
ASSAULTS OF SCHOOL PREMISES

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New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

1994

Published by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
Attorney General's Department
Level 8
St James Centre
111 Elizabeth Street
Sydney

ISBN 0 7310 3442 2

PREFACE

There has been a great deal of public debate over the last three years about the issue of violence in New South Wales schools. By and large, the debate has not been informed by a sober assessment of the available empirical evidence on the problem. Researchers must take some of the blame for this. Despite the wealth of Australian research interest in educational issues only very few studies have been conducted on the problem of school violence. Nature and the media abhor a vacuum. So it is no surprise to see public perceptions of the apparent scale and character of the problem of school violence shaped by endless television replays of dramatic but utterly atypical incidents fortuitously recorded on film.

The intensity of public and media interest in the problem of school violence created a research dilemma for the Bureau. Government policy on school violence in the United States of America has been informed by two very large-scale representative sample surveys. Only very limited survey work of this kind has been carried out in Australia, although it is undoubtedly the most reliable means of obtaining information on the character and prevalence of school violence. Large-scale sample surveys, however, are expensive and time-consuming to conduct. The alternative is to construct a picture of school assault from reports of assault to police (or school authorities). This method, while less satisfactory for some purposes than the sample survey, is a much faster system of identifying the main dimensions of the problem.

The present report details the result of a study of police reports of assault on school premises in NSW over the years 1990 to 1992 (inclusive). The results provide valuable insight into the character of such assaults, the time of day and location in which they occur, and the circumstances surrounding them. Interpreted in the light of overseas evidence on the incidence of non-reporting of school violence, they also give some insight into the prevalence of assault in schools in NSW. All of this information should be of value in framing violence prevention strategies. Some of it, hopefully, will act as an antidote to misleading television imagery surrounding the problem of school violence.

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June 1994

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of people contributed to the preparation of the final report. The NSW Police Service provided access to their microfilm records from which the relevant Crime Information Report forms (or P40 Forms) were retrieved for subsequent analysis. Ms Jeannette Murry and Ms Anna Craney were responsible for coding the information from each P40 Form onto a schedule.

Constructive and valuable feedback was provided by Ms Bronwyn Lind and Dr Don Weatherburn. Mr Les Kery was responsible for desktop publishing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

A total of 877 recorded incidents of aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault occurred on school premises (of government, non-government and special schools) in NSW between 1990 and 1992. For 643 of these incidents the P40 forms documented the occupation of both the victim and the offender. In 406 incidents both the victim and the offender were school students. In 117 incidents teachers and school officials were involved as either victims or offenders. A further 95 incidents involved students as either victims or offenders but the incidents were not between students and did not involve teachers or school officials. In the remaining 25 incidents where occupations were documented, an assortment of victim/offender combinations were involved, including unemployed individuals, individuals with occupations such as labourer, architect, builder, etc.

GENERAL TRENDS

- The number of recorded incidents increased by 36.8 per cent between 1990 and 1992. The average annual increase was about 17 per cent. Differences over the three years in the relative frequency of aggravated and non-aggravated assaults recorded by the police are not statistically significant (Table 1).
- Each year approximately 80 per cent of recorded incidents were classified as non-aggravated assault (Table 1).
- The per capita rate of recorded aggravated assault offences in the community between 1990 and 1992 was, on average, 16 times higher than the per capita rate of aggravated assault incidents recorded as occurring on school premises. For non-aggravated assault, the community rate was, on average, 20 times higher than the recorded school rate (Table 2).
- School students accounted for three-quarters of each year's victims of assault (Table 3).
- On average, school students accounted for 70 per cent of each year's offenders (Table 4).

ASSAULTS BETWEEN STUDENTS

- Over the three years, 406 recorded incidents of assault occurred between school students.
- Comparing government and non-government secondary and primary schools, the highest rate of recorded incidents of assault between students occurred in government secondary schools and the lowest rate occurred in non-government primary schools (Table 5). Differences between government and non-government schools in the recorded rate of assault, however, may simply reflect differences in the willingness to report assaults to the police.
- The vast majority of recorded incidents in each school type (government and non-government) and grade level (primary and secondary) resulted in no injury at all or involved abrasions, bruises or minor cuts (Table 6).
- The rate of recorded incidents of assault between school students increased over the three years for government schools (both primary and secondary), but the increase was not uniform across different school regions. One region actually showed a decrease (Table 7).

- 97.5 per cent of all recorded incidents occurred on school days (Table 8).
- 91.9 per cent of all recorded incidents which occurred on school days also occurred in core school hours (that is, between 8 am and 4 pm), with the largest single category of incidents occurring during lunchtime (that is, between 1pm and 2pm) (Table 8).
- The school playground was the location of 63.1 per cent of all recorded incidents which occurred during core school hours and the location of 66.7 per cent of all incidents which occurred at other times on school days (Table 9).
- 85.5 per cent of all recorded incidents involved one victim and one offender (Table 10).
- Most victims and offenders were of similar age, the most common age being 14 or 15 years (Table 11).
- 89.8 per cent of all recorded incidents involved a victim and offender of the same gender (Table 12).
- A weapon of some type was involved in 12.3 per cent of all recorded incidents but in only one case was the weapon a gun (a replica pistol) (Tables 13 and 14).
- Most recorded incidents resulted from unexplained physical assaults (40.3%), arguments (26.3%) and/or retaliations (21.2%) (Table 15).
- Police action against the offender differed according to the type of assault: 23.3 per cent of all incidents of non-aggravated assault resulted in an arrest/charge whereas 48.5 per cent of all incidents of aggravated assault resulted in an arrest/charge (Table 16).

ASSAULTS INVOLVING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS

- Over the three years, teachers and/or school officials were involved in 117 recorded incidents. In the majority of incidents, students were the offenders or were not involved at all (Table 17). There was no change in the pattern of teacher/school official involvement in recorded incidents over the three year period.
- 56.5 per cent of all recorded incidents involving teachers and/or school officials resulted in no injury or negligible injury to the victim (Table 18).
- 49.1 per cent of all recorded incidents involving teachers and/or school officials resulted from disciplinary issues (Table 19).
- 49.5 per cent of all recorded incidents resulted in the offender being arrested/charged (Table 20).

INTRODUCTION

For several years, the issue of violence in schools has been receiving a great deal of attention and generating controversy, both in Australia and overseas. Such attention has come from numerous quarters, including members of parliament, educators, school administrators, parents, lobby groups, the media and the general community.

There are two government inquiries in Australia (one in NSW and one at the Commonwealth level) examining the nature of violence. One is the Inquiry into Violence in Schools conducted by the Federal House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training (1994). This inquiry addressed various issues, including early intervention strategies, the effects of the media, positive parenting programs, alternative education programs for children, and the development of a national school violence data collection system. The other inquiry, Youth Violence, being conducted by the Legislative Council, NSW Parliament Standing Committee into Social Issues, addresses the issue of violence in schools within the wider context of youth violence.

The Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training is also funding the Gender and Violence Project which aims to develop ... quality teaching and learning materials designed to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and students of all ages in relation to the issue of gender and violence (Ollis and Tomaszewski, 1993, p.2).

Overseas, different interest groups have discussed the issue from various perspectives. The result has been a plethora of articles and reports, some of which express contradictory opinions. For example, while Bayh (1977, p.7) argues that acts of violence and vandalism are ... occurring with more frequency and intensity than in the past, others such as Newman (1980, p.7) argue that the issue is not something special to this turbulent age ... violence and resultant educational chaos have been recurrent themes in schools for centuries.

1.1 OVERSEAS RESEARCH

Most of the research which has been conducted into school violence has been conducted overseas, most notably in the United States of America. The results obtained in surveys and reports to the United States Congress and Senate have had a substantial impact on discussion of school violence in that country. The most frequently quoted of these reports and surveys have been:

- i) Challenge for the Third Century: Education in a Safe Environment - Final Report on the Nature and Prevention of School Violence and Vandalism: Report of the Sub-Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency (Bayh, 1977).

This report was the product of an investigation conducted between 1971 and 1977 into the extent and nature of school violence and vandalism. The investigation included hearings, ... testimony from over 500 witnesses on a variety of topics, some of which involved ... the most promising programs for reducing the alarming rate of juvenile delinquency (ibid., p.1).

It also included a nationwide mail survey of the superintendents of 757 public school systems. The aim was to determine the extent and scope of violence, vandalism and drop-outs in the systems surveyed for the school years 1970-71, 1971-72, and 1972-73 (Bayh, 1975, p.2).

The report of the Sub-Committee suggested a number of strategies aimed at addressing the prevention and deterrence of school crime.

- ii) Violent Schools - Safe Schools: The Safe School Study Report to the Congress prepared by the National Institute of Education (NIE), United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare (1978).

Following the introduction of legislation (Safe Schools Study Act) into the United States House of Representatives and similar legislation in the Senate in 1974, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare was mandated to conduct a study to determine the incidence and seriousness of school crime; the number and location of schools affected; the costs; the means of prevention in use, and the effectiveness of those means (National Institute of Education, 1978, p.1). The overall objective was to obtain information which could guide the development of policies and program initiatives.

The study was conducted in three phases and included:

- A mail survey of a nationally representative sample of 5,578 principals of public elementary and secondary schools who were asked about the incidence of illegal and disruptive activities for selected one month periods (ibid., p.1). Completed forms were returned by 72 per cent (or 4,014) of these principals. Participants included schools in large cities (populations greater than 500,000); smaller cities (populations between 50,000 and 500,000); suburban areas and small towns/rural areas.
- A survey of a nationally representative sample of 851 public junior and senior high schools. The response rate was 75 per cent: 642 schools participated. Questionnaires were administered on site to 623 principals, 23,895 teachers and 31,373 students; 6,283 students who completed the questionnaire were also interviewed in detail about their reported incidents of victimisation.
- Qualitative studies of ten schools which had had serious problems with crime and violence in the past and had changed dramatically for the better in a short period of time (ibid., p.1).

- iii) School Crime: A National Crime Victimization Survey Report conducted by Bastian and Taylor (1991).

This study represented a supplement to the ongoing data collection program of the National Crime Victimization Survey (United States Department of Justice) and was conducted between January and June 1989. The respondents, 10,449 youths between the ages of 12 and 19 years who had attended either primary or secondary school during the preceding six months, were interviewed regarding personal crimes of violence and theft that were committed inside a school building, on school grounds or on a school bus in the six month period preceding the interview.

The first of these reports (Bayh, 1977) has a number of serious limitations. It does not represent an empirical research study based on data which have been objectively and systematically collected from a representative sample of the population. Rather it depends upon two key sources of information:

- The perceptions and experiences of various stakeholders in the educational community who offered their opinions to the Sub-Committee. Such stakeholders included school security directors, professional teaching associations, teachers, principals and students.

- The responses of the superintendents of public school districts who were sent a questionnaire. Of the 757 superintendents who were sent a questionnaire, only 296 (or 39%) returned a completed form; a further 220 returned incomplete questionnaires and the others did not respond.

On the basis of the superintendents responses, Bayh (1975, p.4) concluded that:

violence in our schools .. continues to escalate to even more serious levels. The preliminary Subcommittee survey found that in the three years between 1970 and 1973:

- A. Homicides increased by 18.5 percent;
- B. Rapes and attempted rapes increased by 40.1 percent;
- C. Robberies increased by 36.7 percent;
- D. Assaults on students increased by 85.3 percent;
- E. Assaults on teachers increased by 77.4 percent; ..

An even more ominous statistic for the future course of school safety is the fact that by the end of the 1973 school year the number of weapons confiscated by school authorities had risen by 54.4 percent in three years. These weapons include knives, clubs, pistols and even sawn-off shotguns...

Whether Bayh's conclusions are warranted on the evidence available to him is open to question. The report fails to acknowledge that the stakeholders who participated in the investigation may not have been representative of either their colleagues or other groups within the community and may not have been correct in their judgement of the magnitude and character of the problem of school violence. The survey of the school district superintendents suffers from similar weaknesses.

The empirical studies conducted by the National Institute of Education (1978) and Bastian and Taylor (1991), on the other hand, provide some useful information regarding the extent of self-reported personal violence in schools in the United States of America. Both studies asked similar questions of their respondents, namely:

Did anyone physically attack and hurt you (not including rapes) at school in [specific month]

- a. How many times were you attacked and hurt so badly that you saw a doctor?
- b. How many times were you attacked and hurt but not so badly that you saw a doctor?

(NIE, volume 2, D-68-70, D-90).

- 28 a. ..did anyone physically attack you at school during the last six months?
- b. How many times did this happen?
- c. Did you go to a doctor as a result of (this/any of these) attacks?
- d. How many times did you receive injuries in any of these attacks at school that led to a visit to the doctor?

(Bastian and Taylor, 1991, pp. 17-18).

In the NIE study, an average of 1.3 per cent of secondary school students (that is, students between 12 and 19 years of age) reported that they were attacked at school in a one month period. Bastian and Taylor, on the other hand, found that about 2 per cent of their sample of students aged between 12 and 19 years had been assaulted in the previous six months. These two estimates of risk of assault would appear to be quite different unless the Bastian and Taylor study included a group of students who were repeatedly victimised and therefore had the same risk regardless of whether the period examined was one month or six months.

The NIE study results indicated significant variation in risk according to school student gender, the grade level of the student and whether the school was located in an urban or a rural area. Male students were twice as likely to be the victims of an attack than female students. About 2 per cent of junior high school students and 1 per cent of senior high school students reported being attacked. Students attending schools in urban areas were also significantly more at risk of assault than students attending schools in rural areas.

In addition to examining the extent of reported physical attacks in schools, the NIE study investigated the nature and circumstances surrounding these attacks. It found that, averaged across the country:

- Forty-two per cent of physical attacks on students involved some injury: 38 per cent of injuries were minor; only 4 per cent resulted in injuries requiring medical attention. However, there was a discrepancy between students reports and principals reports regarding both the proportion of incidents involving injury and the seriousness of injuries. Principals reported that 53 per cent of attacks on students involved injury and 12 per cent required medical treatment.
- Approximately 0.5 per cent of the teachers in public secondary schools reported that they were attacked in a typical month at school with male and female teachers having the same risk. Reports varied however according to the grade level and the geographical location of the school, with higher percentages of attacks being reported in junior high schools than senior high schools. Almost 2 per cent of all secondary school teachers in large cities reported having been attacked, compared with 0.7 per cent of teachers in small cities, 0.4 per cent of teachers in suburban areas and 0.2 per cent of teachers in rural areas.
- Approximately 19 per cent of the attacks on teachers were reported to have required medical treatment.
- Approximately one out of six personal attacks were reported to police and about one-third of attacks requiring medical treatment were reported to police.
- An average of 80 per cent of all personal violence at school was reported as occurring during regular school hours. This percentage varied according to location of the school and grade level, ranging from 65 per cent in rural elementary schools to 93 per cent in large city senior high schools. Assault-related incidents were less frequent on Mondays and Fridays and more frequent during mid-week.
- Between 4 and 8 per cent of students reported staying at home at some time during the month surveyed because they feared that someone might hurt ... or bother [them] at school (NIE, volume 2, D-90). This percentage varied according to grade level and geographical location of the school. For junior high schools, 4 per cent of students attending schools in rural areas reported staying home during the month surveyed because of fear of being hurt or bothered at school. This percentage increased to 5 per cent for suburban areas and small cities, and to 8 per cent for large cities. For senior high schools, 4 per cent of students attending schools in rural areas, suburban areas and small cities reported staying home because of fear; this percentage increased to 8 per cent in large cities.
- The most common locations reported to have been the locus of violence were stairways and hallways. These locations accounted for 43 per cent of all violent acts reported to have occurred. Restrooms accounted for 16 per cent of all violent acts; classrooms accounted for 13 per cent of violent acts; and cafeterias accounted for 9 per cent of all violent acts reported. (Bastian and Taylor, 1991, found that students avoided certain locations in schools; restrooms were reportedly avoided by 2.7 per cent of students, hallways by 2.1 per cent of students, and cafeterias by 1.6 per cent of students.)
- Forty per cent of all violent incidents occurring in elementary schools occurred in outdoor areas (either the playground or sports field). Thirty-six per cent of assaults in elementary schools occurred in classrooms.

- In 60 per cent of attacks on students, and in 80 per cent of attacks on teachers, only one offender was reportedly involved, rather than a gang of offenders.
- In 75 per cent of attacks on students, the offender was known to the victim by name.
- A current student was reported to have been the offender in 92 per cent of attacks on students and in 88 per cent of attacks on teachers.
- In 76 per cent of attacks on students, the victims and the offenders were of the same age. In a further 16 per cent of attacks, the offenders were older than their student victims.
- The risk of being a victim of attack in secondary schools declined steadily as the grade level increased.
- Fifty-eight per cent of the attacks reported by students involved victims and offenders of the same race.
- Eighty-eight per cent of attacks reported by students involved victims and offenders of the same gender: in 66 per cent of attacks males victimised males; in 22 per cent of attacks females victimised females. In a further 9 per cent of attacks the offender was male and the victim female.
- Students and teachers who were attacked had increased chances of being victims again.

1.2 AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

Australian research on school violence, though limited, does exist. Generally, Australian researchers have been interested in the wider question of bullying in schools.

Bullying, as defined by researchers such as Rigby and Slee (1991, p.618), consists of systematic verbal or physical harassment of one child by another or others. Bullying, therefore, need not involve either the threat of, or any actual, physical assault.

While these findings may not generalise to students in all Australian States and Territories, in their study of children in three primary co-educational schools (two government and one Catholic) and one government high school in lower to middle class suburbs of Adelaide, Rigby and Slee (1991) found that:

- based on self-reports from 296 boys, 16.8 per cent reported that they were bullied pretty often very often
- based on self-reports from 340 girls, 11.4 per cent reported that they were bullied pretty often very often.

Various studies have dealt with issues surrounding the personality of bullies and the characteristics of those they harass. It is known, for example, that children tend ... not to despise children who were bullied for being weak; they [do] not seek to justify or admire bullying; and they favour ... giving support to victims (Rigby & Slee, 1991, p.623). However, sympathy for the victim was found to decrease with increased age; Rigby and Slee (1991) found this to be true for both boys and girls in their sample.

Slee and Rigby also claim that bullies and victims have different personality types (Slee & Rigby, 1993b) and differing perceptions regarding their interpersonal relationships (Slee & Rigby, 1993a). They maintain that the personality make-up of the bully reflects a sensation seeking, insensitive and uncaring individual who holds a positive attitude toward violence and violent means ... the tendency to be victimized is associated with low levels of self-esteem (Slee & Rigby, 1993b, p.372). Children who are victimized ... perceive themselves to have fewer friends, to be unpopular with peers, to be unhappy and feel unsafe at school (Slee & Rigby, 1993a, p.280).

1.3 CURRENT STUDY

The research by Slee and Rigby has greatly increased our understanding of school bullying. School bullying, however, cannot safely be assumed to overlap in all, or even most of its aspects, with the problem of criminal violence on school premises. To date, a paucity of information exists in Australia which might shed light on the issues examined in American studies such as the one conducted by the National Institute of Education (1978). No published Australian data can provide answers to questions such as:

- Does the incidence of assault vary according to the type and grade level of the school?
- What proportion of assaults occur on school premises during school hours?
- Do assaults occur in specific locations of the school?
- Do assaults on school premises typically involve only one victim and one offender?
- What is the frequency with which weapons are involved in assaults on school premises?
- What is the pattern of injury amongst victims of assault on school premises?
- What are the circumstances leading to assaults on school premises?

Ideally, these questions would be answered by conducting a large-scale representative sample survey of the kind conducted by the National Institute of Education in the United States of America. Such a study, unfortunately, would have been very expensive and time-consuming to conduct. In the interests of making a more timely contribution to public debate about school violence policy it was decided to conduct an analysis of assaults recorded by the NSW Police Service as having occurred on school premises.

The aims of the current study, then, were to:

- (i) identify the characteristics of recorded incidents of assault on school premises in NSW, specifically addressing questions such as those listed above; and
- (ii) assess whether there has been any change in the pattern of assaults on school premises in the past three years.

2. METHOD

The source of information for this study was the NSW Police Service's Crime Information Report (or the P40 Form) which is completed by the police officer to whom the incident is reported.

With the co-operation of the NSW Police Service, copies of the P40 Forms were obtained for all assaults recorded as occurring on school premises (of government, non-government and special schools) in each of the years, 1990, 1991 and 1992. The study was restricted to an examination of non-sexual assault. Sexual assault offences were not included in the study because their recorded incidence on school premises is relatively rare.

Obtaining copies of the incident report forms was a two-stage process. First, a search was made of the police database of computerised records. This search produced a list of the incident report numbers for all recorded assault offences on school premises. This list of incident report numbers was used to retrieve copies of the original incident report forms from police microfilm records. The incident report forms were used as the main source of data for the study as they include more information than the computerised records and, in addition, include a narrative description of each incident.

It should be noted that, as the study was restricted to assaults reported to the police, the data obtained are likely to underestimate the actual incidence of assaults on school premises.

Data from each of the P40 Forms were coded on a schedule, a copy of which is provided in the Appendix. The information regarding the incident, victim and offender recorded on the schedule included:

- the type and grade level of school, for example, government primary school, government secondary school, non-government primary school, non-government secondary school, special school;
- the school's geographical location;
- who reported the incident to the police;
- the number of offenders and victims involved in the incident;
- whether the incident was an aggravated assault or a non-aggravated assault;
- the time and day of the incident's occurrence;
- where the incident occurred;
- the circumstances surrounding the incident;
- the victim's age, gender, occupation;
- the nature and location of the victim's most serious injury;
- whether the victim required medical attention;
- the relationship between the victim and the offender;
- the offender's age, gender and occupation;
- the weapon used during the incident;
- the action taken by the police, for example, a warning, caution, arrest, etc.

Some recorded incidents of assault involved more than one victim, more than one offender, or both. The information recorded on the schedule regarding each incident of assault dealt only with the characteristics of the principal victim and the principal offender documented by police officers on the P40 Forms.

Police classify assault as either aggravated assault or non-aggravated assault.

The category aggravated assault refers to an assault causing or inflicting grievous bodily harm or occasioning actual bodily harm. It also includes malicious wounding and shooting with intent to cause or inflict grievous bodily harm, or to prevent lawful apprehension or investigation. Some examples of the incidents which were classified as aggravated assault by the police include:

- an incident in which the offender approached his victim and without provocation hit him in the side of his face, resulting in a broken jaw and a cut lip;
- an incident in which the offender placed a heated metal ruler against the cheek of his victim while both the victim and the offender were attending a metal work class; the incident left a burn scar on the victim.

The category non-aggravated assault includes the following offences: common assault; assault to commit felony; assault police; assault to prevent lawful apprehension; assault to prevent an investigation. Some examples of incidents classified as non-aggravated assault by the police include:

- an incident in which the victim was kicked in the back while sitting in a school corridor;
- an incident in which the offender pulled her victim to the floor by her hair and then struck her in the face with her fist.

3. RESULTS

The results are presented in three sections. Section 3.1 presents general trends over the three years, 1990 to 1992, in the recorded incidents of assault which occurred on school premises in NSW. Section 3.2 presents the nature and circumstances surrounding the recorded incidents of assault where both the victim and the offender were school students. Section 3.3 presents the nature and circumstances surrounding the recorded incidents of assault involving school teachers and school officials as either victims or offenders.

3.1 GENERAL TRENDS

3.1.1 Trend in type of assault

A total of 877 incidents of aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault were recorded and classified by police as having occurred on school premises in NSW over the three year period under investigation, 1990 to 1992. The number of recorded incidents increased from 247 in 1990 to 288 in 1991 and 338 in 1992. This represents an increase of 36.8 per cent over the three years, or an average annual increase of about 17 per cent.

Table 1 presents the trend in the type of assault recorded by police on school premises.

Table 1: Trend in type of assault for recorded assault incidents on school premises, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type of assault</i>	1990		1991		1992	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Aggravated	51	20.6	55	19.1	73	21.6
Non-aggravated	196	79.4	233	80.9	265	78.4
Total	247	100.0	288	100.0	338	100.0

Note: Table 1 excludes four incidents for which *type of assault* was not recorded.

As Table 1 indicates, each year approximately 80 per cent of the recorded assault incidents which occurred on school premises were classified by police officers as non-aggravated assault.

Although there was a general increase over the years in the recorded number of incidents of each type of assault, there was no change in the relative frequency of the two types of assault ($\chi^2 = 0.6$, $df = 2$, $p > 0.05$).

3.1.2 Trend in rates of recorded incidents

Table 2 indicates the trend in the rate per head of school population of aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault occurring on school premises and compares this with the per capita assault rate in the general population.

Table 2: Trend in type of recorded assaults in schools and in the community, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type of assault</i>	<i>Number of recorded assault incidents in schools per 100,000 students enrolled (a)</i>			<i>Number of recorded assault offences in NSW per 100,000 population (b)</i>		
	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>
Aggravated	4.9	5.3	7.0	96.3	90.7	85.8
Non-aggravated	19.0	22.5	25.2	414.7	435.2	444.0

(a) The school student population estimate is drawn from an annual census, conducted in July, of both government and non-government schools (*Schools Australia, 1992*, ABS Catalogue No. 4221.0). Census figures include students attending 'special' schools.

(b) The general population assault rate is drawn from *New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 1992* (NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 1993, p.54).

As Table 2 indicates, the number of recorded incidents of assaults (both aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault) in schools per 100,000 enrolled students has increased progressively between 1990 and 1992. In the general community the rate of aggravated assault has fallen over the same period while that for non-aggravated assault has risen.

It is also clear from Table 2 that the per capita rate of assault incidents, recorded by police as having occurred on school premises, is much lower than the per capita rate of assault recorded for the NSW community. This is the case for both aggravated and non-aggravated assault. The rate of recorded incidents of aggravated assault in the community between 1990 and 1992 was, on average, 16 times higher than the rate of assault occurring on school premises. For non-aggravated assault, the community rate was, on average, 20 times higher than the school rate.

3.1.3 Trend in victim type

In the three year period between 1990 and 1992, for 234 recorded incidents of assault on school premises the occupation of either the victim or the offender was not documented on the P40 Forms. These incidents were, therefore, excluded from the examination of victim type. Of all recorded incidents of assault for which information regarding the occupation of both the victim and the offender was documented (that is, 643), 63.1 per cent were between school students. Another 18.2 per cent involved teachers and/or school officials either as victims or offenders. The remaining 18.7 per cent of recorded incidents of assault were not between school students nor were teachers or school officials involved. Rather these remaining incidents involved an assortment of victim/offender combinations:

- in 10.3 per cent of all recorded incidents a student was the victim of an unemployed individual;

- in 3.3 per cent of all recorded incidents a student was the victim of an individual with an occupation such as labourer, architect, builder, etc.;
- in 0.5 per cent of all recorded incidents a police officer was the victim of a student;
- in 0.8 per cent of all recorded incidents an unemployed individual or an individual with an occupation such as labourer, architect or builder was the victim of a student;
- in 3.9 per cent of all recorded incidents neither the victim nor the offender was a student or a teacher/school official.

Clearly, at least some of the assaults recorded as occurring on school premises may not be directly associated with either the school in which the incident occurred, its students or its teachers or school officials.

Table 3 indicates the trend in the type of victim involved in the incidents of assault which were recorded by police as having occurred on school premises for each year between 1990 and 1992.

Table 3: Trend in type of victim in recorded assault incidents on school premises, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type of victim</i>	1990		1991		1992	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
School student	167	74.6	187	73.6	236	76.6
Teacher/school official	39	17.4	41	16.1	47	15.3
Other	18	8.0	26	10.2	25	8.1
Total	224	100.0	254	100.0	308	100.0

Note: Table 3 excludes 91 incidents for which the occupation of the *victim* was not recorded.

Table 3 indicates that the relative proportions of students, teachers/school officials and other victims remained consistent for each year. In fact, there is no statistically significant difference between the three years in the relative frequency of different victim types ($X^2 = 1.5$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$). Each year, school students (both primary and secondary school students) accounted for the largest single category of victims, comprising approximately 75 per cent of recorded victims. School teachers and school officials together comprised between 15 per cent (1992) and 17 per cent (1990) of the victims.

The remaining victims in the other category included police officers, individuals who were classified by police officers as unemployed, and individuals with a variety of occupations, including child care workers, labourers, persons with home duties, cleaners, etc.

3.1.4 Trend in offender type

The trend in the type of offender involved in the recorded incidents of assault is presented in Table 4. There is no statistically significant difference across the three years in the relative frequency of different types of offender ($X^2 = 7.1$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 4: Trend in type of offender in recorded assault incidents on school premises, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type of offender</i>	1990		1991		1992	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
School student	118	63.1	169	71.9	211	74.0
Teacher/school official	7	3.7	8	3.4	7	2.5
Other	62	33.2	58	24.7	67	23.5
Total	187	100.0	235	100.0	285	100.0

Note: Table 4 excludes 170 incidents for which the occupation of the *offender* was not recorded.

As with victims, school students (both primary and secondary school students) accounted for the largest single category of offenders involved in the incidents of assault which were recorded by police on school premises for each year between 1990 and 1992.

In contrast to the situation with victims, however, teachers and school officials did not comprise the second largest category of offenders. In fact, the proportion of offenders who were teachers and school officials is relatively small. The second largest category of offenders was other, which consisted of a combination of individuals classified as unemployed or as a labourer, architect, builder, carpenter, driver, security officer, sales assistant, etc. This is an important issue and will be discussed in Section 4.3.

3.2 ASSAULTS BETWEEN STUDENTS

A total of 406 incidents of assault were recorded as having occurred between school students on school premises over the three year period under investigation. These incidents accounted for 46 per cent of the total sample of recorded assaults on school premises. The nature and circumstances surrounding these assaults between students are examined below.

3.2.1 Rates of assault by type and grade level of school

Table 5 shows the rate of recorded assaults between students by the type (government and non-government) and grade level (primary and secondary) of school.

As Table 5 indicates, each year, government secondary schools had the highest rates of recorded assaults between students, and non-government primary schools had the lowest recorded rates. The relative frequencies of assaults in schools of different types and grade level remained consistent across the three years ($\chi^2 = 0.6$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$; for the chi-square test, non-government primary and non-government secondary schools were combined into one category).

Table 5 shows an increase in the rate of recorded assaults in government schools over the three years. This is true for both primary and secondary schools. For secondary schools, the recorded rate of assault per 100,000 students increased from 26.4 in 1990 to 33.9 in 1991 and 41.8 in 1992. For primary schools, while the recorded rate of assault per 100,000 students was much lower than secondary schools, it also rose from 2.5 in 1990 to 3.2 in 1991 and 4.3 in 1992.

Table 5: Trend in numbers and rates of recorded incidents of assault between students, by type and grade level of school, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type and grade level of school</i>	1990		1991		1992	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 students)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 students)</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Rate (per 100,000 students)</i>
Government secondary	81	26.4	104	33.9	130	41.8
Government primary	11	2.5	14	3.2	19	4.3
Non-government secondary	7	5.1	6	4.4	9	6.5
Non-government primary	1	0.7	1	0.7	2	1.3

Note: Table 5 excludes 21 incidents for which information regarding *school type and grade level* was not recorded.

In non-government secondary schools, the recorded rate of assaults per 100,000 students was 5.1 in 1990, 4.4 in 1991 and 6.5 in 1992.

3.2.2 Degree of injury by type and grade level of school

Table 6 shows the degree of injury suffered by student victims when assaulted by student offenders according to the type and grade level of school in which the incident occurred.

Table 6: Degree of injury in recorded assaults between students, by type and grade level of school, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Degree of injury</i>	Government secondary		Government primary		Non-government secondary		Non-government primary	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Serious	78	28.9	8	21.6	9	40.9	0	0.0
Abrasions, bruises, minor cuts	146	54.1	17	45.9	11	50.0	3	75.0
None, negligible	46	17.0	12	32.4	2	9.1	1	25.0
Total	270	100.0	37	100.0	22	100.0	4	100.0

Note: Table 6 excludes 73 incidents for which information regarding *injury* was not recorded.

As Table 6 demonstrates, for each type and grade level of school in which the incident occurred, the majority of recorded incidents in which a student assaulted another student resulted in either negligible or no injury, or abrasions, bruises or minor cuts to the victim. There is no statistically significant difference between the level of injury reportedly sustained by the victim and the type and grade level of school ($X^2 = 9.1$, $df = 6$, $p > 0.05$).

While no serious injuries (that is, broken bones, concussion or major wounds) were documented as having been suffered by victims of assaults on the premises of non-government primary schools, serious injuries were recorded as having been suffered by

students in each of the other school types and grade levels. Approximately 41 per cent of the incidents recorded for non-government secondary schools resulted in serious injury, while approximately 22 per cent of the incidents recorded in government primary schools and about 29 per cent of the incidents recorded in government secondary schools resulted in serious injury.

3.2.3 Rates of assault by school region

Table 7 presents the rate of recorded incidents of assault between students by region. The regions are those employed by the NSW Department of School Education (DSE). There are ten DSE regions in NSW: four metropolitan regions (Metropolitan East, Metropolitan North, Metropolitan South West and Metropolitan West) and six non-metropolitan regions (Hunter, North Coast, North West, Riverina, South Coast and Western).

The figures in Table 7 refer only to primary and secondary government schools because direct comparisons cannot be made between regions as defined by the NSW Department of School Education and those defined for non-government schools.

Table 7: Trend in rates of assault between government school students, by school region, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>School region</i>	<i>Number of recorded incidents of assault between students per 100,00 students enrolled (a)</i>		
	<i>1990</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1992</i>
Hunter	6.3	12.6	21.0
Metropolitan East	6.0	16.1	14.9
Metropolitan North	9.9	19.8	19.4
Metropolitan South West	15.1	16.9	24.5
Metropolitan West	9.4	15.4	22.1
North Coast	12.3	15.3	16.6
North West	9.2	18.3	12.2
Riverina	13.2	13.0	28.6
South Coast	24.8	17.3	9.9
Western	28.8	19.6	38.8

(a) The school student population is based on census figures (*Schools Australia, 1992*, ABS Catalogue No. 4221.0) for primary and secondary schools; students attending 'special' schools have not been included.

In every DSE region, except the South Coast, the rate of assault in 1992 was higher than in 1990. The largest increase occurred in the Hunter region. Its 1992 rate was more than three times higher than that of 1990. In the South Coast region, however, the recorded rate of assault decreased substantially: the 1992 rate of recorded assaults between students in this DSE region was 2.5 times lower than its rate of 1990. When DSE regions were ranked according to their recorded rate of assault the correlation between the rankings for 1990 and 1992 was not statistically significant (Kendall's $\tau = 0.14$, $n = 10$, $p > 0.05$). There would appear, therefore, to be no general tendency for schools with high rates of recorded assault in 1990 to have a high rate in 1992.

3.2.4 Time of day incident occurred

Table 8 shows the relative frequency of recorded incidents of assault between school students according to the time of day at which the assault incident occurred. The data have been analysed according to whether the incidents occurred on school days (that is, Monday to Friday during school terms) or non-school days (that is, Saturday, Sunday, public holidays, and school vacations as defined for NSW government schools). While there may be some slight variation from school to school regarding the times at which the school day officially begins and ends, in this study, core school hours are defined as between 8 am and 4 pm.

Table 8: Relative frequency of recorded incidents of assault between students, by time of day for school days and non-school days, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Time of day</i>	<i>School days</i>		<i>Non-school days</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
8.00am - 8.59am	30	8.4	0	0.0
9.00am - 9.59am	17	4.7	0	0.0
10.00am - 10.59	22	6.1	0	0.0
11.00am - 11.59am	52	14.5	1	11.1
noon - 12.59pm	41	11.5	1	11.1
1.00pm - 1.59pm	73	20.4	0	0.0
2.00pm - 2.59pm	49	13.7	1	11.1
3.00pm - 3.59	45	12.6	2	22.2
4.00pm - 7.59am	29	8.1	4	44.4
Total	358	100.0	9	100.0

Note: Table 8 excludes 39 incidents for which information regarding *time of incident* was not recorded.

Table 8 indicates that 97.5 per cent of all recorded incidents between students occurred on school days. It also shows that the core school hours between 8 am and 4 pm accounted for 91.9 per cent of incidents which occurred on school days. The single time period between 1 pm and 1.59 pm, or lunchtime, alone accounted for 20.4 per cent of all incidents recorded as occurring on school days. The other notable periods during which incidents of assault were recorded as having occurred between school students on school days were:

- between 11 am and 11.59 am this period accounted for 14.5 per cent of all recorded incidents;
- between 2 pm and 2.59 pm this period accounted for 13.7 per cent of all recorded incidents;
- between 3 pm and 3.59 pm this period accounted for 12.6 per cent of all recorded incidents.

During core school hours, the fewest recorded assaults between students occurred between 9 am and 9.59 am, during which period only 4.7 per cent of all recorded incidents of assault occurred.

3.2.5 Location of incident

Table 9 shows the location of the recorded incidents of assault between students for the three years from 1990 to 1992. The data have been analysed according to whether the recorded incidents occurred on school days and during core school hours or on school days but outside core school hours.

Table 9: Relative frequency of recorded incidents of assault between students, by location and whether inside or outside core school hours, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Location of assault</i>	<i>School days 8.00 am - 4.00 pm</i>		<i>School days other times</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Playground	169	63.1	14	66.7
Classroom	41	15.3	1	4.8
School corridor	26	9.7	0	0.0
Toilet block	9	3.4	1	4.8
Principal's office	2	0.7	0	0.0
Gymnasium	1	0.4	1	4.8
Other school building	10	3.7	2	9.5
Street	10	3.7	2	9.5
Total	268	100.0	21	100.0

Note: Table 8 excludes 39 incidents for which information regarding *time of incident* was not recorded.

Table 9 suggests that the majority of assaults between students on school days occurred in the playground regardless of whether the recorded incidents occurred during core school hours or at other times.

The playground accounted for 63.1 per cent of all recorded incidents of assault which occurred during core school hours and 66.7 per cent of incidents which occurred outside these hours. During core school hours, the other notable locations where assaults between students occurred were the classroom and the school corridor, respectively accounting for 15.3 per cent and 9.7 per cent of all recorded incidents which occurred between 8 am and 4 pm on school days.

3.2.6 Type of incident

Table 10 shows the number of victims and offenders involved in the recorded incidents of assault between students.

Table 10 indicates that 85.5 per cent of recorded incidents of assault between students involved one victim and one offender. A further 9.9 per cent of incidents involved multiple offenders attacking one victim. Therefore, in 95.3 per cent of recorded incidents of assault between students a single student victim was involved. Only 1.7 per cent of all incidents involved more than one offender attacking more than one victim.

Table 10: Relative frequency of single victim/offender, multiple victim/offender incidents of assault between students, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Type of incident</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
One victim - one offender	347	85.5
One victim - multiple offenders	40	9.9
Multiple victims - one offender	12	3.0
Multiple victims - multiple offenders	7	1.7
Total	406	100.0

3.2.7 Characteristics of victim and offender

Inspection of Table 10 reveals that 14.5 per cent of incidents involved either more than one offender, more than one victim, or both. In Tables 11 to 16, the term victim refers to the principal victim about whom details were documented in police officers P40 Forms. Similarly, the term offender refers to the principal offender or suspect/person of interest about whom the P40 Forms documented characteristics and relevant police action.

Table 11 shows the age of the victim in relation to that of the offender in the recorded incidents of assault between students.

The majority of offenders were either 14 years of age (25.2%) or 15 years of age (26.7%). Similarly, the majority of victims were either 14 years old (24.6%) or 15 years old (20.4%).

Table 11 reveals that offenders generally attacked victims close to their own age or one or two years younger or older than themselves. About 90 per cent of all recorded incidents of assault between school students involved students whose ages differed by no more than two years.

Table 11: Age of victim by age of offender in recorded incidents of assaults between students, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Age of victim</i>	<i>Age of offender</i>																			
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>						
<12	18	5.5	6	1.8	1	0.3	4	1.2	2	0.6	1	0.3	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	33	10.0
12	2	0.6	7	2.1	5	1.5	6	1.8	4	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	24	7.3
13	1	0.3	4	1.2	15	4.6	16	4.9	13	4.0	3	0.9	2	0.6	1	0.3	0	0.0	55	16.7
14	0	0.0	0	0.0	11	3.3	42	12.8	19	5.8	7	2.1	2	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	81	24.6
15	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	10	3.3	35	10.6	16	4.9	4	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.3	67	20.4
16	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	0.9	9	2.7	14	4.3	13	4.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	40	12.2
17	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	5	1.5	3	0.9	8	2.4	3	0.9	1	0.3	21	6.4
18	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	2	0.6	3	0.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	1.8
<18	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	1	0.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.6
Total	21	6.4	17	5.2	33	10.0	83	25.2	88	26.7	47	14.3	33	10.0	5	1.5	2	0.6	329	100.0

Note: Table 11 excludes 77 incidents for which information regarding age was not recorded. All percentages in this table are percentages of the total (329).

Table 12 shows the gender of the student victim in relation to the student offender in all recorded incidents of assault between students.

Table 12 shows that the majority of both victims and offenders in recorded incidents of assault between students were male: 69.5 per cent and 77.7 per cent respectively.

The relationship between the gender of the victim and the gender of the offender is statistically significant ($X^2 = 231.1$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$). The majority of assaults between students involved victims and offenders of the same gender; only 10.2 per cent of incidents involved a victim and offender of different gender.

Table 12: Gender of victim by gender of offender in recorded incidents of assault between students, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Gender of offender</i>	<i>Gender of victim</i>					
	<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	276	68.5	37	9.2	313	77.7
Female	4	1.0	86	21.3	90	22.3
Total	280	69.5	123	30.5	403	100.0

Note: Table 12 excludes three incidents for which information regarding *gender* was not recorded. All percentages in this table are percentages of the total (403).

3.2.8 Weapons involved

Table 13 shows the relative frequency of weapon involvement in the recorded incidents of assault between students according to the school region in which the incident occurred.

Table 13 indicates that, in every DSE region, the majority of recorded incidents of assault between school students involved no weapon. Some form of weapon was, however, involved in 12.3 per cent of all recorded incidents which occurred on school premises in NSW. 2 A gun (a replica pistol) was involved in one recorded incident of assault which occurred in Metropolitan East region.³ It should be noted that this represents 0.3 per cent of all recorded incidents of assault between school students.

Despite the apparent marked variation in the percentage of recorded incidents which involved a weapon in each school region, the differences are not statistically significant ($X^2 = 12.4$, $df = 9$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 14 shows the trend in the relative frequency of recorded assaults which involved weapons over the period 1990 to 1992.

Table 13: Relative frequency of weapon involvement in recorded incidents of assault between students by school regions, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>School region</i>	<i>Weapon</i>		<i>No weapon</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Hunter	3	5.0	57	95.0	60	100.0
Metropolitan East	8	21.6	29	78.4	37	100.0
Metropolitan North	4	8.2	45	91.8	49	100.0
Metropolitan South West	11	20.0	44	80.0	55	100.0
Metropolitan West	5	9.1	50	90.9	55	100.0
North Coast	4	16.0	21	84.0	25	100.0
North West	2	13.3	13	86.7	15	100.0
Riverina	3	13.6	19	86.4	22	100.0
South Coast	6	16.7	30	83.3	36	100.0
Western	3	7.0	40	93.0	43	100.0

Note: Table 13 excludes nine incidents for which insufficient information was recorded. The percentages in the table are based on school region totals

Table 14 shows that there was no weapon involved in the majority of incidents which occurred in each of the three years during core school hours on school days. For these assaults between students the proportion involving the use of weapons did not change significantly over the three years examined ($X^2 = 0.9$, $df = 2$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 14: Trend in weapon involvement in recorded incidents of assault between students during school hours, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Weapon involvement</i>	<i>1990</i>		<i>1991</i>		<i>1992</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Weapon	8	10.0	14	12.3	19	14.4
No weapon	72	90.0	100	87.7	113	85.6
Total	80	100.0	114	100.0	132	100.0

Note: Table 14 excludes three incidents for which insufficient information was recorded.

3.2.9 Circumstances of assault

Table 15 shows the trend in the circumstances leading to the recorded incidents of assault between school students. The classification of circumstance is based on the narrative provided by police officers on P40 Forms. Unexplained physical assault describes those incidents of assault for which police officers provided no explanation on the P40 Forms of the circumstances leading to the incident. Brawl is an altercation between five or more offenders and five or more victims.

Table 15: Trend in circumstances of recorded incidents of assault between students, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Circumstances</i>	1990		1991		1992		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Unexplained physical assault	31	32.6	56	44.1	65	41.9	152	40.3
Argument	21	22.1	40	31.5	38	24.5	99	26.3
Retaliation	30	31.6	18	14.2	32	20.6	80	21.2
Verbal abuse/teasing	13	13.7	11	8.7	14	9.0	38	10.1
Arrest/criminal activity	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.3
Intervention	0	0.0	1	0.8	2	1.3	3	0.8
Accidental injury	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.3	2	0.5
Brawl	0	0.0	1	0.8	1	0.6	2	0.5
Total	95	100.0	127	100.0	155	100.0	377	100.0

Note: Table 15 excludes 29 incidents for which information regarding *circumstances* was not recorded.

Table 15 indicates that most of the incidents between students resulted from unexplained physical assaults, arguments (verbal altercations) and retaliations.

There was a statistically significant difference between the three years in the pattern of circumstances leading to the recorded incidents of assault between school students ($X^2 = 17.9$, $df = 8$, $p < 0.05$; for the chi-square test the categories arrest/criminal activity intervention accidental injury and brawl were combined). There is a difference in the relative frequencies of the circumstances argument and retaliation. In 1991 and 1992 arguments accounted for a greater proportion of assaults than retaliation. The reverse was true for 1990.

3.2.10 Police action

Table 16 indicates the action taken by police officers with respect to the student offender in the recorded incidents of aggravated assault and non-aggravated assault between school students.

Table 16: Police action by type of assault in recorded incidents of assault between students, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Police action</i>	Aggravated assault		Non-aggravated assault		Total	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Arrest/Charge	47	48.5	62	23.3	109	30.0
Caution/Warning	28	28.9	144	54.1	172	47.4
CAN/Summons	17	17.5	21	7.9	38	10.5
AVO	0	0.0	4	1.5	4	1.1
Recorded only	5	5.2	35	13.2	40	11.0
Total	97	100.0	266	100.0	363	100.0

Note: Table 16 excludes 43 incidents for which information regarding *police action* was not recorded.
CAN = Court Attendance Notice. AVO = Apprehended Violence Order.

The differences in police action according to type of assault are statistically significant ($X^2 = 36.4$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$). Nearly half (48.5%) of the recorded incidents of aggravated assault between students resulted in the police arresting or charging the student offender. However, only 23.3 per cent of all recorded incidents of non-aggravated assault between students resulted in the offender being arrested or charged. The majority of non-aggravated assaults resulted in the police cautioning or warning the offender.

3.3 ASSAULTS INVOLVING TEACHERS AND SCHOOL OFFICIALS

Separate analyses were conducted of the recorded incidents of assault which occurred on school premises which involved teachers and school officials as either victims or as offenders. There were 117 such incidents, comprising 13 per cent of the total sample of 877 recorded incidents of assault on school premises between 1990 and 1992. In the following tables, assaults have been classified according to the role played by the teachers and school officials in the incidents. Three roles have been identified:

- assaults involving teachers and school officials as offenders and school students as their victims;
- assaults involving teachers and school officials as victims of students;
- all other assaults involving teachers and school officials as either victims or offenders, but involving no students.

3.3.1 Trend in role

Table 17 indicates the trend, over the three years under investigation, in the role played by teachers and school officials in the recorded incidents of assault in which they were involved.

Table 17 indicates that other assaults (that is, assaults in which students were not involved as either victims or offenders) accounted for between one third and one half of each year's incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials.

Over the three years, there was no change in the pattern of teacher/school official involvement in recorded assaults ($X^2 = 4.3$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$).

Table 17: Trend in role of teachers and school officials in recorded incidents of assault, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Victim-offender relationship</i>	<i>1990</i>		<i>1991</i>		<i>1992</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Teacher/school official offender - student victim	6	17.6	7	17.9	4	9.1
Teacher/school official victim - student offender	11	32.4	19	48.7	22	50.0
Other assaults involving teachers and school officials	17	50.0	13	33.3	18	40.9
Total	34	100.0	39	100.0	44	100.0

3.3.2 Degree of injury

Table 18 shows the degree of injury suffered by the victim in the recorded incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials. The data are presented according to the role played by teachers and school officials in the incidents.

Table 18 indicates that 56.5 per cent of all assaults involving teachers and school officials resulted in no injury or negligible injury to the victim. A further 37.0 per cent of all such incidents resulted in abrasions, bruises or minor cuts. There is no statistically significant relationship between the degree of injury suffered by the victim and the role played by teachers and school officials in the recorded incidents of assault ($X^2 = 2.1$, $df = 4$, $p > 0.05$).

Furthermore, no weapon was involved in the majority of recorded incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials. This was the case regardless of the role played by teachers and school officials in the incidents of assault. No incident involved a gun. A sharp instrument was involved in one incident in which a student attacked a teacher/school official. This represented 0.9 per cent of all incidents involving teachers and school officials. A further four other assaults (involving no students) involved a sharp instrument.

Only 6 incidents involving teachers and school officials resulted in serious injury to the victim:

- in 2 incidents, a teacher/school official was the victim of a student;
- in 2 incidents, a student was the victim of a teacher/school official;
- in 2 incidents, no students were involved.

Table 18: Degree of injury by teacher/school official role in recorded incidents of assault, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Degree of injury</i>	<i>Teacher/school official offender-student victim</i>		<i>Teacher/school official victim-student offender</i>		<i>Other assaults involving teachers and school officials</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Serious	2	15.4	2	4.9	2	5.3	6	6.5
Abrasions, bruises, minor cuts	5	38.5	15	36.6	14	36.8	34	37.0
None	6	46.2	24	58.5	22	57.9	52	56.6
Total	13	100.0	41	100.0	38	100.0	92	100.0

Note: Table 18 excludes 25 incidents for which information regarding *injury* was not recorded.

3.3.3 Circumstances of assault

Table 19 shows the circumstances which led to the recorded incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials over the three year period. As in Section 3.2.9, the classification of circumstance is based on the narrative provided by police officers on their P40 Forms.

Table 19 shows that the types of circumstances leading to incidents of assault in which no students were involved (that is, other assaults) differed from those incidents in which students were involved as either the victims of teachers/school officials or as their assailants ($X^2 = 34.5$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$; for the chi-square test only three types of circumstances were included: unexplained physical assault disciplinary, and other comprising the remaining types combined). The circumstances surrounding incidents involving students were similar regardless of whether the student was the alleged victim or the alleged offender. Generally, assaults involving teachers/school officials but no students tended to result from three types of circumstances: disciplinary issues (23.9%), arrest/criminal activity (21.7%) or arguments (19.6%). By contrast, disciplinary issues were responsible for the largest single category of incidents in which students were involved accounting for 68.6 per cent of incidents in which teachers/school officials were the victims of students and 58.8 per cent of incidents in which teachers/school officials assaulted students.

Table 19: Circumstances of assault by victim/offender relationship in recorded incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Circumstances</i>	<i>Teacher/ school official offender- student victim</i>		<i>Teacher/ school official victim- student offender</i>		<i>Other assaults involving teachers and school officials</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Unexplained physical assault	5	29.4	9	17.6	5	10.9	19	16.7
Argument	0	0.0	1	2.0	9	19.6	10	8.8
Retaliation	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.5	3	2.6
Verbal abuse / teasing	1	5.9	1	2.0	0	0.0	2	1.8
Arrest / criminal activity	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	21.7	10	8.8
Intervention	0	0.0	3	5.9	3	6.5	6	5.3
Disciplinary	10	58.8	35	68.6	11	23.9	56	49.1
Accidental injury	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Brawl	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.2	1	0.9
Other	1	5.9	2	3.9	4	8.7	7	6.1
Total	17	100.0	51	100.0	46	100.0	114	100.0

Note: Table 19 excludes three incidents for which information regarding *circumstances* was not recorded.

3.3.4 Police action

The types of action taken by police officers in the incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials are shown in Table 20. The data are presented according to the role played by teachers and school officials in the recorded incidents of assault.

Police action differed according to the role played by teachers and school officials in these recorded assaults ($X^2 = 41.7$, $df = 6$, $p < 0.001$). Arrest and charge was the most common action in incidents of assault in which no students were involved (that is, other assaults). The offender was arrested and charged in 77.3 per cent of incidents of

this type whereas arrest and charge occurred in only 25.0 per cent of cases in which a student was allegedly the victim of a teacher/school official and in 31.9 per cent of cases in which a teacher/school official was allegedly the victim of a student.

Table 20: Police action by victim/offender relationship in recorded incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials, NSW, 1990-1992

<i>Police action</i>	<i>Teacher/ school official offender- student victim</i>		<i>Teacher/ school official victim- student offender</i>		<i>Other assaults involving teachers and school officials</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Arrest/Charge	4	25.0	15	31.9	34	77.3	53	49.5
Caution/Warning	2	12.5	22	46.8	3	6.8	27	25.2
CAN/Summons	2	12.5	5	10.6	3	6.8	10	9.3
Recorded only	8	50.0	5	10.6	4	9.1	17	15.9
Total	16	100.0	47	100.0	44	100.0	107	100.0

Note: Table 20 excludes 10 incidents for which no suspect was recorded by police.

4. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

In the three year period between 1990 and 1992, a total of 877 recorded incidents of aggravated and non-aggravated assault occurred on school premises in NSW, the larger proportion (79%) being classified as non-aggravated assault. Reports of assaults on school premises increased over the period. It is impossible on the available data to determine whether the increase in reports of assault reflects a real increase in assault or an increase in the willingness to report assaults or both.

Assaults between school students comprised the largest single category of assaults on school premises, accounting for approximately 63.1 per cent of the total number of recorded incidents for which information regarding both the victim and the offender was documented on the P40 Forms by the attending police officers. Teachers and school officials were involved, either as victims or offenders, in another 18.2 per cent of documented incidents of assault. A further 14.8 per cent of recorded incidents of assault on school premises involved students but were not between students, and did not involve teachers or school officials. The remaining 3.9 per cent did not involve students, teachers or school officials. Hence, some assaults which occurred on school premises appeared to be between individuals who were not associated in any way with the school in which the assault occurred.

In general terms, most of the assaults between students:

- occurred in government secondary schools;
- occurred in the playground during core school hours, particularly at lunchtime;
- involved one victim and one offender of similar age (generally 14 or 15 years of age) and of the same gender;
- involved the use of fists, hands and feet but no other weapon;
- resulted from unexplained circumstances; or (where explained on the P40 Forms) involved arguments or retaliation;
- involved either no injury or injuries in the nature of abrasions, bruises or minor cuts to the victim.

The majority of incidents of assault involving teachers and school officials:

- did not involve a student at all or involved students assaulting teachers or school officials;
- resulted from disciplinary issues (those where students were also involved);
- involved no weapon;
- resulted in no injury or negligible injury to the victim.

4.1 PREVALENCE OF ASSAULT ON SCHOOL PREMISES

Based on the recorded rates of assault on school premises and in the general community, the former appear much safer than the latter.

It is likely, however, that many incidents of assault which occurred on school premises over the period from 1990 to 1992 were not reported to the police, but instead were dealt with within the school setting either by staff, administrators or students. It is known,

for example, that the non-reporting rate amongst the general population is quite high: the Australian Bureau of Statistics Crime and Safety Survey (Catalogue No. 4509.0), for example, estimated that 67.9% of assault victims in Australia in 1993 did not report the incident to the police.

Likewise, within the school setting, several authors (including Bayh, 1977; National Institute of Education, 1978; Rubel and Ames, 1986; Challenger, 1987) have noted that school principals do not always notify the police of assaults on school premises which come to their attention. While acknowledging that his sample of school principals is not representative, Challenger, for example, reports that, of the thirty school principals throughout Australia who responded to a questionnaire which asked them to indicate what action they would take for each incident, only four (13%) indicated that they would call the police in a hypothetical incident where a disruptive student is instructed by a teacher to leave the class, the student responds by assaulting the teacher causing a head laceration that needs suturing (p.132). Most of the respondents indicated that they would attempt to deal with the situation within the school setting. Similarly, based on a comparison of the number of incidents reported by school principals to police with the number of incidents recorded by police, the National Institute of Education (NIE) concluded that most offences against persons are not reported: police receive reports of approximately ... 1 out of 6 attacks ... (p. 43).

If the NIE estimate of non-reporting of incidents on school premises in the United States of America was accepted as being true of NSW schools, the true rate of assault on students on school premises in 1992 would have been 0.13 per cent of all students enrolled in schools in NSW (including government, non-government and special schools). This is still substantially lower than the victimisation rate in the general community. In the Crime and Safety Survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1992 (ABS Catalogue No. 4509.1), 2.2 per cent of the State's population reported being the victims of assault in the previous twelve months. Indeed, the non-reporting rate of assaults on NSW school students would have to be 16 times higher than that noted in the NIE study for the assault rate in NSW schools to even approach that in the general NSW community. Overall, therefore, it seems reasonable to conclude that assaults are relatively infrequent and substantially less prevalent on school premises than in the general community.

4.2 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Variations in willingness to report assaults to the police are likely to affect the rates of recorded assault between government and non-government schools.

Table 5, it will be recalled, suggests that students who attend government schools, particularly at secondary level, are at greater risk of interpersonal physical violence than their counterparts attending non-government schools. For example, in 1992, the rate of recorded incidents of assault between students in government secondary schools was 41.8 assaults per 100,000 students enrolled. By contrast, in the same year the rate in non-government secondary schools was 6.5 recorded assaults per 100,000 students enrolled.

The much lower figure for non-government schools may be the result of lower levels of reporting rather than lower rates of occurrence. Adverse publicity and community reaction is likely to have a greater effect on non-government schools which depend on school fees to operate: parents can simply choose another school, a government or non-government school, in which to enrol their children.

Some evidence for this possibility is provided by the fact that, compared with government secondary schools, a larger proportion of the incidents recorded on the premises of non-government secondary schools result in serious injury: 40.9 per cent in non-government secondary schools compared with 28.9 per cent in government secondary schools (see Table 6). This finding is consistent with the possibility that non-government schools tend not to report as many minor cases of assault to police as government schools.

4.3 DEALING WITH SCHOOL VIOLENCE

Knowledge regarding the nature and circumstances surrounding incidents of interpersonal physical violence on school premises can assist governments and school authorities in developing school violence prevention strategies.

The present results suggest that most recorded incidents of assault between school students involved a single male offender attacking a single male victim of the same or similar age. The attack was typically the result of an argument or in retaliation to some earlier incident. The assault usually occurred in the playground during lunchtime or during the last two hours of the school day (see Tables 8 to 12 and 15).

These findings highlight the importance of adequate supervision of students (particularly males) during lunch hours and recreation periods. Adequate supervision, by itself, however, cannot be relied upon to deliver substantial reductions in the level of school violence. The opportunities for altercation in the school environment, as in the wider community, are simply too numerous relative to the scope for deterrence through increased surveillance. The only type of school assault where increased surveillance might be capable of exerting a substantial effect consists of those cases where the offender was neither a student, a teacher or a school official. In 1992, 23.5 per cent of offenders fell into this category. The data available do not permit a thorough analysis of the characteristics and circumstances surrounding these cases. This is an important issue (cf. Toby, 1983), however, and one which deserves much closer research attention.

Many of the assaults between students examined in this study involved more or less spontaneous reactions to insults, taunts, jealousy or frustration. Spontaneous though they may be, such reactions are no doubt conditioned by attitudes towards violence as a means of responding to personal insult, frustration or personal difference and beliefs about the likely response of school authorities to violent behaviour. Long-term prevention policy for school violence, therefore, needs to focus on:

- (a) creating a social atmosphere of intolerance towards school violence;
- (b) teaching male students non-violent methods for dealing with situations which make them angry, frustrated, resentful or jealous; and,
- (c) attempting, where possible, to remove factors underpinning these emotions.

The NIE Study offers potentially useful insights in this regard. It found that:

If a school is large and impersonal, discipline lax and inconsistent, the rules ambiguous and arbitrarily or unfairly enforced, the courses irrelevant and the reward system unfair, the school lacks a rational structure of order and the basic elements necessary to maintain social bonds, both among students and school ... acts of violence ... are likely to be common.

(National Institute of Education, 1978, p.9.)

Based on its investigation, the NIE Study Team identified several policy-relevant characteristics of secondary schools with low rates of school violence. They found that school violence is lower in:

- Small schools.
- Schools where students rate classrooms as well disciplined, where rules are strictly enforced, and where the principal is considered strict.
- Schools where students consider school discipline as being fairly administered.
- Schools where there are fewer students in each class and where teachers teach fewer different students each week.
- Schools where students say that classes teach them what they want to know.
- Schools whose students believe they can influence what happens in their lives by their efforts, rather than feeling that things happen to them which they cannot control.

(*ibid.*, p.129)

Given the general similarity between the NIE study findings and the present results, these factors may also prove to be of relevance to schools in NSW.

Bayh argued that there is no single, all encompassing solution to these problems; there are no panaceas, no magic wands (Bayh, 1977, p.47). Rather, he argued that a well integrated system would be desirable suggesting that the components of such a system could include:

- (a) Offering students who find the traditional approach to learning unrewarding and frustrating (*ibid.*, p. 54) alternative educational settings and programs, such as:
 - learning centres which allow students to spend part of their school day in a regular school pursuing academic programs and part of the day at a Learning Centre which provides a mixture of academic, vocational and technical education (*ibid.*, p.55);
 - schools without walls which allow students to observe various aspects of the criminal justice system in practice by, for example, attending courthouses, police stations, etc.;
 - schools within schools which allow small educational units to be located within large schools providing a lower student-teacher ratio and enabling the unit to avail itself of the facilities of the large school.
- (b) Innovative disciplinary techniques such as:
 - behaviour contract which involves a contract between the student and the administrator whereby the student agrees to cease violating certain specific rules of the school, an interim punishment (is) imposed, and an agreement is reached on the more severe consequences that would follow any continued violations (*ibid.*, p.58);
 - cool off rooms within the school. Bayh suggests that this technique is more effective if the services of a trained student counsellor are also provided.
- (c) Student counselling strategies, including peer group counselling programs which are small student-led and counsellor-assisted discussion groups where various issues can be discussed.

- (d) Parental and student involvement.
- (e) Reform of the curriculum, including the development and introduction of new courses and new learning methods to attempt to address some of the underlying causes of the violence.
- (f) Written and well-publicised codes of rights and responsibilities within the educational setting. The development of such codes could involve participation by students, teachers, parents and administrators.
- (g) Teacher training regarding effective disciplinary practices and prevention strategies.
- (h) Security personnel program which combines a number of educational, law enforcement and community oriented elements all designed not only to control existing school crime problems but also prevent new ones from starting ... a school security officer is not merely a conventional school guard but is also a fully functioning member of the educational community, who is expected to work with students, staff and parents on a wide variety of educational and security problems (ibid, pp. 81-83).
- (i) Design of buildings to diminish the propensity for certain crimes.

Some of these initiatives are potentially very expensive and may not be appropriate in a NSW school setting. Their value must also be weighed against the fact that school violence would appear much less frequent in NSW than in the United States of America. It will be recalled, for example, that Bastian and Taylor (1991) found that 2 per cent of their sample of students reported being victims of assault in the previous six months. Assuming one in six assaults in NSW schools is reported, we arrived at an estimated average assault victimisation rate in NSW schools of approximately 0.13 per cent per annum. Unless the non-reporting rate of school violence in NSW is much higher than in the United States the NSW rate of school assault would appear to be lower than that in the United States by a factor of about fifteen. This difference in risk ought not to prompt complacency about the problem of school violence in NSW. It does, however, suggest the need to avoid uncritical adoption of overseas school violence prevention initiatives.

NOTES

1. Special schools are schools catering for students with specific needs, including behaviour disorders, hearing disabilities, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, visual disabilities, etc.
2. Police officers P40 Forms indicate that the types of weapons used in assaults between students included sharp instruments such as scissors, knives, compass, razor blade, machete, glass, sharp tool, screwdriver, bottle; blunt instruments such as iron bars; and other types of weapons such as steel ball bearing, tree branch, portable radio and heated metal ruler.
An examination was conducted of the P40 Forms documenting incidents of assault between students which involved a sharp instrument. A total of 29 such incidents were recorded. The incidents were analysed according to the type of sharp instrument involved and whether the offender actually used the instrument on the victim or threatened the victim with the instrument.
The analysis revealed that in 17 of the 29 incidents of assault between students involving sharp instruments, the offender threatened the victim with a sharp instrument. Thus a sharp instrument was actually used in only 12 (3.0%) of the incidents of assault between students.
3. The P40 Form documenting the incident which allegedly involved a gun was examined closely. According to the incident report, the gun was not brought onto the premises by the offender to intentionally inflict injury or threaten injury, rather the gun (a replica pistol) was part of a fancy dress costume which was on display at the secondary school. The injury suffered by the victim was a chipped tooth.

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NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
 Assault on School Premises Questionnaire

INCIDENT DETAILS

1. Questionnaire number

2. Microfilm reference number

year

reel

sheet

*(if more than one P40 form record number
 of first P40 which relates to this incident)*

3. Name of school (record fully)

.....

4. Type of school

- 1 state-primary
- 2 state-high
- 3 other-primary
- 4 other-high
- 5 other
- 9 not recorded

5. Postcode of school

6. Incident reported to police by:

- 1 teacher (not the victim)
- 2 parent relative of victim
- 3 other school official
- 4 student (not the victim)
- 5 victim
- 6 other
- 9 don't know

7.	Type of incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 one suspect/one victim	
	2 one suspect/multiple victims	
	3 multiple suspects/one victim	
	4 multiple suspects/multiple victims	
	5 no suspect/one victim	
	6 no suspect/multiple victims	
	9 don't know	

8.	Number of suspects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	99 cannot establish		

9.	Number of victims	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	99 cannot establish		

10.	Most serious assault recorded in this incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 aggravated assault	
	2 non-aggravated assault	
	9 don't know	

11.	Time of incident	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	(12.01am = 0001)				

12.	Day of incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 Monday	
	2 Tuesday	
	3 Wednesday	
	4 Thursday	
	5 Friday	
	6 Saturday	
	7 Sunday	
	9 don't know	

13.	Incident location - physical	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1 principal's office	
	2 school/class room	
	3 school corridor	
	4 gymnasium	
	5 school playground	
	6 toilet block	
	7 street/area around school	
	8 other school building	
	9 don't know	

14. Circumstances of incident from narrative

01 unexplained physical incidents
 02 arguments
 03 retaliation
 04 verbal abuse/teasing/name calling/taunting
 05 interventions
 06 disciplinary
 07 arrest/criminal activity
 08 injury accidental
 09 brawl
 10 other - record fully and postcode
 99 don't know

15 Who stuck the first blow?

1 first blow struck by offender
 2 first blow struck by victim
 3 no blow struck by either / threats only
 4 don't know who struck first blow

16 Incident status

1 accepted
 2 rejected
 3 doubtful
 9 status not recommended

VICTIM DETAILS

17 Age last birthday

99 don't know

18 Gender

1 male
 2 female
 9 don't know

19 Occupation

01 teacher
 02 student - high school
 03 student - primary school
 04 unemployed / pensioner / welfare
 05 other school official
 06 police
 08 other employment - specify
 09 don't know

20 Nature of most serious injury 1 negligible / none 2 abrasions / bruises / minor cuts 3 serious - broken bones / concussions / major wounds 4 other - specify 9 don't know	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
--	---

21 Medical attention received 1 yes 2 no 9 don't know	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
---	---

22 Main victim's relationship to main suspect 01 both victim and offender are students 02 victim is student, offender is parent of other student 03 victim is student, offender is other relative of other student 04 victim is student, offender is person other than 01-03 <hr/> 05 victim is teacher, offender is student 06 victim is teacher, offender is parent of other student 07 victim is teacher, offender is other relative of other student 08 victim is teacher, offender is person other than 05-07 <hr/> 09 victim is parent of student, offender is teacher 10 victim is other relative of student, offender is teacher 11 victim is parent of student, offender is other person 12 victim is other relative of student, offender is other person <hr/> 13 victim is other school official, offender is student 14 victim is other school official, offender is other <hr/> 15 relationship other than those listed above 99 cannot establish relationship	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
--	---

SUSPECT DETAILS

23 Age last birthday 99 don't know	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/> <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
--	---

24 Gender 1 male 2 female 3 don't know	<input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="checkbox"/>
--	---

25 Occupation

01 teacher
 02 student - high school
 03 student - primary school
 04 unemployed / pensioner / welfare
 05 other school official
 06 police
 08 other employment - specify
 09 not known / no suspect identified

26 Racial appearance

1 white
 2 Aboriginal
 3 Asian
 4 Pacific Islander
 5 Arabic / Middle Eastern
 6 Mediterranean
 7 other
 9 don't know

27 Place of birth

1 Australia
 2 New Zealand
 3 Pacific Islands
 4 Vietnam
 5 Other Asia
 6 Lebanon
 7 other - specify
 9 don't know

28 Weapon used

1 none (hands / fists / feet etc.)
 2 sharp instrument
 3 blunt instrument
 4 gun
 5 other - specify
 9 don't know

29 Police action

1 warning
 2 caution
 3 C.A.N. / summons / (CAN = Court attendance Notice)
 4 arrest / charge
 5 no police action / recorded only
 9 don't know / no suspect / no apprehension