and clinically diagnosed depression and/or anxiety) have been instigated and/or aggravated by both antisocial student behaviour and the absence of systemic social support (relevant to student victimisation of teachers).

However, in spite of Departmental intolerance (suspension is specified as a penalty for aggressive behaviour), and in spite of the deleterious effects of student verbal abuse on both teacher wellbeing and classroom functioning, the principal is swayed by the belief that placing restraints on certain students’ ‘customary’ language, albeit aggressive, would be socially prejudicial. This misplaced deference to discursive practices associated with perceptions of social class fails to take into account the bigger picture, and, in doing so, fails to adequately prepare students for future relations (both intimate and social). Verbal abuse is implicated in both relationship breakdowns and domestic violence. Students need good relationships with their teachers, teachers need to use discursive practices that demonstrate respect for students, students need to be made aware of the impact of verbal abuse and aggression on their relationships, and both students and teachers require the assistance of systemic practices that purport to support student-teacher relationships. However, at Huckville, action in relation to student verbal abuse of teachers - that is, students’ use of so-called ‘bad language’ - is largely undecided.

4.3 CONCLUSION

At Huckville, fdsc behaviours rank as the chief stressor of participating classroom teachers, and the chief concern of participating executives bar one. Fdsc behaviours (‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, ‘bullying’, and ‘impasse’ issues) have served to obstruct teaching and learning, frustrate cooperative students, and impair teacher wellbeing. Student defiance of authority at large (‘impasse’ issues) tends to emerge from teachers’ efforts to
curb ‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, and ‘bullying’ issues; and, student verbal abuse of classroom teachers tends to emerge from teachers’ efforts to curb any/all of the fdsc behaviours identified.

Teachers are professionally required to manage classroom behaviour. Indeed, the way in which teachers communicate with students is a vital component of the teaching role - it is necessary for teachers to demonstrate respect for their students, and it also necessary for teachers to investigate reasons for student behaviour. Secondary school students, particularly juniors, face multiple transitional pressures. At the same time, teachers can never be fully cognisant of the pressures on, and assumptions made by, each and every one of their students. Sound student-teacher relationships will, by and large, help ease the pressures felt by students, and curtail both students’ and teachers’ false assumptions; however, such relationships require systemic social support. Moreover, there will be times when the anti-social behaviour exhibited by a student has nothing whatsoever to do with his/her teacher (e.g., ongoing student-student bullying/cyber bullying, family issues), yet the behaviour manifests at a particular moment in a particular classroom. The absence of school-wide practice that purports to support student-teacher relationships is evident at this school, which is not remarkably different from others in its region/system.

In the following chapter, I will make use of participants’ voices to demonstrate that the absence/inadequacy of supportive organisation disciplinary/social practices (relevant to fdsc behaviours) in combination with the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours has served to negatively impact on school climate - indeed, student socialisation, student learning, and teacher wellbeing are compromised.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter I identified student behaviours that constitute fdsc behaviours according to the teachers and executives I interviewed at Huckville. There, as represented in Figure 5.1, I demonstrated that student verbal abuse of teachers is largely perceived as a direct product of classroom teachers’ efforts to manage/curb fdsc behaviours.

Interviewees’ perceptions of the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, as well as the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for these behaviours, paint a picture of a school culture that is characterised by classroom disorder, teacher dysfunction, and distrust between supervisors and subordinates (see Figure 5.2) (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Carosi & Tindale, 1995; Finnigan, 2012; Gavish & Friedman, 2011; Hemmings, 2012; Lee, Dedrick, & Smith, 1991; Lee & Nie, 2014; Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012; Price, 2012; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Suber, 2011; Troman, 2000; Wildy & Clarke, 2012; Zhu et al., 2012). Indeed, the potential for teacher burnout (if not teacher attrition) is implicated within this culture (Abel & Sewell, 1999; Barmby, 2006; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000;
Dinham, 1995; Dorman, 2003; Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Fernet et al., 2012; Fetherston & Lummis, 2012; Hart et al. 1993; Troman & Woods, 2000; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). State/national policy in relation to professional practice explicitly states that the role of school leadership is to “implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues” and “promote student responsibility for learning” (NSW Education Standards Authority [NESA], *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*, 2018, p. 14). However, at Huckville, as I show in this Chapter, existing disciplinary practice relevant to fdsc behaviours effectively serves to punish teachers.

Figure 5.2: Problematic Organisational Variables in Relation to FDSC Behaviours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable: The Low Organisational Status of FDSC Behaviours</th>
<th>Variable: The Organisational Emphasis on Teacher Responsibility for FDSC Behaviours</th>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence: The Absence/Inadequacy of Systemic Disciplinary Consequences (Escalations) + The Misappropriation of Teacher Time (Within the Classroom)</td>
<td>Evidence: Systemic Reliance on Teacher Action (Detentions &amp; Legwork) + The Misappropriation of Teacher Time (Beyond the Classroom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicated Burnout/Attrition Factors:</td>
<td>Implicated Burnout/Attrition Factors:</td>
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<td>Student Misbehaviour (1 of 4)</td>
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<td>Obstructed Teaching &amp; Learning</td>
<td>Excessive Teacher (Disciplinary) Workload</td>
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<td>Increased Student Frustration</td>
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<td>Proliferation/Intensification of Fdsc Behaviours</td>
<td>Impaired Teacher Wellbeing</td>
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<td>Low-Trust Supervisor-Subordinate Relations</td>
<td>Proliferation/Intensification of Fdsc Behaviours</td>
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<td>Low-Trust Supervisor-Subordinate Relations</td>
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**SCHOOL CULTURE: DISORDER + DYSFUNCTION + DISTRUST**

At Huckville, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours is particularly evident in the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations) relevant to fdsc behaviours. Indeed, fdsc behaviours are a teacher problem. Consistent with this designation, the
organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours is particularly evident within systemic overreliance on teacher-supervised detentions (and associated teacher legwork) as the chief means of responding to fdsc behaviours. Beyond the classroom, in addition to the supervision of detentions, teachers are charged with physically combing the school grounds in search of students who have refused/failed - perhaps, repeatedly - to attend assigned detentions. Moreover, the penalty for student refusal/failure to attend an assigned detention is additional teacher-supervised detentions. Indeed, fdsc behaviours are very much a teacher problem. School policy clearly emphasises the need for consistent use of teacher-supervised detentions on an extensive range of disciplinary matters. At the same time, teachers are effectively restrained from seeking executive assistance in view of the explicit caution that such action may result in the loss of respect for them:

Passing a matter on may reduce the respect that a student has for a teacher. [If students refuse to follow teacher instructions, then] teachers [should] offer students the choice of complying with the reasonable request or an alternate consequence, for example, detention…. Students who are late to class without an excuse should be detained by the teacher…. Student failure to bring equipment - [impose a] detention…. [Students who swear at other students] should be given a detention…. Continuous poor classroom behaviour - only after all avenues of classroom management have been exhausted should it be necessary to involve a Head Teacher…. Refusal to turn up to detention [or] walking away from a teacher when asked to stay - classroom teachers follow up. Remind the student that they now have two detentions…. Refusing to follow an instruction in the playground - don’t expect [the Head Teacher on duty] to impose the consequences…. Note uniform breeches - issue detentions…. (Huckville High Welfare, Creating a Culture of Consistency, 2012, pp. 12-14)

The stifling of escalating systemic consequences evident within this welfare policy serves to highlight the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours at Huckville. Commensurate with this organisational status, classroom teachers’ onerous responsibility for fdsc behaviours - both within and beyond the classroom - has left the bulk of interviewed teachers feeling exhausted, demoralised, and punished:

Kate: I do my best by keeping them in for a detention [but] every time I have to locate [students] for a detention, it’s my time that I’m wasting - my recess and my lunch, my prep time or my free period…. I’m taking the time to do it and I don’t get the backup when I fill in those behaviour notifications…. 
As problematic derivative issues of fdsc behaviours, neither the misappropriation of teacher time beyond the classroom (teacher-supervised detentions and associated legwork as common practice) nor the implications of student failure/refusal to attend an assigned detention (continued disobedience amassing additional teacher-supervised detentions) is explored in cited research literature.

At Huckville, systemic toleration of fdsc behaviours has seemingly facilitated the emergence of a school culture that is characterised by interviewees as involving: (1) the rule of student aggression (a hostile, verbally abusive, anti-academic, mostly male, ‘jock’ culture); (2) the prevalence of teacher dysfunction (exhaustion, victimisation, and demoralisation); and, (3) the pervasiveness of low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations. Indeed, during the conduct of my interviews at Huckville, the male deputy’s announcement of finalised protocols for a newly-implemented isolation room was perceived by many interviewees as disappointing proof of both the organisational toleration of fdsc behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours. As interviewees explain, although teachers had expressed a desire for a supervised space to which they, themselves, could directly send disruptive/abusive students, this desire was disappointingly thwarted by finalised protocols that restricted the space to deputy referral of “two or three students”. Meanwhile, state policy indicates that, among other things, time-out may be teacher directed:

The use of a dedicated time-out room should only be implemented … following full consultation with the school community…. Time-out may be teacher directed…. The use of a dedicated time-out room should not be an alternative to suspension…. Procedures to be followed if a student does not comply with the use of the time-out room, or if the use of the time-out room is not successful in managing the behaviour of the student, [must be] developed…. (NSWDEC, 2011, pp. 3-4 & 7)

At Huckville, neither classroom teachers nor head teachers are permitted to direct disruptive/abusive/aggressive students to the isolation room, and teachers’ weekly responsibilities were extended in order to sustain operation of this space. As evidenced within the data, the isolation room was implemented as a ‘strategic’ means to ameliorate external perceptions of
Huckville’s suspension statistics, and teachers’ awareness of this purpose served to exacerbate their demoralisation, cynicism, and antipathy.

Hence, at Huckville, in spite of the detrimental impact of fdsc behaviours on both the core business of schooling and teacher wellbeing, and in spite of professional standards that insist upon leadership responsibility for both behaviour management initiatives and promotion of student responsibility (NESA, 2018), fdsc behaviours appear to be neither a systemic priority nor a shared responsibility. Indeed, it seems that Huckville’s emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours has merely served to intensify student aggression, teacher dysfunction, and low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations.

5.2 MY INTERVIEWEES: MORE REPRESENTATIVE THAN REMARKABLE

Whilst the representativeness of my samples has implications in terms of validity, my analysis of computer-registered student behaviour notifications serves to distinguish my interviewees as more ‘representative’ than ‘remarkable’. Twelve students explicitly identified by my interviewees as particularly problematic in terms of their anti-social behaviours are represented in Table 5.1 (see over the page). In 2010, over 30 school weeks, the majority of these students (10/12) were implicated in the production of notifications from the majority of faculties; and, for the majority of these students (8/12), staff members who did not participate in my research were responsible for more than half the number of registered behaviour notifications. All of these students, bar one, are implicated in both playground incidents and multiple instances of student failure/refusal to attend/complete teacher-assigned detentions. This information demonstrates that neither a particular faculty nor a particular teacher stands out in terms of having ‘problems’ with these particular students. Hence, the notion that my interviewees constitute the set of teachers who are mostly experiencing student behaviour problems is considerably undermined. In addition, my analysis of computer-registered behaviour reports serves to confirm interviewees’ reports of head teacher inaction relevant to student behaviour. Whilst I am unable to confirm head teacher failure to enter a behaviour
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT (Years 7-10)</th>
<th>M1</th>
<th>F1</th>
<th>M2</th>
<th>F2</th>
<th>M3</th>
<th>M4</th>
<th>M5</th>
<th>M6</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>M7</th>
<th>M8</th>
<th>M9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of entries over 30 weeks</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage of entries by staff not interviewed</td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>&gt; 33%</td>
<td>&gt; 33%</td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
<td>&gt; 50%</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour: Persistent Disobedience/Disruptive Behaviour/Verbal Abuse/Bullying/Harassment</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour: Physical Violence/Vandalism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour: Truancy</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student failure/refusal to attend/complete detentions</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short/Long suspensions</td>
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<td>1/0</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>4/0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


notification, I am able to confirm computer-registered instances of head teacher inaction within five different faculties (relevant to the twelve students indicated). Analysis of computer-registered behaviour notifications also confirmed examples of inconsistency relevant to systemic disciplinary consequences (suspensions). Within interviews, participants expressed frustration in relation to their perceptions of absent, inadequate, and
inconsistent systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations) for student behaviour. Analysis of computer-registered behaviour notifications confirms these perceptions. For example, four short suspensions have been imposed on both M1 and M9; however, in spite of this parity in terms of official consequences, M1 has attracted more than three times the number of behaviour notifications attracted by M9. M1 has attracted 52 behaviour reports from 7 faculties (and teachers on playground duty) over 30 weeks, and M9 has attracted 16 behaviour reports from 5 faculties (and teachers on playground duty) over 30 weeks (see Table 5.1).

5.3 THE LOW ORGANISATIONAL STATUS OF FDSC BEHAVIOURS

At Huckville, the misappropriation of teacher class time is a substantial product of the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours. Both classroom teachers and students note the adverse impact of these behaviours on teacher capacity to teach, student capacity to learn, and social relationships; indeed, student awareness of systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours has served to facilitate intensification of these behaviours. From the comments I highlight below, it is clear that teacher reports are couched in language that expresses negation (for example, “not held accountable”). Such language serves to emphasise the absence and/or inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations). Language that expresses ‘shock and awe’ (for example, “it’s a battlefield”) serves to emphasise the presence of heightened student aggression. Ultimately, organisational indifference to fdsc behaviours (which, at times, teachers scornfully refer to as ‘petty crimes’) has facilitated intensification of both fdsc behaviours and the victimisation of classroom teachers (teachers as victims of student aggression and verbal abuse).

5.3.1 The Misappropriation of Teacher Class Time Due to FDSC Behaviours

Classroom teachers view the misappropriation of class time as a direct and unjust threat to the quality of students’ education. They feel particularly ill at ease about students who desire but are not getting “the best
level of education”. Moreover, student awareness of fdsc behaviours as an obstruction to their education serves to heighten teachers’ exasperation, anxiety, and guilt. Teacher reports indicate that the consumption of teacher class time by student disruption has served to obstruct: explanation and understanding; progress through the set curriculum; and, development of positive social relationships. All fdsc behaviours (‘talk’, ‘technology’, ‘commitment’, ‘impasse’, and ‘bullying’ issues) are implicated in the misappropriation of teacher/class time:

Eve: They’re not entering the room prepared for work [and] they all get louder and louder.... It does slow down the lesson.... You are constantly putting out spot fires.... It's very unjust that cooperative students have to put up with it.

Ava: [Co-operative students] have to listen to three minutes of me telling other kids to shut up [then] a three-minute argument about [refusal to move]....

Bea: The quiet achievers are not getting the best level of education....

Cora: You waste a lot of time on [disruptive] kids....

Fay: [Co-operative kids] are suffering. They're not getting the education they deserve because [other] kids are stopping the learning....

Gina: When [defiant students] refuse to leave the room, I will physically leave the room [to get help].... [Co-operative students] are supremely ticked off that they have to put up with this. The look that washes over the co-operative kids’ faces says: I can't believe that we have to put up with this idiot!

Ita: Having to spend so much time on behaviour management while the other kids get left behind makes me feel like a failure.... Time gets taken away from [co-operative kids] who get really frustrated and really cranky....

Kate: [Due to continual defiance], I can't effectively teach the kids who actually want to learn and who are doing the right thing....

Olga: Too often, you have to stop what you're doing - which is your teaching - and work on the miscreant instead of that child being removed....

Pam: The ones who are co-operative know that they're learning at a much slower pace - they're getting behind. So they're quite frustrated....

Bob: Fifty per cent of my time was spent on [eight kids] who refused to do the work.... [Other students] didn't get anywhere near the same attention....

Col: The thing that bugs me is kids who detract from [other students’] education through their poor behaviour and soak up my time - that
really annoys me.... I’ve got this kid in [my] class who won’t let me teach....

Ed: My biggest thing is time management.... In my classes one kid disrupts another kid and then the whole class goes....

Both teacher capacity to teach and student capacity to learn are directly obstructed by the sustained presence of persistently disruptive students. In effect, classroom inhabitants are held to ransom by persistently disruptive students.

5.3.2 Organisational Indifference to the Misappropriation of Teacher Class Time Afforded by FDSC Behaviours & Ensuing Intensification

At Huckville, the misappropriation of teacher class time is perceived as a product of the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours. That is, in spite of the adverse impact of fdsc behaviours on classroom proceedings, in spite of the plethora of official behaviour notifications forwarded by teachers (relevant to fdsc behaviours), and in spite of the systemic disciplinary consequences outlined in school policy, systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations) for inappropriate/anti-social student behaviours, according to the bulk of interviewees, have been either absent or inadequate or inconsistent. Moreover, interviewees insist that student awareness of this systemic indifference has served to facilitate intensification of fdsc behaviours. School welfare policy, which seems to be at variance with school practice, clearly indicates the reasons for student demotions (‘Level drops’) and associated consequences. In addition, the policy’s reference to both ‘time-out’ and ‘restorative justice’ as consequences for inappropriate/anti-social student behaviour has served to set the bar for teachers’ expectations:

All students and teachers have the right to feel safe at school, and learn or teach to the best of their ability without interference....Completed behaviour notification forms are sent to the relevant Head Teacher and/or the Deputy Principal who investigates the incident.... These forms are then passed to the Behaviour Review Committee [who] decides if a demotion will occur.... You could be placed on Level 4 because [you] are trying to disrupt a class [or] you are being rude to teachers.... [You] may be withdrawn from the class.... You could be placed on Level 3 because [you] are regularly disobeying instructions.... In school isolation [may result].... You are placed on level 2 because you have been suspended.... [You] have been rude, persistently disobedient or disruptive to school routine.... Students may be required to participate in a restorative justice meeting....

(Huckville High School: Student Welfare Support, 2009, pp. 4 &16-19)
Classroom teachers’ grievances in relation to the absence and/or inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences are clearly associated with fdsc behaviours:

Pam: [Student behaviour] is just dreadful! Ugly! Behaviour notifications need to be acted on.... There is very little consequence for disruptive behaviour....

Leah: We have outrageous problems with kids who are defiant and disengaged.... We have to have consequences to follow rules....

Kate: I’ll just write up [their verbal abuse of me] even though I know that nothing’s going to happen....

Alex: [One boy’s verbal abuse of me] resulted in a behaviour notification [but] he’s back in class today....

Perceived organisational indifference to fdsc behaviours is highlighted by the teachers’ consistent use of language that expresses negation - “not being dealt with”, “not … held accountable”, “nothing’s going to happen”, and “no consequences”. Whilst teachers lament this indifference, they see it as relished by exploitive students:

Col: It’s: I’m going to pass on information about your poor behaviour.... Then the kids look at you and laugh because they know that behaviour notifications are a paper tiger - nothing happens....

Gina: Nothing is going to happen in relation to the ‘petty’ crimes in the classroom.... That’s what the kids see.... And that really irks me....

Organisational indifference to ‘petty crimes’ has served to facilitate intensification of fdsc behaviours and, in turn, intensification of the misappropriation of teacher class time. Teachers’ perceptions of student aggression are encapsulated within language that registers far in excess of ‘pettiness’. Selection of this particular terminology to describe classroom conditions is indicative of the presence of heightened aggression:

Jan: Quite a lot of the behaviour that we have trouble with in the classroom escalates. It’s tolerated. I get annoyed. I get steam coming out of my ears....

Hope: We are humiliated and belittled on a personal and professional level every day in most classes that we walk into.... Notifications in relation to ‘defiance’ - it’s not really considered significant....

Alex: You know that those lessons are going to be horrific - an absolute battle.... And the problem is that there are no consequences....
Olga: Get [disruptive kids] out of everybody's hair.... It's not a pleasant, successful academic environment - it's a battlefield! [We need] consequences!

Nina: [Kids] are destroying the atmosphere in the room and disrupting the lesson.... I want consequences [and] back up.... There's got to be an incredible build-up of behaviour notifications....

Teachers’ criticisms of systemic inaction in relation to student disruption and aggression arise in view of cited school policy (which appears to advocate both ‘time-out’ and ‘restorative justice’), and state/national professional standards (which insist upon leadership responsibility in relation to both behaviour management initiatives and promotion of student responsibility).

In summary, Huckville’s interviewed teachers’ claim that the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences for fdsc behaviours has served to: (1) increase and intensify student aggression; (2) increase the misappropriation of teacher class time; and, (3) impede student learning. The impact of these classroom conditions on teacher wellbeing, explored in upcoming discussion, constitutes a significant issue of concern. Meanwhile, the school’s emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours - evidenced in what is perceived to be an overreliance on teacher-supervised detentions and associated teacher legwork - is viewed by a number of teachers as misappropriation of their time beyond the classroom. For these teachers, this consumption of their time beyond the classroom has further served to put their wellbeing at risk.

5.4 THE ORGANISATIONAL EMPHASIS ON TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY FOR FDSC BEHAVIOURS

Within the cited research literature, the misappropriation of teacher time during class ranks as a problematic derivative issue of fdsc behaviours (Coslin, 1997; Infantino & Little, 2005; Little, 2005). However, within my study, the misappropriation of teacher time both during and beyond class constitutes a derivative issue of concern relevant to fdsc behaviours. At Huckville, classroom teachers are expected to use out-of-class time (recess, lunch, and ‘free’ periods) to physically locate students who fail/refuse to attend an assigned detention. Moreover, according to executive expectations, student failure/refusal to attend an assigned detention serves
to generate additional teacher-supervised detentions (see ‘Creating a Culture of Consistency’). ‘Student failure/refusal to attend an assigned detention’ is not explored within the cited research literature. However, required teacher action relevant to ‘student failure/refusal to attend an assigned detention’ has the potential to overlap with ‘excessive teacher workload’ which constitutes one of four key factors implicated in teacher burnout/attrition. As for the remaining three key factors - student misbehaviour, ineffective disciplinary policy, and inadequate leadership support - these are implicated in both the low organisational status of fOSC behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fOSC behaviours.

At Huckville, it seems that the low organisational status of fOSC behaviours has been unsuccessfully counterbalanced by the organisational emphasis on time-consuming teacher responsibility for fOSC behaviours. In effect, organisational reliance on teacher-supervised detentions has supplanted systemic disciplinary escalations for fOSC behaviours. In the first place, the very act of either writing a behaviour notification or committing to behaviour monitoring presupposes teacher-supervised detentions. Next, teacher legwork is commensurate with the executive expectation that classroom teachers use out-of-class time to physically locate students who fail/refuse to attend assigned detentions. Finally, repeated student failure/refusal to attend an assigned detention attracts additional teacher-supervised detentions. In the absence of systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations), the potential for considerable consumption of teacher time beyond the classroom is implicated. This is how the sense of teacher culpability for students’ misbehaviour is underscored. Indeed, organisational failure to effectively address so-called ‘petty crimes’ has culminated in punitive work conditions for teachers, neglect of the school’s core business, and failure to promote student responsibility.

5.4.1 The Misappropriation of Teacher Time Beyond the Classroom: Teachers’ Perceptions

Employed at Huckville for decades, Col views the gradual erosion of teacher-time beyond the classroom as a product of increasing teacher
workload. Within Col’s testimony, teacher-time beyond the classroom, once occupied with convivial recreation, has eroded to the point where teachers observed in the act of eating - let alone socialising - are rendered ‘professionally’ suspect. Col’s testimony serves to distinguish three salient factors: systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours; increased student contempt for classroom teachers; and, increased teacher workload beyond the classroom:

Col: When I started teaching [here in the 1980’s] there would be two or three tables of teachers who were playing cards [in the common room] and others playing table tennis.... It created a really cohesive feeling.... [Nowadays], I don't think there are many teachers in the school who actually get to eat.... In fact, you’re looked at sideways for actually having your lunch and not actually working. This increasing workload is a stressor.... The other stressor, I think, is the total lack of respect that you get from a growing number of kids.... [What about] the notion of there being an ultimate consequence for any action? The kids look at you and laugh because they know that behaviour notifications are a paper tiger - nothing happens....

Col’s words here construct what he sees as a ‘golden age’ - particularly in terms of teacher time for time-out. Col’s colleagues corroborate his identification of (1) systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours, (2) flourishing student disrespect, and (3) increased teacher workload as issues at Huckville. Moreover, they reveal that the interrelationship of these factors has served to increase the disciplinary workload of teachers and, in turn, teacher demoralisation.

The absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary escalations desired by teachers has served to create feelings of an increased number of ‘chronic offenders’ whom teachers perceive as completely undaunted by the use/threat of repetitive teacher-supervised detentions. Inconvenienced teachers are both distressed and exasperated by this state of affairs:

Pam: I can tell kids every single day that they have to turn up to detention but it means nothing. I need the backup, and I'm not getting the backup....

Gina’s words, too, articulate a desire for consistency in relation to suspension policy, where two categories of misbehaviour warrant short suspension - ‘continued disobedience’ and ‘aggressive behaviour’:
Gina: Last year I had a kid on monitoring slips for weeks.... The first time he was suspended was for a fight during recess. There was no consequence for the [classroom] misbehaviour. That really irks me.... Nothing is going to happen in relation to the ‘petty’ crimes in the classroom. The monitoring slip is just a pile of shit to go on the card until [kids] do something ‘big’.... That needs looking at.

Other teachers underscore the feeling that the persistent use of detention, in the absence of other interventions, is insufficient as a deterrent for classroom misbehaviour:

Ita: Being put on detention [is] not a deterrent anymore.... It’s a behaviour notification and detention. Nothing else happens....

Meg: If [kids] are disruptive in the classroom they have learned that they can have a detention and they just shrug it off - it’s no big deal to them.

Fay's exasperation is palpable when she proclaims that the relationship she has now developed with a particular class is one of ‘hate’ - the effects of which are unlikely to be improved with the application of additional detentions:

Fay: [My Year 10 girls] just want to text on their phones..... Then they’re usually on detention at lunchtime because they haven’t done the work.... [Most] of them are just chronic offenders.... I hate that class - absolutely hate it....

Whilst organisational reliance upon the use of teacher-supervised detentions has largely failed to rein in “chronic offenders” who “just shrug it off”, organisational misappropriation of teacher time has served to both exhaust and distract teachers. Specifically, teachers resent the loss of time for both rejuvenation and lesson preparation:

Bea: Detention [cuts] into the teacher’s time to have a break, refresh, re-energise - or even catch up on some prep.... It cuts into my time to stop and be a human being for a minute before you go back into the classroom. It’s a hard job.

In the following extract, Ita points to her belief that she needs to have engaging material for the students, however, her stress emerges from two factors - knowing that she has not had adequate time to prepare, and anticipating the effects of inadequate time to prepare:
Ita: [Literally] chasing up on the behaviours means that I [haven't] the time to come up with fabulous, engaging lessons which stresses me out....

Ultimately, the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for student misbehaviour - in lieu of systemic disciplinary escalations - has served to exhaust teachers, consume their time, undermine their disciplinary efforts, and threaten supervisor-subordinate trust relationships. The following excerpts highlight teachers’ need for more support from their school leaders in order to tackle student behavioural problems more effectively. These excerpts show that what appears to be an incessant and futile misappropriation of valuable teacher time has left teachers feeling exhausted, dejected, forsaken, and abused:

Nina: I want clear consequences [and] back up.... Leadership is the key here.... I really do try to follow the process - warnings, detentions, phoning the parents, behaviour notifications, monitoring, informing the head teacher, isolating students, and chasing [students] when they don't turn up to detention during [my] free bloody periods! Then you get to the end of the line and you think, well, this is your side of the bargain now - and you just can't count on it.... It's been let go!

Doug: If [a student] is defiant you chip them and you make them do the detention. But there seems to be a roadblock somewhere along the line in the school. You feel like you're chipping away on your own.... Your efforts to do something about it just seem to be getting nowhere. It's very draining.... There's a lot of frustration [and] disillusion.... I think that morale's down in the whole school.... I think if the school's not going to look after their teachers [it's] going to lose good teachers....

Kate: Continual defiance - every single lesson! I'm worthless.... I do my best by keeping them in for a detention [but] every time I have to locate [students] for a detention, it's my time that I'm wasting - my recess and my lunch, my prep time or my free period.... I'm taking the time to do it and I don't get the backup when I fill in those behaviour notifications.... It's a form of abuse - I'm not being allowed to do my job....

Bea: Even though the student might be behaving in exactly the same way in several different classes, it still comes down to the individual teacher to be dealing with their behaviour. It's not being dealt with at a whole-school level....

In summary, the discursive and practical emphasis on teacher responsibility for student misbehaviours has led to the misappropriation of teachers’ time beyond the classroom. Systemic dependence upon teacher-supervised detentions as the chief means of responding to student misbehaviour has
produced four detrimental outcomes: (1) failure to stem fdsc behaviours; (2) failure to safeguard teacher wellbeing; (3) failure to safeguard teacher focus on core business; and, (4) failure to support teachers’ disciplinary efforts (hence, low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations).

5.4.2 The Misappropriation of Teacher Time: Executives’ Expectations & Perceptions

Executive reports corroborate teachers’ perceptions that (1) the consumption of teacher-time afforded by disruptive students during class time is excessive, and (2) the consumption of teacher-time afforded by disruptive students beyond class time is expected. Executives perceive the consumption of teacher-time by disruptive students during class as disproportionate, counterproductive, and incapacitating. However, whilst executives express concern about the consumption of teacher time afforded by fdsc behaviours during lessons, they remain committed to the use of teacher-supervised detentions (and associated legwork) for fdsc behaviours. (see ‘Creating a Culture of Consistency’). Indeed, beyond the classroom, teacher responsibility for both the supervision of detentions and the physical location of evasive detainees is explicitly sanctioned, favoured, and unchallenged by all executive interviewees. These expectations serve to substantiate the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for student misbehaviour. Although executives’ concerns and expectations appear to be somewhat at odds, the Principal’s attribution of the emergence of fdsc behaviours to teacher incompetence provides a rationale for the consistency between ‘cause’ (teacher incompetence) and ‘consequence’ (teacher responsibility). Here, the principal is drawing on discursive constructs of the competent teacher that are consistent with current professional standards:

[Proficient teachers] establish and maintain orderly and workable routines to create an environment where student time is spent on learning tasks. (NESA, 2018, p. 14)

Hence, prima facie, teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours is rendered rational. However, reading further, according to current professional standards, the responsibility for disruptive student behaviours is not limited to
the individual teacher; indeed, the implementation of system-wide behaviour management initiatives are required in order to promote both student engagement and student responsibility:

[Leaders are expected to] implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues [and] promote student responsibility for learning…. (NESA, 2018, p. 14)

As evidenced in the comments from interviewees, Huckville’s emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours constitutes a form of governance that is failing to safeguard teaching and learning, failing to promote student socialisation (the acquisition of vital life skills, attitudes, and behaviours), and failing to protect teachers’ wellbeing.

Members of the executive team indicate a keen awareness of, and objection to, the excessive consumption of teacher-time afforded by fdsc behaviours during class time. Indeed, executives represent such consumption as disproportionate, unfair, and incapacitating. Two head teachers and the female deputy comment:

TESS: You can see in some classes - maybe the majority of classes - that [co-operative students] are frustrated and unhappy. [Teachers are] spending so much of their time disciplining kids who are out of control....

SUE: Students’ behaviour is disruptive [and] pulls the teacher away from what [he/she] should be doing with everybody else.

ROSE: The teacher has to stop and try and get [students who refuse/fail to bring/unpack essential equipment] organised so that’s valuable time lost, and while the teacher is trying to sort them out, the rest of the class is off task.... There could be fifteen minutes [wasted]....

However, in spite of these detrimental effects, interviewed executives do not explicitly challenge the notion of exclusive teacher responsibility for such behaviour at such a time. Their ‘acceptance’ of teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours during class time extends to acceptance of time-consuming teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours beyond class time. As they explain, executives expect teachers to detain students, to physically locate evasive detainees, and to convince evasive detainees to attend assigned detentions. And, although entrenched student insubordination is an acknowledged issue (“there will be students who just defy, defy, and defy”), one executive reveals an expectation of interminable teacher action (legwork) which she perceives...
as the chief/sole means of weakening the resistance of some belligerent students. The classroom teacher observed supervising detentions (“she’ll keep the kids in”) is, in effect, complimented by her head teacher for not ‘passing on’ discipline issues, and the novice teacher observed scouring school grounds for evasive detainees (“she goes out into the playground and gets them”) is, according to the same head teacher, considered to have “almost no discipline issues”. It is clear that these teachers must have discipline issues if they need to detain students or locate students for an assigned detention; however, because their management of classroom discipline complies with executives’ expectations, they are characterised as ‘successful’. Herein, the presence of discipline issues is not represented as a sign of poor teaching or poor classroom management; hence, it is reasonable to suggest that teachers who seek/require executive assistance (relevant to student behavioural problems) constitute ineffective managers of student classroom behaviour. Indeed, all executives are consistent in terms of (1) their emphasis on teacher responsibility for student misbehaviour, and (2) their insistence on teacher-supervised detentions as the chief, enduring organisational disciplinary strategy:

TESS: I believe that some kids do get the message that it's not worth behaving in an unacceptable way if they know that their teacher is going to be forever keeping them in on detention…. All of that is the teacher's responsibility.

HAL: If a student doesn't turn up [to detention] for one of my teachers, I expect the teacher to go and get that student. I rarely see anyone from [Teacher A]. She deals with her discipline - she'll keep the kids in. [Teacher D] is a new teacher…. She goes out into the playground and gets them....

ROSE: I expect teachers to do something about [unacceptable student behaviour] - detentions, following up on the detentions, and making [detentions] stick....

GUY: The first [detention] the student misses - the follow-up should be from the classroom teacher…. There will be students who just defy, defy and defy.

IAN: It's the teacher's primary responsibility to be managing [student] behaviours. I'd be expecting them to [say]: I'm going to detain you!

SUE: I do expect that my teachers are going to attempt to remediate the behaviour…. Detention [is] the next consequence.
Finally, Huckville’s organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours is commensurate with the wider, governing discourse of student disruption as the product of teacher incompetence. Specifically, Ian - who as Principal sets the tone for the executive - perceives student disruption/disengagement as the product of three teacher-related factors: lack-lustre pedagogical skills; inadequate managerial skills; and, teacher inattentiveness. Consequently, in view of these perceptions - which emanate from the top - the major outcome for teachers who seek executive assistance (relevant to fdsc behaviours) is exposure of their professional incompetence. Indeed, teachers who seek assistance are represented as having failed (“lost”); and, if a disciplinary escalation is ‘forced’, then the implicated teacher is excluded from decision-making relevant to the implicated student. Since teacher incompetence rather than student choice is deemed the problem (relevant to student disruption/disengagement), the focus is on teachers to account for, and reassess, (1) their pedagogy, (2) their behaviour management, and (3) their level of vigilance. These weighted perceptions emphasise teacher culpability for fdsc behaviours, and rationalise an emphasis on teacher action. Moreover, as observable phenomena, teacher-supervised detentions (and associated legwork) constitute proof of teachers’ submission to these perceptions. Ian clearly emphasises teacher responsibility for (and teacher culpability for) student disruption, defiance, and disengagement:

IAN: It’s the teacher’s primary responsibility to be managing the behaviours that students exhibit in the classroom.... Teachers have got to get kids’ attention [otherwise] you get behaviours like defiance and disengagement.... Teachers either have the skills to manage the classroom or they’re seeking assistance.... And we all know that as soon as you [seek assistance] then, in a sense, you’ve lost.... We need to be talking about what produced that [situation] and how you’re going to face them [next time].... Sometimes it comes down to we get tired [or] we get lax... I would be expecting them to be using the familiar things that teachers have - I’m going to detain you! - and, by the way, follow it up.... And, if you hand the issue on [then] you’ve handed it on.... Don’t whinge about it! [Executives] have now been presented with the thing so that’s where the decision rests.... If you really want to change things then you change how teachers teach....

However, this emphasis on teacher rather than student responsibility appears to have achieved nought in terms of stemming either student
aggression or student disruption. According to Ian, these behaviours constitute the two highest ranked reasons for student suspension at Huckville:

IAN: A large proportion of our suspensions are aggressive behaviour and then, I guess ... it could be persistent disruption to learning.

In summary, at Huckville, the misappropriation of teacher-time afforded by fdsc behaviours appears to have emerged from three interconnected factors: the overriding belief that fdsc behaviours are the product of teacher incompetence (which positions the teacher, rather than the student, as the problem in relation to disruptive student behaviours); the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours (which normalises these behaviours within classrooms); and, the emphasis on teacher responsibility for dealing with fdsc behaviours. Interviewed teachers consider that the school’s emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours represents: organisational failure to adequately address the adverse impact of fdsc behaviours on teaching/learning conditions; organisational failure to promote student responsibility; and, organisational failure to protect, trust, and value teachers. The punitive emphasis on teacher responsibility for student behaviour has served to exacerbate student aggression (disorder), reduce teacher wellbeing (dysfunction), and intensify low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations (distrust).

5.5 A SCHOOL CULTURE OF DISORDER, DYSFUNCTION, AND DISTRUST

In view of the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours, and in view of the principal’s belief that “as soon as you [seek assistance] then, in a sense, you’ve lost”, exploitive students are able to utilise their awareness of the vulnerability of individual teachers in such a context. At Huckville, the main ‘short-term’ outcomes of these two organisational variables include classroom disorder (the reign of aggressive students), teacher dysfunction (impaired teacher wellbeing), and low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations.
5.5.1 Disorder: The Reign of Aggressive Students

Huckville’s mission statement includes the endeavour to realise every student’s “sporting potential” (Huckville High School, 2009, Student Welfare Support, p. 1). Artefacts such as numerous displayed photographs of student athletes constitute the visible upshot of dominant assumptions, values, and norms (Maslowski, 2006). Teacher reports indicate that they experience this endeavour as executive toleration of a ‘jock’ culture which has facilitated the reign of anti-academic students. In particular, they see these as male students whose disruption dominates/intimidates the classroom by means of both verbal and physical aggression. According to staff reports, students deemed ‘jocks’ are aware that they are highly valued by executives in terms of their sporting prowess/achievements; hence, such students “can do just about anything” in terms of their classroom behaviour. In Australian society at large, sport is a national pastime, and footballers are particularly hero-worshipped; however, the anti-social and criminal behaviours of some players (including drug/alcohol fuelled incidents of rape, physical assault, and domestic violence), and the dire consequences of such players’ behaviours, have been increasingly reported in recent decades.

Within Huckville’s classrooms, corridors, and grounds, unchecked aggressive male posturing - most notably, that of male footballers - has particularly served to disrupt and intimidate classroom inhabitants. Ultimately, the absence/inadequacy of disciplinary consequences for aggressive male behaviour not only resonates with the overriding perception of student misbehaviour as a product of teacher incompetence, but it also resonates with the Principal’s open passion for sport. Indeed, Ian’s commentary contains sporting analogies that serve to (1) naturalise the isolation of teachers, and (2) qualify student disruption/disengagement as a product of teacher incompetence.

Teacher reports indicate that anti-academic students disrupt and dominate the classrooms (and corridors) by means of both verbal and physical aggression. In the main, disruptive verbal aggression includes loud, off-task, offensive, sexualised talk. Disruptive physical aggression includes
prowling, battering, hurling objects, tackling, and acquisition of greater physical space by means of threatening behaviour. Students displaying these behaviours, predominantly male, are viewed with considerable antipathy by classroom teachers. Labelled ‘thugs’ and ‘dickheads’, such students are denounced for prohibiting academic progress, intimidating co-operative students to the point of mute withdrawal, and exacerbating teacher anxiety in view of the need for teachers to remain on constant high alert:

Cora: You can’t be academic because that’s ‘uncool’. You can see that the kids who are academic want to talk but they feel that they can’t…. I find this really sad….

Fay: [The thugs] are just chronic offenders - constant talking, moving around, [and] throwing things: You dumb bitch! She’s my hoe! You slut! One will go over to another kid and hit him in the head or tackle him off his seat. This is all so-called ‘fun’…. I feel tense and anxious…. [Co-operative kids] are suffering.

Teacher reports suggest that the lack/absence of systemic disciplinary consequences for aggressive male posturing - particularly that of male footballers - is a major reason for teacher attrition. Below, Doug’s reference to “a roadblock somewhere along the line” constitutes a metaphor for executive disciplinary inaction in relation to disruptive “dickheads” who just “want to play footy”. Bob desires appropriate application of the ‘Level system’ in order to ensure that persistently disruptive male students “will not be going on any rugby league trips”. Alex, who has a serious heart condition, juxtaposes a lack of disciplinary consequences with male students who physically “shape up” to him. Jan refers to the incapacitating classroom rule of aggressive males, and recalls the star footballer who was permitted to represent the school in spite of his notorious classroom behaviour. Ultimately, teachers perceive systemically unchecked student aggression as executive neglect of teacher wellbeing and, in turn, a reason for teacher attrition:

Doug: At this school there are not enough consequences…. There seems to be a roadblock somewhere along the line…. The dickheads don’t give a shit about the level system. The only time they do care is when they want to play footy…. If the school’s not going to look after their teachers [it’s] going to lose good teachers….

Bob: There needs to be a school policy as to consequences: Your son has continually done this and this. That's a suspension, and he has
dropped two levels. This means that your son will not be going on any rugby league trips!

Alex: There are so many young [teachers] leaving at such a rapid rate that the problem has to be addressed. And the problem is that there are no consequences for anyone’s actions.... I’ve already had a couple of Year 9 [boys] shape up to me....

Jan’s reference to the disciplinary regimes in her ‘last two schools’ indicates that footballers who failed to comply with classroom rules were barred from representing their school on the football field:

Jan: The [Year 9] boys were particularly aggressive towards me and other kids. They didn’t want to learn - they just wanted to rule the classroom.... I had lots of problems with [a star footballer] yet he went away for athletics right in the middle of it! At my last two schools he would not have been allowed to represent the school....

Teachers explicitly indicate that their efforts to develop a culture of intellectual inquiry are undermined by prominent executives who are ‘into’ sport, so that the anti-social behaviour of jocks, particularly that of male footballers, attracts little or no systemic disciplinary consequences. Essentially, teachers complain that these boys “can do just about anything” in terms of their classroom behaviour, and the boys’ aggressive physicality - extolled on the football field - is defended by ‘fans’ in terms of the flippant adage ‘boys will be boys’. Three individual members of the school executive team - the head teacher of Sport, a deputy, and the Principal - are clearly reproached by interviewed teachers for perceived dismissal of unacceptable ‘jock’ behaviour which has produced an adverse impact on teacher wellbeing:

Eve: I had one [boy] getting quite violent during a practical.... The kid basically said to the deputy: Oh, he’s my mate, we were just mucking around. And then [the deputy] gets back to me: They were just mucking around.... It was a serious bullying event! The ‘jock’ tone comes from the top.... It correlates very, very strongly with the current principal.... I find the whole culture quite repulsive.... The glory associated with sport [means] you can do just about anything.... My hackles go up [in staff meetings] - there’s always a sporting analogy..... One Year 9 student [whose] behaviour was inappropriate most of the time was [eventually] denied ‘the right’ to play rugby league for the school.... We were berated [by senior executives] for not providing him with work [when he was ‘reluctantly’ suspended].... And that for me was the trigger.... I spent a week on stress leave after that, and I now take antidepressants....
Ita: Disrespect is not such a big deal at this school…. I feel very demoralised most days - and don’t want to be a teacher anymore…. I’m scared to walk down the stairs in case I get pushed…. I’m still concerned that balls will get thrown at my head on purpose…. The [kids’] behaviour and treatment of teachers in this school needs to be our first priority - that shouldn’t come after sporting events.

Di: I was talking to some kids about their unacceptable behaviour when [the head of Sport] walked past. He gave them a wink and a bit of a nudge.

Nina’s comment embraces the full extent of the school’s mission statement which claims to endeavour to “foster in all students tolerance to the rights of others”. From her perspective, more often than not, assemblies have become spaces for senior executives to eulogise the sporty few rather than address the bulk of the student population about ongoing, pressing matters (such as poor classroom behaviour):

Nina: Assembly needs to be a place where [executives] fire a few bullets about inappropriate behaviour…. Congratulations to Sport [but] that relates to maybe 5% of the student population…. If we can’t succeed [in the classroom], why congratulate ourselves for football?

The Principal’s belief in teacher responsibility/ culpability for fdsc behaviours is, indeed, framed within metaphorical language relevant to sport. From his perspective, teachers who seek/need executive support (relevant to student misbehaviour) have “dropped the ball” in “a lonely game”. Unlike the remainder of my interviewees, whose greatest stressor/concern is fdsc behaviours, the principal’s greatest concern is student-student playground violence. What is more, although the principal attributes student playground violence to an infiltrating “social trend”, and although the worst of sporting culture (for example, aggressive male posturing) constitutes an undeniable component of this infiltrating “social trend”, the veracity of his perception is somewhat contradicted by his attribution of student classroom violence to teacher incompetence and/or negligence. In effect, the principal has transferred the onerous weight of social responsibility for anti-social student behaviours from the systemic (schools as social institutions) to the idiosyncratic (teachers as individual scapegoats). Ian’s sporting analogies naturalise both teacher isolation (it’s “the nature of the game”) and teacher incompetence (“a teaching workforce that drops the ball”) relevant to fdsc behaviours. From Ian’s point of view, the increasing incidence of anti-social
student classroom behaviours dictates the need for change in relation to pedagogy rather than the need for change relevant to school culture (school standards and/or systemic disciplinary practices):

IAN: The [student misbehaviour] that concerns me the most [is] kids getting physical and hitting each other out in the playground.... There’s an increase in [physical] violence.... It's a societal trend.... It's the teacher's primary responsibility to be managing the classroom [and] the nature of the game is that you are on your own.... And it's where you've got, I believe, a teaching workforce that drops the ball with that that you can start getting disengagement in the room.... A large proportion of our suspensions are aggressive behaviour.... And then, I guess, it's the persistent disobedience - persistent disruption to learning.... If you really want to change things then you change how teachers teach....

Ironically, an excerpt from the Principal's concluding commentary contains his contemplation of “a primary role” of schooling which is “turning out healthy citizens who contribute”. At this juncture, he indicates that the imposition of standards and rules on students, with supports, is an essential prerequisite to student socialisation:

IAN: A primary role of the school is to put in place the behaviours, the guidelines, and the supports that will turn out citizens.... It's about turning out healthy citizens who contribute.... Why do schools exist? Well, to educate kids - but to educate them in what areas? And the answer is in social circumstances as well.... I talk expectations....

However, according to the bulk of my interviewees: systemic standards relevant to student conduct and performance are low; the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations) for fdsc behaviours has made a mockery of school rules; and, the inadequacy of systemic disciplinary support has served to increase the victimisation of teachers whose responsibility for unmanageable fdsc behaviours has rendered them both exhausted and demoralised. I contend that “the nature of the game” at Huckville has served to impair teacher wellbeing.

5.5.2 Dysfunction: Impaired Teacher Wellbeing

According to the bulk of interviewees, student verbal abuse has greatly contributed to impaired teacher wellbeing/morale. Based on reports, some classrooms have become ‘battlefields’ in which both student abuse
and student aggression are ‘normal’. Most interviewees note that the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences and systemic social support has served to facilitate the propensity for students to flout and/or ridicule teachers’ authority. This absence/inadequacy is perceived as a form of organisational neglect, triggering/exacerbating impaired teacher wellbeing, and, perhaps, resulting in the loss of both veteran and novice teachers from the school. Reported adverse physiological symptoms include: increased cardiac rates; aggravated cardiac stress; distressed foetal activity; disrupted sleep due to disconcerting job-related dreams; heightened aggression; clinically diagnosed depression; headaches; and, debilitating exhaustion. Reported psychological symptoms include a plethora of adverse feelings: resentment, humiliation, demoralisation, isolation, abandonment, worthlessness, distress, insecurity, and incapacitation. Ultimately, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours at Huckville has produced unacceptable/intolerable classroom conditions in which teacher wellbeing has been either impaired or threatened.

Whilst I have demonstrated by means of interviewees’ commentary that student verbal abuse of teachers is typically a product of teachers’ efforts to curb fdsc behaviours, the interviewees, themselves, have not articulated the bigger picture in terms of the classroom behaviour management strategies/skills they use to interact with students. Instead, they have invariably focused on moments that serve to encapsulate an abusive student’s response to a teacher’s directive. This absence of articulated classroom behaviour management strategies/skills does not necessarily mean that my interviewees lack such strategies/skills; however, it does suggest that their habitual repertoire relevant to student behaviour is not embedded in relational discourse. Nevertheless, appropriate systemic disciplinary/social support also constitutes a key contributory factor in the development of teachers as effective classroom managers (Rogers, 2007); and, whilst this gap in teachers’ articulation is not to be interpreted as my dismissal of the significance of teachers’ classroom behaviour management strategies/skills (see 2.5.2.1), my inquiry does demonstrate that the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to
student verbal abuse of teachers (and parent/caregiver verbal abuse of teachers) has served to exacerbate the breakdown in teacher-student relationships. Herein, teachers’ feelings of anxiety, disillusion, anxiety, rage, indignation, and vulnerability are evident:

Nina: I’ve asked students to move or get on with their work and they’ve replied with ‘fuck off’ or ‘fucking bitch’.... I [once] ended up down in the deputy's office, in tears, just saying: I have been sworn at over and over again and I report it and nothing happens!

Col: I was really disillusioned.... I went to [the deputy] and said: You just told this kid to apologise and all will be well! That’s not good enough! The kid’s just told me to get fucked! ... This made me feel expendable.... I was really getting angry and he just walked off.... Some girl called [my female colleague] a dumb, fat, fucking slut. The notification went through, and the person who runs [the committee] went: We’ll note that.

Cora: Recently, I put a Year 8 girl outside the classroom because she called me a fucking dog. She said: I'm going to spread rumours about you and get you fired! It made me cry. [The deputy] did nothing about it.... You feel unsafe.... There’s no support ... none whatsoever.

Fay: Fuck you! You can't touch [my phone]! Who do you think you are? I did a behaviour notification [but] that was the last I heard of it.... I hate that class - absolutely hate it! You dumb bitch! You slut! One will go over to another kid and hit him in the head or tackle him off his seat.... I couldn't do a prac with them because I didn't trust them, and I didn't feel safe.... I felt tense and anxious.... When I get stressed my heart rate increases and the baby kicks a lot, and whenever I had [this class] the baby was usually going pretty strong.... I dreaded going to that class....

Di: We’ve become frightened to take kids on because the Department won’t back you, the parents won’t back you.... I don’t like phoning [parents]! What if I got somebody who is really abusive?

Fred, a head teacher, is similarly enraged by systemic inaction in relation to student verbal abuse of teachers. Not only is he appalled by the ‘horrendous’ way in which students speak to classroom teachers, but his obvious desire to protect his staff from verbally abusive students is undermined by the absence of systemic consequences/interventions:

FRED: The swearing! It really upsets me. Some of the things that the students say are quite horrendous.... I’ve heard students swear at a teacher and nothing’s happened! And you’re like: What the hell? I’m not being supported! And it makes me angry....
A handful of veteran teachers whose commentary bears witness to impaired wellbeing have either left Huckville or left teaching altogether within the two year period following the completion of my interviews. Stress, aggression, depression, and distress are evident:

Alex: I've been away from teaching for three or four years and then to come back into this has been…. (Alex falters). It's the first time I've ever dreamt about kids at school - like I wake up from a dream. With my heart condition, I can feel the stress on my heart to a point where I was nearly going to belt someone or be ill…. And it's pointless sending students to senior executives…. I've already had a couple of Year 9 kids shape up to me [and] I've actually replied: I don't have to be here so you'd better make the first one a good one because I will hit back!

Teacher uncertainty in relation to systemic disciplinary pathways contributes to teacher stress:

Eve: I put a kid in the prep room [because of his verbal abuse].... He swears at people in the classroom and I won't have it…. Now, I don't chase [him] because his mother calls the race card quite regularly…. I don't want the thugs in charge! I spent a week on stress leave [and] I now take antidepressants…. It's the lack of respect…. It's the way you're spoken to! There are not enough consequences….

Hope: My Year 9 class [verbally] attacks me because I've checked their persistent misbehaviour…. We are humiliated and belittled on a personal and professional level every day….

Pam: There is a group of kids in this class who are like a hunting pack - just merciless…. If it's me they are targeting, they'll be very snide - loud conversations. Initially it was things like the clothes that I was wearing. They attack my teaching. They just keep ranting and raving at me, and I just move over to help kids who will respond. Ah, hell! (Pam commences crying). It is hell! I hate it! I absolutely hate it! (Pam continues crying. I stop the interview. Pam insists on continuing).... They refuse to leave the room. They refuse to leave the room for the head teacher. But most of the time the kid gets back into the classroom…. A Year 10 girl told me to get fucked and wouldn't hand over a phone - there was supposed to be a re-entry meeting but it never happened…. The executive doesn't care (long pause)…. I'm not getting the back up. And I've just given up now…. Oh, God! Kids need to learn to take responsibility…. [Here] there is very little consequence for disruptive behaviour, defiance.

Veteran teachers’ concerns about the attrition of novice teachers are particularly linked to systemic inaction in relation to verbally abusive students. Interviewed veteran teachers claim that ‘young teachers’ are ‘giving
up’ and ‘leaving at such a rapid rate’ because there are ‘no consequences’ for the abusive way in which teachers are ‘spoken to by students’:

Olga: [We need] consequences.... All we hear is the absolute defiance, yelling out, swearing at others, and put-downs.... We can see young teachers who are just giving up.... It’s a battlefield!

The novice teachers who left Huckville did so within one year following the completion of my interviews:

Kate: I know that nothing’s going to happen.... I’m worthless.... It’s abuse. I’m not being allowed to do my job....I’ve been thinking about leaving [teaching] for some time now....

Doug: You assume that if you get sworn at that kids will ‘get sent’ - but it just doesn't happen.... There are not enough consequences [even though] you do the behaviour notification, the detention, and you send them to the deputy.... You’re on your own.... It's very draining.... Morale’s down.... I’m not going to stick around if the problems aren’t fixed.... If you're getting treated like shit and not getting any support, why would you?

Ita: I have had kids call me a bitch and tell me to fuck off - I've been called a fat cunt.... I would do a behaviour notification and put them on detention - but nothing else happens.... Two girls ranted and raved and threw a chair across [my] room and stormed out saying: This is fuckin’ gay! You’re a fuckin’ dog! I put in a behaviour notification and informed the deputy - and nothing happened.... One of my Year 8 students went off tap.... I said to the deputy: She told me to fuck off and other students to fuck off, and she was bullying another student.... He put his hand up. He didn’t look at me at all. And I assumed that was my indication to exit, which I did.... [The kids] have no respect, and I don't feel supported.... I certainly feel very demoralised [and] I don't want to be a teacher anymore.... I hate being here....

Ed: Disrespect and humiliation! Swearing is something that we need to deal with....

Doug, a novice teacher who left the school, expresses sympathy for the lack of options available to veteran teachers who are ‘beyond starting over’. Frustrated by systemic inaction in relation to student verbal abuse of teachers, yet young enough to explore other options, Doug forecasts a teaching workforce that is deserted by shocked novices, and staffed by demoralised veterans:

Doug: Surely, if you get sworn at, that's an immediate suspension! There's a lot of frustration.... Students have been able to get away with it.... If they don't sort it out pretty soon there's going to be just the older
teachers who stay here and put up with it until they retire because they don't have any choice....

In summary, classroom teachers’ reports indicate that perceived systemic indifference to student verbal abuse of teachers has particularly served to trigger/exacerbate impaired teacher wellbeing. A number of teachers - both veteran and novice - have left Huckville and, although I am unable to provide precise reasons for their departures, their commentary verifies their intolerance of the verbal abuse they ‘copped’ from students, as well as their abhorrence of associated systemic inaction. Indeed, the adverse physiological and psychological symptoms reported by these classroom teachers are directly linked to student (and systemic) abuse. Ultimately, it appears that both the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours have produced a school culture that is too often characterised by classroom disorder (student disruption and student aggression) and teacher dysfunction (teacher exhaustion and teacher demoralisation). And, whilst such a culture inevitably implicates low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations, an event took place during my presence as interviewer - that is, implementation of the long-awaited isolation room - which served as indisputable evidence of a culture of low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations.

5.5.3 Distrust: Low-Trust Supervisor-Subordinate Relations

Senior executives’ announcement of finalised isolation room protocols - an announcement made during the conduct of my interviews - served to expose the intensity of low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations at Huckville. Prior to the announcement of protocols, interviewees perceived impending implementation of an isolation room as systemic recognition, albeit overdue, of the need for greater protection of the teaching-learning environment. In line with these perceptions, classroom teachers eagerly anticipated a supervised space to which they and/or their head teachers could directly send persistently disruptive (defiant) students. Indeed, in view of the need to entrust classroom teachers with such authority, the prospect of either mending or strengthening supervisor-subordinate trust relations was
palpable amongst interviewed teachers. However, contrary to classroom teachers’ expectations, finalised isolation room protocols not only failed to meet classroom teachers’ disciplinary support needs but wrought an extension of their disciplinary responsibilities. Finalised isolation room protocols are as follows:

(1) Only two or three students are permitted to occupy the isolation room at any given time (from a population of 873 students);

(2) Student isolation, as a disciplinary strategy, will not have blanket application (‘case-hardened’ students are exempt);

(3) Student isolation is solely dependent upon deputy referral (neither classroom teachers nor head teachers are authorised to refer students); and,

(4) Sustained operation of the room requires scheduled supervision by classroom teachers (that is, the relinquishment of one ‘free’ period per fortnight).

A draft document (“Huckville Isolation Room”) distributed in September, 2010, confirmed these protocols. From the point of view of the bulk of interviewees, finalised protocols offered nothing in terms of safeguarding classrooms from student disruption. Indeed, within the context of the interview, the Principal explicitly indicated that the reason for implementation of an isolation room was to curb suspension statistics (see p. 198).

Focused on the needs of the student majority, Huckville’s classroom teachers desired implementation of an isolation room model that would expedite immediate removal and remote placement of persistently disruptive or verbally abusive students. There was both direct and indirect support for such a model as existing removal strategies were considered haphazard and/or ineffective. At worst, disruptive students deposited in corridors and hallways sustained and spread disorder by bellowing their defiance, and bashing on adjacent classroom doors. At worst, disruptive students deposited in adjacent classrooms further spread disorder by either instigating or supplementing disruption in these other rooms.

Teachers with experience of isolation room models (in other school settings) indicated their preference for disciplinary protocols that: (1) expedite the removal of disruptive/abusive students from the classroom; (2) obligate the containment of disruptive/abusive students within remote, supervised physical spaces; and, (3) stipulate the need for teacher-student negotiation
as a condition of student re-entry to the classroom. Teachers’ preferences resonate with state policy relevant to time-out strategies:

Time-out strategies include ... the use of a dedicated time-out room.... Time-out may be teacher directed.... Training should be provided to school staff in the appropriate implementation of time-out procedures.... Procedures for the use of time-out strategies should include clearly articulated steps to be followed if the student does not comply with the time-out strategy, or if the use of the time-out strategy has not been successful in managing the behaviour of the students.... (NSWDEC, 2011, pp. 3-4)

Essentially, these teachers were seeking systemic confidence in teacher referral, systemic maintenance of unobstructed teaching-learning spaces, and systemic augmentation of teacher-student relationships:

Ed:  I'm a big believer in the 'isolation room' - if it's done properly.... When one student disrupts the group, the teacher owes it to the group to remove that student....

Jan:  My last school had a timeout room - it was really effective. [Disruptive kids] were kept out of the school population - they didn't have to go through the deputy [and they] couldn't come back into the classroom until the teacher was happy with their attitude.... We need something [like this] to break repeat offenders....

Di:  We had a ‘time out’ room at [my last school]. It was another level of support.... I think it worked.

The classroom teachers who expressed dissatisfaction with existing removal practices either suggested or implied the need for an isolation space that was remote, contained, and supervised:

Olga:  You've got to look after the rest of the group - we have to do more than just send them out to the corridor.... I think there needs to be some way of exiting a student who is non-compliant and having it dealt with immediately.

Ita:  When I have to send the same kid [out into the hallway] two or three times, to me, that is just unacceptable.

Bea:  There definitely needs to be an area that [disruptive] students could go to and be supervised.... I don’t want to be disrupting another class for the sake of one kid. And I've got twenty-five of my own children that I’m trying to teach!

Teachers’ preference for immediate removal and remote isolation of disruptive students is explicitly founded in their desire to protect learners at risk from infiltrating anti-social student behaviour. The teachers comment:

Leah:  Kids come with baggage! Sometimes, no matter what you do, you're not going to be able to have them stay [in the room].... Disruptive
students can make it very difficult for the teacher, and the students who want to learn.

Gina: Removal needs to be immediate! The look that washes over co-operative kids’ faces says: I can't believe that we have to put up with this idiot!

Col: Give everyone else a fair crack at getting an education! Give the teachers a fair crack at being able to teach! [Disruptive] kids aren't being removed!

Nina: I would love immediate consequences…. I hope that this isolation room gets off the ground [because] you've got to save the other kids.... The kids who defy you are destroying the atmosphere in the room and disrupting the lesson!

Specifically, anti-social student behaviour is perceived as an infiltrating phenomenon (“kids come with baggage”) which not only makes life “very difficult” for classroom inhabitants but has the capacity to exceed teacher function (“no matter what you do”). The teachers' preference for immediate removal and remote isolation of disruptive students, therefore, is about the provision of reasonable learning opportunities (being “fair” to the bulk of students), and the protection of learners from the impact of FDCS behaviours.

However, as indicated, classroom teachers' hopes were quashed by the restrictive nature of the finalised isolation room protocols. From the point of view of these teachers, the protocols served to: ignore classroom teachers’ disciplinary support needs; confirm the overriding perception that teachers are held responsible for both the emergence and management of FDCS behaviours; and, exacerbate existing low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations. In effect, the isolation room became a teacher-supervised ‘bottleneck’ for two or three hand-picked students (recidivists). By and large, the Principal confirms this characterisation:

IAN: What we’re trying to do [with the isolation room] is actually not suspend kids.... It’s not going to be useful for every kid....

Hence, whilst the senior executive is deliberately targeting only a couple of hand-picked recidivists at a time, immediate referral to the isolation room is neither an option for classroom teachers nor an option for head teachers. Teachers’ thwarted expectations in combination with extension of their disciplinary responsibilities served to exacerbate teacher antipathy towards senior executives.
As I have already indicated, previous to finalisation of the isolation room’s protocols, a number of classroom teachers were already incensed by what they perceive as the school’s low expectations of students (behaviour and performance), and the need to endure disruptive classroom conditions:

Alex: I’ve been told by [my head teacher] and the deputy that it’s a win-win situation if I can keep the kids in the classroom - they haven’t killed each other, and they’ve [written] three or four lines…. I just find that appalling! Get rid of all the saboteurs! Isolate them! Why should two or three kids affect the learning of twenty-seven others?

Subsequent to finalisation of the isolation room’s protocols, a number of classroom teachers were incensed by what they perceive as supervisory responsibility for in-school suspensions (conducted in the isolation room):

Hope: We wanted an isolation room where we could get rid of kids who were causing problems on a day-to-day basis! I am dependent upon [the deputy] to decide whether or not the kid is sent to the room! We weren’t looking for a room which is run in lieu of in-school suspensions!

Kate: I thought [an isolation room] was meant for a problem kid…. It shouldn’t be used for ‘in-school’ suspensions…. We have to have consequences for defiance and we have to have the support of the executives....

Doug: I think it would be good if the head teacher could send someone there rather than it being just a [deputy] tool.... We need immediate consequences....

Like these classroom teachers, a number of head teachers were also critical of the finalised isolation room protocols in terms of their failure to meet classroom teachers’ need for immediate removal and remote placement of persistently disruptive or verbally abusive students. Some head teachers were critical of the extension of teachers’ disciplinary responsibilities (supervision of two to three ‘hand-picked’ recidivists), and others were critical of the room’s express function (to “actually not suspend kids”). Clearly, in view of the misappropriation of teacher time afforded by fdsc behaviours, a number of head teachers indicated that they, like classroom teachers, expected isolation room protocols that would facilitate the immediate removal of persistently disruptive students from the classroom:
SUE: A teacher has a right to teach [and] a student has a right to learn. So anybody who is stopping that from happening [is] interrupting the teaching-learning process.... You can see in some classes - maybe the majority of the classes - that [cooperative students] are frustrated.... The teacher is spending so much of their time disciplining [uncontrollable kids]. They are trying the isolation room....

TESS: I think the isolation room is a good concept but it's [only] used for one or two [hand-picked] people at a time.... Teachers are having difficulty getting on with their teaching and getting through content because you've got kids in there who are virtually bullying the whole room [and] monopolising the teacher during the period....

In his comment below, Hal not only deplores the restraint of warranted student suspensions, but also perceives the finalised protocols as a means to exploit teachers for the sake of public appearances. Indeed, his commentary underscores teachers’ perception that systemic disciplinary escalations/supports are either absent or inadequate:

HAL: This isolation room is running on the goodwill of teachers.... I think the boss and the deputy ... keep suspension rates down to make us look good in the eyes of the community [and] the Department. [However], I'm not one for statistics. I believe that if a student does something that deserves suspension then they should be suspended....

The Principal, however, insists that teachers are responsible for the management of student behaviour. Ian comments:

IAN: A large proportion of our suspensions are aggressive behaviour.... And then, I guess, it's the persistent disobedience.... It could be persistent disruption to learning.... It's the teacher's primary responsibility to be managing the behaviours that students exhibit....

Indeed, from Ian’s perspective, the comprehensiveness of classroom teacher responsibility for management of fdsc behaviours is such that he represents teachers who seek executive assistance as incompetent (“struggling”), unskilled (“start asking others about how they manage”), and disruptive (“I get blindsided”). Subsequently, most likely in view of this portrayal, such teachers are excluded from decision-making relevant to the matter at hand (they’ve “handed it on”):

IAN: It's the teacher's primary responsibility to be managing the behaviours that students exhibit.... You are on your own most of the time.... And if a teacher is struggling in a room with a kid or a group of kids, I am looking for them to start asking others about how they manage.... And if you hand the issue on [then] you've handed it on....
If I engage [in disciplinary matters] I get blindsided from what the Department actually wants me to do....

Likewise, Tess perceives both the emergence of fdsc behaviours and teachers’ associated calls for executive/systemic assistance as evidence of teacher incompetence. This perception holds in spite of her acknowledgement of the overwhelming, adverse impact of student bullying on classroom inhabitants/proceedings, and in spite of her dissatisfaction with the finalised isolation room protocols. For Tess, the organisational solution to systemic management of fdsc behaviours involves patient anticipation of the ‘natural’ attrition of ‘incompetent’ teachers - in particular, novice teachers - who “won’t cope or can’t cope”:

TESS: You’ve got kids in there who are virtually bullying the whole room [and] monopolising the teacher during the period.... [However], I think the teacher has to show themselves as the one in control of that.... The teachers who won’t cope or can't cope - they're the ones you get called to, mostly.... They’re decorating the hallway with all the bad kids while they try to get on with the rest of the class.... Some young [teachers] are finding it difficult.... They'll get itchy feet and move.

However, whilst the Departmental ‘Quality Teaching’ agenda and workforce plan justifiably involves the need for classroom teachers to demonstrate that they meet professional standards, it is imperative that lead teachers: “initiate strategies and lead colleagues to implement effective classroom management”; “implement behaviour management initiatives to assist colleagues”; and, “promote student responsibility” (NESA, 2018, pp. 12 & 14). In other words, policymakers recognise that classroom teachers need systemic disciplinary/social support.

In summary, the controversy connected with Huckville’s finalised isolation room protocols provides an example of leadership decision-making that excludes teacher input (relevant to school initiatives), denies teacher support needs (relevant to systemic management of fdsc behaviours), and culminates in a keenly felt betrayal of teacher trust. Whilst trust forms the basis for social order, and incorporates both inclusion and support, this betrayal of teacher trust has the power to directly jeopardise teacher commitment, and indirectly jeopardise student success (Troman, 2000). In order for schools to succeed, reform must be accompanied by
complementary professional development and complementary systemic strategies/initiatives. Meanwhile, teacher attrition is considered “an important educational challenge word-wide” (Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015, p. 95), and supervisor/executive reliance upon teacher attrition as the solution to behaviour management issues is morally reprehensible (Dinham, 1995; Dorman, 2003). At Huckville, the Principal appears intensely focussed on the goal of student retention both within the school (“actually not suspend kids”) and within the classroom (“if a teacher is struggling in a room with a kid or a group of kids, [then] start asking others about how they manage”). *Prima facie*, such a goal has merit. However, in view of the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary/social support (relevant to teachers’ management of fdsc behaviours), and in view of the prevailing sense of professional disparagement attached to teachers who seek executive support, the Principals’ goal/focus is rendered a ‘signpost’ on the pathway to teacher burnout and teacher attrition. When teachers view their workplace as an environment that both overlooks and naturalises the victimisation of classroom teachers, the need for hard thinking about this issue is clear. Can the profession afford to lose teachers because of burnout and attrition? How can we ensure that those who venture to teach our kids are both prepared and supported?

5.6 CONCLUSION

At Huckville, two problematic organisational variables - namely, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviour - have produced a school culture that appears to be failing these teachers, as much as it is failing the students. The accounts here speak of classroom disorder, teacher dysfunction, and low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations. My argument here is that the proliferation and intensification of fdsc behaviours in these teachers’ classrooms is, by and large, a product of failing relationships between teachers and students - perceived by the teachers as student exploitation of the absence/inadequacy of systemic disciplinary consequences (escalations)
for fdsc behaviours. Within classrooms, both teacher capacity to teach and student capacity to learn have been obstructed.

Student verbal abuse of teachers - more often than not, a product of teachers’ efforts to curb fdsc behaviours - is a particular cause of relationship breakdown, leading to both teacher victimisation and teacher demoralisation; indeed, interviewed teachers feel victimised by students as a consequence of their efforts to ‘do their job’. Further, they feel that the school’s policies have produced systemic indifference to this abuse, thus intensifying their demoralisation. The time that is taken up - both within and beyond the classroom - as they try to conform to the school’s policy requirements (and executives’ expectations) is perceived by teachers as detrimental. Indeed, the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours - in the absence of either systemic disciplinary/social support or the promotion of student responsibility - constitutes a problematic organisational variable in relation to both teacher exhaustion and teacher demoralisation.

Ultimately, this situation is untenable for these teachers. My analysis has shown that, even though these teachers do not represent the majority either at Huckville or in the larger school system, failure to deal effectively with fdsc behaviours is significantly detrimental to all students. As I outline in the next chapter, the discourse of teacher professionalism that assigns responsibility for the management of fdsc behaviours to teachers alone has resulted in punitive work conditions, victimisation of teachers by students, neglect of the core business of schooling, and neglect of the promotion of self-discipline among students. Unquestioning acceptance of teacher burnout as evidence of ‘natural selection’, as opposed to evidence of problematic organisational variables, has grave ethical and socio-economic implications for students, teachers, and the education sector - at worst, the generational inheritance of cultural capital is at risk. Fortunately, teachers are full of ideas in relation to ways to tackle the impact of fdsc behaviours.
CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH & FINDINGS - SECONDARY TEACHERS’ DESIRED SUPPORT NEEDS IN RELATION TO FDSC BEHAVIOURS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Secondary teachers are called upon to manage the behaviours of students who face major upheavals in terms of both physiological and social transitions. My analysis in the previous chapters has demonstrated that, for many teachers at Huckville, the discourse of quality teaching has been emphasised and exploited in organisational disciplinary practices to convey an overwhelming sense of teacher responsibility for management of fdsc behaviours. This has led to the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, and, in turn, directly and substantially contributed to both reduced teaching/learning opportunities and reduced teacher wellbeing. I have shown that teaching and learning are regularly impaired or threatened by the absence/inadequacy of external supports in relation to fdsc behaviours, and I have shown that student verbal abuse of struggling classroom teachers typically emerges from these teachers’ unsupported efforts to curb fdsc behaviours. At Huckville, classroom disorder, teacher dysfunction, and low-trust supervisor-subordinate relations are evident. According to Australian professional standards, teacher responsibility for managing fdsc behaviours must be counterbalanced by systemic implementation of strategies and initiatives that serve to create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments (AITSL, 2011 & 2018). My interviewees expressed a desire for the implementation of systemic disciplinary/social practices that serve to protect and promote: (1) the wellbeing, learning, and socialisation of students; (2) the wellbeing and authority of classroom teachers; (3) significant school community relationships (student-teacher, teacher-executive, and school-parent); and, (4) a positive, inclusive school culture. Indeed, the organisational disciplinary/social supports desired by my interviewees are commensurate with practices that prioritise: relationships-based approaches; the status of fdsc behaviours; the status of teacher authority; and, the status of student responsibility. In this chapter, I present my analysis of the data that focussed on addressing the problem of fdsc
behaviours for these teachers and school leaders, to argue the need for stronger systemic attention to the welfare needs of both students and teachers.

6.2 THE NEED FOR PROMOTION OF APPROPRIATE DISCURSIVE PRACTICES

During my analysis of interviewees’ commentary, I was concerned by the silence of almost all participating teachers in terms of their own classroom teaching practices. Promotion of quality relationships and shared responsibility for students’ social development requires both particular teacher skills and appropriate systemic social support of teachers in their role as managers of student behaviour (Rogers, 2006). Effective student-teacher relational ties must be developed in the context of multiple pressures on teachers. These multiple pressures include: external performance demands of conformity, responsibility, and accountability; the taken-for-granted organisation of ‘schoolwork’ (defined content, learning deadlines, defined assessment, and assessment deadlines); the complex ‘ecology’ of the classroom as social space; in some cases, the clash between school and home relevant to conflicting social values; and, for secondary teachers, the increase in disruptive/aggressive behaviours exhibited by junior secondary students (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Johnson, 2016; Johnson & Sullivan, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). Indeed, the major impact of contextual factors on teachers’ resilience underscores both the importance of supporting teachers’ relationships and the inevitability of shared responsibility for teacher development (Mansfield et al., 2016).

Since anti-social student behaviours tend to either reflect or activate impaired student-teacher relationships, the implementation of ‘relationships-based’ interventions is implicated (Arbuckle & Little, 2004; Clunies-Ross et al., 2008; Drewery & Kecskemeti, 2010; Johnson & Sullivan, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Mansfield et al. 2016). However, a fundamental requirement for relationships-based interventions is teachers’ sound knowledge, and use, of appropriate discursive practices. Specifically, use of ‘respectful inquiry’ serves to value others’ meaning; an emphasis on discourses of affirmation
(positive teacher talk) promotes student engagement; and, knowledge of discourses pertaining to both ‘blame’ and ‘entitlement’ enables prompt identification of others’ (and reflection on one’s own) abrogation of moral responsibility (for which a respectful invitation to assume moral responsibility may be triggered). Indeed, relationships-based interventions require (1) discourses that reject deficit views of students and their families, and (2) promotion of clearly articulated school values (Johnson & Sullivan, 2016b).

Like Johnson (2016), I believe that an emphasis on ‘building relationships’ constitutes an effective foundation for balancing the very real and competing demands of individuals and the collective within the classroom environment. However, whilst both knowledge and use of appropriate discourses are fundamental to teacher practice, researchers have underscored the need for effective systemic social support of teachers in view of the time-consuming and competing demands of classroom behaviour management (Clunies-Ross et al., 2008). These demands, which include inequitable consumption of teachers’ class time, underscore the need for supportive time-out strategies in order to diffuse unmanageable situations. It is essential that time-out strategies are monitored, used judiciously, used respectfully, and, according to both the literature and my interviewees, closely followed by conferencing that aims to support both student engagement and more positive student-teacher relationships. Indeed, as I outline below, conferencing provides a context in which: privacy is protected; rights, responsibilities, and notions of entitlements can be addressed; and, the undivided attention - and care - of the implicated teacher is assured.

6.3 THE NEED FOR PRIORITISATION OF THE ORGANISATIONAL STATUS OF FDSC BEHAVIOURS: TIMELY, CLEAR, CONSISTENT, AND APPROPRIATE SYSTEMIC DISCIPLINARY/SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS

Most interviewees desire greater protection of both teaching/learning opportunities and classroom inhabitants’ wellbeing through the development of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate systemic disciplinary/social
interventions for fdsc behaviours. In other words, they express a pressing need for the school to prioritise the status of fdsc behaviours as problematic. Indeed, from the perspective of interviewees, it is the absence and/or inadequacy of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate systemic disciplinary and social interventions for fdsc behaviours that has contributed to both the proliferation and intensification of such behaviours - in particular, increasing student verbal abuse of classroom teachers.

From the point of view of the teachers, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours is reflected in an unresponsive, convoluted, and time-consuming disciplinary infrastructure that operates when classroom conditions degenerate to a level beyond the capacity of the teacher alone to manage. Disciplinary/social interventions are neither timely nor clear nor consistent nor appropriate. In the first place, the potential for early intervention is frustrated by classroom teachers’ dependence on a hierarchical paper trail, which, by its very nature, dictates a time delay. Following this paper trail, movement beyond the level of middle management may be either delayed or prevented by head teacher failure to either record or promptly forward behaviour notifications to the behaviour committee, or by head teacher failure to take action before passing on behaviour notifications to the behaviour committee. Thereafter, even if a behaviour notification reaches committee and/or executive level, anticipated disciplinary consequences for fdsc behaviours are not guaranteed - reported behaviour may simply be ‘noted’. Executives, themselves, confirm that there are problems in relation to: (1) head teacher delay (“the behaviour notification … sits on the desk”); (2) head teacher inaction (“not passing stuff on”); (3) senior executive inconsistency (“much depends on who picks up the kid”); (4) senior executive inaction (“I’m not sure if action is happening … down the chain”); (5) significant committee delays (“nine times out of ten … that needs to be referred back to the head teacher”); and, (6) systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours (“if they’ve got lots of notifications then they’re more likely to do something”). In Chapter 5, my analysis of behavioural incidents relating to twelve students (Years 7-10) who were explicitly named by interviewees resonates with these assertions. The executives comment:
ROSE: The trouble is, in some faculties, the behaviour notification goes to the head teacher, it sits on the desk, and the horse has bolted.... A lot of teachers are whingeing about the head teachers not passing stuff on....

HAL: There have to be consistent consequences across the school.... I’ve sat [on the behaviour committee]. Nine times out of ten we’ll go: What’s the head teacher done? Righto, that needs to be referred back to the head teacher....

GUY: We need consistency when things get to [senior] executive level.... Much depends on who picks up the kid when they get sent [to the main office]....

SUE: Students’ behaviour is disruptive [and] the only other difficulty is whether or not those sorts of behaviours are addressed down the chain....

FRED: [We need] more prescriptive responses and consequences.... I push my staff really hard to notify behaviours - if they’ve got lots of notifications then they’re more likely to do something....

Most interviewed executives are highly intolerant of student verbal abuse of teachers, which, as demonstrated, largely stems from teachers’ efforts to curb fdsc behaviours. Whilst executives lament the absence/inadequacy of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate consequences for student classroom disruption in general, the absence/inadequacy of disciplinary consequences for student verbal abuse of teachers provokes particular concern among head teachers. Specifically, executives insist that verbally abusive students be: (1) immediately removed from the classroom; (2) immediately brought to the attention of senior executives; and, (3) required to face “serious” consequences. Indeed, they believe that ‘allowing’ perpetrators to either remain in, or promptly return to, the classroom signals intolerable systemic acceptance of verbal abuse:

HAL: If a teacher is sworn at by a student [then] that student should be removed! [Hal continuously thumps the desk with a closed fist]. If that student is allowed to stay in that classroom after they’ve sworn at a teacher then that sends the wrong message to everybody....

GUY: [Bad language] got debated at length last year - in executive meetings.... I don’t think the discussion ever got resolved.... [However], I don’t tolerate any [verbal] abuse of a teacher. If a kid has a go at a teacher [then] I’ll be marching them up [to the deputy] and expecting to see some fairly serious consequences.

FRED: I hate the swearing! [It] really upsets me.... If you swear at a teacher [then] you [should be] out the door! Some of the things students say are quite horrendous - what used to be occasional is now the norm....
I've heard students swear at a teacher and nothing's happened! It makes me angry - and it makes my staff angry.... I don't necessarily agree with the way [the deputy] handles things....

ROSE: We want action straight away.... Send kids straight to the deputy for physical violence [and] verbal abuse.... Sometimes [the Principal and I] will have a disagreement over suspensions....

TESS: It's the swearing.... [Students] are being malicious.... It encourages their peers to be disrespectful and destructive.

Whilst classroom teachers strongly object to the absence of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate systemic disciplinary consequences for fdsc behaviours, they consider the absence of serious disciplinary consequences for student verbal abuse of teachers to be intolerable. The catalogue of adverse psychological/physiological states associated with student verbal abuse of teachers includes: stress, distress, anger, humiliation, low self-esteem, disillusion, demoralisation, worthlessness, and insecurity. Teachers’ intolerance of verbal abuse is such that they reference both expulsion and suspension:

Alex: The way they talk to the staff! In a private school situation, they would be expelled (clicks his fingers).... There is no respect and I find that stressful.... It's just sustained defiance and that attitude of 'go fuck yourself'.... Parents as well: Oh, it's just another fuckin' teacher [and] he's a dickhead....

Col: It used to be that you could expel somebody [for verbal abuse].... Some girl called [my female colleague] a dumb, fat, fucking slut.... The person who runs [the behaviour committee] went: We'll note that. And a couple of committee members said: You're kidding!

Hope: Students who tell teachers to 'fuck off' should be automatically suspended.... We've got an enormous copycat syndrome.... We are humiliated and belittled on a personal and professional level every day in most classes that we walk into.... We are absolutely powerless....

Ita: If kids swear at a teacher then they should be put on an in-school suspension.... [Kids] are swearing constantly at me and students.... I've been called a fat cunt.... [It's] disgraceful....

Doug: It's got to change. [My colleagues] are like: Surely, if you get sworn at, [then] that's an immediate suspension! But it just doesn't happen. There's disillusion in the whole school.... Morale's down....

Nina: I [once] ended up in the deputy's office in tears [because of students’ verbal abuse of me].... [Twenty-something] kids in the class have to sit and watch your embarrassment.... You need to know that you can send [verbally abusive students] to where there is going to be something done....
Kate: We have to have consequences [for] swearing.... Fuck off, shit, mother-fucker, bitch, get fucked.... Nothing’s going to happen [in relation to the abuser].... I’m worthless.

Cora: Swearing at a teacher - I just don’t see any action.... You feel unsafe.... There’s no support for the teachers - none whatsoever....

Meg: The way that they speak to you! *Fuck this! Cunt! You’re gay!* I just can’t and won’t tolerate any more of that.... The principal [should be] addressing the social behaviours of students....

Ava: There should be consequences for students who swear.... I get sworn at: *I’m not fucking doing this! Fucking bitch!*

Ed: Disrespect and humiliation - swearing is something that we as a community need to deal with....

In practice, however, as we have seen, teachers indicate that some executives - in particular, senior executives - typically deal with these behaviours by promptly returning the verbally abusive student to the classroom, and relying upon teacher-supervised detentions as a disciplinary consequence. Hence, whilst teachers claim that detention, by itself, no longer works to deter abusive students, they are still expected to both track down and sit in solitude with their abuser.

At Huckville, protection of both the teaching/learning opportunities and wellbeing of classroom inhabitants requires prioritisation of f’dsc behaviours as high status misbehaviours. In order to safeguard the inhabitants of the classroom, systemic initiatives should commence with promotion of appropriate discursive practices (teachers’ interactional talk), and - subsequent to the development of clear, fair, respectful, and endorsed student removal protocols - systemic initiatives should include the education of teachers in relation to the judicious use of such protocols. Indeed, according to government policy, teacher directed removal of students from the classroom is an acknowledged management strategy, and training of school staff in the appropriate implementation of time-out procedures is recommended (NSWDEC, 2011, *Guidelines for the Use of Time-out Strategies Including Dedicated Time-out Rooms*).
6.4 THE NEED FOR PROMOTION OF TEACHER AUTHORITY: DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT CLASSROOM REMOVAL PROTOCOLS

Protection/promotion of (1) teaching and learning opportunities, (2) classroom inhabitants’ wellbeing, (3) student-teacher relationships, and (4) subordinate-supervisor trust relationships requires teacher training in relation to the judicious use of student removal protocols. Student removal protocols must be clear, fair, respectful, monitored, and endorsed by the whole school community. At Huckville, existing student removal practices appear to be either too restrictive (for example, the isolation room protocols) or too haphazard (indiscriminate use of corridors, hallways, and the classrooms of other teachers/executives). Moreover, from my perspective, the silence of participants relevant to teachers’ classroom behaviour management practices constitutes evidence of a pressing need for teacher professional learning that facilitates teacher certainty (relevant to classroom behaviour management), and, with this, increased executive trust in teachers’ judgement calls.

As discussed in earlier findings, teacher dissatisfaction with both ad hoc removal practices (for example, placing students in nearby hallways, corridors, and adjacent classrooms) and restrictive isolation room protocols indicates the need for development of teacher-authorised removal protocols that are concomitant with teacher training:

Hope: I am dependent upon [the deputy] to decide whether or not the kid is sent to the [isolation] room!

Kate: I thought [an isolation room] was meant for a problem kid who needed time out.... We have to have the support of the executives....

Doug: [The isolation room] is just a deputy tool.... We need immediate consequences....

Jan: At my last school [disruptive kids] didn't have to go through the deputy.... We need something [like this]....

Bea: I don't want to be disrupting another class for the sake of one kid. And I’ve got twenty-five of my own children that I’m trying to teach!

Ita: When I have to send the same kid [out into the hallway] two or three times, to me, that is just unacceptable.
Teachers’ desire for the summary authority to remove persistently disruptive/aggressive students from the classroom produces an absence of any talk of developing their own skill and resilience in the face of disruptive classroom behaviour. The high emotional charge, and urgent need for resolution of these classroom situations, leads teachers to primarily highlight their desire to protect the bulk of learners:

Col: Give everyone else a fair crack at getting an education! Give the teachers a fair crack at being able to teach! [Persistently disruptive] kids aren't being removed!

Nina: You've got to save the other kids.... The kids who don't do as you ask are destroying the atmosphere in the room and disrupting the lesson!

Ed: When one student [persistently] disrupts the group, the teacher owes it to the group to remove that student....

Hence, thus far, systemic promotion/protection of the classroom environment requires teachers’ cultivation of appropriate discursive practices, and teacher training in relation to the judicious use of teacher-authorised student removal protocols that are clear, fair, respectful, monitored, and endorsed by the school community. And, for the sake of both clarity and consistency in this case, student classroom re-entry protocols require further development.

6.5 THE NEED FOR PROMOTION OF TEACHER AUTHORITY: DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT CLASSROOM RE-ENTRY PROTOCOLS

Teachers desire protocols that require a student who ‘had to be removed from the classroom’ to consult with the implicated classroom teacher before student re-entry to the classroom. Prima facie, this desire conflicts with Departmental policy in that “a time-out strategy should be used only for the minimum period of time necessary” (NSWDEC, 2011, p. 4). However, I believe that a compromise can be reached. I suggest that, if a student’s behaviour is such that a classroom teacher deemed it necessary to send him/her to an executive, then the student’s return to the classroom, albeit within the minimum period of time necessary, should include executive insistence upon student responsibility for immediate, official arrangement of
a compulsory meeting (beyond class time) with the classroom teacher. Such insistence should replace existing school practice wherein classroom teachers are expected to scour the playground in search of students who have failed/refused to attend an assigned detention. Furthermore, student failure to take responsibility for such an arrangement should attract escalating systemic consequences. Practice such as this would comply with policy, and simultaneously promote both teacher authority (as gatekeeper to the classroom) and student responsibility (for behaviour exhibited). The teachers explain:

Eve: I had one kid getting quite violent during a practical... And then [the deputy] gets back to me: They were just mucking around.... It was a serious bullying event.... My attempts to maintain discipline and a safe work practice were [teacher growls].... It's too hard....

Jan: [The executive] should be making the kids talk to the teacher ... but that doesn't happen.....

Ita: There is no point in the child just dealing with the deputy and then coming back in [to the classroom]. We need to talk to [students]....

Hope: The kid is always back in my class next lesson - and the [unacceptable] behaviour doesn't change.... I've never ever had a kid come and talk to me about re-entering the classroom. They are not [made] accountable....

Bob: It's appalling. I haven't seen any way that these students have been held accountable. I've been in the staffroom when students have been pulled in.... It's a quick rap on the knuckles, and they're sent [straight] back to the classroom.... These kids are feral - and [the teacher concerned] has been in tears a number of times.... No support at all....

Classroom teachers’ desire for consultation with removed students is based in their need for understanding, certainty, and direction. If a removed student simply walks straight back into the classroom, turns his/her nose up at the teacher, and immediately engages in the behaviour for which he/she was removed, then policy has certainly been maintained (“the minimum period of time”) but student-teacher relationships remain strained (if not further impaired). Officially requiring removed students to arrange a consultation with their classroom teachers would serve to facilitate (1) promotion of student responsibility, (2) promotion of teacher authority, and (3) detection of student problems that may have escaped teachers’ (or the school’s) notice. Rules and people can be broken; hence, within the space
provided by student-teacher conferencing, reasons for behavioural choices, and awareness of the adverse impact of poor behavioural choices on others, may be explored in order to address needs, rights, and responsibilities. According to the bulk of participants within my study, conferencing relevant to student verbal abuse of teachers is best situated within the context of restorative justice practice/protocols.

6.6 THE NEED FOR PROTECTION OF CLASSROOM INHABITANTS’ WELLBEING: DEVELOPMENT OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICE

Nascent within two of Huckville’s faculties, restorative justice practice is desired by a substantial number of Huckville’s interviewees (both teachers and executives). Restorative justice practice is a form of conferencing that serves to promote relationships through acknowledgement of the feelings and concerns of others, and through facilitation of clear, common solutions to conflict (Hemphill & Hargreaves, 2009; Lewis & Roache, 2012; Mutch & Collins, 2012; Sullivan et al., 2014). Policymakers stress that promotion of staff wellbeing is critical to both student wellbeing and student learning. In view of this claim, policymakers endorse restorative justice practice as a means by which school leadership can demonstrate responsibility for a safe and supportive school culture. Restorative justice practice (as a consequence of teachers’ right to seek help as victims of student aggression, student discrimination, and student bullying) is endorsed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA):

Staff wellbeing is promoted [by school leadership] as it is critical to student wellbeing and student learning.... The school [should have] established structures that provide a systematic and coherent focus on staff wellbeing to identify appropriate actions and interventions.... All members of the school community are aware of the right to seek help to resolve situations of aggression, discrimination, [and] bullying.... The school [considers] approaches to whole-school behaviour management [such as] positive behaviour support [and] restorative practices.... [Practice involves] encouraging students to accept greater responsibility for their actions.... (MCEECDYA, 2011, pp. 18, 21-24 & 30)

Within my study, a number of interviewed head teachers indicated the desire for school-wide development and implementation of restorative justice
protocols. Fred and Hal already make use of ‘diluted’ restorative justice protocols - questions posed to students - within the space of teacher-supervised detentions:

FRED: I go through the process of restorative justice [when requested]....
I've found that reasonably successful....

HAL: [In my faculty] students never come to detention and just sit there. We basically use the restorative justice questions....

Fred and Hal have made use of a wallet-sized card that contains questions posed by REAL JUSTICE (www.realjustice.org). Depending on the nature of the incident, they choose a set of questions from two sets of options in order to initiate discussion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restorative Questions I</th>
<th>Restorative Questions II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When things go wrong:</strong></td>
<td><strong>When someone has been hurt:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What happened?</td>
<td>- What did you think when you realised what had happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What were you thinking of at the time?</td>
<td>- What impact has this incident had on you and others?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What have you thought about since?</td>
<td>- What has been the hardest thing for you?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?</td>
<td>- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?</td>
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<td>- What do you think you need to do to make things right?</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Guy’s reference to unsolved issues between students and teachers forms the basis for his advocacy of restorative justice practice:

GUY: Keep the classroom teacher in the loop.... If [a suspended] kid just walks back in, then the issue still sits there between the teacher and the kid.... [We need] restorative justice conferencing....

And, although such practice is intermittent beyond that established by Fred and Hal, Sue’s account of a “distressed” novice teacher who returned from a restorative justice session feeling “very, very positive” attests to the power of the restorative justice process in relation to protection/promotion of teacher wellbeing:

SUE: I'd like to see [restorative justice] implemented on a grander scale. [Give] the classroom teacher a chance to validate their concerns and restore their power. They're human, they feel it, and, therefore, the student's got to face up to that. [One boy] made inappropriate comments about pregnancy - breast talk [to a young, pregnant, first
year teacher]…. She did ask him to stop but he didn't.... The counsellor arranged a restorative justice session with [the teacher, the boy] and his parents. She came back very, very positive.... [Beforehand], she was distressed....

Student suspensions do occur - indeed, my analysis of computer-registered student behaviour incident reports (Table 5.1) indicates that this is so. However, classroom teachers are frustrated by their exclusion from post-suspension student re-entry protocols. They essentially regard such exclusion as executive disregard for student-teacher relationships and/or themselves. The teachers comment:

Ita: If a child has been suspended then whatever teacher they had the conflict with should be involved [in re-entry].... The classroom teacher is the most important person in relation to that child....

Pam: There was supposed to be a re-entry meeting [with a student who verbally abused me] but it never happened.... Well, if the executive doesn't care (Pam recommences crying).... I haven't got the mental strength at the moment.... It's just dreadful! Ugly!

In the absence of officially endorsed opportunities to “talk it out” and “reset” relationships - that is, established structures that provide a systematic focus on wellbeing - teachers express concern about the re-entry of embittered students:

Alex: Suspension [has] probably made the kid bitter about the teacher! In previous schools, I was always invited [to re-entry meetings]. I haven’t had that situation here....

Hope: [Kids] have been suspended.... They've come back, and they're really arrogant, and they're really angry....

Nina: Students [can] walk back in incredibly resentful of you.... You never get to reset your relationship with that kid as such because you are pretty much ignored in the [re-entry] process....

Gina: I've never been called in for an interview regarding student [re-entry].... If the kid needs to be involved and the parent needs to be involved, why don't I need to be involved?

However, in spite of the call for restorative justice practice from the majority of interviewees, and in spite of its nascent use by two head teachers (within the convenient space of teacher-supervised detentions), school-wide development and implementation of restorative justice practice has not transpired. Indeed, although staff wellbeing is critical to both student wellbeing and student learning, at Huckville, the strength of ‘teacher quality’
discourse relevant to teacher responsibility for management of student behaviour has served to eclipse the implementation of strategies/initiatives that promote teacher wellbeing. Executive commentary (including two senior executives) indicates that restorative justice practice is either considered unfeasible or not considered at all:

ROSE: I don’t have a problem with [restorative justice sessions] except I know I can’t take that time…. We only have one counsellor……

TESS: I think there's a place for [restorative justice] but the logistics of organising something like that are huge…. Some of the really young [teachers] are finding it difficult because of the type of kids they've got in the class…. They'll get itchy feet and move.

IAN: It’s the teacher's primary responsibility to be managing the classroom and that includes [student] behaviours…. The nature of the game is that you are on your own…. We all know that as soon as you … need somebody else [then] in a sense you’ve lost…. 

At Huckville, the need for implementation of school-wide strategies/initiatives that purport to promote/protect both teacher wellbeing and student-teacher relationships is imperative. And - in view of the adverse influence and apparent invincibility of the archetypal student whose ‘parent carried on’ - the same need is relevant to parent-teacher relationships.

6.7 THE NEED FOR PROTECTION OF TEACHER WELLBEING: DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL MONITORING OF TEACHER-PARENT INTERACTIONS VIA WRITTEN BEHAVIOURAL NOTIFICATIONS (FDSC BEHAVIOURS)

In order to buffer and track parent-teacher interactions, classroom teachers desire the development of written notifications that serve to inform parents/caregivers, in a timely manner, of their children’s behaviour relevant to itemised fdsc behaviours. Whilst this desire emerges from teacher demand for organisational prioritisation of both the status of fdsc behaviours and student responsibility for fdsc behaviours, teachers especially seek organisational protection from abusive (or potentially abusive) parents. Current educational policy recognises the need for: parent/carer support of the school (relevant to management of students’ behaviour); regular communication with parents/carers (relevant to management of students’
behaviour); and, clear victim support mechanisms (relevant to management of offensive or threatening communications):

Parents and carers are encouraged to work with the school, support the school’s responses to any safety or wellbeing issues, [and] act as good role models. The school communicates regularly with parents and carers to update their understanding [of] what actions the school will take in response to situations involving bullying/cyber, bullying, and aggression…. All members of the school community are aware [of] the right to seek help to resolve situations of aggression, [and] the school is proactive in informing staff and students about appropriate procedures to follow if they receive offensive or threatening communications…. (MCEEDYA, 2011, pp. 22, 26, & 38)

Government policy relevant to student suspension emphasises the responsibilities of both parents and students in relation to the modification of inappropriate student behaviour:

[Suspension] is most effective when it highlights the parents’ responsibility for taking an active role, in partnership with the school, to modify the inappropriate behaviour of their child…. For the majority of students, suspension allows time for the student to reflect on their behaviour, to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the behaviour that led to the suspension, and to accept responsibility for changing their behaviour to meet the school’s expectations…. (NSWDEC, 2011, Suspension and Expulsion of School Students - Procedures, p. 3)

However, according to teacher reports, classroom/school culture has been adversely manipulated by confrontational parents whose “unquestioning support” of their children has served to: (1) intimidate and distress staff; (2) exacerbate the anti-social behaviour of the implicated student; (3) obstruct the positive socialisation of the implicated student; and, (4) obstruct the discharge of appropriate systemic disciplinary consequences. The teachers comment:

Olga: The parent rushes to defend the child [and] then the school caves in…. We are seeing a culture of students who can’t be [made] responsible. If only the parent could actually see [and hear] their child in class telling everybody to get fucked [and] standing over [others]....

Eve: [It is] the unquestioning support that parents give to their kids - this adversarial attitude - that I find very stressful…. I don’t chase [one student] because his mother calls the race card quite regularly....

Di: There needs to be a whole-school response [to disruptive behaviour].... We’ve become frightened to take kids on [because] the parents won’t back you....

Jan: I don’t think there is high accountability for some of [our rules].... I think we are afraid to follow it right through because we are going to face irate parents.... But [then] quite a lot of the behaviour that we have trouble with in the classroom escalates. [It’s] tolerated.
Hence, in view of the stated unfavourable impact of adversarial parents on student behaviour, classroom conditions, teacher wellbeing, and organisational disciplinary action, teachers desire the development of written notifications that officially, clearly, and expediently inform parents/caregivers of their children’s disruptive and/or abusive behaviours. Teacher reports indicate that emotions can escalate between teacher and parent during an unrecorded telephone conversation, and subsequent accounts of the nature of the interaction are, of course, hearsay. Nina indicates that a response to the messages that teachers leave on answering machines is not always forthcoming. Written notifications, on the other hand, constitute a record that is informative, detached, proof of attempted contact, retrievable, and a source of reference if and when subsequent meetings are required. The teachers explain:

Nina: Whether or not I get a response [from a parent] is another thing.... I left specific messages on the [parents'] answering machine - Your son had to be removed from [my] class by the deputy principal today, could you please return my call? - and still no phone call back.... That is stressing me because I know those kids are going to turn up [to my] next lesson and we are going to have the same fight again....

Col: Parents are half the problem in a lot of cases. I think [behaviour] letters are a better way to go.... When you're talking on the phone emotions can escalate ... If it's kept on a piece of paper you've got a record....

Di: We are not getting support from parents like we used to.... We've become frightened to take kids on.... A teacher in my staffroom rang a parent. [She] got such an amount of abuse hurled at her [that] she was in tears [and] had to go home.... She had to be driven home [the following day].... It didn't worry the mother that her daughter had been foul-mouthed and revolting.... I've heard my head teacher say on the phone I'm terminating this conversation because the parent's just been so aggressive.... I don't like phoning - what if I got somebody who was really abusive? [A behaviour letter] is a documented way of ensuring that parents [are informed]. And it is that little bit more detached....

Eve: A behaviour letter is probably more important than an academic letter.... Then that written record [of the precise communication with parents] is in the child's behaviour file - whereas a phone call isn't.... This adversarial attitude [of some parents] - that I find very stressful.... It's the way you're spoken to.... I've heard the deputy say: Be very careful with [mother and son] - the mother is causing a problem....
Cora: Parents should be contacted about [their child's] continual disruption of classes because it jeopardises everyone’s education. Send a behaviour letter straight to the parent rather than filling in behaviour slip after behaviour slip - nothing happens! We need a pro-forma with different categories of misbehaviour.

Col: A couple of years ago a kid told me to ‘get fucked’. I went through the system, and nothing happened. I then wrote a letter home: You’re daughter told me to get fucked. The father rang me and said: Thanks for letting us know. The student apologised and never said ‘boo’ to me again.…. 

Classroom teachers believe that written behaviour notifications would be more conducive to the implementation of procedures that facilitate shared responsibility:

Fay: It would be ideal [that] if the parent got a certain number of [behaviour] letters then they would have to come in and speak about the child's behaviour….

Col: And if the parent is getting inundated with letters about their kid … then make an appointment and we’ll talk about it.

Promotion of both early intervention and shared responsibility are inherent in interviewees’ desire to ‘nip things in the bud’ by means of official, clear, timely - and considerately worded - written behaviour notifications. As for teacher workload, teachers are already tasked with filling in a plethora of behaviour notifications and in-class behaviour monitoring slips, which, according to the bulk of interviewees, are simply ‘noted’. Written behaviour notifications (sent to parents) would be more likely to facilitate optimal intervention junctures; and, in view of the greater likelihood of behaviour modification as an outcome of timely intervention, serve to reduce the need for notification.

Executive reports attest to the adverse impact of adversarial parents on student behaviour, classroom conditions, teacher wellbeing, and organisational disciplinary action. Classroom teachers’ awareness of parents who go so far as to abuse and intimidate executives has left teachers feeling afraid to phone parents - particularly parents who are known to be abusive - and afraid to discipline the children of abusive parents. In addition, abusive parents have been known to obstruct the satisfactory resolution of fdsc behaviours:
ROSE: I got a shock when I came here.... Parents in [my last school] were, overall, really supportive and there was a high work ethic. Here, I haven’t found that at all.... I definitely see a decline in parental support of the school....

TESS: Recently, [a staff member] phoned a parent to let her know that [her] daughter was [truanting]. The parent proceeded to tell [this teacher] that it was her fault…. [This student] has had suspensions [and] this truancy still hasn't been resolved.... [This student said to me]: My mother told me not to go to that teacher’s class!

SUE: [My first year female teacher’s] been told: Just leave me fuckin’ alone! I hope you get raped by a dog! [The boys were] asked to write three lines.... I've spoken to a number of [these boys’] parents who say: My boy doesn't speak like that at home!

HAL: You look at the [behaviour notification] and say [to the classroom teacher]: Have you called home? They don’t want to do it! The Mrs Biters of the world abuse the deputy and the principal all the time [and] there’s even a bit of intimidation there. No, it’s Mrs Biter! I’m not going to ring her! It’ll just blow up! And I think that that’s what’s caused part of the children’s problems.... There are parents who’ve got the senior executive intimidated....

At Huckville, classroom teachers believe in the need to promptly inform parents of their children’s disruptive/abusive behaviours; however, both their experience and anticipation of verbal abuse from parents have fed their reluctance to ‘phone home’. Tied to self-protection and the need for evidence, concerns about phone contact have prompted teachers’ desire for administrative development of written behaviour notifications that inform parents of their children’s specific classroom behaviours. From these teachers’ perspective, judicious use of written behaviour notifications that specify fdsb behaviours would serve to facilitate early intervention, clarify lock-step interventions, expose parties’ issues, and encourage shared responsibility for behavioural issues. Both organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsb behaviours and organisational promotion of shared responsibility for fdsb behaviours are concomitant with this desired administrative development.

6.8 CONCLUSION

At Huckville, in order to safeguard both the teaching/learning opportunities and the wellbeing of classroom inhabitants, the majority of the participants within my study call for a cultural shift that serves to both
prioritise the status of fdsc behaviours and promote student responsibility. Specifically, these interviewees desire systemic endorsement of:

(1) Organisational disciplinary/social interventions that are timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate;

(2) Student exit and re-entry protocols (from/to the classroom) that emphasise, and facilitate student recognition of, teacher authority;

(3) Student re-entry protocols that promote student responsibility for arrangement of mandatory student-teacher conferencing;

(4) Restorative justice protocols that purport to foster positive student-teacher relationships; and,

(5) Written behavioural notifications that serve to buffer and track parent-teacher interactions relevant to fdsc behaviours.

Organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours requires (1) development of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate systemic interventions for fdsc behaviours, and (2) authorisation of classroom teachers to remove persistently disruptive or verbally abusive students from the classroom. At Huckville, both the teaching/learning opportunities and the wellbeing of classroom inhabitants have been adversely impacted by: fdsc behaviours; systemic indifference to fdsc behaviours; and, what is perceived as a convoluted, ineffective disciplinary infrastructure. Most interviewees are particularly demoralised by, and intolerant of, student verbal abuse that, more often than not, has emerged from teachers’ unsupported efforts to curb fdsc behaviours. Entrusting classroom teachers with the summary authority to remove disruptive and/or abusive students from the classroom serves to: secure timely intervention, reinforce behavioural expectations, and reinforce teacher authority. At the same time, entrusting classroom teachers with the summary authority to remove disruptive and/or abusive students from the classroom requires development of both clear removal protocols and focused professional learning (relevant to removal protocols).

Organisational promotion of student responsibility in tandem with organisational promotion of teacher authority involves the need for development of student classroom re-entry protocols that require mandatory student action (that is, prompt arrangement of a time/date for student-teacher conferencing with the implicated classroom teacher). Established practice,
which excludes teacher involvement in student re-entry protocols, has served to exacerbate impaired student-teacher relationships. Specifically, executives’ prompt return of disruptive or abusive students to the classroom has served to undermine a number of essential characteristics of a healthy school and workplace: classroom order (teaching and learning opportunities); student accountability in relation to fdsc behaviours; teacher authority; teacher wellbeing; and, both student-teacher and teacher-executive relationships. Systemic endorsement of interviewees’ desired student re-entry protocols would serve to (1) reinforce systemic intolerance of fdsc behaviours, and (2) reinforce student recognition of, and respect for, both the authority and behavioural expectations of the classroom teacher. Indeed, in order to turn out mature citizens, it is incumbent upon schools to facilitate the development of student responsibility.

Restorative justice practice is desired by interviewees as a means to protect and promote teacher wellbeing. That is, in order to protect/promote student-teacher relationships - and simultaneously check students’ resentment of their classroom teachers - it is necessary to facilitate greater understanding between students and their teachers through exploration of motivations, expectations, perceptions, needs, feelings, and concerns. Protection of teacher wellbeing - synonymous with protection/promotion of both student wellbeing and student learning - requires both organisational prioritisation of fdsc behaviours and organisational promotion of student responsibility. Restorative justice practice - evident as straightforward, effective practice within two of Huckville’s faculties - requires both executive endorsement and blanket application.

Also implicated in the protection/promotion of teacher wellbeing, development and use of standardised written behavioural notifications that clearly and progressively inform parents/caregivers of their children’s fdsc behaviours would serve to reinforce (1) systemic intolerance of fdsc behaviours, and (2) systemic promotion of shared responsibility for behaviours exhibited. Development and use of such notifications would facilitate: (1) clear-cut tracking of records of fdsc behaviours; (2) timely apprising of parents/caregivers (relevant to their child’s/children’s classroom
conduct); (3) timely activation of warranted parent-school conferencing; and, to err on the side of caution, (4) protection of teacher wellbeing (relevant to actual, potential or anticipated abuse from adversarial parents/caregivers). In view of the feedback provided by interviewees, it is envisaged that such notifications would include, but not necessarily be limited to, itemised fdsc behaviours and derivative issues (for example, ‘talk’, ‘technology’, ‘commitment’, ‘bullying’, ‘refusal to move’, ‘student verbal abuse of teacher’, ‘failure to attend a detention’, ‘failure to arrange a mandatory student-teacher conference’, ‘failure to attend a mandatory student-teacher conference’, ‘unsatisfactory resolution to a student-teacher conference’, and ‘school-parent/caregiver conference required’).

Ultimately, to borrow from the Principal’s concluding commentary, the primary role of schooling is to produce healthy citizens. Both organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours and an organisational emphasis on student responsibility are commensurate with this role. In order to safeguard the opportunities and wellbeing of all classroom inhabitants, it is incumbent upon schools to implement guidelines (rules and consequences) that work to effectively guide students in terms of their socialisation. We need to show students how to take responsibility, how to show respect, how to make amends, how to negotiate, how to seek support, and how to talk about problems/worries. In the end, Huckville’s principal makes the need for establishment of school standards, school guidelines, and school supports abundantly clear:

Ian: A primary role of the school is to put in place the behaviours, the guidelines, and the supports that will turn out citizens…. It's about turning out healthy citizens who contribute…. Why do schools exist? Well, to educate kids - but to educate them in what areas? And the answer is in social circumstances.…. These comments now bring me to the end of Section II, and to the conclusion of this report of my inquiry (Chapter 7).
7.1 INTRODUCTION

My investigation of secondary classroom teachers’ needs relevant to whole-school management of fdsc behaviours has been based in my concern - both practical and ethical - for the wellbeing of all classroom inhabitants. Ultimately, this investigation underscores the notion that effective teaching-learning environments are critically dependent on sound student-teacher relationships which, in turn, are critically dependent on supportive whole-school disciplinary/social practices that serve to (1) challenge fdsc behaviours, and (2) minimise the negative effects of fdsc behaviours. Indeed, in terms of worst-case scenarios, both teacher burnout and teacher attrition constitute the undesirable outcomes of inadequate organisational disciplinary/social support relevant to fdsc behaviours, and such outcomes pose serious risks to both educational purpose (teaching and learning) and the wellbeing of teachers and students as individuals. However, as my analysis of an apparently unremarkable school site shows, ‘worst-case’ scenarios may be far more common than the rhetoric of policy and professionalism relevant to teacher standards has acknowledged.

In Chapter 1, I anticipated the contribution I hoped my study would make to my profession - that is, teaching - with acknowledgement that the romantic view of the learner that I initially brought into my work was a fantasy from an aspirational childhood. Many teachers enter the profession with similar vocational aspirations toward redressing social inequities. As my study has shown, too many leave the profession with little of such a professional self-concept intact, and some with deep personal injury to their own ideas of self and their efficacy as teachers. This has been the core of my argument here - that if the teaching profession is to adapt effectively to social change, there needs to be focussed systemic attention and action to (1) better prepare teachers to manage classroom populations where respect for social conventions cannot be assumed, and (2) better assist and support practising teachers to manage fdsc behaviours that hinder student learning.
In this final chapter, I briefly review my investigation by highlighting the bases on which I have made my claims. I acknowledge the areas of research, the methodological basis, and the participant contributions that have aided the development of my thesis.

7.2 AIDED BY EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH, A CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD?

In developing my argument, I relied upon representative samples of evidence-based research literature relating to: (1) typologies of frequent, disruptive student classroom behaviours; (2) teacher burnout and teacher attrition; (3) school leadership influences and desirable behaviours; and, (4) systemic disciplinary/social interventions considered ‘best/endorsed’ practice relevant to management of student classroom behaviour. My evaluation of the disciplinary/social practices advocated by the participant practitioners within my own study is framed within this literature.

Core propositions within the cited literature on *fdsc behaviours* indicate that safeguarding the teaching-learning environment (and its inhabitants) requires systemic interventions designed to target, address, and closely monitor ‘talk’, ‘technology’, ‘commitment’, and ‘bullying’ issues. Whilst my study has substantiated and extended this list to include ‘impasse’ issues (‘student refusal to move’), I have contributed to this research field by demonstrating that student verbal abuse of teachers constitutes both an *fdsc behaviour* and a direct outcome of classroom teachers’ efforts to curb/manage *fdsc behaviours*. Commensurate with this contribution, I have provided further corroboration of the existence, nature, and detrimental impact of the phenomenon distinguished as ‘student bullying of teachers’. Indeed, studies that provide further corroboration of this phenomenon are required in view of wide-ranging failure to acknowledge the provisional nature of teachers’ power relevant to students’ usable power.

Core propositions within the cited literature on *teacher burnout and teacher attrition* indicate that ‘student misbehaviour’, ‘inadequate leadership support’, ‘ineffective systemic disciplinary policy’, and ‘excessive teacher workload’ constitute the key organisational antecedents to both teacher
burnout and teacher attrition. Given that the organisational variables that threaten teacher wellbeing also serve to threaten student wellbeing and student learning, the vital role of leadership in the minimisation of all dimensions of teacher burnout and teacher attrition is implicated. Emergent explanatory theory within my study reveals that two problematic organisational variables - namely, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours in combination with the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours - resonate with all four key organisational antecedents to both teacher burnout and teacher attrition; and, in turn, implicate the need for school leadership to take responsibility for the provision of adequate, effective organisational disciplinary/social supports relevant to classroom teachers’ management of fdsc behaviours.

Core propositions within the cited literature on school culture indicate that the direct and indirect influence of principal/leadership behaviours on school culture mandates the need for particular principal/leadership behaviours. Cited research establishes the importance of shared vision, high expectations, trust, inclusion, and support as means to promote school success. The interviewees in my study present a picture of school culture that is antithetical in terms of these desired leaderships behaviours - conflicting beliefs/values, low expectations, distrust, exclusion, and inadequate disciplinary/social support are indicated. Whilst my study generally contributes to corroboration of the need for desirable principal/leadership behaviours, I specifically explore principal/leadership behaviours relevant to whole-school management of fdsc behaviours.

Core propositions within the cited literature on ‘best/endorsed’ practice promote relationships-based approaches to whole-school management of student behaviour. Herein, practices such as positive behaviour support and restorative justice conferencing purport to value school community relationships through promotion/prioritisation of: core school values (high social standards); clear, solution-oriented consequences for breeches of behavioural standards; knowledge and use of appropriate discourses; and, above all, shared responsibility for student socialisation. Whilst Johnson (2016) recognises that teachers need to “balance the competing demands of
individuals and the collective group”, he rightfully insists that teachers/schools enact ‘respectful ways of dealing with students’ (p. 22). As the foundation for positive action, ‘respectful ways’ include: explicit promotion of desirable core values; habitual use of positive discursive practices; attendance to the underlying causes of students’ disruptive behaviour; and, development of positive relationships with students (Johnson, 2016; Johnson & Sullivan, 2016b). Enacting ‘respectful ways’, according to Johnson and Sullivan (2016), serves to facilitate ‘decision-making space’; nevertheless, this conceded need for ‘decision-making space’ must neither prevent appropriate, timely disciplinary action nor thwart timely, required disciplinary support. Indeed, as asserted in earlier discussion, “the majority of teachers can become more effective classroom managers as a result of the right kinds of training, experience, and support” (Elton Report, 1989, p. 69). Within my study, I demonstrate that the inadvertent effect of current national (Australian) discourse relevant to ‘quality teaching’, which explicitly articulates teacher responsibility for the management of student behaviour, has served to disrupt whole-school development of supportive initiatives relevant to teacher management of fdsc behaviours. Evident within my study, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc are consistent with leaderships’ weighted perceptions of such discourse. Hence, I have demonstrated that implementation of effective systemic disciplinary/social support relevant to classroom teacher management of fdsc behaviour cannot, and should not, be taken for granted.

7.3 AIDED BY METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS, A CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROFESSION?

My choice of research topic, methodologies, and methods reflects my ardent desire to make a contribution to “the efficient and humane functioning of modern bureaucratic systems” (McLeod, 2002, p. 89) - in particular, my own profession of teaching. To this end I have made use of grounded theory and grounded action methodologies. These methodologies - methodologies that value social perspectives of social processes by means of an inductive
approach to data - have supported my quest to unearth sustainable solutions to the problems that teachers/schools face relevant to fdsC behaviours, through elicitation of teachers’ and executives’ organisational disciplinary/social support needs (in one particular NSW public secondary school). My adoption of a constructivist approach gave me the freedom to acknowledge that I am responsible for the overarching narrative in which the shared experiences of participants - their data - was assembled and secured. In order to focus interviewees on relevant issues and procure their perspectives, data collection involved the use of open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The emergence of both explanatory and operational theory that represented data - an iterative and recursive process - was facilitated by transcription and analysis of data subsequent to the conduct of each interview. Analysis of data - using coding - was achieved through use of the constant comparison method. Refinement and validation of emergent categories mandated the inclusion of significant stakeholders (classroom teachers and executives). In these ways I have ensured that the approach I have taken to the research problem has been one that the profession can recognise as grounded in its own reality and concerns.

In the latter stages of analysis, the emergent core categories derived (explanatory theory) indicated that relationships between teaching/learning and teachers/students are adversely impacted by two organisational variables - the low organisational status of fdsC behaviours, and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsC behaviours. Thereafter, operational theory was derived from explanatory theory; and, as it turned out, operational theory was commensurate with evidence-based literature. Thus I arrived at recommendations for required whole-school action relevant to classroom teachers’ management of fdsC behaviours. Ethical considerations that particularly applied to the conduct of my research included: obtaining special permission; obtaining consent (written, informed, and ongoing); providing full disclosure; ensuring freedom from coercion; ensuring anonymity; ensuring confidentiality; and, maintaining a duty of care. Dissemination of these findings to all levels of the profession, from
practitioners to policymakers, will serve to confirm/test their validity, and hopefully contribute to systems-level thinking and action into the future.

7.4 AIDED BY TEACHERS’ AND EXECUTIVES’ VOICES, A CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORKPLACE?

In effect, the discourse of teacher professionalism that assigns responsibility for the management of student classroom behaviours (fdsc behaviours) to classroom teachers seems to have eclipsed professional focus/discussion on the need for development of compensating systemic initiatives, strategies, and protocols that serve to provide classroom teachers with effective organisational disciplinary/social support. I have shown that, at Huckville, fdsc behaviours (‘talk’, ‘commitment’, ‘technology’, ‘bullying’, and ‘impasse’ issues) rank as the chief stressor of all participating classroom teachers, and the chief concern of all participating executives bar one. I have shown that these behaviours/issues, at Huckville, have served to (1) obstruct teaching and learning, (2) frustrate co-operative students, and (3) impair teacher wellbeing. I have shown that, at Huckville, student verbal abuse of classroom teachers typically emerges from classroom teachers’ efforts to curb fdsc behaviours, and constitutes an evidence-based form of student bullying of teachers. I have shown that fdsc behaviours at Huckville, according to both the participants in my study and my exploration of pertinent documentation, constitute neither a systemic priority nor an equitably shared responsibility. Emergent explanatory theory indicates both the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours at Huckville, and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours at Huckville. As the data has shown, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours is particularly evident in the absence/inadequacy of school-wide social/disciplinary practices that serve to address fdsc behaviours; and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours is particularly evident within systemic overreliance on teacher-supervised detentions (and associated teacher legwork) as the chief means of addressing fdsc behaviours. In the end, it is the formidable combination of these organisational variables - embedded in the powerful and weighted
discourse of ‘teacher quality’ - that has served to restrain interviewed teachers’ open cries for help, and left the bulk of them feeling exhausted, demoralised, and punished. Subsequently, classroom disorder, teacher dysfunction, and distrust between supervisors and subordinates are evident at Huckville. The school culture appears to be failing these teachers as much as it is failing the students. Herein, unquestioning acceptance of teacher burnout as evidence of ‘natural selection’, as opposed to evidence of problematic organisational variables, has grave ethical and socio-economic implications for students - both for those students at Huckville and for those students in the school system at large.

7.5 AN ENDING PLACE FROM WHICH TO MOVE FORWARD?

My research permitted the facilitation of both teachers’ and executives’ voices in this workplace. Classroom teachers, head teachers, senior executives, and both novice and veteran teachers in all their roles were represented in my samples. The frank commentary of these participants - for which I am most grateful, and bound to represent as stated - furnished a blunt picture of both the conditions and requirements in this particular school. At times, I perceived such frankness as a symptom of teacher burnout. And, although my interviewees ‘pulled no punches’ in terms of their candid descriptions of both students’ inappropriate behaviours and inadequate systemic disciplinary/social supports, their desire for organisational disciplinary/social supports that are commensurate with endorsed relationships-based approaches proved heartening. Indeed, their desire for relationships-based approaches is indicative of the fundamental vocational aspiration associated with teaching - namely, the desire to help students to succeed.

In the end, in order to promote the wellbeing and success of all the inhabitants of the classroom, the interviewees in this school community desire (1) organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours, and (2) organisational promotion of shared responsibility for student behaviours.
In conclusion, to reiterate and summarise the main points of my argument, I highlight them in terms of the framework of my inquiry.

Firstly, organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours requires:

- Development of timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate systemic interventions for fdsc behaviours;
- Development of teacher knowledge/use of appropriate discursive practices (interactional talk); and,
- Development of teacher-authorised student removal protocols, (contingent upon teacher training) that serve to offset disruptive/abusive fdsc behaviours.

In view of the need to keep students in the classroom - a noble goal that, in certain circumstances, has served to undermine classroom conditions - organisational promotion of student responsibility requires:

- Development and implementation of student classroom re-entry protocols that require student responsibility for action (specifically, prompt arrangement of a time/date to consult with the implicated teacher); and,
- Development and implementation of protocols that challenge student failure to take responsibility for required action.

And finally, signifying both systemic prioritisation/promotion of the status of fdsc behaviours and shared responsibility for fdsc behaviours, organisational promotion/prioritisation of teacher wellbeing requires:

- Development and implementation of school-wide restorative justice practices (achievable at faculty level) that serve to protect/promote student-teacher relationships; and,
- Development and implementation of standardised written behavioural notifications that serve to buffer and track parent/caregiver-teacher interactions relevant to itemised fdsc behaviours, and relevant to the derivative issues of fdsc behaviours.
REFERENCES


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Letter to the Principal following SERAP approval

Dear (Name of Principal),

In relation to our previous conversations, I am pleased to inform you that my doctoral research proposal has been approved by the NSW Department of Education & Training and the Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University (Riverina). Accordingly, I seek your express permission to conduct research in your school from 2010-2012. The title of my research project is:

Assisting secondary classroom teachers' management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and managerial support.

The focus of my doctoral research is an examination of the whole-school approach to student behaviour management. The aim of my research is to confirm and ensure the effective and efficient functioning of whole-school student behavioural management via the experiences and input of the persons directly involved and affected. As discussed, such an aim requires me to elicit information about student misbehaviours and the management of misbehaviours from the two groups involved in the interactions - executives and classroom teachers. Information from these participants is required in order to: characterise the existing system; confirm effective and efficient practices; and, collate feasible suggestions for change that are responsive to stated needs and, above all, the school’s particular context.

My use of open-ended interviewing is an acknowledgement that individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences. I hope to make sense of the meanings that others have about the school in relation to the focus indicated. In order to promote transparency, a copy of initiating open-ended questions posed within my research is provided. I have also assembled a power-point presentation in order to introduce staff to my proposed research (a copy is provided). With your permission, I hope to present this power-point at an upcoming staff meeting.

In 2010, in relation to student behaviour management, I propose to investigate teachers' perceptions of: their responses to the misbehaviours exhibited by students; the effects of student misbehaviour on the classroom dynamic; the systemic supports used by them in their management of student misbehaviour; and, their suggestions for the development of whole-school behavioural management strategies.

In 2011, in relation to student behaviour management, I propose to investigate executives' perceptions of: the nature of their role; the strictures and difficulties associated with their role; their expectations of classroom teachers as managers of classroom misbehaviours; the current behaviour management policies/strategies operating (school wide and within faculties); and, their suggestions for the development of whole-school behavioural management strategies.
Classroom teachers and executives who volunteer to participate in this research will be interviewed. Interviews will take about 40-60 minutes at a time and place convenient to individual participants. With permission, interviews will be audio taped.

Participation is voluntary. Withdrawal simply involves contacting me by phone, in person or in writing. No-one will be able to identify a participant or the school from the results of the study. Pseudonyms will be used. Only I will have access to this information, except when students are identified as being at risk of harm from themselves or others. In this case, the names of these students will be given to you, the school principal. All information provided and obtained (teachers, executives, students, and documents) will be stored in a locked filing cabinet then shredded when the research requirements are completed.

When my research is concluded I will provide you with a written report of the findings. If you wish, I can also provide interim reports which focus on each stage of the research. I am more than happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. I intend to make sure that staff and the school do not suffer in any way from my investigation. I will be fair to all parties concerned, protect identities, and check my interpretations with authorised supervisors. The documentation used will not compromise the confidentiality of my sources or setting. My intention is to provide a service to the school whilst developing my skills as a researcher who is supportive of educators and committed to the education sector. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:

Joanne Huckel  (Researcher)

Dr (name supplied) - Supervisor of Doctoral Research (Charles Sturt University)

The Executive Officer / Ethics in Human Research Committee / Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor / Corporate Affairs / Charles Sturt University / The Grange / Private Bag 99 / Bathurst NSW 2795.

(Phone and fax numbers supplied)

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Huckel

BA GDipEd (Soc Sci) MEd (Literacy) C Sturt
Interviews: Initiating Questions

(A) Component – Classroom Teachers (2010)

In view of the information required for this research, the following open-ended questions will be posed to those classroom teachers who volunteer to be interviewed:

- In this school, what are your greatest stressors as a classroom teacher?
- What do you view as the most frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours in your classroom?
- For what frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours have you actively sought assistance?
- In relation to frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours, what is your assessment of the support provided when you have actively sought executive assistance?
- What school-wide strategies/changes would you confirm/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of fdsc behaviours?

(B) Component - The Executive (2011)

In view of the information required for this research, the following open-ended questions will be posed to those members of the executive who volunteer to be interviewed:

- What student misbehaviours exhibited in this school most concern you?
- What is your perception of classroom teachers’ responsibilities in relation to student misbehaviour?
- Generally speaking, for what frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours has your assistance been actively sought by classroom teachers?
- In practice, what difficulties/problems arise when your assistance is sought by classroom teachers in relation to student misbehaviours?
- What school-wide strategies/changes would you confirm/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of student misbehaviours?
APPENDIX 2

INFORMATION SHEET & CONSENT FORM – CLASSROOM TEACHERS
Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Research

Dear .................................................................,

I invite you to take part in doctoral research which has been approved by the NSW Department of Education & Training and the Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University. My research focuses on whole-school student behavioural management. The working title is:

Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and managerial support.

During the first phase of the research, I propose to investigate classroom teachers’ perceptions of: their responses to the misbehaviours exhibited by students; the effects of student misbehaviour on the classroom dynamic; the systemic supports used by them in their management of student misbehaviour; and, their suggestions for the development of whole-school behavioural management strategies. Ultimately, the information provided by you and your colleagues will enable me to: characterise the existing system; confirm effective practices; and, collate feasible suggestions for change that are responsive to the school’s particular context. I will provide a report of the findings to the school.

Classroom teachers who participate in this research will be interviewed (audio-taped). Interviews will take about 40-60 minutes at a time and place convenient to you. Your identity will remain anonymous (alpha-numerical codes will be used) and the information you provide will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary. If you do decide not to take part, this decision will not affect your standing at the school. If you change your mind about taking part, even after the study has started, any information already collected will be destroyed. If students are identified as being at risk of harm from themselves or others, the names of these students will be given to the school principal. The information provided by you will be stored in a locked filing cabinet (off site) until December, 2013. Thereafter, the information will be destroyed (shredded).

I thank you for your consideration of this project. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:

Miss Jo Huckel (Researcher) Ph/Fax: Supplied Mob: Supplied
OR
Dr (supplied) (Senior Lecturer / CSU-Riverina) Ph: Supplied Fax: Supplied
OR
The Executive Officer / Ethics in Human Research Committee / Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor / Corporate Affairs / Charles Sturt University / The Grange / Private Bag 99 / Bathurst NSW 2795.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Huckel BA GDipEd (Soc Sci) MEd (Literacy) C Sturt
Initiating Questions – Classroom Teachers

- In this school, what are your greatest stressors as a classroom teacher?
- What do you view as the most frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours in your classroom?
- For what frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours have you actively sought assistance?
- In relation to frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours, what is your assessment of the support provided when you have actively sought executive assistance?
- What school-wide strategies/changes would you confirm/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of student misbehaviours?

(This information sheet is for you to keep)

Consent Form (Classroom Teachers)

I (print your name) .................................................................
consent to my participation in the research project described below:

Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and managerial support.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER: Jo Huckel     Ph: Supplied     Mobile: Supplied

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read and understood the written explanation given to me and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information with the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary; a decision not to participate will in no way affect my standing or relationship with the school and I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and that no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

5. I understand that if I have complaints or concerns about this research, I have information pertaining to relevant contacts.

Please circle the days on which, generally speaking, you are free to participate in an interview (after school). In time, I will personally approach you in order to confirm a convenient time and place for the interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1: Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
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<th>Fri</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2: Mon</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>Fri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signed: .................................................................  Date: .................................

(Please return this consent form to the assigned pigeon hole)
APPENDIX 3

INFORMATION SHEET and CONSENT FORM – Members of the Executive
Invitation to Participate in Qualitative Research

Dear ...........................................................................,

I invite you to take part in doctoral research which has been approved by the NSW Department of Education & Training and the Ethics Committee of Charles Sturt University. My research focuses on whole-school student behavioural management. The working title is:

**Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and managerial support.**

During the second phase of the research, I propose to investigate executives’ perceptions of: the nature, and difficulties, of the executive’s role; the executive’s perceptions of a successful classroom manager; the current behaviour management policies/strategies operating (school wide and within faculties); the strictures that frustrate executive responses; and, executives’ suggestions for the development of whole-school behavioural strategies. Ultimately, the information provided by you and your colleagues will enable me to: characterise the existing system; confirm effective practices; and, collate feasible suggestions for change that are responsive to the school’s particular context. I will provide a report of the findings to the school.

Executives who participate in this research will be interviewed (audio-taped). Interviews will take about 40-60 minutes at a time and place convenient to you. Your identity will remain anonymous (alpha-numerical codes will be used) and the information you provide will remain confidential. Participation is voluntary. If you do decide not to take part, this decision will not affect your standing at the school. If you change your mind about taking part, even after the study has started, any information already collected will be destroyed. If students are identified as being at risk of harm from themselves or others, the names of these students will be given to the school principal. The information provided by you will be stored in a locked filing cabinet (off site) until December, 2013. Thereafter, the information will be destroyed (shredded).

I thank you for your consideration of this project. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact:

Miss Jo Huckel (Researcher) Ph/Fax: Supplied Mob: Supplied OR

Dr (supplied) (Senior Lecturer / CSU-Riverina) Ph: Supplied Fax: Supplied OR

The Executive Officer / Ethics in Human Research Committee / Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor / Corporate Affairs / Charles Sturt University / The Grange / Private Bag 99 / Bathurst NSW 2795.

Yours sincerely,

Joanne Huckel

BA GDipEd (Soc Sci) MEd (Literacy) C Sturt
Initiating Questions – Members of the Executive

• What student misbehaviours exhibited in this school most concern you?
• What is your perception of classroom teachers' responsibilities in relation to student misbehaviour?
• Generally speaking, for what frequently, disruptive student misbehaviours has your assistance been actively sought by classroom teachers?
• In practice, what difficulties/problems arise when your assistance is sought by classroom teachers in relation to student misbehaviours?
• What school-wide strategies/changes would you confirm/propose as a means of supporting teachers in their management of student misbehaviours?

(This information sheet is for you to keep.)

Consent Form (Members of the Executive)

I (print your name) ................................................................................................................
consent to my participation in the research project described below:

Assisting secondary classroom teachers’ management of student behaviours: Effective behavioural management policy and managerial support.

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER: Jo Huckel   Ph: Supplied   Mobile: Supplied

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read and understood the written explanation given to me and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information with the researcher.

3. I understand that my participation in this project is voluntary; a decision not to participate will in no way affect my standing or relationship with the school and I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and that no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

5. I understand that if I have complaints or concerns about this research, I have information pertaining to relevant contacts.

Please circle the days on which, generally speaking, you are free to participate in an interview (after school). In time, I will personally approach you in order to confirm a convenient time and place for the interview:

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<td>Wed</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
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</table>

Signed: ................................................................. Date: .......................................... 

(Please return this consent form to the assigned pigeon hole)
The Emergence of Operational Theory from Explanatory Theory

| What is the real action problem according to explanatory theory? | Within the investigated site, both student learning and teacher wellbeing are at risk in view of the unchecked, adverse impact of fdsc behaviours. Emergent explanatory theory has revealed that the real action problem resides in the combination of (1) the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours, and (2) the high organisational assignment of teacher responsibility and/or teacher culpability for fdsc behaviours. |
| What are the desired outcomes of the real action problem from the perspective of participants? | Participants’ desired outcomes, commensurate with explanatory theory, serve to counteract the real action problem/s. Desired outcomes include (1) implementation of timely, appropriate systemic disciplinary escalations which serve to facilitate undisrupted teaching and undisrupted learning (organisational prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours), and (2) implementation of student disciplinary protocols that serve to promote the authority, morale, and security of classroom teachers, and serve to better utilise both teacher time and teacher energy (organisational prioritisation of both student responsibility and student action for fdsc behaviours). |
| What does explanatory theory inform us about assigning priorities to identified outcomes? | Explanatory theory reveals that the lack of disciplinary escalation for fdsc behaviours, and overreliance on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours, have served to adversely impact (1) teacher capacity to teach, (2) student capacity to learn, (3) teacher wellbeing, and (4) student socialisation. Hence, in view of the threat posed by the action problem/s to education (student learning and socialisation) and educators (teaching and teacher wellbeing), considerable urgency is attached to the need to both prioritise and implement (1) rigorous disciplinary escalation pathways for disruptive behaviours, and (2) disciplinary protocols that promote student responsibility for disruptive behaviours. |
| In order to bring about desired change, what does explanatory theory indicate about aspects of the action problem that need to be successfully addressed? | Effectively, organisational containment of fdsc behaviours within the classroom and at the level of teacher action has served to impair both student learning and teacher wellbeing. Explanatory theory indicates that, in order to safeguard both student learning and teacher wellbeing, the following aspects of the action problem need to be successfully addressed: |
|  | • The organisational status of fdsc behaviours, which is low, requires prioritisation by means of disciplinary escalation pathways that signal intolerance of such behaviour (timely, appropriate, supported student classroom exit and re-entry protocols); and, |
|  | • The organisational assignment of responsibility for fdsc behaviours to teachers requires reassignment to students (student action). |
According to explanatory theory, what needs to be done in order to mitigate particular aspects of the action problem?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The low organisational status of fdsc behaviours is reflected in the inadequacy/absence of warranted systemic disciplinary escalations for these particular behaviours. Systemically ignored, these particular behaviours - classroom ‘bound’ and proliferating - have served to negatively impact on both student learning and teacher wellbeing.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational assignment of, and reliance upon, onerous teacher responsibility and/or culpability for fdsc behaviours is reflected in (1) organisational insistence upon the maintenance of time-consuming, exhausting teacher disciplinary action both within and beyond the classroom, (2) punitive exclusion of teacher input in the event of student disciplinary escalations, and, (3) systemic failure to promote student responsibility for these particular behaviours. Organisational assignment of onerous, sustained teacher responsibility for disruptive behaviours - both within and beyond the classroom, and minus the support of warranted systemic disciplinary escalations - has also served to negatively impact both student learning and teacher wellbeing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Therefore, in order to reduce the adverse impact of fdsc behaviours on both student learning and teacher wellbeing, prioritisation of the status of fdsc behaviours is required, and organisational enhancement of student responsibility for fdsc behaviours is required. These twofold aspects of the action problem require:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Identification of the behaviours considered fdsc behaviours (identification is provided within the current study, and corroborated by evidence-based research from diverse contexts);</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Development of escalating systemic disciplinary consequences for fdsc behaviours that are timely, clear, consistent, and appropriate; specifically, student classroom exit protocols that provide for both immediate removal (teacher authorised) and remote placement (isolation room) of disruptive students;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of student classroom re-entry protocols, at faculty level, that require student procurement (student action) of a student-teacher consultation upon student re-entry to the implicated classroom; specifically, student-teacher consultations, which replace ‘detentions’, need to be solution-oriented and awareness raising;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of teacher-instigated restorative justice sessions, at either faculty or school level, that actively foster positive student-teacher relationships; specifically, in view of the intensification of student bullying of teachers (verbal abuse), the need to uphold teacher morale/dignity is imperative; and,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of written student behavioural notifications designed to inform parents and carers of their child’s classroom behaviours; specifically, in view of the intensification of parent/carer aggression towards teachers during phone contact, the need to buffer and track parent/carer-teacher interactions is imperative.</td>
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</table>
How would persons/roles need to change in order to bring about the desired results within the action scene/context?

This research provides identification of specific behaviours considered ‘frequent, disruptive student classroom behaviours’ within an investigated site. Almost all research participants (teachers and executives) have asserted that warranted organisational disciplinary support in relation to fdsc behaviours is either inadequate or absent - essentially, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours has adversely impacted classrooms. This research indicates that the behaviours identified as ‘frequent, disruptive’ reflect typologies that have been acknowledged for decades - that is, both time and constancy have validated classroom teachers’ need for effective organisational disciplinary support in relation to these behaviours. Emergent typologies within the current research testify to the times (technological issues), and testify to the intensification of student audacity/effrontery (in particular, student verbal abuse of teachers) as a product of inadequate/absent organisational disciplinary support in relation to fdsc behaviours.

In addition, the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility/culpability for fdsc behaviours has failed to protect both the teaching-learning environment and teacher wellbeing. Whilst the inadequacy/absence of organisational disciplinary support is ostensibly rationalised by the overriding belief that teachers are responsible/culpable for disruptive student classroom behaviour, it is this very inadequacy/absence of organisational disciplinary support - namely, warranted disciplinary escalations - that renders student disruption anarchic, and teacher action interminable.

Ultimately, the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours in combination with the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility/culpability for fdsc behaviours has produced: intensification of student disruption of both teaching and learning (students can safely ignore teachers’ directives as they are aware of the customary absence of escalating consequences); intensification of teacher exhaustion, demoralisation, and powerlessness (onerous teacher disciplinary action is required in spite of the customary absence of escalating consequences); deterioration of student-teacher relationships (from the perspective of students, teacher authority, perceptibly undermined by the customary absence of escalating consequences, is rendered ludicrous); and, deterioration of supervisor-subordinate trust relations (onerous teacher disciplinary action is required in spite of the customary absence of disciplinary escalations which, in turn, serves to undermine both teacher authority and teacher action).

Hence, in order to protect the school’s core business (teaching and learning), both the low organisational status of fdsc behaviours and the organisational emphasis on teacher responsibility for fdsc behaviours must change. There is an urgent need for organisational promotion and/or prioritisation of: (1) the status of fdsc behaviours; (2) student responsibility for fdsc behaviours; (3) teacher authority (classroom gatekeeper); and, (4) teacher morale (restorative justice). Specifically:

(1) Promotion/prioritisation of the organisational status of fdsc behaviours by means of clear, appropriate, and timely disciplinary escalations is required (that is, systemic endorsement/support of student classroom exit protocols that are instigated by teachers):
• Development and community-wide dissemination of school-generated classroom behavioural expectations (standards, rules and escalating consequences) that explicitly identify, and signal intolerance of, fdsc behaviours. Herein, the responsibilities of both students and teachers, and the authority assigned to classroom teachers (gatekeepers of the classroom), should be indicated.

(2) Promotion/prioritisation of student responsibility for fdsc behaviours is required (that is, systemic practice that both requires and tracks student action in relation to student acknowledgement of his/her responsibility for behaviours exhibited):

• Students who have been removed from the classroom in view of disruptive behaviour are expected to approach the implicated classroom teacher in order to arrange a consultation time that suits the teacher (for example, second half of lunch time within the teacher’s classroom); and,

• Student-teacher consultations, to which the implicated head teacher may be invited, need to be both awareness-raising and solution-oriented. Hence, such consultations require: (a) teacher reiteration of school standards in relation to student classroom behaviour; (b) student acknowledgement of the nature and effects of the disruptive behaviour s/he exhibited; (c) student freedom to disclose particular concerns and/or needs; (d) teacher responsiveness to student disclosure of particular concerns and/or needs; (e) student commitment to classroom behavioural standards; and, (e) contingent upon teacher satisfaction with both student action and student attitude (acknowledgements and undertakings), either teacher authorisation of student re-entry to the classroom or escalating systemic consequences (student re-entry temporarily denied).

(3) In order to restore/enhance supervisor-subordinate trust relationships, and student recognition of teacher authority, promotion/extension of teacher authority to the role of classroom gatekeeper is required (that is, systemic practice must include both teacher authority and teacher authorisation within student classroom exit and re-entry protocols):

• Development of clear, reasonable protocols that guide teacher engagement and communications with disruptive students;

• Implementation of protocols, and provision of an adequate physical space, that facilitate both teacher-referral and head teacher-referral of persistently disruptive students to the isolation room (current protocols indicate deputy-referral of students only, and accommodation of 2-3 students only); and,

• Student-teacher consultations, to which the implicated head teacher may be invited, need to be both awareness-raising and solution-oriented. Hence, such consultations require: (a) teacher reiteration of school standards in relation to student classroom behaviour; (b) student acknowledgement of the nature and effects of the disruptive behaviour s/he exhibited; (c) student freedom to disclose particular concerns and/or needs; (d) teacher responsiveness to student disclosure of particular concerns and/or needs; (e) student commitment to classroom behavioural standards; and, (e) contingent upon teacher
satisfaction with both student acknowledgements and student undertakings, either teacher authorisation of student re-entry to the classroom or escalating systemic consequences (student re-entry temporarily denied).

(4) In order to restore/enhance supervisor-subordinate trust relationships, teacher dignity, and teacher workplace safety, promotion/protection of teacher morale by means of student-teacher restorative justice sessions and parent-teacher communication buffers is required (that is, systemic practice must proactively protect teachers from both student bullying and parent/carer aggression):

- The intensification of student bullying of teachers - a product of systemically unchecked fdsc behaviours - has served to intensify teacher demoralisation/victimisation. Therefore, classroom teachers require/desire systemic disciplinary support that actively fosters positive student-teacher relationships through the provision of teacher-instigated restorative justice sessions. Restorative justice sessions involve (see questions posed on restorative justice card).

- The intensification of parent/carer aggression towards teachers - prominent within teacher-parent/carer phone contact concerning disruptive student classroom behaviours - has served to intensify teacher insecurity/victimisation. Therefore, classroom teachers require/desire systemic administrative support, in the form of written student behavioural notifications, which purports to buffer and track teacher-parent communications in relation to fdsc behaviours. Development of a standard, computer-generated ‘student behavioural notification’ (letter) - applicable to removed disruptive students - should include: a list of all identified frequently disruptive student classroom behaviours; space for indication of the disruptive behaviour/s exhibited by the implicated student; space for indication of completed/current/impending school action (for example, isolation, teacher-student consultation, teacher-student restorative justice); and, space for indication of required parent/carer action (for example, parent-child consultation, parent-teacher/head teacher phone contact, parent-teacher/head teacher meeting, and so on).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is possible, given the current circumstances?</th>
<th>The current research provides identification of the fdsc behaviours for which clear, appropriate, and timely disciplinary escalations are required. Therefore, in order to promote/protect both student learning and teacher wellbeing, supervisors need to develop disciplinary escalation pathways that serve to minimise student disruption within the classroom. The framework for desired/required pathways includes:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of clear, reasonable protocols that guide teacher engagement and communication with disruptive students;</td>
<td>Development of protocols that facilitate both teacher-referral and head teacher-referral of persistently disruptive students to a supervised, sizeable isolation room;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Development of isolation room protocols that govern required student activity, required student behaviour, required duration of occupancy, and required exit conditions;

• Development of protocols, at faculty level, that requires either student action (instigation of consultations) or teacher action (instigation of restorative justice sessions) before student re-entry to the implicated classroom. There is evidence of successful restorative justice sessions (student-teacher-head teacher) already taking place in two faculties.

• Development of protocols, at faculty level, that requires teacher authorisation of student re-entry to the classroom (contingent upon the outcome of either a consultation or a restorative justice session);

• Development of systemic disciplinary escalations that govern student refusal to engage/comply with classroom exit and re-entry protocols; and,

• Development of written student behavioural notifications

Subsequent to staff approval of both altered behavioural policy and the written student behavioural notification, dissemination of the new policy/form to the school community is required. Herein, rules and escalating consequences, and responsibilities and rights, should be indicated.

What are likely outcomes of implementing the operational theory?

The likely outcomes of implementing the operational theory include:

• Enhanced systemic protection of the teaching-learning environment in the absence of disruptive students who both consume teacher time/attention and frustrate/impede the bulk of student learners;

• Enhanced student awareness of elevated behavioural standards that reinforce systemic intolerance of frequently disruptive student classroom behaviours;

• Enhanced student socialisation (required student responsibility/action for disruptive behaviours exhibited, and facilitated student awareness of the impact of his/her disruptive behaviours on other classroom inhabitants);

• Enhanced systemic promotion and protection of student-teacher relationships by means of consultations and/or restorative justice sessions (expectations, motivations, understanding);

• Enhanced systemic promotion/support, and increased student/parent/carer awareness of enhanced systemic promotion/support, of teacher authority (by means of teacher involvement in student classroom exit and re-entry protocols);
• Enhanced systemic protection, and student/parent/carer awareness of enhanced systemic protection, of both teacher morale and teacher security (by means of student-teacher restorative justice sessions, and by means of written student behavioural notifications that buffer and track teacher-parent/carer communications in relation to frequently disruptive student classroom behaviours);

• Enhanced systemic utilisation of both teacher time and teacher energy. Specifically: (1) disruptive students, both time-consuming and energy-consuming, are removed from the classroom in a timely fashion; (2) incessant teacher legwork in relation to the location of students who have refused/failed to attend detentions is replaced by required student action in relation to the initiation of arrangements for teacher-student consultations; and, (3) incessant, teacher-supervised student detentions are replaced by student-teacher consultations to which escalating systemic disciplinary consequences are attached in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome (in the absence of mitigating circumstances, unsatisfactory outcomes include student failure to either arrange or attend a set consultation); and, (4) required teacher-supervision of an isolation room which functions to support classroom order is considered is a worthwhile service.