

Irish Traveller Movement Submission July 2012



Tackling Bullying in Schools

The Irish Traveller Movement welcomes the establishment of an Anti-Bullying Forum and a working group to explore ways to tackle the serious problem of bullying in schools, by the Department of Education and Skills.

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) www.itmtrav.ie

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) is a national network of organisations and individuals working within the Traveller community. Established in 1990 it comprises a membership of over eighty Traveller organisations throughout Ireland. Consisting of a partnership between Travellers and settled people, which is reflected in all of the structures, the ITM is committed to seeking full equality for Travellers in Irish society.

Education has been a key area of work for the ITM over its 22 years, with the aim of seeking to ensure *'Travellers would be attending all levels of education and have confidence in their identify within a whole school environment where diversity is valued and where more Travellers view education as one of the valid means to fulfil their own potential.* The Irish Traveller Movement engages members through a number of different structures. The ITM Education Working Group brings members and individual Travellers together to develop ITM's analysis on the experience of education for Travellers nationally and to develop policy accordingly. Members from this group represent ITM at the National Forum Traveller Education.

ITM's Yellow Flag Programme www.yellowflag.ie

An innovative solution developed by the Irish Traveller Movement

Since its establishment the Irish Traveller Movement has been keenly aware of how important it is to support inclusion and diversity within Irish schools and the negative impact on children's school experience without those inclusions. In its absence sought to develop and appropriate solution via a practical schools based programme aimed at:

- 1) Supporting children to have pride in their own culture and identity and learn about other children's culture
- 2) Supporting schools to develop an environment in which all children thrive and where unfair discrimination and racism is challenged
- 3) Encouraging and promoting active partnership, engagement and effective communication between teachers, students, parents and community.

In its development the Irish Traveller Movement ensured the programme, Yellow Flag, supported the inclusion of all children majority and minorities, including Traveller children.

The Yellow Flag Programme is a whole school initiative operated through a cooperative approach of students, staff, management, parents and wider community groups so that issues of diversity and equality are not merely seen as "school subjects" but can be understood and taken outside the school setting into everyone's personal lives and creating an environment for inclusion with a long term impact on wider society.

The programme, in parallel with the Green Schools environmental programme is an 8 practical steps model- with an award incentive which allows schools to apply those steps to the day to day running of the school. Following completion of the 8 steps and external assessment the school is awarded a "Yellow Flag" in recognition of its work in promoting diversity & inclusion.

Guiding Committee and expertise

The ITM established a Yellow Flag Steering Committee comprising Teacher unions and bodies, and key agencies working on Integration, Equality & Diversity and include representatives from the Equality Authority, The Integration Centre, The Immigrant Council of Ireland, Integration officer with the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), Curriculum Development Unit, Educate Together as well as, INTO, ASTI, TUI, ACCS, and JMB & NADP

The Yellow Flag Programme – Currently the only programme of this type

It is important to note that there are no other programmes like Yellow Flag currently operating in Ireland.

The Yellow Flag was initially piloted in 4 schools (2 Primary, 2 Secondary) in 2008/2009. With the support of Philanthropic Bodies it has increased its reach and is impacting on the lives of children in over 17 schools in Dublin, Wicklow, Clare, Galway, Louth, Meath, Kerry and Limerick. A further 12 schools are due to take part in the programme in September 2012. The ITM have also just completed piloting the Yellow Flag in a College of Education, Frobel College in Blackrock.

Further information on the programme including Yellow Flag Handbook & Research report is available to download on www.yellowflag.ie Hardcopy also available on request.

ITM's contribution towards tackling bullying in schools

The Irish Traveller Movement believes that given its remit in the education area specific to Travellers and through its pioneering work via the Yellow Flag Programme, it is well placed to contribute to *Tackling bullying in schools* and in particular to submit expertise on racist bullying.

1) What changes to existing practices and policies in schools would improve how bullying can be tackled in schools?

Tackling bullying should not just be isolated to putting policies and practices in place to respond to bullying, must critically it must seek to develop a school environment which promotes inclusion and an understanding and celebration of difference and diversity.

In order to develop such a school environment teachers, students and parents need to be supported to develop an understanding of what bullying is and how it manifests. They need to be supported to develop an understanding of issues of diversity and equality including the 9 grounds covered under the Equal Status Act. They will also need to be supported to develop an understanding of the impact of stereotyping, racism and discrimination, oppression and ethnic denial. These steps are critical to tackle all forms of bullying including racist, discriminatory and homophobic bullying.

A recommended change is therefore that effective policies and practices in schools are put in place that include both procedures & actions which promote inclusion & issues of Equality & Diversity as well as challenge incidents of all forms of bullying.

Introduction of Anti-Racism & Interculturalism Policies in ALL Schools

While currently all schools as required by the DES to have an anti-bullying policy not all of these policies specifically include addressing racist or homophobic bullying. We therefore welcome the DES identifying racist and homophobic bullying as two of the priority areas that need to be taken into account when reviewing tackling bullying in

schools. ITM defer to the expertise in tackling homophobic bullying in schools by organisations such as BELONG TO and GLEN and look to the DES to take on board their recommendations in this area. In this submission while asking that all diversity and equality issues are taken on board when tackling bullying, the Irish Traveller Movement will focus in particular on its own area of expertise - racist bullying.

Findings

A Teachers Union of Ireland (TUI) (2009) commissioned survey on Racism, Interculturalism, and Resources for Minority Ethnic Students¹, showed that 1 in 4 teachers were aware of racist incidents in schools in the past month. The report also highlighted there is no anti-racism policy in place in half of all schools in this country. The TUI on commenting on the report stated that *'While ad-hoc anti-racism policies are in place in some schools, the Department of Education has never introduced a full-scale policy targeting the issue'*. The TUI at the time called on the DES to ensure ALL SCHOOLS should have an anti-racism policy.

The ITM are not aware of any further research that shows that this has changed and support the Teacher Union of Ireland's call that all schools should have an anti-racism policy and further believe that a school's response to racism will not be dealt with effectively, unless a specific response to racism and discrimination is developed incorporated into the practices and policies of the school.

An example of how this can be effected is in the Yellow Flag Programme. Two of the 8 Steps of the programme include the development of a Diversity code & Anti-Racism Policy. The Diversity code is developed primarily by the students and states what the school as a whole are trying to achieve on a day-to-day basis. The school is also supported to produce an official Anti-Racism & Interculturalism Policy to formalise their best practise in the area. Both documents are then publicised widely throughout the school building and included in various school publications.

The ITM recommend that the development of any policy tackling bullying in schools including anti-racism and interculturalism policy, feeds into the existing policies in the school including the schools anti-bullying policy. The Yellow Flag Programme supports schools to develop such policies by reviewing and drawing on existing relevant policies in place in particular the schools admission and enrolment policies, mission and vision statement, codes of behaviour and disciplinary procedures and anti-bullying policy.

Some schools have opted to have a stand alone Anti-Racism & Interculturalism Policy while others have opted for an enhanced anti-bullying policy. In ITM's experience what is critical is not whether it's a standalone policy or built into the existing anti-bullying policy - but the process involved. It is critical that anti-racism is not just inserted into existing anti-bullying policies but that a range of whole school initiatives are carried out to support an understanding of what this will mean in practice.

(1) Behaviour and Attitudes (B&A) Survey on Racism, Interculturalism, and Resources for Minority Ethnic Students' 2009.

The Yellow Flag programme provides a good model for how this can be achieved in a practical way in schools. As you can see from the steps of the programme outlined below the development of a policy is completed following a range of other practical actions including whole staff training in the area & curriculum work etc.

8 Steps of the Yellow Flag Programme

- 1) Intercultural and Anti-Racism Training for Staff and Management
- 2) Going beyond the School's Walls: Engaging with the Community
- 3) Establishing a Diversity Committee
- 4) Conducting an Intercultural Review
- 5) Formulating an Action Plan for a Diverse School
- 6) Monitoring and Evaluation and Information Dissemination
- 7) Curriculum Work
- 8) Production of a diversity code and anti racist policy for the school

Recommendations: DES to require all schools to have an effective mechanism & policy in place to respond to Racism & Discrimination

Monitoring bullying experience by Travellers and other ethnic minorities

A 2004 ESRI report identified that *Students from non-national backgrounds are significantly more likely to report being bullied as are students from a Traveller background (see Figure 5.11), indicating that bullies may single out students who are somehow "different" as targets. (Ref pg 169 Moving up Report 2004)*

A key concern for ITM is without an ethnic identifier in data collection mechanisms that the particular issues facing Travellers and students from other cultural and national backgrounds experience will get lost. The removal of the Visiting Teachers for Travellers by the DES has left a huge gap and a particular concern of ITM is that there is now no formalised system in place to collect Traveller specific data in schools. The ITM recommends that any guidelines, survey and or policy templates issued on tackling bullying include an ethnic identifier.

The ITM recommend too that this should be extended to all bodies working together with the DES to tackle bullying in schools.

An example of this concern relates to the survey presented by the National Parents Council (*DES conference on Tackling Bullying in schools on the 17th of May 2012*), on close inspection the ITM found that no Traveller or Migrant parents were either included on their database or the survey undertaken. The ITM have since worked with the NPC to support 89 questionnaires to be completed by Traveller parents which will feed into this submission and the NPC's submission to the DES. The ITM recommend that future research and surveys on anti-racism/anti-bullying etc include an ethnic identifier which includes members of the Traveller Community. This will

provide segregated data on the impact of bullying on particular 'at risk' groups including Travellers, it will also support identifying gaps in information, i.e. if no Travellers or non Irish national groups participated in a survey it will identify the need to look at other mechanisms to ensure their views and experiences get included.

One Yellow Flag STEP is for schools to carry out an intercultural review which provides a good model for how schools can ensure the views of all children including children from diverse cultural national and religious backgrounds can be included in a whole school review.

Recommendation: Ethnic Identifier Introduced in all schools and youth reach centres

State recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority

State recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority is a critical component which would to underpin the Department of Education and Skills' serious intention to tackle Travellers experience of bullying and discrimination in schools.

The lack of recognition of Traveller's ethnic status means for example that Travellers are not automatically included in national and international policy making, research in the area of bullying and racism etc. **For example** the research carried out by the TUI referred to previously 'Behaviour and Attitudes (B&A) Survey on Racism, Interculturalism, and Resources for Minority Ethnic Students' did not include Travellers as they were not recognised as an ethnic minority. Similarly more recent surveys, for example the Integration Centre survey on bullying and racism did not include a specific experience to Travellers.

State recognition of Travellers as an ethnic minority is also required if the state is serious about supporting young Travellers to have pride in their identity; and reduce the levels of internalised oppression and racism that young Traveller currently experience.

A key concern for ITM is the crisis of identity that is been experienced by young Travellers, manifesting in many young Travellers hiding their identity/changing their accent while they are in school, and or never mentioning their Traveller background. This is often due to real fears that if their Traveller identity is known they will be treated less favourability by teaching staff and their fellow students and experience bullying, racism and discrimination. ITM are aware of numerous examples of this occurring **and one example recorded** at an ITM Yellow Flag school was demonstrate by an 8 year old Traveller girl who enrolling in a new school advised the Principal that she wasn't going to tell anyone in the school she was a Traveller as at her last school,

her friend stopped sitting beside her and she stopped getting invited to birthday parties when she did.

Without State recognition Travellers as an ethnic minority or positive acknowledgement of Traveller culture and identity by school personnel contributes to young Travellers feeling that their culture is not valued and rather should be hidden, denied and ashamed of.

The Irish Traveller Movement is particularly concerned with the use of the term 'Settled Traveller' and its misconception and in particular the impact this is having in schools as evidenced through feedback with Primary and Secondary schools via the Yellow Flag programme. **For example:** School personnel in response to the question as to number, if any, of Travellers within their school state initially "No" followed by "*but we do have a few settled Travellers*". The ITM are concerned at how this denies Travellers their identity as a Traveller, when they reside in a home, which is not a trailer / halting site. This interpretation fails to respect the many other rich aspects of Traveller culture and identity including language (Cant), culture, values, norms, history etc.

Another point of concern is that current education system fails to positively acknowledge Traveller culture, history or way of life, therefore alienating Traveller students, and resulting in their life experience being invisible across the whole school setting. Also as a result non Traveller children are denied an insight and opportunity to learn about Traveller culture in a positive learning environment and increasing the chance of their views being formed by the negative stereotypical views of Travellers that persist in wider society.

Evidenced through the Yellow Flag programme, teachers recount fears about "how to approach the inclusion of Traveller culture" within the curriculum as they don't feel that they are informed enough about Traveller culture, don't have the right terminology and or that they may come across as being racist. The Yellow Flag programme is a good model to look at how schools can support the inclusion of Travellers as part of wider intercultural measures.

Ethnic recognition of Travellers would enable a shared identity and a shared pride in identity important for any community seeking to take its rightful place in the wider society and so vital for young Travellers to have their culture and identity valued. In this case it helping too, the development of more awareness within the Education system. It would also ensure Traveller culture; history and language are reflected in the curriculum.

Recommendation:

- **The State to recognise Travellers as an ethnic minority**
- **That Traveller culture, history and language is reflected and integrated into the curriculum**
- **That Traveller cultural awareness should form part of initial teacher education. Colleges of Education should adapt their current modules to include such instruction.**
- **Schools to build links with local Traveller organisations in their area and work with them to deliver Traveller culture awareness training to both students and staff. (This is a key action carried out within the Yellow Flag programme). The DES should support and resource Traveller organisations to deliver this training to schools.**

2. How can awareness of bullying and its effects be raised at school level?

In order for bullying to be effectively dealt with by School Personnel it requires an understanding of what bullying is, in all its forms including homophobic; racist and anti-Traveller bullying. Requiring too a learned understanding of racism, discrimination, ethnicity and oppression. This would envisage a whole school programme, embedded as an equality principle as opposed to once-off training.

For a school (and teachers) with a real knowledge of the impact of racist and discriminatory bullying, they would look to create an inclusive school environment. *'Anti-racism education is not an end in itself but rather the beginning of a new approach to thinking, acting and feeling'*

Recommendations

- Anti-Racism and Interculturalism Awareness Training should form part of initial teacher education. Colleges of Education should adapt their current modules to include this.
- The DES should provide regular and comprehensive training at in-service level on intercultural and diversity issues.
- Despite the difficult economic climate, the necessity of intercultural education for the holistic development of students must be recognised and as such, the DES should reserve a specific budget for the support and development in this area.
- Bullying needs to be highlighted more in Schools – in all of its forms, as referred.
- Young people need to know a procedure of steps they could follow if they were being bullied. Students need to be able to highlight their problem to their Teacher, without it being dismissed as troublemaking on their behalf.

- There needs to be more knowledge spread to the students about the effects of bullying. Could advertise it more in Schools using posters, newsletters etc. Students should become aware of how much it is happening around them. Posters, newsletters etc need to be broken down, in simple English so a child of any background can understand the basics of bullying.
- An anti-bullying education programme could be introduced in every school. Bullying prevention/intervention programmes could be introduced in Schools.
- Students could be issued with annual questionnaires; by administering annual/bi-annual questionnaires to young people in the Schools the level of bullying within the School can be monitored. This approach will also give a School an indication whether its long term strategy to combat bullying and the anti-bullying policy are effective.

3. Have you been a victim of bullying? If so, what helped you to deal with it or what would have helped you to deal with it? Please note parents are also welcome to share their experience of bullying on behalf of their child.

Travellers experience of Racism and Discrimination

It is widely acknowledged within many key national and international reports including 1995 Taskforce Report on Travellers, CERD etc the Traveller Community face high levels of racism and discrimination. Also Dr. Michael McGreal, S J. Sociologist, Author of "Prejudice in Ireland Revisited & Religion & Pluralism in 21st Century Ireland" highlighted the high levels of anti-Traveller racism that existed in Ireland in the 1980's and continues to exist in 2011 on re-examination .

Most Travellers can give a range of examples of how they have been and are discriminated against because of their Traveller identity, from those who decide not to socialise or use certain services because they are afraid that yet again they will be "made a show of", embarrassed or denied access to that service. Yet many people who are not experiencing discrimination themselves fail to acknowledge it is an issue in Irish society that must be effectively addressed through a range of measures including strong anti-discrimination legislation.

In 2006 the Irish Traveller Movement conducted a survey of Travellers through its membership on a range of service provision including shops, hotels, pubs, medical and welfare services. The following data highlights the findings of this research.

PUBS

89.7% said they went to a pub	77.2% had been told to leave a pub by bar staff	78.6% had been refused a drink	70.8% had been refused " <i>because we were Travellers</i> "
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HOTELS

60.8% said they had tried to book a hotel	75.7% of these had experienced problems	46.9% said that it was " <i>because we were Travellers</i> "	44.9% were asked to leave or cancel
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SHOPS

53.9% said they had been asked to leave a shop	66.1% had experienced others being served before them	60% had been " <i>made a show of</i> " (embarrassed) in shops
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HAIRDRESSERS

32.5% said they had been asked to leave a hairdressers	31% had experienced others being served before them	28.3% had been " <i>made a show of</i> " (embarrassed) in a hairdressers
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LAUNDRETTE

18.2% said they had been asked to leave a laundrette	25.5% had experienced others being served before them	24.7% had been " <i>made a show of</i> " (embarrassed) in a laundrette
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Racism and how ethnicity denial feeds into racism provided the theme of the Irish Traveller Movement's Annual Conference (2012) and explored how racism continues to be a day to day experience for Travellers. The conference attended by Travellers from throughout Ireland and included key note speakers; Thomas McCann (a Traveller Activist; psychologist and founder of the Traveller Counselling service) and Ronit Lentin (Associate Professor Sociology / Course coordinator, MPhil in Race, Ethnicity, Conflict, Trinity College Dublin, **identified the ongoing need** to name and challenge the racism experienced by Travellers.

Travellers experience of Racism & Discrimination and Bullying within the Education System

Traveller's experience of racism and discrimination within the Education system was a key area of concern raised at the conference

Traveller’s Historical experience of the Education System: In the ITM’s submission to the DES on a Framework for Enrolment the ITM law centre outlined how *‘Empirical evidence suggests that historically Travellers have suffered “extreme educational deprivation” specifically at second level education.¹ The Report of the Travelling People Review Body from 1983 estimated that 3,500 Traveller children attended school and that this figure represented only half of the Traveller children of school going age and that “very few remained after reaching the age of 12 years”² with progress to secondary level education a rarity: “Only 10% of those who finish primary school continue to attend school and most of these drop out after one or two years.”³ The ESRI’s Annual School Leavers Survey commissioned by the Department of Education and Science in 1982 reports that 66.4% of all children (from the general population) who enter second level education complete their secondary schooling. This is in stark contrast to the figures outlined above’.*

At that time in addition to the poor outcomes for Travellers within Education, their experience of education was one of segregation, where children were educated in Traveller only classes or schools were often washed when they came into school and had separate play and lunch times to their settled counterparts. The expectations of Travellers was also in the main extremely low, and the majority of Travellers educated in the 1980’s - 1990’s recall experiences of being left to draw and play, leaving school unable to read or write.

In today’s education mindset, Travellers historic negative experience of the education system is not widely known, as evidenced through the delivery of culture awareness sessions in Yellow Flag schools and Colleges of Education.

The importance of awareness of those historical experiences by education sector personnel is critical, as those experiences may impact on how Traveller parents engage with the education system as well as respond to their own children’s experience of racist bullying within school.

Traveller’s ongoing experience of Racism and Discrimination within the Education system

While huge advances have been made in the inclusion of Traveller children within the Education system, there are still ongoing issues to be addressed. The following pieces of research highlight how Traveller students and students from non-Irish national backgrounds are more likely to be bullied.

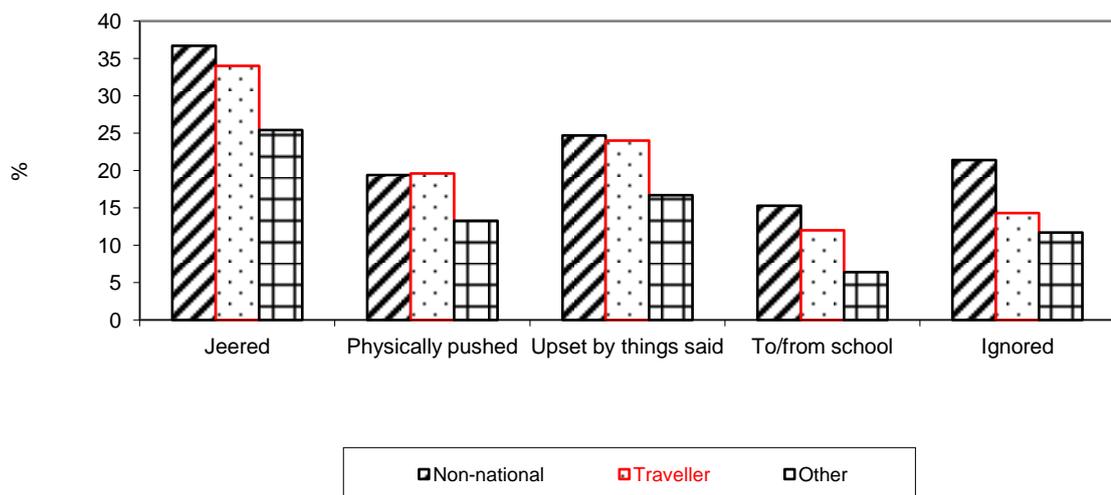
¹ Report of the Travelling People Review Body 1983 Government Report (here in after called “the Report”)

² At paragraph 2.3 of the Report.

³ At paragraph 2.6 of the Report.

In the ESRI 2004 report *Moving Up: The Experiences of First-Year Students in Post-Primary Education* a composite measure of being bullied was constructed. It included that *'Girls tend to report less bullying than boys on average. While the incidence of being bullied does not vary consistently by social class background, students from professional backgrounds are slightly less likely to report being bullied and those from non-employed households are more likely to do so. Students from non-national backgrounds are significantly more likely to report being bullied as are students from a Traveller background (see Figure 5.11), indicating that bullies may single out students who are somehow "different" as targets.* (Emer Smyth, Selina McCoy, Merike Darmody, 2004, *Moving Up: The Experiences of First-Year Students in Post-Primary Education*. Dublin: Liffey Press and ESRI ref pg 169)

Moving Up report (2004): Figure 5.11 (p.170) – proportion of first year students who report experience of being bullied in the two weeks prior to the study



In *'Pathways through the Junior Cycle'* a report, based on second year students (2006, p.83): it was found that *'Students from minority backgrounds newly arrived in Ireland or from the Traveller community, are significantly more likely to report having been bullied than other students, a pattern which is in keeping with that found among first year students (see Smyth et al., 2004). Experience of bullying is even more prevalent among immigrant students who had changed schools since first year, although this pattern should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of students involved'.*

Emer Smyth, Allison Dunne, Selina McCoy and Merike Darmody 2006, *Pathways through the Junior Cycle*. Dublin: Liffey Press and ESRI

In *Choices and Challenges* a report, based on fifth year students (2011, Chapter 6): It found the following

'In keeping with the patterns at junior cycle, newcomer students were more likely to report being bullied than Irish students. [page 197]'

'Traveller students are more likely to consider themselves unpopular than settled students (21% doing so as opposed to 11%). [pages 198 and 199]'

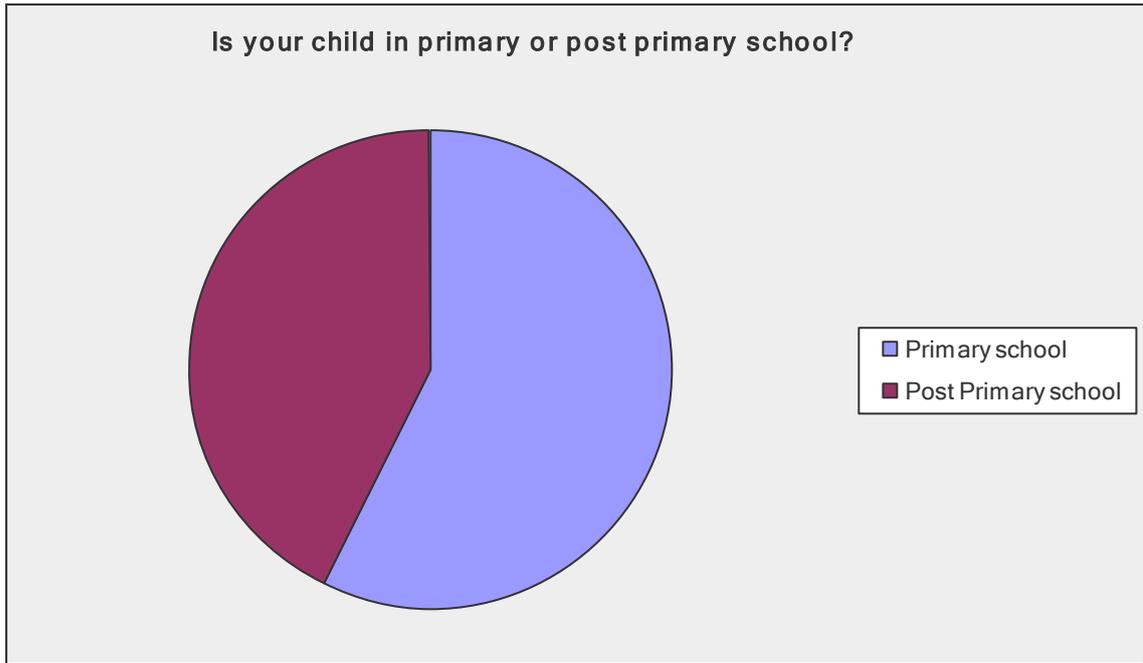
'Feelings of isolation were more commonly reported by newcomer students but did not vary systematically by other student characteristics. [page 200]'

Emer Smyth and Emma Calvert 2011. *Choices and Challenges: Moving from Junior Cycle to Senior Cycle Education*. Dublin: Liffey Press and ESRI

The ITM as part of its preparation on making this submission to the DES supported 89 Traveller parents to complete the National Parents Council questionnaire on bullying. These will feed into the NPC submission, for the purpose of this submission we include the Traveller specific finding, below.

Of the 89 Traveller parents surveyed 57.3% of parents had children in Primary schools & 42% of the parents had children at second level.

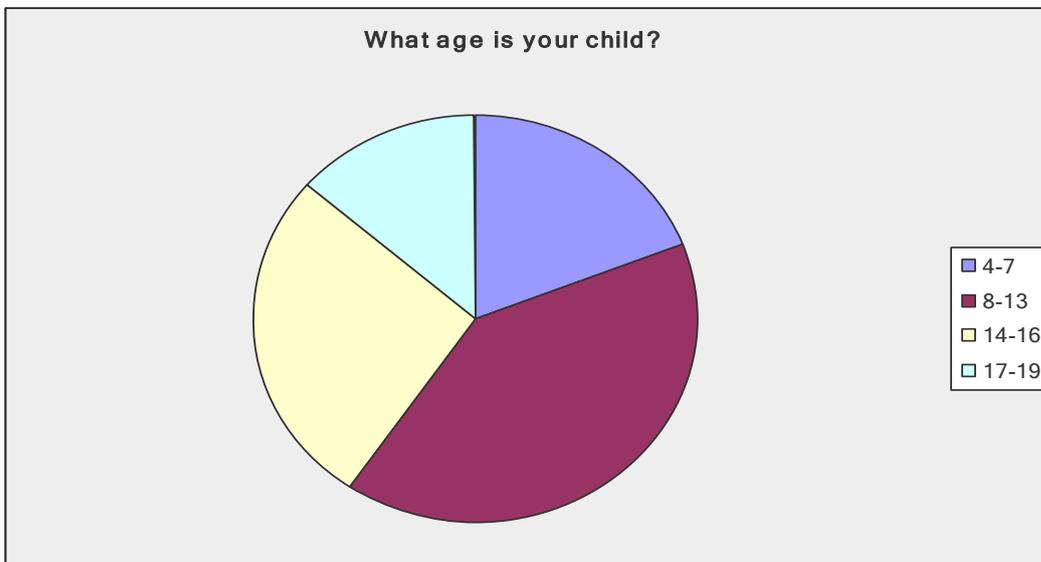
Is your child in primary or post primary school?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Primary school	57.3%	51
Post Primary school	42.7%	38
	<i>answered question</i>	89
	<i>skipped question</i>	0



The survey captured the views of Traveller parents who had children within all of the age ranges.

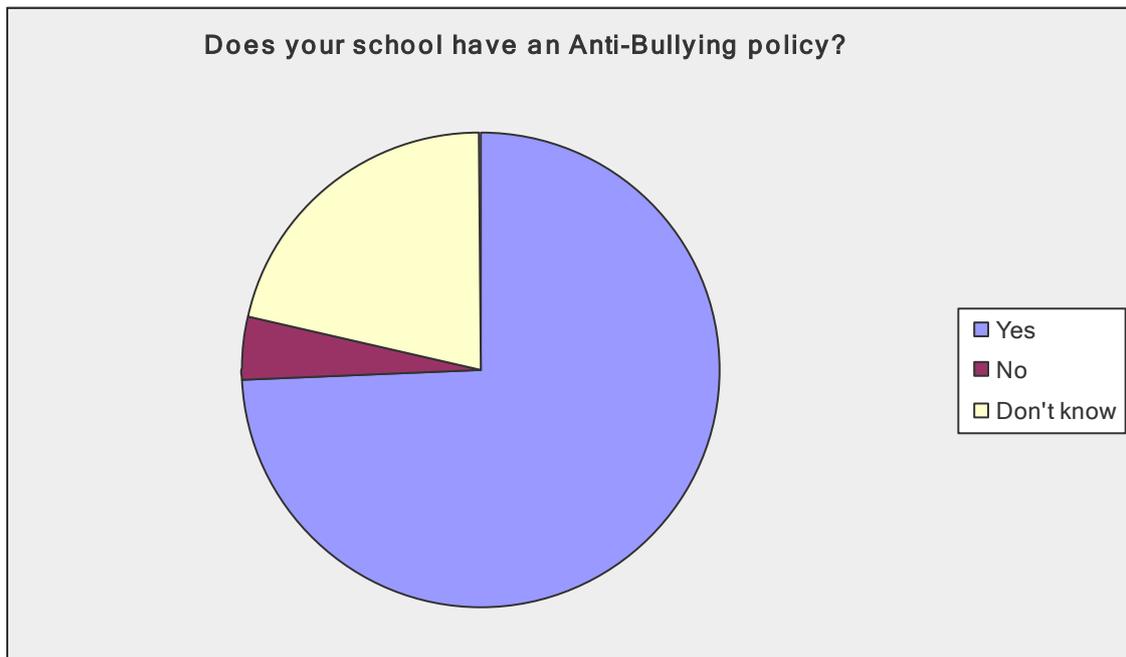
What age is your child?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
4-7	19.1%	17
8-13	40.4%	36
14-16	27.0%	24
17-19	13.5%	12
answered question		89
skipped question		0



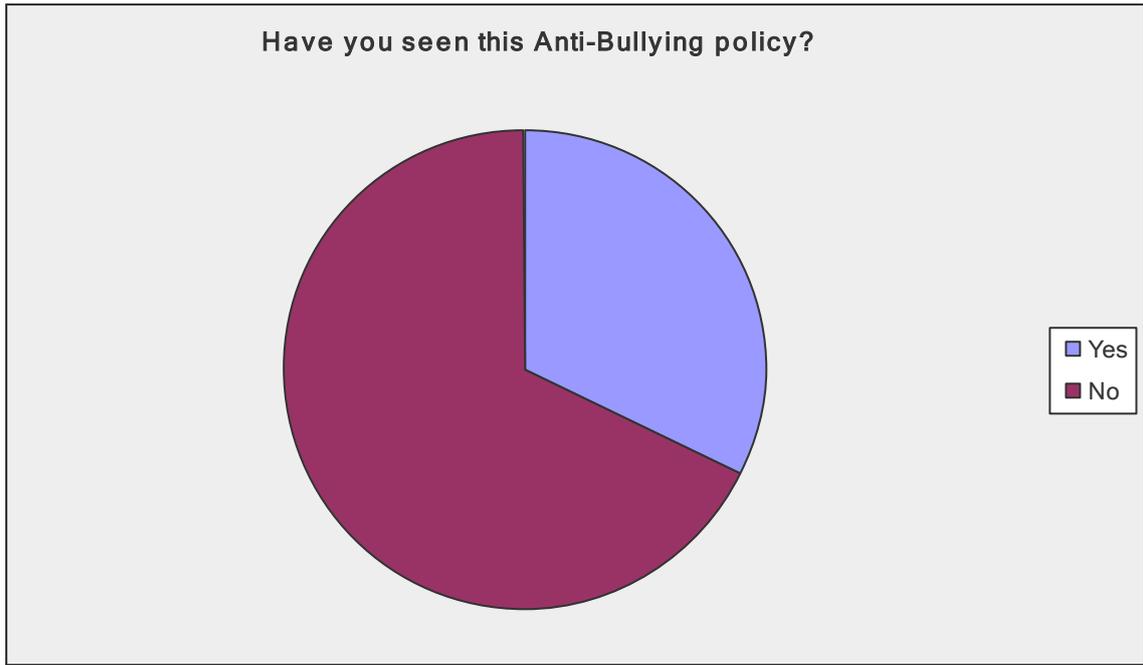
74% of the Traveller parents were aware that there was an anti-bullying policy in place in the school their children attended.

Does your school have an Anti-Bullying policy?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	74.2%	66
No	4.5%	4
Don't know	21.3%	19
answered question		89
skipped question		0



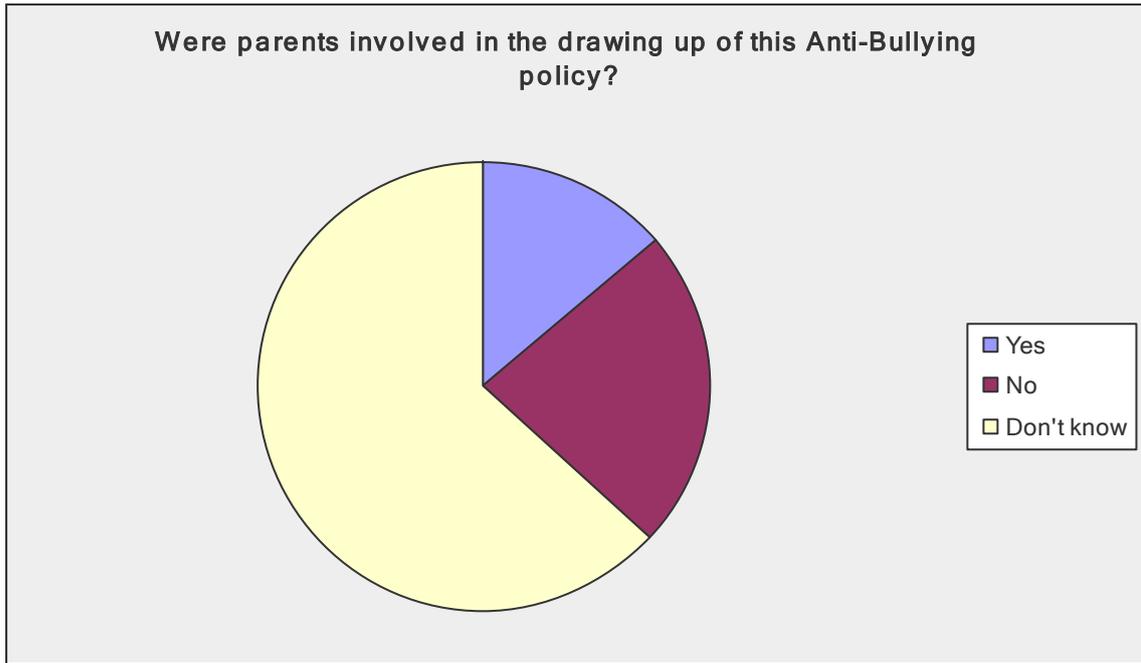
Only 32% of the Traveller parents who took part had seen the policy

Have you seen this Anti-Bullying policy?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	32.3%	21
No	67.7%	44
answered question		65
skipped question		24



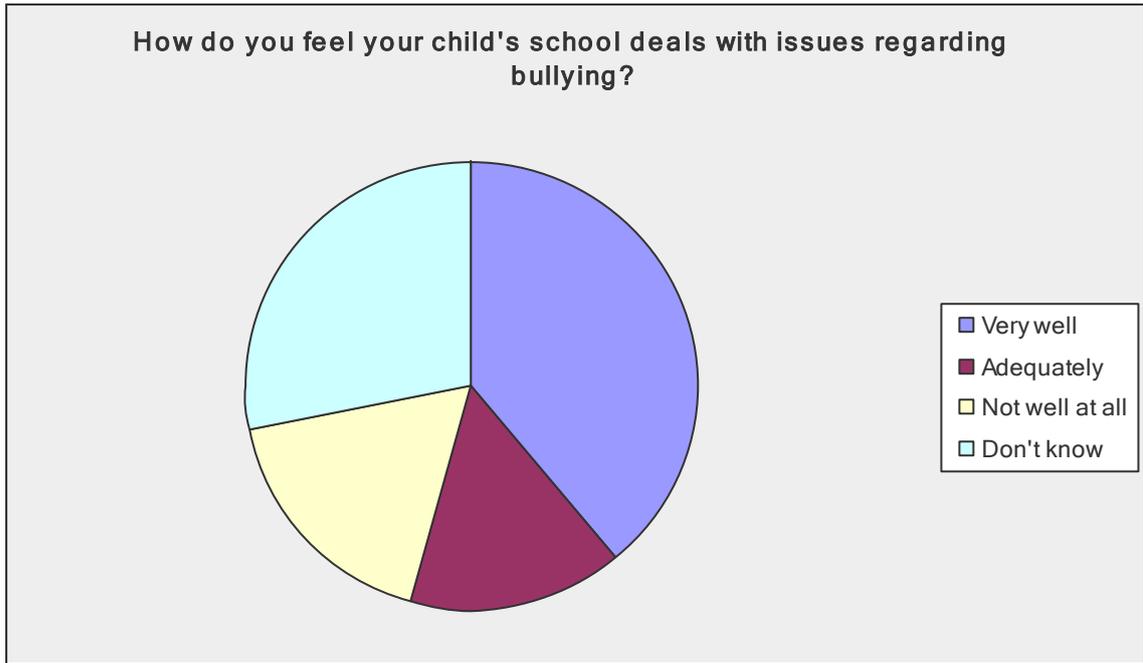
Only 13% said that parents were involved in drawing up the policy. The majority 63% of the parents didn't know.

Were parents involved in the drawing up of this Anti-Bullying policy?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	13.8%	9
No	23.1%	15
Don't know	63.1%	41
<i>answered question</i>		65
<i>skipped question</i>		24



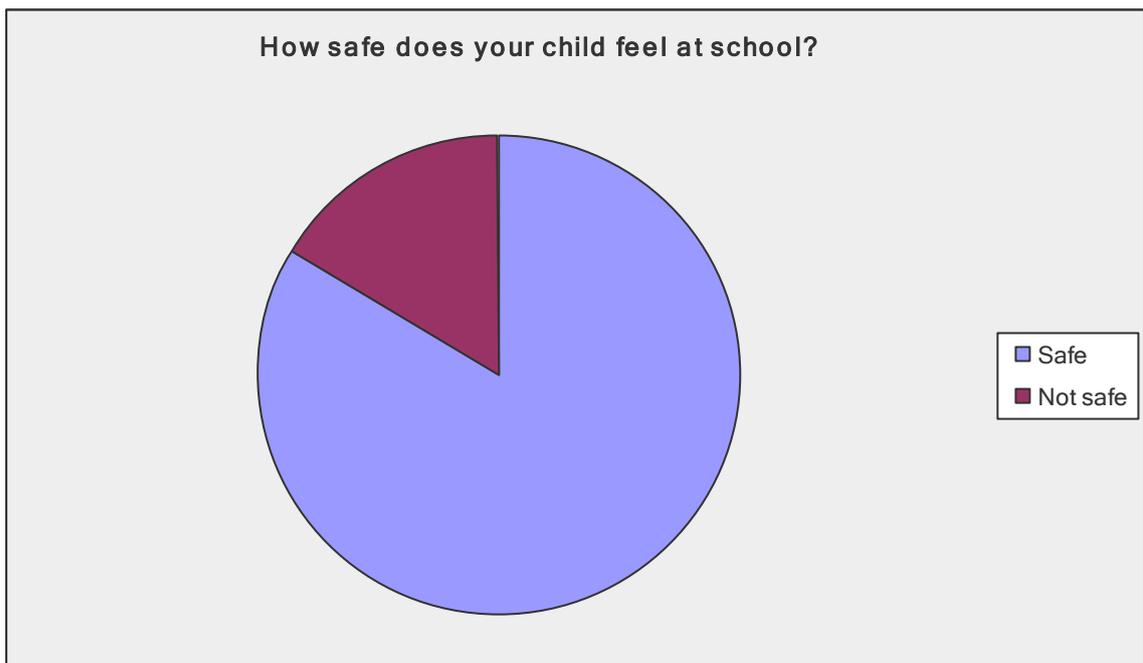
Only 38% of Traveller parents felt that their child school dealt well with the issue of bullying.

How do you feel your child's school deals with issues regarding bullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very well	38.8%	33
Adequately	15.3%	13
Not well at all	17.6%	15
Don't know	28.2%	24
<i>answered question</i>		85
<i>skipped question</i>		4



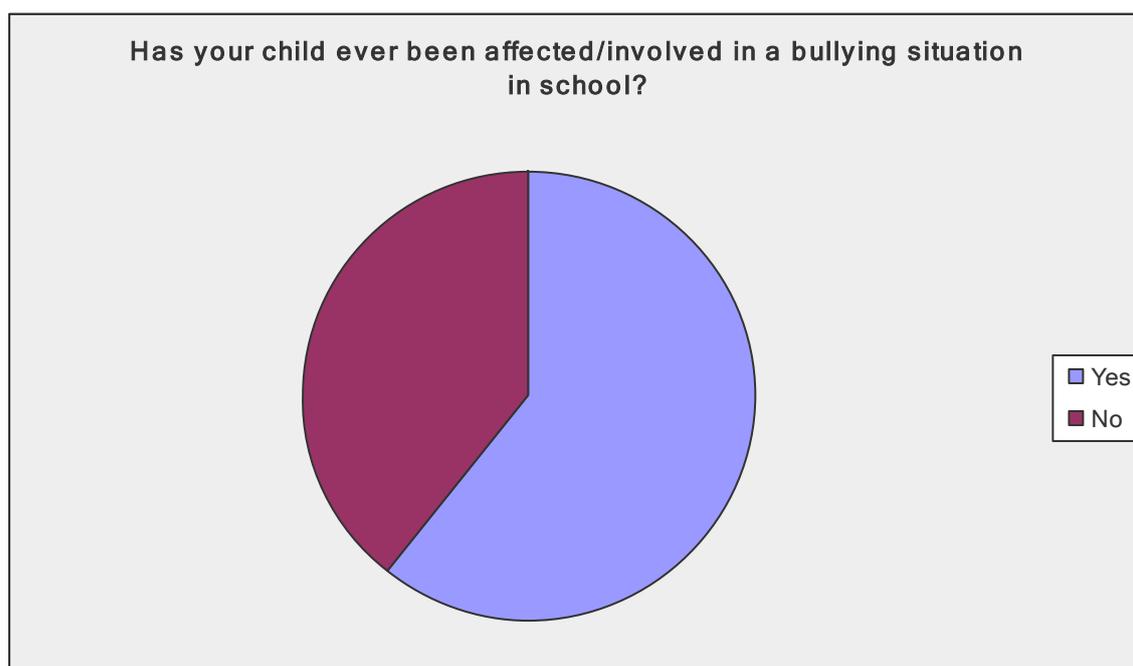
83% of Traveller parents felt that their child feels safe in school, with a significant percentage 16.3% stating that their child does not feel safe.

How safe does your child feel at school?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Safe	83.7%	72
Not safe	16.3%	14
<i>answered question</i>		86
<i>skipped question</i>		3



A high percentage 60.5% of Traveller parents stated that their child had been affected by bullying

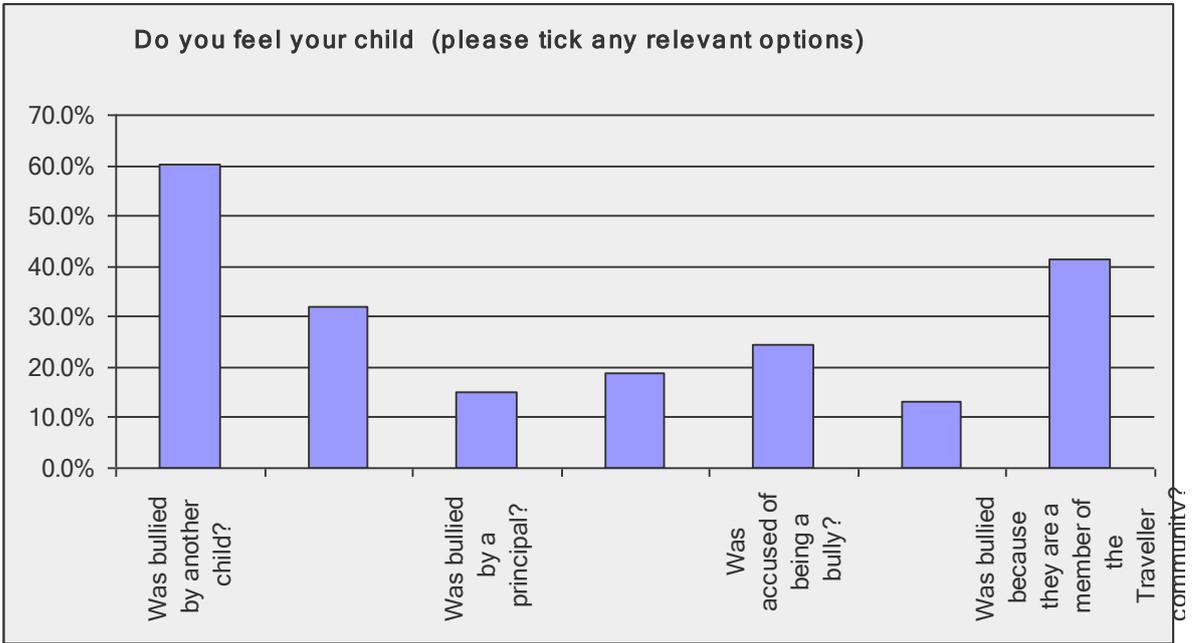
Has your child ever been affected/involved in a bullying situation in school?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.5%	52
No	39.5%	34
answered question		86
skipped question		3



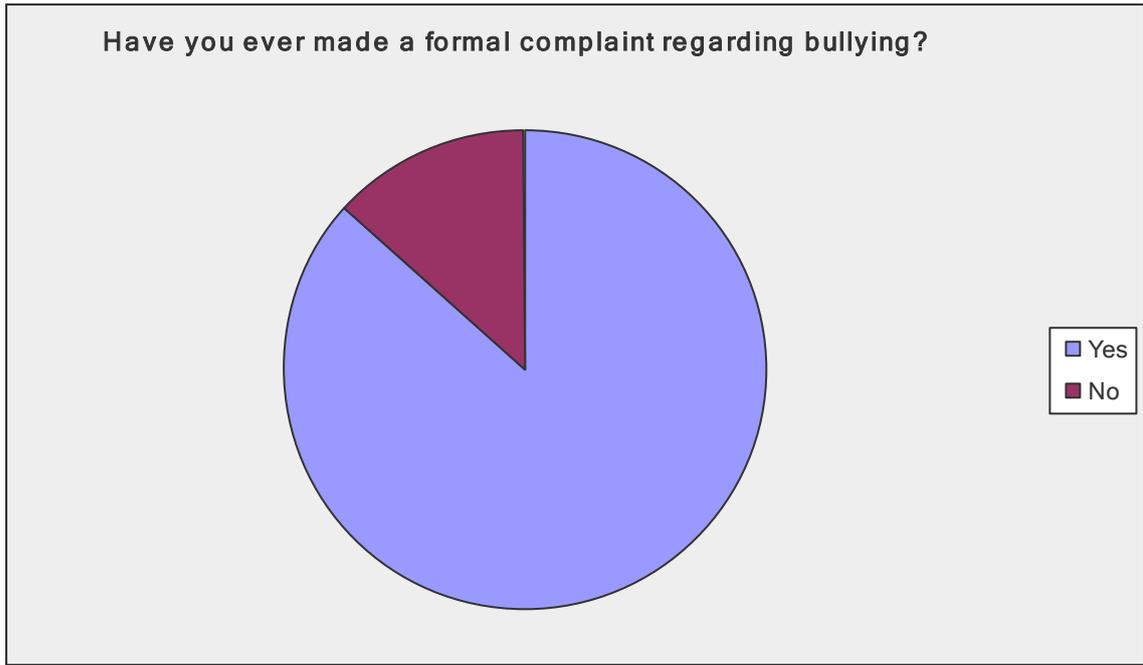
60% of Traveller children that had experienced bullying were bullied by another child, 47.2% were bullied by either a Teacher or Principal. 18.9% were bullied by a parent of another child. With 41.5% of parents stating that they felt their child was bullied because they were a member of the Travelling community.

Do you feel your child (please tick any relevant options)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Was bullied by another child?	60.4%	32
Was bullied by a teacher?	32.1%	17
Was bullied by a principal?	15.1%	8
Was bullied by a parent of another child?	18.9%	10
Was accused of being a bully?	24.5%	13
Bullied another child?	13.2%	7
Was bullied because they are a member of the Traveller community?	41.5%	22

If you would like to give more detail please do	18
answered question	53
skipped question	36

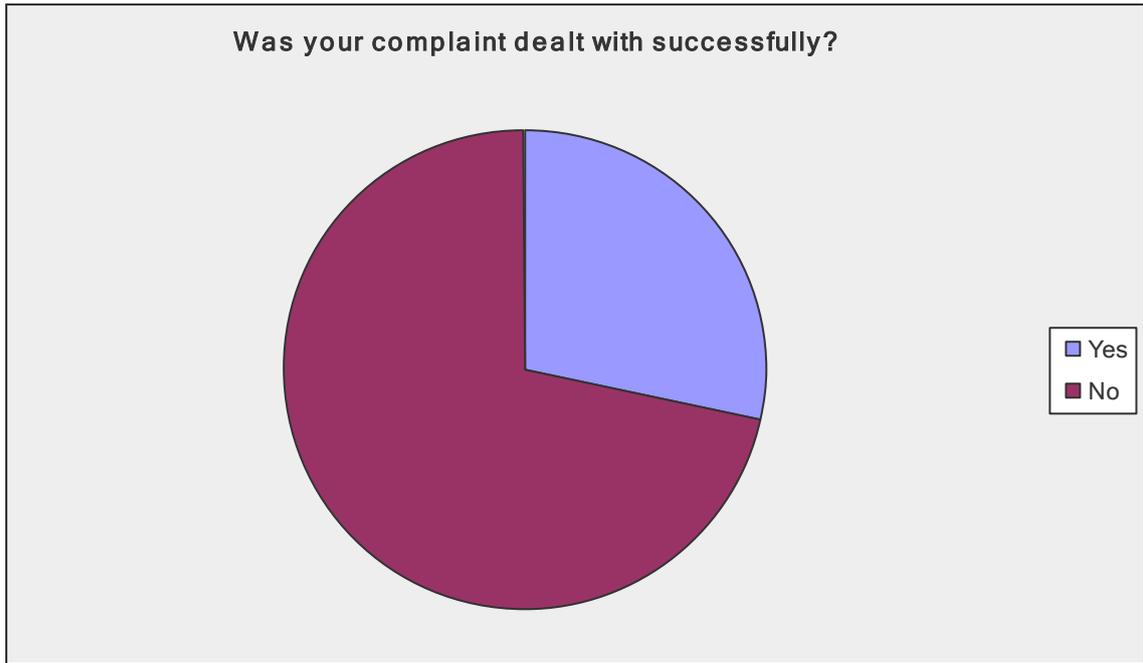


Have you ever made a formal complaint regarding bullying?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	86.8%	46
No	13.2%	7
answered question		53
skipped question		36



86% of Traveller parents had made a complaint, however only 28.3% of these parents felt that their complaint was dealt with successfully and this was for a range of reasons outlined in the following question.

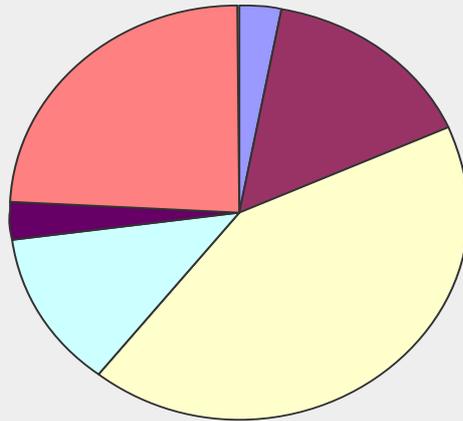
Was your complaint dealt with successfully?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	28.3%	13
No	71.7%	33
<i>answered question</i>		46
<i>skipped question</i>		43



If your complaint was not dealt with successfully, was this because?

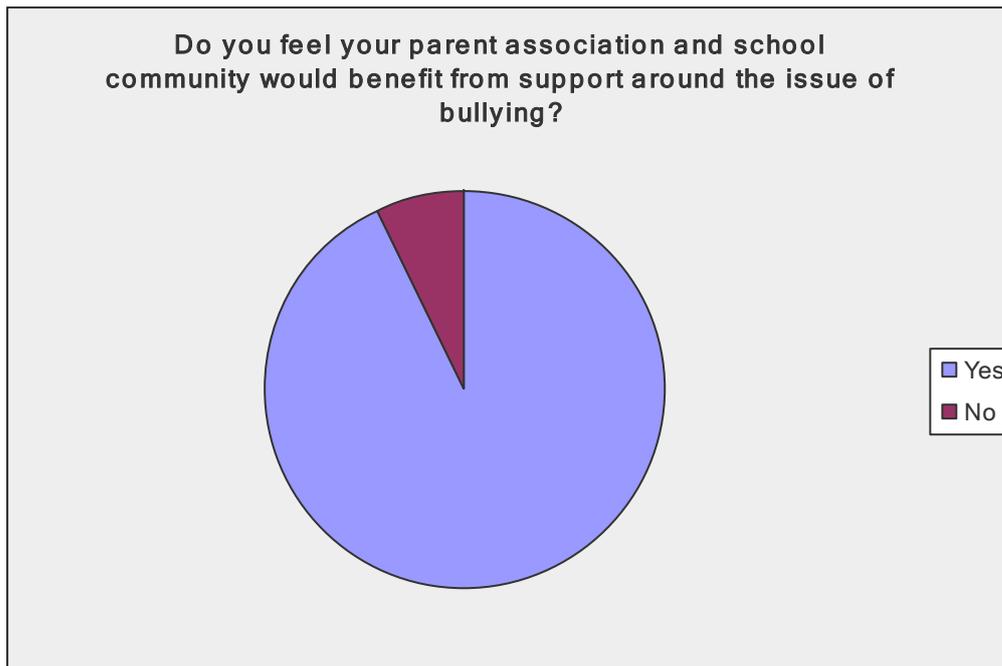
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
There was no clear procedure in place to deal with bullying in the school	3.0%	1
The teacher did not follow the procedure	15.2%	5
The principal did not follow the procedure	42.4%	14
The Board did not follow the procedure	12.1%	4
The procedure was not a suitable mechanism to resolve the problem	3.0%	1
You weren't happy with the outcome of the investigation	24.2%	8
If you would like to give more detail, please do		14
<i>answered question</i>		33
<i>skipped question</i>		56

If your complaint was not dealt with successfully, was this because?



- There was no clear procedure in place to deal with bullying in the school
- The teacher did not follow the procedure
- The principal did not follow the procedure
- The Board did not follow the procedure
- The procedure was not a suitable mechanism to resolve the problem
- You weren't happy with the outcome of the investigation

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	92.7%	76
No	7.3%	6
<i>answered question</i>		82
<i>skipped question</i>		7



While this survey is no by any means fully comprehensive of Travellers experience of racism and discrimination within education, it does raise a number of red flags. Through our network of members we are aware of too many instances where Traveller children don't report racist bullying as they know it will get them nowhere. Or that they take some action to highlight it and get suspended while the bully gets off.

This survey consolidated those experiences, by showing that over 70% of parents did not feel their complaint was dealt with successfully.

It also highlighted how 'at risk' young Travellers are to being bullied and how inadequate the current policies and procedures are in place in many schools to respond effectively to that bullying. Furthermore comprehensive research is needed in this area.

Recommendations:

- A more comprehensive study on the experience of Traveller children in the education system is undertaken.
- DES support school personnel to recognise that racism is not just an issue of colour but it something that is experienced by Irish Travellers.

4. What are the key priorities that need to be addressed, including actions to be taken by the Department of Education and Skills, other government department and agencies and school communities?

- **State to recognise Travellers as an ethnic minority**
- **DES to become a lead partner in supporting & resourcing the mainstreaming of the Yellow Flag**
- **DES to introduce an ethnic identifier**

5. Are there any practical steps that can be taken in the short term to improve how schools approach and tackle bullying?

- **(As outlined earlier)**

6. Are there any exemplars of effective practice, drawn from Irish or an international context, that you consider could be usefully introduced in our schools?

Yellow Flag Programme

As outlined throughout this report the ITM believe that the Yellow Flag Programme is a proven model of good practice in this area. In addition to comments made throughout the report it provides the following

- A proven framework for schools to involve parents and community groups in work around challenging racist bullying and promoting inclusion and diversity.
- One of the 8 steps of the programme ensures that schools are supported to establish structures in the form of diversity committee's within schools, membership of which includes not only students and teachers but also parents and community organisations. This ensures students, parents and community groups are key partners along with school personnel in promoting diversity and inclusion in the school and challenging racist bullying.
- A further Step of the programme is for the school to carry out an Intercultural Review. Parents, students and community groups are consulted and feed into this review through both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Again the findings of the reviews support the involvement of parents as well as the establishment of a demand for diversity in a school.
- To ensure that schools are socially and culturally inclusive it is also important the schools are supported to develop policies, practices and a school environment that supports inclusion and diversity. While the Intercultural Education Strategy outlines the need for anti-racism policies and anti-racism & interculturalism training, the Irish Traveller Movement believes that schools are not currently adequately resourced to access training and or incentivised to develop Anti-

Racism and Equality Policies. **The DES needs to provide leadership and direction to schools.** The Yellow Flag again provides a framework for this by supporting schools to develop a diversity code for the school as well as Anti-Racism Policies.

7. Are there further areas which should be highlighted? If yes, please elaborate.

Critical Issues:

The Irish Traveller Movement are committed to progressing our work with the State partner in relation to Travellers in education, and in the promotion of inclusion, diversity and fairness – however this needs to be supported and resourced by the State at National Level. Specifically, the ITM has not received funding for a National Education Worker and so is limited in that capacity to ensure a comprehensive response to the work involved.

The ITM would like to formally request as part of this submission that the DES consider providing resources to ensure ITM continue its Traveller Education work and to commit funding for a National Education Worker .

The ITM remain concerned about how Travellers are to be supported within the Education system given that all Traveller specific supports have been cut in the last number of budgets. The Office of Integration has been re-named as the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration clearly including Travellers in its remit. It is therefore particularly critical now that the DES actively names and provides resources to ensure that work is being carried out to support the inclusion of Travellers in schools in Ireland.

ITM call on the DES in its review of the IES to include Travellers as part of the work of the Office of Integration. It also calls on it to provide targeted resources to support the inclusion of Travellers within the strategy.

A Traveller Education Forum was established by the DES in Nov 2009. **The ITM requests that there is a formal link between the work of this Forum and the working group on tackling bullying in schools.**

The ITM believe that the Yellow Flag programme, the innovative solution to supporting inclusion and diversity in Irish Schools for all children, provides a model of best practice for the working group to use to tackle bullying in schools. The programme however needs State support to grow this at a national level and fully impact on the lives of children in all schools in Ireland. **The ITM calls on the DES to consider the proposal put forward by ITM to become a lead Partner in the programme.**

It is critical that the DES support Travellers “ethnic” recognition for consideration by the Irish State. The ITM would be happy to facilitate any discussions with regard to this.

The ITM calls on the DES working group to include within their recommendations the need for the State to recognise Travellers as an ethnic minority.

The ITM looks forward to receiving a response to its submission including its recommendations and requests. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact Paula Madden Yellow Flag Co-ordinator Irish Traveller Movement, 4-5 Eustace Street, D2 yellowflagprogramme@gmail.com Tel 0872410258