



**Parent and Student/Pupil  
Perceptions  
of Schools' Actions to Create a  
Positive School Culture and to  
Prevent and Tackle Bullying**



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF  
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION  
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

**Department of Education and Skills 2017**

## **1. Introduction**

The Inspectorate is a statutory body whose role and functions are defined by Section 13 of the Education Act 1998. We work to improve the quality of teaching and learning for children and young people in Irish schools, centres for education and other settings and to support the development of the Irish education system. We do this through providing high quality evaluation, analysis and advice to teachers, school leaders and to the system more broadly.

The *Action Plan on Bullying* was published by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in January 2013. Following on from this, the Department issued *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* to give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils and in dealing with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

As part of the whole-school evaluation process since 2010, the Inspectorate surveys parents and students to gather their perspectives on the work of the school and their experiences at the school. Confidential questionnaires are distributed and the data they provide is processed in the Evaluation Support and Research Unit (ESRU) of the Inspectorate. The aggregated data for the school is shared with the school and school leaders and teachers are encouraged to use it in reflecting on their own progress and in setting school improvement targets through school self-evaluation. It is also used by the inspectors conducting the evaluation as part of the evidence base for their judgements on school quality.

The questionnaires include a number of statements which ask parents and students for their views on aspects of the school which contribute to a positive school culture. Up to and including December 2013, those statements included just one which specifically referenced bullying. The questionnaires were amended in January 2014, following publication of the *Action Plan on Bullying*, to include more evidence gathering concerning the effectiveness of the school's actions to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying. The primary purpose of gathering this evidence is to support reflection and development at the level of the individual school. However, the information provided by the questionnaires is also useful at a system level. The aggregated data provides us with information on parent and student perceptions of their schools which, when considered with other information available, can provide an insight into actions in schools to prevent and combat bullying.

This report sets out what the data gathered through parent and student/pupil questionnaires in the period 2013-2016 tells us about how parents and students perceive their school deals with the problem. Section 2 provides some information about how the data is gathered and it identifies a number of important limitations about the data which should be kept in mind when interpreting the findings, which are set out in section 3. The report concludes with recommendations to schools intended to support continuing improvement in school-level measures to combat bullying.

## **2. Inspection Questionnaires**

### **2.1 Administration**

The Inspectorate uses questionnaires during whole-school type evaluations to gather the perspectives of parents and students about the work of their schools. Pupil and student questionnaires are administered by the inspector to a sample of learners in the school on the first day of an evaluation. The numbers of students/pupils who receive questionnaires is determined by the school size. Generally, primary school children from 3rd to 6th class and post-primary students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year are invited to complete a questionnaire. In all cases, the inspector reads aloud the questions and ensures that children have adequate time to complete the survey.



In primary schools, parent questionnaires are distributed with the help of the principal. The principal is asked to ensure that each family of pupils in the school is given a questionnaire to complete. Thus, if siblings from the one family are in a number of classes in the sample, the questionnaire should be sent home with the eldest child and completed by the parents in respect of that child only. In post-primary schools, at the time that the student questionnaire is administered, the inspector gives a parent questionnaire to each student in the sample for his/her parents.

All questionnaires are available in English and Irish to reflect the language of the school. The Irish version of the pupil and parent questionnaires has the English translation on the reverse. The parent questionnaire is also available in Polish, Lithuanian and Latvian, each of which has an English translation on the reverse.

The letter which accompanies the parent questionnaires for primary and post-primary school inspections requests that they be returned to the school in a sealed envelope to the school on or before the first day of the in-school phase of the evaluation. The reporting inspector makes arrangements with the school for the collection of questionnaires. Data from the returned forms is analysed by the Inspectorate.

In the period January 2013 to December 2016 inclusive, questionnaires were administered in all schools where a whole-school type evaluation was conducted. 63,539 parent questionnaires were returned from primary schools and 30,050 were returned from post-primary schools. 47,661 primary pupils and 47,359 post-primary students also completed questionnaires.

## 2.2 The questions

The questionnaires include a number of statements which ask parents and students for their views on aspects of the school which contribute to a positive school culture. Appendix 1 of this report sets out the question sets used prior to January 2014 and since.

Parents and post-primary students are asked to “Strongly agree”, “Agree”, “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree” with questionnaire statements or to indicate that they “Don’t know”. Primary school pupils are asked to select “Yes”, “No” or “Don’t know” as responses. The table below shows how these responses are treated in this report.

Categories used in this report	Possible parental/post-primary student responses	Possible primary pupil responses
Agree	Strongly agree	Yes
	Agree	
Disagree	Disagree	No
	Strongly disagree	
Don't know	Don't know	Don't know

Table 1 Analysis and reporting of responses to Inspectorate questionnaires deployed in schools

## 2.3 Limitations

It is important to keep in mind that, while questionnaires provide an opportunity for parents and students to share their views with the inspector, there are a number of limitations to their use which mean that the information they provide has to be treated carefully. Some of these limitations are:

- Limitations arising from the mode/context of administration:
  - Because the questionnaire is administered as part of a school inspection, parent and student responses may be influenced by loyalty, introducing bias in the information provided
  - Parents and students may read through the questions quickly and respond without giving a lot of thought to their answers
  - There is no Inspectorate control of who completes parent questionnaires
- Limitations arising from the questionnaire design
  - Parents and students may feel constrained to complete the full questionnaire, so that they answer questions about which they know little. In a fixed-question design, there is no opportunity for the person completing the questionnaire to indicate this
  - People may read each question differently and therefore reply using their own interpretation of the question
  - The questions are closed questions. This means that parents and students have fixed choices and no opportunity to explain the reason for their choice of response.

The last limitation merits some further discussion. The questionnaires include the option of a *Don't Know* response so that parents and students are not constrained or forced to select a response from among the other options. This allows for the fact that a proportion of parents and students may not have had experience of some school actions, for example, they may have no direct experience of how the school responds to bullying incidents. In this case, a response of *Don't Know* to the statement, 'I am confident that if my child experiences bullying the school will act promptly and effectively' is accurate. *Don't know* can also indicate issues of concern, which if not included as options in the survey might not otherwise be detected. For example, it can indicate levels of awareness about the school's policies and procedures and this information can help to determine the need to address communication gaps.

However, it might also be that including *Don't know* responses can obscure or distort findings. For example, the person completing the survey might simply opt to respond passively by selecting this option. There is also a risk that the person chooses *Don't Know* for reasons which are not evident. A *Don't Know* response can mean anything from being neutral (neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement), to genuinely not knowing because of lack of relevant knowledge/experience, to simply not wanting to think about the statement and commit to an answer.

Because it is not possible to be definitive when interpreting the *Don't Know* responses, care is needed when interpreting those responses to some statements on the questionnaires. To avoid skewing the interpretation, for those statements where there are high proportions of these responses, two sets of data will be reported – agreement levels with and without the *Don't Know* responses – in order to show satisfaction levels with and without the *Don't Know* responses. This is done for charts 2 and 6 below.

In summary, all the limitations identified above mean that claims cannot be made regarding the statistical validity or reliability of the data which is provided by the questionnaires. However, despite this, the questionnaire data can be helpful to the individual school in identifying aspects of school life and work which are not clear to parents and/or students and it can support school self-evaluation. At a system level, the data can be used to inform policy and to identify where additional advice for schools is required.

### 3. Findings

The Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013) define bullying as follows:

Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. These procedures make clear that this definition includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying) (p.5).

We know that bullying has significant impacts on the lives of victims. The *Action Plan on Bullying* points out that bullying can have a very negative impact on a person's mental health and sense of well-being, including "Loss of self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, difficulties with school work, reluctance to attend school, and, in extreme cases, self-harm and suicide" (p31). Emotional and behavioural problems suffered by both victims and bullies may continue into adulthood, leading to long-term negative outcomes (Vanderbilt & Augustyn, 2010).

There is a lot which schools can do to prevent bullying and, drawing on research, the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* sets out principles of best practice. These include

- having a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect;
- implementing specific education and prevention strategies; and
- having a consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying, which is set out in the school's anti-bullying policy and communicated to all members of the school community.

#### 3.1 School culture

The *Action Plan on Bullying* acknowledges that the problem of bullying is complex and that no one intervention is effective in all situations. However, a positive school culture and climate is noted as a keystone of preventing bullying<sup>1</sup>. Respectful relationships across the school community (including students, teachers, non-teaching staff, school management, parents and all visitors to the school) form a solid foundation for such a culture.

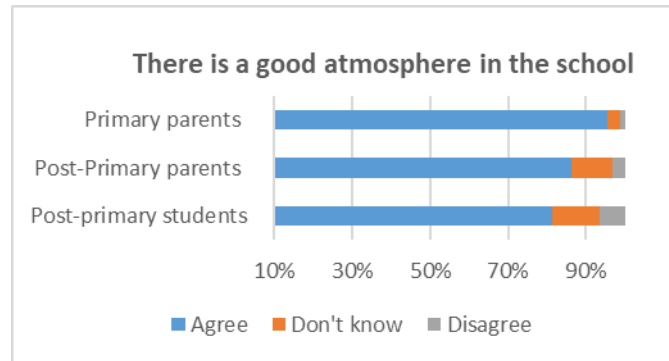
The parent and student/pupil questionnaires administered in the period 2013-16 included a number of statements which allow parents and students/pupils to share their perceptions of particular aspects of school climate. These are:

- 'There is a good atmosphere in the school' (Not asked of primary pupils)
- 'I get on well with the other children/students in my school' and
- 'All the pupils in my class are treated fairly and respectfully' ('All students are treated fairly and respectfully in this school' at post-primary).

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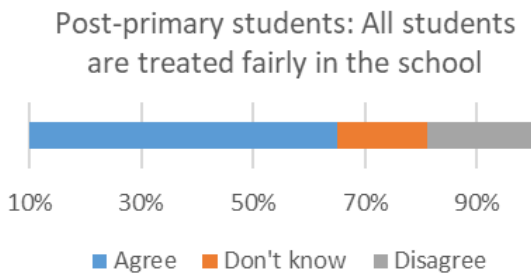
<sup>1</sup> Action Plan on Bullying (2013) page 77

Overall, there were high levels of positive responses from both parents and students to these statements:

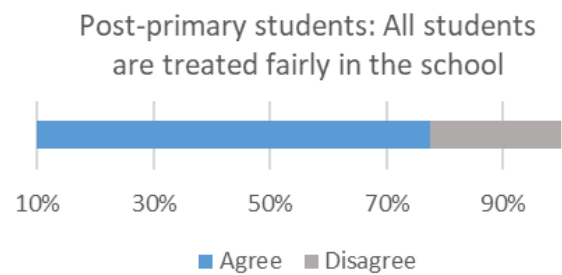


**Chart 1** (All responses): There is a good atmosphere in the school

Parental and student perceptions of school atmosphere at post-primary differ, with 6.37% of students disagreeing with this statement, compared to 3.10% of parents. Student responses to the statement, 'All students are treated fairly and respectfully in this school', may be relevant here.



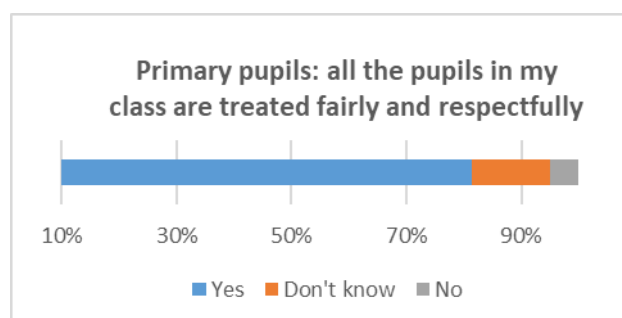
**Chart 2** (All responses): All students are treated fairly in the school



**Chart 2a** (Don't Know responses removed): All students are treated fairly in the school

The questionnaire asks students to consider this statement at the level of the whole school rather than at class or individual level. This may account for the relatively high numbers of *Don't know* responses, for example, where students are unable or reluctant to agree with a statement that asks them about matters beyond their direct experience. Those responses are removed in table 2a, which shows that one in five post-primary students disagreed with the statement. That proportion has remained steady in the period 2013-16.

The picture at primary level is more positive, with only 4.93% disagreeing with the statement that 'All pupils in my class are treated fairly and respectfully.' The more direct 'in my class' in this statement may be a factor in the smaller number of *Don't Know* responses at this level (13.6%).



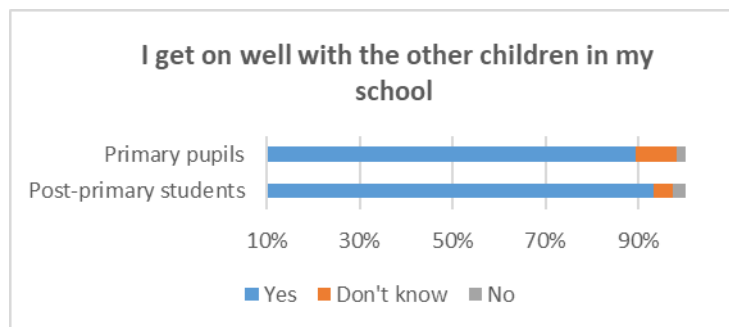
**Chart 3** (All responses): all the pupils in my class are treated fairly and respectfully

A particular limitation of this statement, at both levels, is that it does not ask respondents about who provides the treatment. While inspectors administering the questionnaire do provide explanations where these are requested, it is not always clear whether children, in responding to this question, are considering fair treatment by their peers or by the school staff or both.

Research indicates that positive relationships between teachers and students are important for the social and emotional well-being of students and that it can be a strong influence on students' engagement with school and learning. The inspection questionnaire data does not ask students directly about their relationships with teachers but there are other studies which do and the information they provide may be helpful in informing an appropriate response to the questionnaire data. ESRI *Growing Up in Ireland* reports<sup>2</sup> have found that, overall, young people's perception of treatment by their teachers was fairly positive. That survey examined the perceptions of 17/18-year-olds' of their treatment by teachers by asking them how frequently they received praise or criticism from their teachers in their current or final year in school. 73% of students reported being told that their work was good and 56% reported being praised by their teacher because their work was well done. A very high percentage of 17/18-year-olds agreed that "most of [their] teachers were friendly" (94%).

At an international level, the *Programme for International Student Assessment* (PISA) in 2015 included a questionnaire on student wellbeing, including questions which asked students about their perceptions of how fairly they are treated by teachers. On average across OECD countries, between 35% and 9% of students reported unfair treatment by their teachers at least a few times per month, ranging from being called on in class less than other students are to being insulted by the teacher in front of others. The Irish 15-year olds who participated in PISA 2015 reported significantly lower levels of unfair treatment, at 16.9% and 5.4% for the same questions.

The inspection questionnaires also ask students about how they get on with other children in the school. At both primary and post-primary levels, students reported very good relationships:



**Chart 4** (All responses): I get on well with other children in my school

Parents and children were also asked about their perceptions regarding their personal safety in the school and the degree to which they felt cared for. As evidenced by the data, parents are very satisfied that their children feel safe in school and this is generally borne out by pupil and student responses to similar statements.

<sup>2</sup> ESRI *Growing up in Ireland: Key findings Child Cohort 13 years olds* No1 School Experiences among 13-year-olds and *Growing up in Ireland: Key findings Child Cohort at 17/18 years* No1 Education and early work experiences

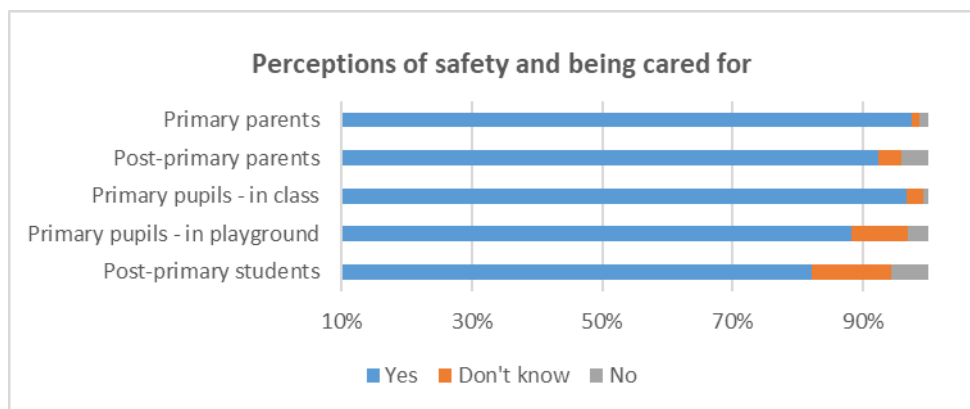


Chart 5 (All responses): Perceptions of safety and being cared for

Primary pupils were provided with two statements intended to elicit their perceptions of safety – ‘I feel safe in the playground’ and ‘I feel safe in my class.’ Their responses to both statements indicate that pupils feel safer in the classroom than in the playground, with less than 1% disagreeing with that statement compared to 3% for the second statement. These figures are low and the majority of pupils feel safe in school.

Parents, pupils and students are also asked about their perception of discipline in school. Again, the data provided through these questionnaires indicates that children’s behaviour is generally positive:

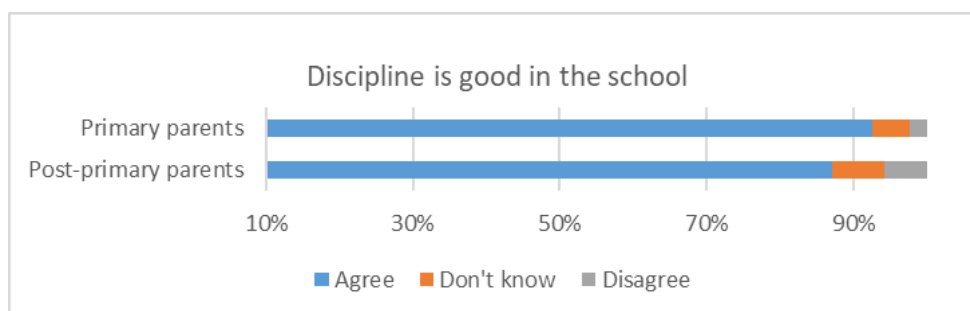


Chart 6 (All responses): Discipline is good in the school

The Department’s *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013) emphasise effective supervision and monitoring of students as a key contributor to a positive school climate. Data from the *Growing Up in Ireland*<sup>3</sup> longitudinal study asked 13-year-olds about various forms of misbehaviour in school over the previous year. 74% of boys and 62% of girls responded that they had ‘messed in class’, while more serious behaviours (such as truancy and actions which led to being suspended from school) had been indicated by only a small number. The predominance of the relatively low-level form of misbehaviour reported in that study, together with the implementation of robust codes of behaviour in schools, may explain the high level of parental agreement with this statement.

The wording of the relevant statement differed on the primary and post-primary student questionnaires. The younger children were given the statement, ‘The children in my class behave well’ and post-primary students were asked to respond to a more general statement, ‘The behaviour of students is good in the school’. At both levels, students recorded a high number of *Don’t Know* responses:

<sup>3</sup>ESRI *Growing up in Ireland: Key findings Child Cohort 13 years olds* (No1) School Experiences among 13-year-olds p4.



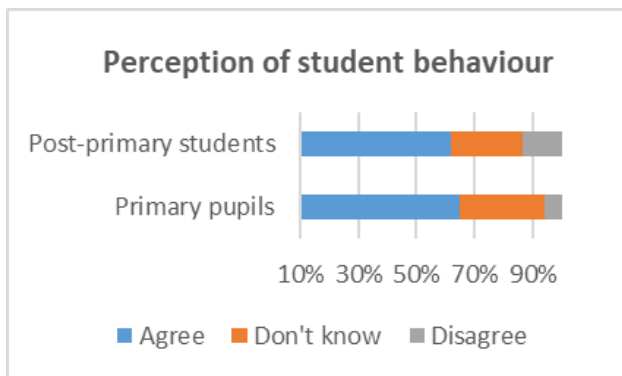


Chart 7 (All responses): Perception of student behaviour

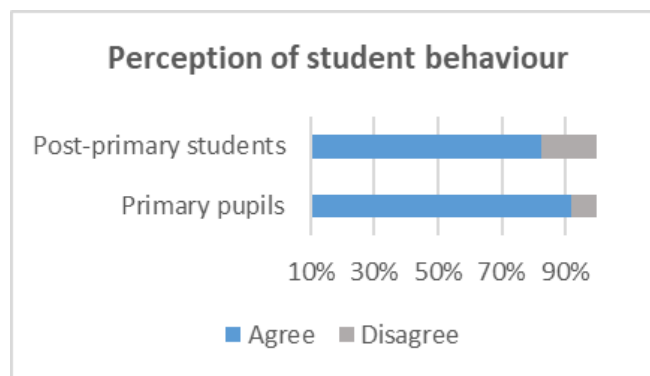


Chart 7a (Don't Know responses removed): Perception of student behaviour

When the *Don't Know* responses are discounted, the level of agreement with the statements is very positive, with 91.89% of primary pupils and 82.21% of post-primary students in agreement. However, more than 15% of post-primary students disagreed. The difference between the students' perspectives at both levels and those of their parents may indicate the impact that 'messing in class' has on the disciplinary climate in classrooms. Where the data for any one school provides a significant level of disagreement with one of the statements on the questionnaires, the inspection team explores the potential explanation for that with the in-school management team and, where warranted, make recommendations to the school.

### 3.2 Shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

The *Action Plan on Bullying* identified the development of a shared understanding across the school community of what bullying is and of its impact as a crucial step in underpinning an effective school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.<sup>4</sup> Providing children with an opportunity to explore the various forms of bullying and how they affect others is key to raising awareness of what is acceptable and what is not. The questionnaires administered to pupils and students in 2013 asked children a general question about how this was facilitated in schools. Primary pupils were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, 'The teachers talk to us about what to do if someone is being bullied' and post-primary students were provided with the statement, 'The school deals well with bullying.'

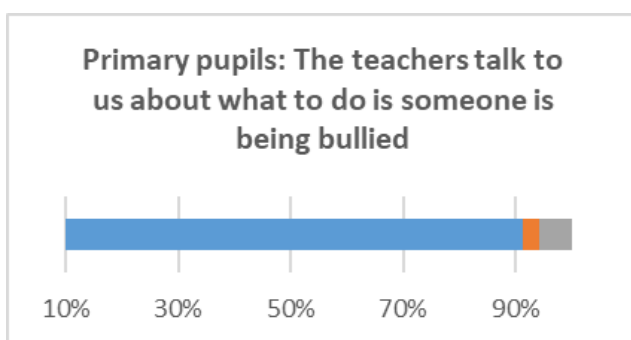


Chart 8 (All responses to 2013): Primary pupils

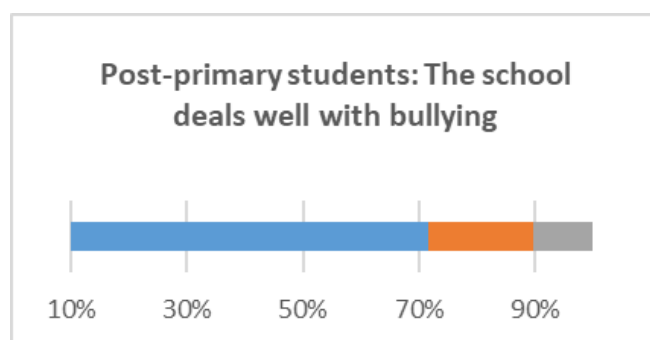


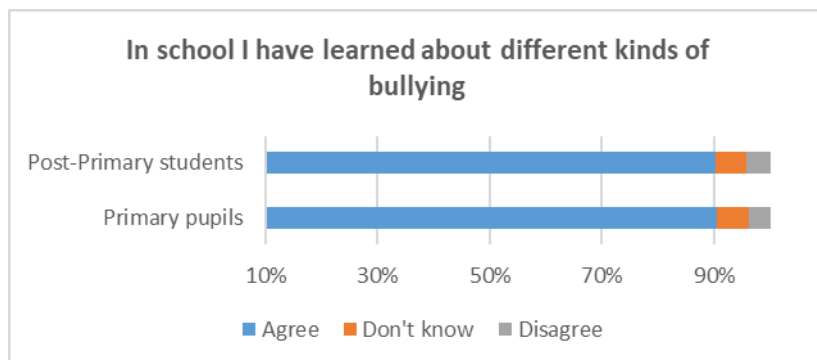
Chart 9 (All responses to 2013): Post-Primary students

As part of the Inspectorate's commitment under the *Action Plan on Bullying* to amend the questionnaires, these statements were replaced with three which directly sought the children's perceptions of whether the school provides opportunities to develop a shared understanding of bullying and its effects and whether they can identify an adult in the school from whom to seek help.

<sup>4</sup>Anti-Bullying Strategy (2013) p.81

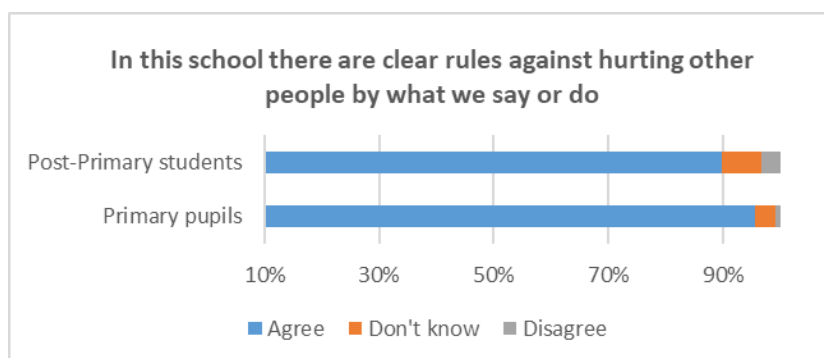
Those three questionnaire items are:

1. In school I have learned about different kinds of bullying
2. In this school there are clear rules against hurting other people by what we say or do
3. If someone is bullying me I can get help from a teacher or other adult in the school



**Chart 10** (All responses 2014-2016): In school I have learned about different kinds of bullying

Responses to these statement in the questionnaires provide evidence that the majority of schools are implementing preventative programmes which provide clear information to children about the nature of bullying and about what is acceptable behaviour. This reflects data from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) 'Lifeskills' survey which was conducted in 2015 in primary and post-primary schools. The survey was voluntary and required schools to self-report on a number of matters, including the implementation of anti-bullying policies. The survey had an overall response rate of 53% at primary level, 33% at post-primary level. All primary schools that responded indicated that they cover the topics 'understanding bullying' and 'how to seek help regarding/about bullying' as part of awareness raising. All of the post-primary schools that responded to the question reported that their students would know what to do if they were being bullied. 95% of schools reported covering topics such as: influences on decision making, resisting inappropriate peer pressure, resolving conflict, and understanding and expressing emotions.

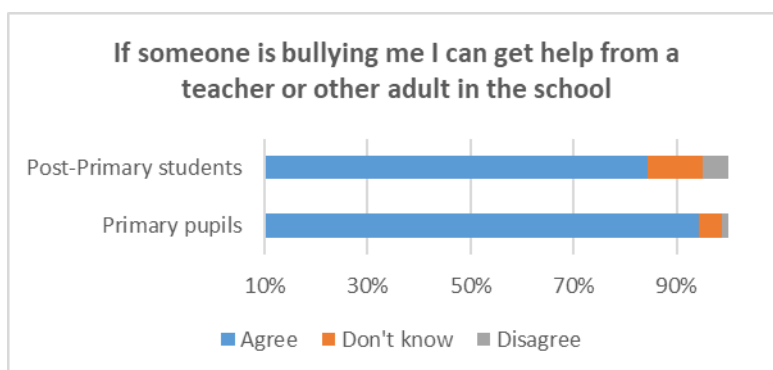


**Chart 11** (All responses 2014-2016): In this school there are clear rules against hurting other people by what we say or do

Exploration of these topics is facilitated in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), which is a mandatory component of both the primary curriculum and the current junior-cycle curriculum at post primary level. Both the primary and post-primary SPHE syllabuses allocate time for exploring bullying, as well as the related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. Awareness-raising programmes such as the SPHE programme are an important part of a school's anti-bullying strategy because they set clear boundaries for students and support open discussion about bullying and work to create a safe environment in which young people can raise their concerns.

Prior to 2014, the statement, ‘I can talk to a teacher if I am upset about something in school’ was included on the questionnaire for primary pupils; this read as, ‘I can talk to an adult in the school if I am having problems’ on the post-primary student questionnaire. The responses to these statements were positive, with the majority of students agreeing with the statement (71% at post-primary; 88% at primary). The figure at post-primary is slightly less positive than that found by *Growing Up in Ireland* research, which shows the proportion of young people who feel that they could “talk to [their] teachers if they had a problem” as 84%<sup>5</sup>. The difference is likely to be related to the different contexts within which the inspection questionnaires and the *Growing Up in Ireland* data are collected.

When this statement was replaced with the more specific statement about bullying in 2014, the number of *Don’t Know* responses dropped significantly at each level, from 17.7% to 10.6% at post-primary and from 7.8% to 4.4% at primary. It is evident that the majority of children feel that they can turn to an adult in the school for help should they experience bullying themselves.



**Chart 12** (All responses 2014-16): If someone is bullying me I can get help from a teacher or other adult in the school

Post-primary students are less certain than their younger counterparts of this. This may be because the nature of the relationships established between primary teachers and their pupils is different to that established in post-primary schools, where students work with a number of teachers across each school day. It is a matter of concern that one in ten students at this level do not know if there is an adult in the school from whom they could seek help. This may have occurred because they are not sufficiently familiar with the student support and guidance structures in place in their school.

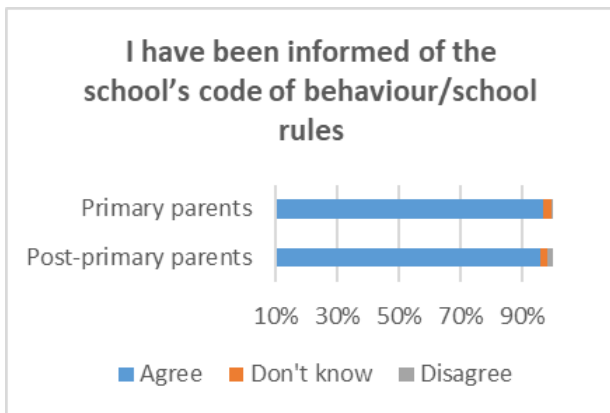
### **3.3 Code of behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy**

A third support to the effective prevention and management of bullying in schools is the development and sharing of an anti-bullying policy which is integrated with the school’s code of behaviour. Under the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000*, all schools are required to have in place a code of behaviour, which must be developed through consultation with the whole school community, including parents and students. This code must be drawn up in accordance with the guidelines of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) which were issued to schools in 2008. These guidelines also make it clear that each school must have policies to prevent or address bullying and harassment and schools must make clear in their code of behaviour that bullying is unacceptable.

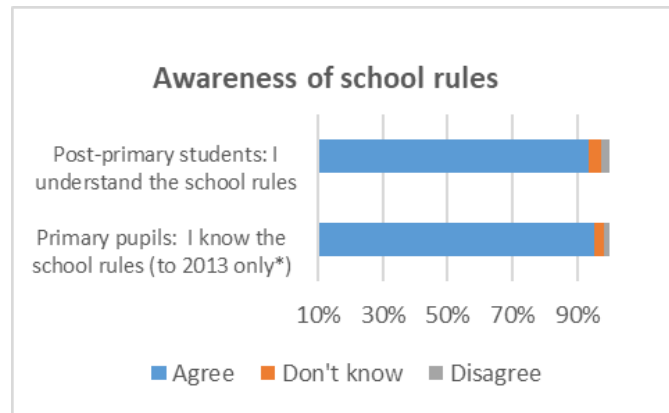
A school’s disciplinary structure should contribute to a positive school climate and set both the parameters for acceptable behaviour and the procedures which will be implemented in the school in response to allegations of

<sup>5</sup>Growing up in Ireland: Key findings Child Cohort at 17/18 years No1 Education and early work experiences

bullying. Questionnaires administered as part of whole-school evaluations in primary and post-primary schools include a statement that measures how effectively the school communicates its code of behaviour to parents and pupils/students. An analysis of the questionnaires completed between 2013 and 2016 indicate that both parents and students have been provided with copies of their school's code and are familiar with the school's rules.



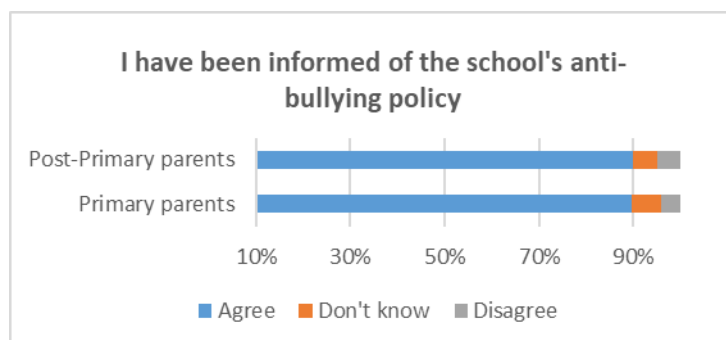
**Chart 13** (All responses): I have been informed of the school's code of behaviour / school rules



**Chart 14** (All responses): Awareness of school rules

\*Primary pupils were not asked this question in 2014, when changes to the question set were made. In the interest of keeping the questionnaire to a length appropriate to the age profile of this group of respondents, this question was dropped.

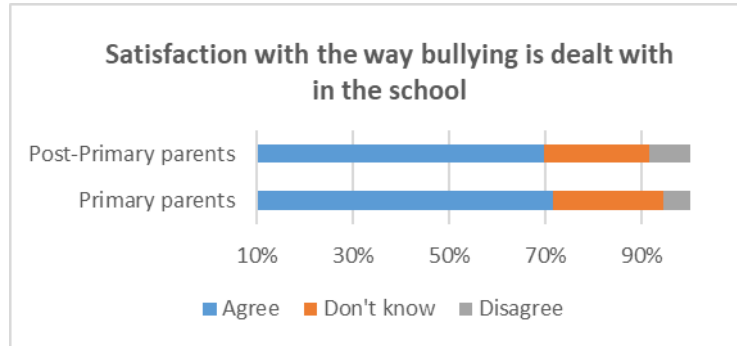
The *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (2013) remind schools that they are also required to have an anti-bullying policy within the framework of their overall code of behaviour. In response to the 'Lifeskills' survey, 99% of schools reported having an anti-bullying policy in place, while the remaining 1% were in the process of developing one. Since 2014, the inspection questionnaires for parents have included the statement, 'I have been informed of the school's anti-bullying policy'. The data shows that a very small percentage of primary and post-primary parents (4.1% and 4.81% respectively) disagree with this statement. Research indicates that all adults, including parents, have a role to play in modelling and building children's awareness of appropriate behaviour. Their support for the work done in the school in regard to anti-bullying measures is a necessary part of a strategy to promote a respectful and positive school climate and to counter bullying where it is manifested.



**Chart 15** (All responses) 2014-16: I have been informed of the school's anti-bullying policy

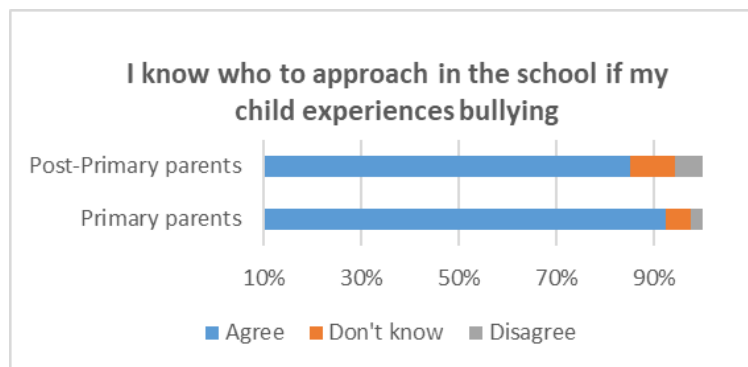
The Department of Education and Skills issued *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* in 2013 as an aid to schools in devising measures to prevent and deal with instances of bullying behaviour. These procedures include a template to be used by schools in developing their anti-bullying policy.

The parent questionnaires administered in 2013 included a single item seeking their perception of how the school dealt with bullying.



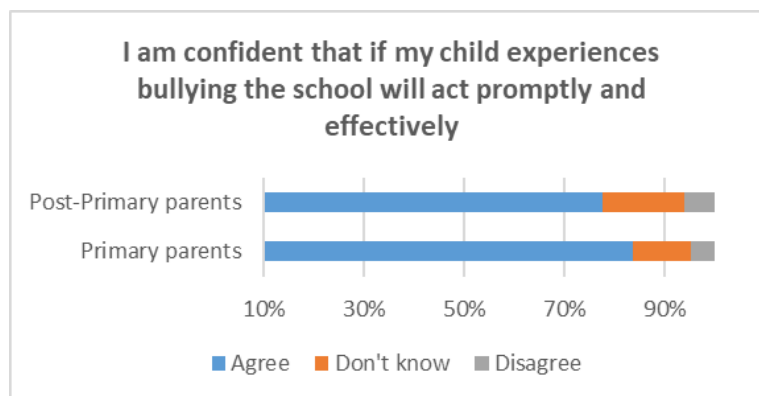
**Chart 16** (All responses 2013): satisfaction with the way bullying is dealt with in the school

The responses indicated a high level of uncertainty which may be explained by either a failure of the school to effectively communicate how it deals with bullying incidences or by a lack of certainty on the part of parents who have not experienced this directly. In 2014, this statement was replaced by two statements and the data indicates that there is a high level of parental confidence in their schools' procedures.



**Chart 17** (All responses 2014-16): I know who to approach in the school if my child experiences bullying

The second statement asks parents to indicate agreement with, 'I am confident that if my child experiences bullying the school will act promptly and effectively':



**Chart 18** (All responses 2014-16): I am confident that if my child experiences bullying the school will act promptly and effectively.



Despite this positivity, a small percentage of parents at both levels do not have this confidence and this is an issue which should be addressed by schools (6.22% post-primary; 4.72% primary). The questionnaires do not provide an opportunity for parents to provide an explanation for their responses. Possible reasons may include inadequate procedures for dealing with parental concerns or complaints, negative parental experiences in the past or simply poor communication of how issues are dealt with. When questionnaire data indicates that a higher than normal percentage of parents do not have confidence in a school's ability to deal with bullying, inspectors recommend that the school should explore the reasons for this response at school level.

#### 4. Conclusion

The data provided by the parent and pupil/student questionnaires administered as part of whole-school evaluations provide a measure of reassurance that schools have put in place a number of the principles identified in the *Action Plan on Bullying* (2013) as key to preventing and tackling bullying. Real strengths in schools' actions are identified in this data:

- Parents and children have a high degree of confidence in the work done in their schools to create and maintain a culture in which there is open discussion of bullying
- They are satisfied that they have been provided with information about what behaviours are valued in the school and what behaviour is not tolerated and children are being given the opportunity to learn about bullying in many forms
- The great majority of children feel safe in their schools and are able to identify an adult from whom they can seek help if necessary.

However, it is also evident that for a small minority, more so at post-primary level than primary, some schools are still challenged to adequately communicate their anti-bullying policies and their supports for students to the full school community. The following suggestions are made to support the ongoing efforts in schools to prevent and to combat bullying.

Many of the post-primary students who completed the inspection questionnaires perceive that all students are not treated fairly in their schools. Research, including the PISA 2015 research, indicates that such a perception can affect engagement and achievement at school.

1. Schools should continue to ensure that they include the voice of students in the school self-evaluation process and consider extending opportunities for feedback on the quality of the learning climate and of relationships in school
2. In the context of normal subject planning, teachers should review the teaching strategies used across all classrooms, to ensure that pedagogical approaches build positive relationships between teachers and students and support their active engagement in lessons
3. Teachers can influence a reduction in bullying and other unacceptable behaviours by creating a mutually respectful classroom environment, in which they act as role models

Although it is acknowledged that the majority of primary students feel safe in school, they feel less so in the playground.

4. School management should review their provision for supervision of areas outside of the classroom in order to identify how it can be improved to build children's confidence in their safety. Inviting the pupils themselves to share their concerns and their ideas would be a useful first step in this regard

A notable percentage of both primary and post-primary students disagreed that children are well-behaved in their school.

5. All continuing professional development for principals and teachers should include a focus on classroom management and on pedagogical approaches that minimise disruptive behaviours
6. Whole-school codes of behaviour, including bullying prevention and intervention strategies, should make everyone responsible for the creation and maintenance of a positive school climate and classroom norms. The school policy should help parents to be aware of the role they play in helping their children to prevent bullying by their own behaviour

Finally, it is evident that some parents are unaware of the range of actions taken in schools, including the availability of the school's anti-bullying policy and of someone to whom they can bring concerns about bullying.

7. Schools should work with parents' representatives to identify ways to reach that minority of parents and to ensure their confidence in the procedures in the school.
8. It would also be worthwhile for all schools to periodically survey their parents to assess their level of confidence in the school's anti-bullying arrangements and any reasons why such confidence might be lacking.

## APPENDIX - Questionnaires administered as part of whole-school type evaluations

<b>PRIMARY: PARENTS</b>	
<b>September 2010—December 2013 inclusive</b>	<b>From January 2014</b>
<p><b>The school in general</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discipline is good in the school.</li> <li>2. I have been informed of the code of behaviour/school rules.</li> <li>3. There is a good atmosphere in the school.</li> <li>4. The school deals well with bullying.</li> <li>5. Facilities are good in the school.</li> <li>6. The school is well run</li> </ol>	<p><b>The school in general</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a good atmosphere in the school</li> <li>2. I feel welcome in the school</li> <li>3. The school is well run</li> <li>4. Discipline is good in the school</li> </ol>
<p><b>The school and my child</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. My child feels safe in school.</li> <li>8. The school helps my child's social and personal development.</li> <li>9. My child is treated fairly by the teacher(s).</li> <li>10. My child likes school.</li> </ol>	<p><b>The school and my child</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. My child feels safe and well looked after in the school</li> <li>6. My child is treated fairly and respectfully in the school</li> <li>7. The school helps my child's social and personal development</li> <li>8. I have been informed of the school's code of behaviour/school rules</li> <li>9. I have been informed of the school's anti-bullying policy</li> <li>10. I know who to approach in the school if my child experiences bullying</li> <li>11. I am confident that if my child experiences bullying the school will act promptly and effectively</li> <li>12. My child enjoys school</li> </ol>
<p><b>Teaching and learning in the school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. Teaching is good in the school.</li> <li>12. My child is doing well in school.</li> <li>13. The work my child is asked to do is matched to his/her ability.</li> <li>14. My child gets help from the teacher(s) when needed.</li> <li>15. My child gets homework most days.</li> <li>16. Teachers regularly correct my child's work.</li> <li>17. The school is helping my child to progress with reading.</li> <li>18. The school is helping my child to progress in Maths.</li> <li>19. My child has a PE lesson each week.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning in the school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Teaching is good in the school</li> <li>14. I have been informed of the details of the relationships and sexuality policy of the school</li> <li>15. The school is helping my child to progress with reading</li> <li>16. The school is helping my child to progress in Maths</li> <li>17. My child has a PE lesson each week</li> <li>18. My child is doing well in school</li> <li>19. I am happy with the amount of homework my child gets</li> <li>20. School reports give me a good picture of how my child is doing</li> <li>21. The school consults me if my child needs extra help</li> </ol>
<p><b>The school and parents</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20. The school is welcoming of parents.</li> </ol>	<p><b>The school and parents</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22. I know who to talk to in the school if there is a problem</li> </ol>

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| 21. There are good arrangements for parent / teacher meetings.                                 | 23. I am satisfied with the arrangements for parent/ teacher meetings              |
| 22. I know who to talk to in the school if there is a problem.                                 | 24. The school regularly seeks the views of parents on school matters              |
| 23. I trust the school to deal fairly with complaints  | 25. The board of management reports annually to parents on the work of the school. |
| 24. I have been informed of the detail of the relationships and sexuality policy of the school | 26. The school's parents' association keeps me informed about its work             |
| 25. I am expected to sign my child's homework or homework diary.                               | 27. Overall, I am happy with the school  |
| 26. School reports give me a good picture of how my child is doing.                            |  |
| 27. The board of management reports annually to parents on the work of the school.             |  |
| 28. The school regularly seeks the views of parents on school matters.                         |  |
| 29. Financial contributions to help the running of the school are voluntary.                   |  |
| 30. The Parents' Association keeps me informed about its work.                                 |  |
| 31. Overall I am happy with the school.  |  |

## PRIMARY: PUPIL

September 2010—December 2013 inclusive	From Jan 2014
<p><b>About my school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I get on well with the other children in my school.</li><li>2. The children in my class behave well.</li><li>3. I feel safe in the playground.</li><li>4. I feel safe in my class</li><li>5. I know the school rules.</li><li>6. Everyone in my class is treated fairly.</li><li>7. The teachers talk to us about what to do if someone is being bullied.</li><li>8. I can talk to a teacher if I am upset about something in school.</li><li>9. I like school.</li></ol>	<p><b>About my school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I like this school</li><li>2. I feel safe in the playground</li><li>3. I feel safe in my class</li><li>4. I get on well with the other children in my school</li><li>5. The children in my class behave well</li><li>6. In this school there are clear rules against hurting other people by what we say or do</li><li>7. In school I have learned about different kinds of bullying</li><li>8. If someone is bullying me I can get help from a teacher or other adult in the school</li><li>9. All the pupils in my class are treated fairly and respectfully</li></ol>
<p><b>About my learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>10. My teacher explains things clearly.</li><li>11. We work in groups most days.</li><li>12. I am doing well at reading.</li><li>13. I am doing well at Maths.</li><li>14. I use a computer/ the interactive whiteboard in school most days.</li><li>15. My teacher usually corrects the work I do.</li><li>16. My teacher tells me how to improve my work.</li><li>17. I make changes to my work after the teacher corrects it.</li><li>18. My teacher listens to me.</li><li>19. I enjoy my lessons and learning.</li></ol>	<p><b>About my learning</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>10. I enjoy my lessons and learning</li><li>11. I am doing well at reading</li><li>12. I am doing well at Maths</li><li>13. My teacher explains things clearly</li><li>14. My teacher talks to me about how to improve my work</li><li>15. My teacher listens to me and pays attention to what I say</li><li>16. We work in groups most days</li><li>17. I use a computer during some lessons</li><li>18. My homework is usually checked by my teacher</li></ol>
<p><b>Other information</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>20. I am doing well with my homework.</li><li>21. There is a Green Schools Committee in my school.</li><li>22. There is a students' council in my school.</li><li>23. This is a good school.</li></ol>	<p><b>Other information</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>19. I am doing well with my homework.</li><li>20. I have a say in how things are done in the school</li><li>21. This is a good school</li></ol>



## **POST-PRIMARY: PARENTS**

<b>September 2010—December 2013 inclusive</b>	<b>From January 2014</b>
<p><b>The school in general</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Facilities are good in the school</li> <li>2. Discipline is good in the school</li> <li>3. I have been informed of the code of behaviour/ school rules</li> <li>4. There is a good atmosphere in the school</li> <li>5. The school is well run</li> </ol>	<p><b>The school in general</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a good atmosphere in the school</li> <li>2. I feel welcome in the school</li> <li>3. The school is well run</li> <li>4. Discipline is good in the school</li> </ol>
<p><b>The school and my child</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><del>6.</del>—The information about how to enrol my child in the school was clear</li> <li><del>7.</del>—The school made my child welcome when he/ she started in the school</li> <li>8. My child feels safe and well looked after in the school.</li> <li><del>9.</del>—My child is treated fairly in the school.</li> <li>10. The school helps my child's social and personal development</li> <li>11. The school pays attention to drugs and alcohol issues</li> <li>12. I am satisfied with the way bullying is dealt with by the school</li> <li>13. I am aware of the detail of the relationships and sexuality policy of the school</li> <li>14. My child enjoys school</li> <li>15. My child is involved in school activities (e.g. music/sports) outside class-time</li> </ol>	<p><b>The school and my child</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. My child feels safe and well looked after in the school</li> <li>6. My child is treated fairly and respectfully in the school</li> <li>7. The school helps my child's social and personal development</li> <li>8. I have been informed of the school's code of behaviour/school rules</li> <li>9. I have been informed of the school's anti-bullying policy</li> <li>10. I know who to approach in the school if my child experiences bullying</li> <li>11. I am confident that if my child experiences bullying the school will act promptly and effectively</li> <li>12. My child enjoys school</li> </ol>
<p><b>Teaching and learning in the school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>16. Teaching is good in the school</li> <li>17. My child is doing well in school</li> <li>18. I am happy with the amount of homework my child gets</li> <li>19. The school reports give me a good picture of how my child is doing</li> <li>20. My child has very few free classes in a week</li> <li>21. I received helpful advice from the school when my child was choosing subjects</li> <li><del>22.</del>—Teachers regularly correct my child's homework</li> <li>23. I sign my child's homework journal on a weekly basis</li> <li>24. The school consults me if my child needs extra help</li> </ol>	<p><b>Teaching and learning in the school</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Teaching is good in the school</li> <li>14. My child has been taught in school about drugs and alcohol issues</li> <li>15. I have been informed of the details of the relationships and sexuality policy of the school</li> <li>16. My child is doing well in school</li> <li>17. I am happy with the amount of homework my child gets</li> <li>18. School reports give me a good picture of how my child is doing</li> <li>19. I received helpful advice from the school when my child was choosing subjects</li> <li>20. The school consults me if my child needs extra help</li> </ol>

<b>School and Parents</b>	<b>The school and parents</b>
25. There is good contact between the school and home	21. I know who to talk to in the school if there is a problem
26. There are good arrangements for parent/teacher meetings	22. I am satisfied with the arrangements for parent/teacher meetings
27. The school regularly seeks the views of parents on school matters	23. The school regularly seeks the views of parents on school matters
28. I know who to talk to in the school if there is a problem	24. Financial contributions to help the running of the school are voluntary
29. If I have a problem with the school I will get a fair hearing	25. The board of management reports annually to parents on the work of the school.
30. Financial contributions to help the running of the school are voluntary	26. The school's parents' association keeps me informed about its work
31. The board of management reports annually to parents on the work of the school.	27. Overall, I am happy with the school
32. The school's Parents' Association keeps me informed about its work.	

### ***POST-PRIMARY: STUDENT***

<b>September 2010—December 2013 inclusive</b>	<b>From January 2014</b>
<b>My school in general</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am proud to be in this school</li> <li>2. I enjoy going to my classes</li> <li>3. The facilities available in the school are good</li> <li>4. I feel safe and cared for in the school</li> <li>5. I get on well with other students in the school</li> <li>6. There is a good atmosphere in the school</li> </ol>	<b>My school in general</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I am proud to be in this school</li> <li>2. I enjoy going to my classes</li> <li>3. I feel safe and cared for in this school</li> <li>4. I get on well with other students in this school</li> <li>5. There is a good atmosphere in this school</li> </ol>
<b>How things work in my school</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. I understand the school rules</li> <li>8. The behaviour of students is good in the school</li> <li>9. All students are treated fairly in the school</li> <li>10. Attendance at classes is checked regularly</li> <li>11. My classes begin on time</li> <li>12. I am expected to use my journal to record all homework</li> <li>13. I have very few free classes each week</li> <li>14. The school pays attention to drug and alcohol issues</li> <li>15. The school deals well with bullying</li> <li>16. I learn about relationships and sexuality in some lessons</li> </ol>	<b>How things work in my school</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. I understand the school rules</li> <li>7. The behaviour of students is good in this school</li> <li>8. All students are treated fairly and respectfully in this school</li> <li>9. Attendance at classes is checked regularly</li> <li>10. My classes begin on time</li> <li>11. In this school there are clear rules against hurting other people by what we say or do</li> <li>12. In school I have learned about different kinds of bullying</li> <li>13. If someone is bullying me I can get help from a teacher or other adult in the school</li> <li>14. I learn about drugs and alcohol issues in some lessons</li> <li>15. I learn about relationships and sexuality in some</li> </ol>

<p><b>Teaching and learning in my school</b></p> <p>17. My classes are interesting</p> <p>18. I am getting on well in my school work</p> <p>19. The teachers explain things clearly for me in my classes</p> <p>20. The teachers encourage me to work to the best of my ability</p> <p>21. The teachers tell me how I can improve</p> <p>22. The teachers listen to me and take notice of what I say</p> <p>23. I get opportunities to work together with other students in my classes</p> <p>24. We use ICT regularly in classes</p> <p>25. Homework is assigned in most subjects</p> <p>26. My written work is corrected regularly</p>	<p><b>Teaching and learning in my school</b></p> <p>16. My classes are interesting</p> <p>17. I have very few free classes each week</p> <p>18. I am getting on well with my school work</p> <p>19. The teachers encourage me to do the best I can</p> <p>20. Teachers talk to me about how to improve my learning</p> <p>21. The teachers listen to me and pay attention to what I say</p> <p>22. I get opportunities to work together with other students in my classes</p> <p>23. We use ICT regularly in classes</p> <p>24. My homework is corrected regularly</p> <p>25. Teaching is good in the school</p>
<p><b>Other information about my school</b></p> <p>27. I can talk to an adult in the school if I am having problems</p> <p>28. I got helpful advice and information from teachers when choosing subjects</p> <p><del>29.</del> The school regularly sends information home about my work in school</p> <p>30. I have a say in how to make the school a better place</p> <p>31. I do other activities (e.g. music/sports/debating) in school outside class time</p>	<p><b>Other information about my school</b></p> <p>26. I can talk to an adult in the school if I am having problems</p> <p>27. I got helpful advice and information from teachers when choosing subjects</p> <p>28. I have a say in how things are done in the school</p>





A N R O I N N | D E P A R T M E N T O F  
O I D E A C H A I S | E D U C A T I O N  
A G U S S C I L E A N N A | A N D S K I L L S