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News Release

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INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AGAINST LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL STAFF IN 2001/02

The results of the survey on incidents of violence and anti-social behaviour against local authority school staff in 2001/02 are published today by the Scottish Executive Education Department.

Violence and anti-social behaviour, in this context, is categorised as physical violence, verbal abuse or intentional damage to personal property, and includes threatening behaviour with or without a weapon.

The information collected refers to the number of separate incidents reported, rather than the number of individual members of staff involved in at least one incident during the year.

The main findings are:-

- During 2001/02, the total number of incidents reported against local authority school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) was 5,412.
- 37 per cent of these incidents occurred within the primary sector, 30 per cent in the secondary sector, 32 per cent in the special sector and, two per cent in pre-school centres of education.
- Two thirds of the incidents reported involved teaching staff. There were 64 incidents against teaching staff per 1,000 teachers.

- 237 incidents (around four per cent of the total) were notified to the police.
- 98 per cent of incidents were recorded as occurring in school hours, with 50 per cent taking place in the classroom.
- 44 per cent of the incidents reported involved physical violence alone. 26 per cent involved both physical violence and verbal abuse, and 29 per cent involved verbal abuse alone.
- Less than one per cent of incidents were reported as racially motivated, with a similar number sexually motivated.
- In 94 per cent of all incidents reported, the perpetrator was a current pupil of the school. This is a rate of six incidents per 1,000 pupils. Where this information was available, 60 per cent of these incidents involved pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- In four per cent of all incidents, the perpetrator was recorded as a parent.
- On average there were five working days lost per 1,000 staff as a direct result of the incidents reported in 2001/02.

**Incidents against local authority school staff,
by sector and category of staff, 2001/02**

Table 1

	Number of incidents					Number in which police were notified
	Total		Against teaching staff only	Against non-teaching staff only	Against both teaching and non-teaching staff	
	Number	Per 100,000 pupils ⁽¹⁾				
Total	5,412	663	3,399	1,821	192	237
Pre-school centres	101	139	32	68	1	5
Primary schools	1,982	472	1,032	852	98	63
Secondary schools	1,602	507	1,486	108	8	121
Special schools	1,727	21,105	849	793	85	48

(1) includes incidents perpetrated by non-pupils

**Incidents against local authority school staff,
by location and time, 2001/02**

Table 2

	Number of incidents		
	Total	During school hours	Outwith school hours
Total	5,412	5,304	108
Pre-school centres	102	102	0
Classroom	2,713	2,703	10
Elsewhere in school buildings	1,825	1,797	28
School grounds	572	541	31
Outwith school grounds	200	161	39

**Incidents against local authority school staff,
by type of incident, 2001/02**

Table 3

Number of incidents	Number of incidents	of which	
		number racially motivated ⁽²⁾	number sexually motivated ⁽²⁾
Total	5,412	45	44
Verbal abuse only	1,555	22	30
Physical violence only	2,389	12	5
Both verbal abuse and physical violence	1,419	11	9
Damage to personal property	49	0	0

(2) data not available from Aberdeenshire

**Incidents against local authority school staff,
by type of perpetrator, 2001/02**

Table 4

	Type of perpetrator				
	Total	Current pupil	Ex-pupil	Parent	Other person
Total	5,412	5,078	24	225	85
Pre-school centres	101	86	0	8	7
Primary schools	1,982	1,791	3	155	33
Secondary schools	1,602	1,483	21	57	41
Special schools	1,727	1,718	0	5	4

**Incidents against local authority school staff,
perpetrated by pupils, 2001/02**

Table 5

Incidents by location	Perpetrated by current pupil			
	Total all current pupils	With SEN	Without SEN	Not known if with or without SEN
Total	5,078	2,459	1,667	952
Pre-school centres	86	16	36	34
Primary schools	1,791	610	720	461
Secondary schools	1,483	115	911	457
Special schools	1,718	1,718	*	*

* not applicable

NOTES TO NEWS EDITORS

1. In June 1997, the then Scottish Office issued a circular (No 5/97) to Local Authorities in Scotland, informing them of a formal requirement to report, record and monitor incidents of violence against school staff. In circular 5/97, an incident of violence was defined as:

‘any incident in which any employee of a school is seriously abused, is threatened or is assaulted by a pupil, parent, member of the public or any other persons in circumstances arising out of the course of his/her employment. This includes physical attack and threatening behaviour with or without a weapon, and intentional damage to personal property’.

This reflects the fact that violence is not restricted to acts of aggression that may result in physical harm but incorporates behaviour, including the use of gestures and language, that may cause the victim to become afraid or feel threatened or abused.

The Scottish Office collected and collated information from Local Authorities for the first time in 1998, and subsequently as the Scottish Executive again in each August since.

2. It should be noted that:

- This is the fourth year that the survey has been completed by all authorities. The numbers of incidents reported in the past four years have been:

1998/1999	1,898
1999/2000	3,083
2000/2001	4,501
2001/2002	5,412

- However, it is not necessarily valid to make comparisons between these annual totals, since the reporting procedures within local authorities are still bedding in. Several local authorities have indicated that they view increases in 2001/02 as largely due to improved reporting procedures, recent training, and greater emphasis placed by authorities and unions on the importance of reporting incidents, rather than representing ‘real’ increases.
- As with all such surveys, there may be an element of under reporting within the overall figures. This factor is expected to diminish with time as the incident reporting procedure becomes more firmly established within each local authority.

- School staff may have different responses to incidents, and despite the definition, what one member of staff may report as a violent incident, another may choose not to report.

- In reporting the summary information for 2001/02, there was no requirement for Local Authorities to record separately those incidents that involved multiple acts of violence by the same perpetrator, or where more than one member of staff was involved. Similarly, incidents perpetrated by more than one person are not recorded separately.
- Where an incident was notified to the police, this does not imply that this incident was recorded as a crime by them.
- A pupil with SEN is any pupil with special educational needs who has a Record of Needs, or any other identified special educational needs (including undergoing assessment for possible recording). Note that this categorisation, for the purposes of this survey, is made largely at the discretion of the school.

3. Each local authority has established its own system for collecting information about violent incidents from its schools, based on guidelines issued by the Scottish Executive. While work is ongoing to increase consistency in reporting, some of these systems have proved to be more sensitive than others in recording the number of incidents that have taken place. Separate breakdowns of results are therefore not available for individual Local Authorities due to the different reporting systems used. Figures from different Local Authorities are not generally comparable.

4. **This is a National Statistics publication.** National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

Enquiries

5. Public enquiries (non-media) about the information contained in this News Release should be addressed to Mal Cooke, Statistician, The Scottish Executive Education Department, 1-A Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

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6. Media enquiries about the information in this News Release should be addressed to Press Education, tel. 0131 244 2087.

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