“I am bad apparently.” The role of stand-down to manage behaviour in communities of learners

A thesis submitted to the University of Otago in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education.

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Dedication and acknowledgements

This study is dedicated to Chris and Violet who should not have been excluded from school and who started me wondering about the process of stand-down. This study is also dedicated to Missy’s Mother who died during the study.

I would like to thank all of the participants who gave their time generously and thoughtfully to this study.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the University of Otago and specifically the support and assistance of

- Dr Greg Burnett
- Dr Julie Lawrence
- Dr Helen May
- Dr Tamsin Meaney

I would also like to acknowledge the support and assistance of my family
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Glossary

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<tr>
<td>Alternative Education Programme. Alt Ed. AE</td>
<td>In 1998 post primary schools were provided with funding to “provide a positive option for students who are not succeeding in mainstream school” (Te Puni Kokiri, 2004). Schools are provided with funding based on school decile to the value of $11,100.00 per verified student per year. Verified status depended on a set of criteria set out in 1997 and updated 2002 (MOE, 2002). Schools could use 20% of the funding for non verified students. Any additional non verified students were at the school’s expense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area School</td>
<td>A school which includes year 1 (age 5) to year 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Elected group of parents who govern the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decile</td>
<td>School decile is a means of allocating resources according to the socio economic status (SES) of the school. Low decile schools are schools with low SES; high decile schools are schools with high SES.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSE</td>
<td>Group Special Education. A branch of the Ministry of Education with the mandate to provide services and resources for students with special education needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Rights Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate school</td>
<td>A school for students in years 7 and 8 (ages 11-12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iwi</td>
<td>Local people or tribal affiliation (Maori)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kura Kaupapa Maori</td>
<td>Maori medium primary and secondary education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCEA</td>
<td>National Certificate of Education Achievement. The name of the NZ school qualification for students in years 11-13. The qualification is in three levels (1-3). The majority of students in year 11 are working towards a level 1 certificate, level 2 in year 12 and level 3 in year 13.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>A collective term for people whose cultural identity comes from the islands of the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakeha</td>
<td>A New Zealand European person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTLB</td>
<td>Resource teacher of learning and behaviour. A resource teacher for students years 1-10 usually working in clusters and shared by a number of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Definition</td>
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<td>RTLit</td>
<td>Resource Teacher literacy. A resource teacher for students with reading and writing difficulties in years 1-10 usually working in clusters and across a number of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special education needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio economic status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Integrated School</td>
<td>A special character school often church based that is funded as a state school but is allowed to charge fees to a given level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWIS</td>
<td>Social worker in school. Low decile primary schools have the use of a trained social worker; other schools have to pay for the service. Often SWIS work within a community around a number of schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangi</td>
<td>Weeping (Maori for the cultural procedure that follows death which ends in the burial.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Te Kohanga Reo</td>
<td>Language nest (Maori)Maori preschool movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whanau</td>
<td>Family (Maori)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whare wananga</td>
<td>School (Maori)</td>
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Abstract
This study investigates how students renegotiate their membership of the school community following being stood-down from school. In New Zealand stand-down is the least serious of the school exclusion provisions available to schools under the Education Act (1989). By sending the student home at stand-down for unacceptable behaviour the school principal restricts the student’s participation in the school as a community of learners. Wenger’s (1998) Theory of Situated Learning in Communities of Practice suggests participation is closely linked to membership and identity and that restricting participation creates marginalized membership and outbound identity trajectories. This study uses Wenger’s (1998) theory as a framework to understand the shared stories of school membership for ten students stood-down from school in 2008. The study found that stand-down provides both constraints and opportunities for schools. School principals are constrained by the need to make a clear statement that the school is a safe environment for learning. At the same time stand-down presents an opportunity to ascertain the school identity trajectories of students at risk of exclusion from school at an earlier stage of a student’s school experience. By listening to shared storytelling it was possible to get a clear picture of the nature of each student’s reintegration to school following being stood-down. A closer focus on the stories of all participants in a stand-down event, therefore, may increase the school’s ability to retain students in school.
Chapter one: Introduction: Understanding stand-down

This research investigates the practice of stand-down in New Zealand schools. Stand-down is one of the suspension provisions in the New Zealand Education Act (1989) which enable principals to suspend the attendance of students whose behaviour is either likely to cause harm or set a dangerous example to other students. This study interviewed ten students who had been stood down from school in 2008 for a range of perceived inappropriate behaviours and interviewed them again in 2009. For each student caregivers and school personnel were also interviewed. Of the ten students, seven had managed to renegotiate their membership of the school community by the end of the study though for three that renegotiation was to a marginal or peripheral position in the school. Any renegotiation, however, came as a direct result of resolving the context that generated the stand-down. For the student who renegotiated membership, too, those who had been stood down for the first time at that school were able to resolve the context more rapidly and effectively. Where on-going conflict was not resolved further stand-downs occurred and participants developed negative stances. The results of this study suggest that the first stand-down at any school provides an opportunity for students, caregivers and school personnel to resolve conflict and reengage students with their membership of the school as a community of learners.

The most significant and practical contribution we can make to the lives of young people is to ensure they stay in school. NZ Government statistics (Statistics New Zealand, 2008) reveal that children who remain in school and achieve a school qualification are more likely to gain employment and to remain employed. Membership of a school community, therefore, is important because school qualifications play an important role in the acquisition of entry level qualifications to communities beyond school (Beebe, 2007; Brown, 2003). Membership is more than just acquiring cultural capital. Lemke (2000) emphasizes the importance of students being in school as a means to negotiate both legitimate school and social identities and, like
other researchers (Church, 2003; Sutton, 2000), recognizes the relationship between students being in school and associating with prosocial peers to legitimate membership both of the school as a community of practice and to the wider community.

Staying in school and completing qualifications has been recognized as important for young people (MOE, 2007c). In New Zealand there has been a steady increase in the proportion of school leavers leaving school with a recognized school qualification though there is still a significant group of students who leave school early (MOE, 2007c). About 12% of all school leavers each year leave during years 10 and 11 (ages 15-16) without acquiring recognized school qualifications (MOE, 2007c). New Zealand and overseas studies suggest that young people who fail school and leave early may be at risk of a variety of poor life outcomes (Hemphill, McMorris, Toumbourou, Herrenkohl, Catalano & Mathers, 2007; Hayden, 2007; Christle, Jolivette & Nelson, 2005; Fergusson, Swain –Campbell & Horwood, 2002; Durlak, 1998; Dryfoos, 1990, Pritchard & Williams, 2009). Those students who leave school without qualifications face a widening gap between their prospects for future participation in society and those of their qualified peers (Weaver, 2007). American studies show that “students who dropped out of school pay a heavy financial price for the rest of their lives. But our whole society will also pay a price” (Weaver, 2007, p.7). Those costs to society come about because not only are high school dropouts likely to earn less and cost the economy more through welfare they are also more likely to be involved in crime and have poor health (Richard, 2005; Weaver, 2007).

This research is important because it examines the process of stand-down. Stand-down removes the student from school but, unlike suspension, does not have the potential to cancel enrollment. Suspension from school has been cited as one reason for students exiting the school system before gaining qualifications (Durlak, 1998; Fergusson et al, 2002; Hemphill, Toumbourou, Todd, Herenkohl, Catalano & Mathers, 2006; Hemphill et al, 2007). Suspension from school has also been linked to other poor life outcomes for young people e.g. entry to the youth justice system (Christle et al, 2005; Hemphill et al, 2007) and adolescent antisocial behaviour (Hemphill et al, 2006). Stand-down as one of the suspension provisions available to schools in New Zealand is hierarchically
linked to suspension and thus school exclusion. The numbers of students stood down are small in relation to the whole school roll and the proportion of the total school roll suspended even smaller. The established link between students suspended from school and poor life outcomes (Christle et al, 2005, Hemphill et al, 2006, 2007) makes it important to understand better those processes, like stand-down, that are linked to suspension but which return the student to school.

Similar to other similar education systems across the world, the New Zealand Education Act (1989), while it upholds the right to education, also upholds the right of school boards of trustees, through the school principal, to suspend the attendance of any student because of their behaviour. This is because the school board of trustees, an elected body of parents and community representatives responsible for school governance, are not only responsible for ensuring the requirements of the New Zealand curriculum are met by the school principal, they are also responsible to parents and the community to ensure the school is a place of safety (MOE, 2009d). Suspension from school, therefore, is a complex issue for principals and boards of trustees. Membership of the school community enables students to acquire entry level qualifications the adult world (Laluvein, 2010) but unacceptable behavior not only disrupts this process for the student but also, potentially, for other students in the school community (Chaplain, 2003).

While interest in school suspension appears to be increasing worldwide (Smith, 2009) there has been little research in New Zealand about suspension of attendance and none at all about the contribution being stood down makes to notions of school membership. Casey (1994) reviewed Ministry of Education statistics on suspension and expulsion from New Zealand schools, Overton (1995) conducted mixed method research with students who had either been suspended or excluded from school and Smith (2009) conducted qualitative research with students who had been excluded from school. While Casey’s (1994) research made direct reference to students who had been suspended for a specified period (stand-down), Overton’s (1995) research only made oblique reference to students who did not have a history of suspension referring to them as ‘group 1’. Overton’s (1995) research, however, did express concern about a group of students who had a history of suspension as being separate and different from
other students at school. Both Overton (1995) and Smith (2009) conducted interviews with research participants; Overton (1995), however, did not interview families and Smith (2009) did not interview schools.

Overseas qualitative research into suspended attendance from school has involved interviews with students, parents and schools (Hayden, 2001, 2007; Munn, Lloyd & Cullen, 2000) and quantitative research both in New Zealand (Fergusson et al, 2002) and overseas (Christle et al, 2005; Hemphill et al, 2006; Hemphill et al, 2007) identify links between being suspended from school, leaving school early without qualifications and other poor life outcomes e.g. youth detention. What makes this research project different is that while most other research makes reference to both short term, fixed suspension and long term exclusion from school this research concentrates on short term suspension only, or stand-down as it is called in New Zealand. In addition other research investigates the impact and consequences of suspended attendance on children’s lives; i.e. the research accepts the practice but examines the consequences. This research is different because it interrogates the return to school following a stand-down event as a way to understand school identity and membership.

1.1 Stand-down explained: definitions, policy and process.

1.1.1 Definitions, the legislation and statistics.
The school suspension of attendance practice selected for this study is stand-down. There are two points of suspended attendance in New Zealand schools; stand-down, and suspension. Stand-down is a fixed period away from school initiated and managed by the school principal, while suspension, although initiated by the school principal passes the decision making process to the school board of trustees. The New Zealand Education Act (1989) has a three part structure for disciplinary actions to manage extreme and recidivist behaviour in students through suspension of attendance. Provisions under sections 13 to 18 of the Education Act 1989 allow schools to stand-down a student for a specified period, to suspend for an unspecified period and, following a meeting with the board of trustees, the option to exclude the student and cancel enrolment. Stand-down, therefore, is a response in its own right while
suspension and exclusion are connected in that exclusion is one possible outcome of suspension.

Use of the term stand-down, instead of suspension for a specified period (Education Act, 1989), came into use with the Education Amendment Act No. 2 1998 which split the practice of stand down from that of suspension. Stand-down, while it appears a separate practice to suspension, is connected because an accumulation of five stand-down days in any term or ten in any school year requires the principal to suspend the student for the next breach of behaviour. Anecdotally, too, school personnel see stand-down as a hierarchically lower response to behaviour than suspension. Sections 13 to 18 of the Education Act (1989) also set out the governance and management relationship between the school board of trustees and school management when a decision is made to suspend a student’s attendance at school. At stand-down the school board of trustees have no formal input apart from a requirement to be informed; at suspension this group of elected parents have the responsibility to decide the nature of the student’s ongoing membership of the school community. Following stand-down, therefore, the student has the right to return to school while suspension may result in exclusion.

In the last twenty years since the Review of Education Administration (Picot Report, 1988) statistical collections of suspension data have occurred. While the numbers of students attending school in New Zealand has risen steadily (approximately a 20% increase in general school roll between 1991 and 2009) the numbers of students suspended from school both short term (stand-down 600+%) and for an unspecified term (suspension 300+%) have risen sharply.
Table 1: Comparison of State school roll, stand-downs and suspensions 1991 and 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of stand-downs</th>
<th>Number of suspensions</th>
<th>State school population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3051</td>
<td>1246</td>
<td>644773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>20279</td>
<td>4374</td>
<td>664666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source Casey, 1994; MOE, 2009a, 2009b)

Table 1 shows that, in less than twenty years, there has been a rise in stand-downs numbers that is more than double that of the rise in suspensions and thirty times the increase in roll numbers.

Ministry of Education data also reveals that, in 2008, 49% of state and state integrated schools did not stand-down any students. This statistic changes when only secondary schools’ data is included; in 2008 only 2.8% of secondary schools did not stand students down (MOE, 2009a). At secondary level most stand-downs occur in the middle school area. In the middle school years 61% of all stand-downs occur with the peak age for stand-down being 14 years where the age standardised rate for stand-down is 84.3 students per 1000 students enrolled (MOE, 2009a). Given that there are around 20000 stand-down events in New Zealand every year that means approximately 12000 stand-down events occur to New Zealand children in their early high school years each year. It seems relevant, then, to investigate stand-down and its use in the middle school area not only to understand better the part stand down takes in managing behaviour given its dramatic rise in use but also its use in the middle school area where the greatest usage of stand-down occurs.

Stand-down statistics are also disproportionately higher for specific groups of students. Students stood down from school tend to be males, aged between 13 and 15 years, who attend schools in poorer areas. There is, also, about a fifty percent chance of them being either Māori or Pasifika. Boys across all ethnic groups are stood down nearly three times as often as girls and students who attend low decile schools i.e. low socioeconomic schools, are four times more likely to be stood down than students from decile nine and ten schools (MOE, 2009a). Māori and Pasifika children
experience a higher number of stand-downs than any other group represented in the statistics. In 2004 stand downs for Māori children constituted 41% of all stand down cases while Māori children made up 21% of the school population (MOE, 2005a). Disproportionate rates of suspension of attendance for Māori and Pasifika students in New Zealand echo those for some other similar minorities in other parts of the world. African American children in the United States (Christle, et al, 2005,) African Caribbean children in Great Britain (Reid, 1999), and Aboriginal children in Australia (New South Wales Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. & NSW Department of Education and Training, 2004) are all stood down significantly more than other ethnic groups. Similar to New Zealand statistics overseas children from the poorest areas are also disproportionately represented in exclusion statistics (Hayden, 1997; Hemphill et al, 2006, 2007, Munn, Lloyd and Cullen, 2000; Parsons, 2009). Overseas studies (Hayden, 1997; Lawrence, 2004, Munn et al, 2000) also indicate that children with SEN (Special Education Needs) are more likely to be stood down from school. While statistics for this are not collected in New Zealand, statistics collected by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner (Grant, 2004) suggest that special-needs students in New Zealand are also over represented in stand downs and suspensions.

1.1.2 The stand-down process
Standing a student down restricts the student’s ability to participate in the learning community for a fixed period. It is the student’s behaviour that prompts the decision to stand the student down. When a principal perceives that behaviour is extreme enough to constitute a threat to other students’ safety or future good behaviour the principal may decide to stand the student down from school. A stand-down can be up to five days in length but most are for two to three days (MOE, 2005). The number of days allowed for stand-down is cumulative over a year with the school being able to stand a student down from school only five days in any term or ten days in any year (MOE, 2007b). Immediately following the decision to stand down the principal is required to make contact with the student’s parent, though this contact may be by letter (MOE, 2009). The Ministry of Education must be informed through an online form and the parents must be supplied with a copy of the Ministry of Education pamphlet ‘I’ve been stood down’ (MOE, 2009). The school is not required to provide
work for the student during the stand down period but in exceptional circumstances, e.g. to attend examination level classes, the Principal may allow the student to attend school while stood down (MOE, 2009). The principal is also required to take all reasonable steps to ensure a student has guidance and counseling that is reasonable and practicable while stood down (MOE, 2007b). At the end of the stand down period the student returns to school without conditions.

1.2 The research project
According the Ministry of Education 80% of stand-downs in any year are single events for students (MOE, 2005a). That and the difference in the number of stand-downs each year compared with suspensions suggest that the majority of students resolve their behaviour following stand-down. Ministry of Education statistics also show a distinct reduction in stand-down events for students in years 11 and above compared with those for students in the middle school. This suggests perhaps that the sorts of behaviours that are exhibited in the middle school change and improve as students move into the senior school. Alternatively it may suggest also that those students whose behaviour is considered unacceptable in the middle school leave school early without qualifications or become part of other statistical sets like suspension and exclusion. This research project investigates stand-down events in the middle school and investigates the six month period following return to school from stand-down to ascertain what factors affect the student’s renegotiation of school membership during that time.

1.3 The research question
This research study investigates the student’s membership of the school as a learning community following being stood-down from school. Membership of any organisation is a complex issue because it is not only individual it is also reciprocal in that members not only participate in they also define the organisation (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002; Wenger, 1998). Within any organisation the individual may be a member of a number of communities while at the same time the organisation itself is also part of wider communities (Wenger, 1998). Through membership of organisations, not only is the individual able to continue to engage and contribute, the organization is also able to
sustain itself (Wenger, 1998). In addition through its organisations the community continues to refine its practices and ensures the continuity of future generations (Wenger, 1998). Furthermore, any member of any organization, defines their membership in different ways depending on their perception of themselves within the organization (Clarke, Brown, & Hailey, 2009; Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). Members, therefore, construct identities and acquire identities that are commensurate both with their own perception of the organization and their perception of how the organization perceives them. At stand-down, because of its association with both participation and membership there is potential for the student’s identity within the organization to change. This research investigates that potential through the following research question;

How does being formally removed from school, through the stand down process, affect the way the child and those around him/her see the child’s identity in relationship to being a member of a learning community?

1.4 Overview of the thesis
This thesis is in eight chapters. Chapters two and three review the literature of membership of learning communities. In Chapter two the complex nature of learning communities is described from the point of view of a school being constructed of a landscape of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Some individuals within communities of practice, however, become marginalised so the process of marginalisation is discussed using the literature of the social and conceptual Other as a focus. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the importance of behaviour as a benchmark that includes or excludes individuals in communities. Chapter three shows that at stand-down different priorities take precedence in the joint enterprise of the learning community and that these put pressure on the principal of the school. The methodology chapter, Chapter four, reveals how an Ethnomethodology model is an effective way to express the voices of the different participant groups in the stand-down process. The analysis is in three parts, chapters five to seven. Chapter five presents the case for the students’ membership and chapter six the complex relationships that are expressed when the participants talk about their own and others’
positions about and responsibilities for the student's school membership during the stand-down event. Chapter seven presents those factors that contributed to reintegration with school for the students and the final chapter summarises the results, draws conclusions and suggests recommendations.
Chapter two: Review of the literature: Communities of practice in learning communities.

There has been increased interest recently in identity as a useful tool for the study of human conduct (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Defining what identity is, however, is a slippery concept; identity is one of those apparently “self-evident notions that is rarely preceded by an explanation” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15). In some ways it is easier to say what it is not; that identity is more than character, than personality, than nature (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Identity has been described as “being recognised as a certain kind of person” (Gee, 2001, p.99) though Sfard and Prusak (2005) argue that this definition may not denote that essentially active nature of identity as they define it. An alternative view of Gee’s (2001) definition, however, could be that being a certain kind of person describes identity as both construction and recognition. It suggests that identity is both internally and externally constructed and recognised; i.e. active, dynamic, multi-authored and mediated by context. Inherent in Gee’s (2001) definition, too, is a suggestion of presentation, of selection. Which teacher has not heard a parent say “Well he is not like this at home” which suggests, as Gee (2001) implies, that identity is dependent on recognition of context; that is that individuals construct different identities depending on their perception of field. That individuals, in this case students, elect to be recognised as a certain kind of person in one context but a different one in another imply two concepts particularly pertinent to this study. Firstly this choice implies that “individuals are active agents who play decisive roles in [...] shaping individual activities” (Sfard & Prusak, 2005, p. 15) and secondly that the presentation of self is essentially performance (Goffman, 1971).

This chapter about how identities are articulated in learning communities takes as its starting point Wenger’s (1998) social theory of situated learning within communities of practice. This theory defines and connects the concepts of identity, community and membership that are essential to understanding the practice of stand-down as a mechanism of identity regulation within organisations (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002). According to Wenger (1998);
The primary focus of this theory is on learning as social participation. Participation here refers not only to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people but also to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities. Participation in a playground clique or in a work team, for instance, is both a kind of action and a kind of belonging. Such participation shapes not only what we do but also who we are and how we interpret what we do (p. 4).

Wenger’s (1998) theory emphasises the importance of participation both as a means of learning and of belonging; that the process of engagement defines the nature of the learning that results between the individual and the community. Wenger’s (1998) theory also connects the concept of learning with participation in and membership of communities and thus with the construction of identity. This is a connection that gives expression to one of the key questions of this study; that is the degree to which being stood down from school, effectively restricting participation, affects a child’s membership of a learning community. Wenger’s (1998) theory, therefore, examines the interconnectedness of such concepts as identity, community, membership and participation. This interconnectedness is significant to any study that investigates the effect on membership of restricting participation.

The school as a learning community is both a community of practice in itself (Laluvein, 2010) and a landscape of practices (Wenger, 1998) that may either be encompassed entirely by the learning community or only overlap with the learning community. What defines this difference is the joint enterprise of that community of practice as part of a landscape of practices. In some cases the joint enterprise is a component part of the key enterprise of the school while for others only some of its practices are associated with school learning. The chapter is in three parts: firstly there is an explanation of Wenger’s (1998) theory of situated learning in communities of practice; secondly how the stand-down event has the potential to construct marginal identities.
and finally the importance of behaviour in schools as the glue that holds communities of practice together.

2.1 Learning communities: A landscape of practices

I try hard at school because I want to succeed in the future: Emily¹

Children go to school to learn and for the majority of children the process runs smoothly (MOE, 2005). Schools as learning communities appear to work well for the majority of students. Learning is both essential and complex. It is essential because, in its role as a community of learners; “The school system gives students the attitudes, knowledge, skills and understandings they need to continue learning throughout their lives” (Ministry of Education, 1993, p. 12) and, according to the Ministry of Education (1993) again, “It is the key to skilled and technological workforces” (p. 8). School learning is also essential because of the nature of its reciprocity with social and societal learning. This is because, as well as the student acquiring the skills to participate in society, learning also enables society to refine its practices and replicate itself (Wenger, 1998). In the same way learning is complex not only because it is multifaceted but also, again, because of its reciprocity. Learning is not just one activity; it is neither teacher centred nor student centred (Hanks, 1991). Learning is both people and context centred; it is active, ongoing and occurs in co-participation with others (Hanks, 1991). Wenger’s (1998) components of a social theory of learning (fig 1) below shows the multifaceted and complex nature of learning

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¹ Kennedy and Cox (2008)
Learning, therefore, involves both participation and imagination and how a person makes meaning of context not only defines identity within that context but also the nature of membership to that context (Wenger, 1998). Learning as an activity, therefore, is reciprocal because it both depends on and creates the context within which it occurs.

Learning occurs in many contexts and in the gaps between contexts (Wenger, 1998). While this research study is specifically about participation, membership and identity in the context of school learning, the student as adolescent, friend and child makes meaning of, participates in, negotiates membership of and establishes identity in a number of different and sometimes overlapping contexts at the same time. Wenger (1998) defines these contexts as communities of practice; social groups whereby within, and in the spaces between, individuals derive meaning from their environment. He describes this complex social environment as “a landscape of practices” (Wenger, 1998, p.165); socially embedded groupings that are as much about who are not as who we are. Communities of practice are more than a committee that might come together for a specific project (Laluvein, 2010), they have understandings of shared enterprise, engagement, accountabilities and histories (Wenger, 1998). Schools are communities
of practice as are families, sports and friendship groups and businesses (Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). To this end any person will develop identities within any number of these groupings at any given time (Wenger, 1998) and each identity comes as a consequence of participation in, engagement with and imagination of context.

Members of communities of practice participate in a joint enterprise; belonging means they demonstrate shared engagement and accountability (Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). The joint enterprise for members of the school community of practice is to become educated adults (Laluvein, 2010); the shared engagement is learning and the accountability the acquisition of credentials. From the point of view of the globalization of education qualifications, this is an essential membership for full participation in society. A diagram of Wenger’s modes of belonging to a community of practice can be found in fig 2.

Wenger (1998) in fig 2 indicates the many potential points of contact a student may have with the school as a learning community. To Wenger (1998) full membership of an organisation is defined both by shared stories and agreed behavior. Figure 2 reveals that sharing and making meaning with other members of the community are essential activities to belonging to that community and that, in order to belong to a community of practice prospective members must align themselves with the ways of doing and the language of the organization. Finally members of a community must engage in shared storytelling and participate in shared relationships and be able to articulate what creates the community as separate, evolving and perpetual.
2.1.1 The school as a learning community

While many other activities take place in a school it is learning that is the practice that holds it together (Laluvein, 2010). The school as a community of practice is more than just a collection of buildings; it is a space or field within which all activities are associated with learning. In addition to this the school as a community of learners consists of many overlapping and sometimes intersecting related communities of practice. Teachers, for example, make up a community of practice as do adolescents, caregivers, principals, board of trustees members and senior executive staff members. Each community of practice within a school has a defined joint enterprise and a set of practices that establish a shared repertoire specifically related to learning within that community. Some of these communities of practice also have practices that connect them to practices that are outside the school. Figure 3 is a pictorial representation of the main communities of practice that overlap the school as a community of learners. The principal has a role within many of the associated communities of practice that make up the school as a learning community; the principal is a staff member, an executive staff member and a member of the school board of trustees. The same could be said of some teachers and possibly some caregivers. What is important is that the joint enterprise of each of these communities of practice together with the expectations and understandings that go with that enterprise while both different to all the other communities are at the same time essential to the functioning of all other communities of practice within the school as a learning community.
Figure three shows that the practices of boards of trustees relate specifically to the joint enterprise of maintaining the school as a learning community. In figure three above it is enclosed by the learning community. The same can be said for members of the senior executive of the school though not for the students because, while they are always actively engaged in situated learning (Wenger, 1998), that learning may or may not be directly related to school learning. Outside the school students become adolescents or family members or children; the same can be said for caregivers. Principals and teachers belong to larger communities of principals and teachers outside the school whose joint enterprise may be indirectly but not entirely specifically related to one school as a learning community. Principals, for example, are engaged in the practice of marketing the school (Brown, 2003; Nairn & Higgins, 2007).
Each community of practice that contributes to the school as a learning community has a set of expected practices. These practices are important because they set out the understandings each contributing community of practice has of the other. These practices can be extracted from a range of documents that describe the role of one community to another. Teacher performance management documents, for example, set out the practice of being a teacher (MOE, 1998) while an information leaflet to inform parents sets out the practices of the board of trustees. That these practices are described through Ministry of Education sources reveals the dominant role of the school in expectations and relationships. The practices of each community of practice within the school as a learning community have been summarized in Table two.

Table 2 learning practices in learning communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Have friends, have extracurricular activities, have self confidence, try hard, have good behaviour, relate well to teachers, have a sound level of achievement, be motivated to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregivers</td>
<td>Have established rules of behaviour, develop early learning of language, cognition and development, have rights and obligations, are responsible to send their child to school, show concern for their child, ensure their child does homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>Responsible for learning programmes and evaluation of programmes, staff development and appraisal, school safety, resource management, conflict management, community and board of trustees liaison, are the school leader who speaks on behalf of the school, school marketing, promote and improve the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Responsible for classroom learning programmes, to manage behaviour, establish a safe learning environment, respond to student need, use Te Reo Maori and protocols, are fair, have a sense of humour, listen to students, are cheerful, explain well, make learning fun, enjoy teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Executive</td>
<td>Attends to pastoral needs of students, manages learning outcomes, resource management, advice and guidance of staff, school safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
<td>Employs staff, responsible for the strategic direction of the school, ensures a safe environment, ensures quality learning, oversees resourcing, monitors and reviews, complies with legislative requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two shows that there are clear differences of expectation for the practices ascribed to school based communities of practice compared to those ascribed to the home. The delivery of the curriculum and the maintenance of a safe school environment appear in all of the different sets of practices for school personnel in school communities of practice: principals, senior teachers, teachers and boards of trustees. Some sources expect fairness, a sense of humour and engagement especially from classroom teachers who are the main group that, in the everyday sense, students come into contact with at school (Kennedy & Cox, 2008). The practices described for caregivers and students reveal the importance of understood behaviours to the learning community. Even though the joint enterprise is learning, behavior is an essential part of the environment for learning. Caregivers are expected to ensure that they have developed not only their child’s early language but also their child’s compliance with rules. The student is also expected to behave in a way that promotes learning e.g. tries and is motivated to learn.

Full membership of the school as a learning community goes further than just demonstrating an ability to perform certain practices, though that is important. Wenger’s (1998) modes of belonging encompasses the complexities of membership of the school as a learning community and is as much about recognition of the processes and artifacts that define the community as it is about performance of practices (Laluvein, 2010). Wenger (1998) describes belonging as alignment and engagement with and imagination of those artifacts and processes that define that community of practice. While communities of practice constantly evolve through the processes of reciprocity (Wenger, 1998) at any given time membership and belonging is about recognition of the community as it is now. That belonging also recognises the relative position of the community of practice to other communities; Lemke (2000) maintains that this understanding of relative position is particularly important between the school and wider society.

Moving beyond school to belonging to the wider society means acquiring the cultural capital the school provides (Bourdieu, 1986; Lemke, 2000). More than that both the student and the family must imagine those qualifications and align and engage with
the processes that enable them to be achieved (Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). Doing homework, completing assignments and participating in class work reveals that the student is aligned not only with the processes of the school (Cowley, 2001) but also that the student engages and is aligned with the shared histories that establish and validate those processes (Wenger, 1998). Acquiring school cultural capital is also a reciprocal process because, through alignment with the processes that the school as a community of practice recognises as valid, the student not only knows but becomes known (Danaher et al, 2000; Sfard & Prusak, 2005).

The school not only provides qualifications and certificates it also prepares students for civil life (Eckert, 2000). Alignment and engagement with the social life of the school e.g. the school council, the school ball and playing sport demonstrates the student’s imagination of belonging to the community. On a deeper and less visible level accumulated social capital both manifests and is manifested through alignment with the discourses of the school (Wenger, 1998). Understanding and using the language of school e.g. triadic dialogue (see Zevenbergen, 2000) and subject languages (Gee, 2001) both recognise and enable membership. This belonging also deposits positive social capital through points of contact and recognition of habitus that can be used at a later date (Bourdieu, 2000, 1986). Understanding and imagining the cumulative value of social capital is very important when problems arise between the student and the school e.g. a potential stand-down.

Membership of communities of practice is not an even or smooth process (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Some membership, through choice, is peripheral and some, not through choice, is marginal (Wenger, 1998). The existence of peripheral and marginal membership of the school as a community of practice is important to this study for a number of reasons. Both peripheral and marginal membership comes down to the degree of participation in the modes of belonging of the school each member has. The distinction is that peripheral participation is permitted by the member whereas the degree of participation of marginal members is that which is allowed by the community (Wenger, 1998). Stand-down restricts the participation a student is allowed albeit for a brief period. Participation is important to membership and identity and therefore learning (Wenger, 1998). The next section explains the
interconnectedness of participation, identity and membership and how this relationship works to create insider, marginalized or outsider identities in communities of practice.

2.1.2 Peripheral and marginal participation

The nature and degree of participation with the joint enterprise of any community of practice affects both the individual’s potential for full membership and, consequently, the development of a coherent identity (Wenger, 1998). Membership and thus identity comes through learning about and making meaning of the joint enterprise of the community (Wenger, 1998). Within any community of practice, however, there are degrees of both participation and non-participation though this does not mean that non-participation results in an identity of non-participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). New comers to an organisation, for example, are by necessity, peripheral participants to begin with because this creates the opportunity to learn about and derive meaning from the organisation (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this situation peripheral participation is an essential stage in a trajectory of eventual full participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In some situations individuals may remain as legitimate peripheral participants of the community while others remain as peripheral non-participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The guidance counselor in the school is an example of legitimate peripheral participation while the Social Worker in School (SWIS), an outsider working within the school for a specific purpose, is a peripheral non-participant and this difference defines their identity within and membership of the school community. Those roles, however, are recognised by the community and chosen by the individual.

Wenger (1998) distinguishes between two general types of non or partial participation; peripherality as already discussed and marginality which is more closely allied to discussions about the social Other (Joffe, 2007; Joffe & Staerkle, 2007; Philogène, 2007). One key difference between peripherality and marginality is the nature of the trajectory of the identity in that peripheral trajectories are in bound and marginal trajectories are out bound. Figure 4 demonstrates the difference between marginal and peripheral participation specifically in terms of trajectory.
One of the outcomes of marginal participation therefore is exclusion. The difference between marginal and peripheral participation is not only distinguished by the nature of the trajectory but also by the degree of agency the individual has in that participation (Hanks, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Marginal participation is specifically defined by the individual’s lack of choice in their restricted participation. Furthermore, where participation and non-participation interact to define each other membership can become marginal and problematic (Wenger, 1998). Groups of this nature exist within the school community e.g. dyslexic students. These students gain their participation status through being described in opposition (dys) to a key factor of the school’s joint enterprise which is being able to read and write (lexic). According to Wenger (1998) it is this reciprocity in definition between participation and non-participation that has the potential to marginalize them.

Marginality in an organisation comes about through restricted participation without the choice of the marginalised individual. Some groupings within the school community may, for various reasons, be marginalized through their restricted participation in those communities they belong to. Lave and Wenger’s (1991) study of older members of an organisation is reminiscent of those older members of a school staff who may have become marginal in membership and participation because of their
This marginality may affect the way they express their membership of the community while keeping them in a marginal position may have become so much a part of the practice of the staff that what holds them in that position has become invisible (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The research literature suggests that students defined as having special education needs may also be marginalised. Orr (2007), for example, describes a research study where children who fail to learn to read become marginalised in the classroom by the practices of the teacher. These children were placed close to the teacher’s desk and not included in classroom reading groups. Orr (2007) perceived that children separated in this way gained a separate status in the class that normalised the practice that separated the children as helping them but essentially removed the choice they had to show what they could do. In this example of marginality that is problematic for full membership (Wenger, 1998), these students were defined by their non-participation in classroom activities.

Thus, while peripheral participation is enabling and essential to future full participation, marginal participation is restricting (Wenger, 1998) because marginal identities are denied access to those trajectories essential to full participation. Marginal identities, though, are still insiders and retain membership of the community although marginal and with limited membership status. Because individuals construct identity narratives that enable them to position themselves in a coherent universe (Clarke et al, 2009), marginal participants construct identities that also rationalise and consolidate their marginal status (Wenger, 1998). According to Clarke et al (2009)

A narrative of self provides the human subject with a sense of continuity and coherence [...] rendering their lives in time sensible in terms of beginnings middles and endings [...] while they are generally open ended and lack clarity they are also readable rather than confused. (p. 326)

Marginal identities, like any identities, therefore, are coherent in themselves in terms of the context in which they are constructed and enable the individual to make sense of the reality they inhabit (Ybena, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis, & Sabelis, 2009).
Axelman’s (2006) study of American youth counter cultures at high school, Eckert’s (2000) study of the burnouts and Knipnis’ (2001) study of the lads all provide examples and descriptions of marginal communities within high school communities of practice. These communities within but on the margins of communities of practice have developed coherent identities within the school community that at the same time exist in counterpoint to the hegemonic descriptors that define full membership of the organisation (Wenger, 1998). Identity by alternative dress and attitude (Axelman, 2006), the lads’ focus on having a larf (Knipnis, 2001) and the contemptuous disregard of the jocks by the burnouts (Eckert, 2000) all define their group identities but in terms of non-participation with the joint enterprise of the community, that of educated adults. Marginality, therefore, which in this case is defined by the dominance of non-participatory roles, remains coherent both to the individual and to the organisation. Notwithstanding that, though, these marginal identities are also characterised by their outbound trajectories and thus their tendency towards early exit from the school system either through exclusion or early leaving (Axelman, 2006; Eckhert, 2000; Knipnis, 2001).

Some New Zealand (Church, 2003) and overseas (Dishion, Nelson, Winter & Bullock, 2004) research establishes a marginalised group of children and adolescents for whom behaviour denotes identity. The existence of this view, while it may only provide one version of the literature (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000), is important to this study because of its objectification to the construction of the social Other. For this group of students their behaviour is referred to as antisocial a description constructed in counterpoint with the desirable pro-social behaviour of the dominant majority. The Church Report (Church, 2003) places the responsibility for learning social behaviour on the home and family. Church (2003) maintains that while few children may develop antisocial behaviour in adolescence, children who: “do not engage in antisocial behaviour in childhood do not engage in antisocial behaviour in adolescence and adulthood” (p.3). In addition to this, according to Church (2003), children begin to experience the environments that put them at risk of later antisocial behaviour at a very young age. According to Church (2003)
The earliest sign that the young child may be heading towards an antisocial developmental pathway is the child's failure to acquire age-appropriate levels of compliance with parental instructions. In most families, compliance training begins early - around about the child's first birthday (p.19).

This failure of early environments eventually results in the child using coercive rather than pro-social means to negotiate relationships (Church, 2003). Church (2003) also makes the distinction between “most families” and links “antisocial development pathways” to those families who do not engage in early “compliance training”. Church’s construction of marginalised identities in the school community, their causes and origins, links antisocial behaviour to inadequate early learning in the family. This is an important social representation for this study because it may enable school personnel to dis-identify from responsibility for perceived antisocial behaviour manifested within the school community.

Moscovici (1998, 2001) suggests that the existence of groups makes it easier to attach potential members to the group. Church (2003) and Dishion et al, (2004) define the behaviour of a marginalised group for whom unacceptable behaviour denotes identity in opposite terms to those described in figure two above. Church (2003) and Dishion et al ( 2004) describe this group of “antisocial” students as characterised by “lack of self-control, retarded social development, low academic achievement, poor self-esteem, a lack of concern for others, and a lack of respect for authority” (Church, 2003, p. 26). Dishion et al (2004), who researched the incidence of deviant conversations between members of groups of young people with early onset antisocial behaviour, makes reference to the risky behaviours these young people become involved in. There are shared stories of oppositional behaviour, therefore, that define marginalised participation in schools as communities of practice. The words used to describe that behaviour have negative oppositional connotations that ascribe characteristics to membership of the group that are not part of the shared stories that define membership of the school as a community of practice.
An important task of any community of practice is how it rationalizes discord (Wenger, 1998). Those factors that define organisations also manifest as both cohesive and diverse forces within the organisation and reveal that organisations or communities of practice are at the one time drawing together while at the same time threatening to fly apart (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002; Goffman, 1971; Laluvein, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). These embedded social groupings are not necessarily peaceful they are environments where conflicts are continually arising and being resolved (Goffman, 1971; Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). Within communities of practice, as well as shared stories and imagination, there are also embedded ways to reconcile and resolve difference and conflict (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002; Goffman, 1971; Laluvein, 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Discordant factors are common to communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). Families as communities of practice, for example, may encompass divorce or perhaps degrees of family violence (Wenger, 1998). No matter what, a family is still engaged in a joint enterprise and as a consequence how the participants rationalise and make meaning from these discordant features become part of the joint enterprise that the family is engaged in (Laluvein, 2010). Similarly and as a consequence of this, individuals within the family develop identities that are coherent with that joint enterprise (Clarke et al, 2009). In the same way as families, schools also manage and rationalise discordant features. Marginalized group identities like those of the burnouts and the lads are examples of how communities rationalize discord. Standing a student down may also exist as one of the mechanisms designed to enable schools to resolve discord and conflict. These constructions of marginalized communities within communities of practice restrict participation (Wenger, 1998). Stand-down, as a practice and by definition, also restricts participation. What is critical to this study, though, is what happens following stand-down and how restricted participation, albeit brief, affects the individual’s access to full membership of the community.
2.2 Marginalised communities: the construction of the social and conceptual Other

Students who are stood down from school tend to come from recognised marginalized groups in society. Where groups or individuals derive their membership status in terms of non-participatory roles in opposition to community membership the result is marginalisation and, therefore, problematic (Wenger, 1998). To date most of the concern about students at risk of stand-down refers to the high incidence of stand-down in traditionally marginalized groups in society. Children of colour and those from low SES areas are over-represented in stand-down statistics produced each year by the Ministry of Education (see MOE, 2009a) in the same way as they are represented in negative statistics in wider society. There is evidence too from New Zealand and overseas studies that children whose access to the curriculum is restricted in some way; e.g. through special education needs, are also at higher risk of being stood-down from school (Grant, 2004; Hayden, 1997; Hayden & Dunne, 2001). This section of the review examines some of the literature on the potentially greater risk to exclusion that might exist for students from marginalized groups in society. The focus of this review is the risk to children of colour; the risk to children from low SES areas will be addressed in chapter 3.

Focusing on dialogical thinking or thinking in contrasts is an effective way of understanding social phenomena like the exclusion of defined cultural and social groups (Markovà, 1978). Research and theory identify a mutually informative relationship between dominant groups in society and their designated externalised or social Others (Joffe, 2007; Maloney & Walker, 2007; Liu & Lásló, 2007). Essentially the identity formation of these derogated groups arises from a dynamic model where social identity is “anchored in the in-group while getting objectified through contradistinction to a constructed social Other” (Philogène, 2007, p.31). Thus the dominant in-group both defines and is defined by the derogated out-group or social Other. The relationship between the dominant in-group and its derogated out-group is parasitic in that the dominant in-group obtains its positive social identity by counterpoint with the designated out-group. Essentially, the social Other is perceived
to exemplify those characteristics that are placed outside what the dominant in group considers acceptable (Joffe, 2007; Philogène, 2007). Furthermore because it is agency that denotes the person at the centre of the identity process (Joffe, 2007) this out-group or social Other, constructed by the in-group as an object of its fantasies, constitutes a negative mirror image without any agency or voice (Joffe, 2007).

The social Other is defined by behaviour that is unacceptable (Joffe, 2007). Joffe and Staerkle (2007) point to the protestant self-control ethos as “one of the organizing metaphors of personhood” (p. 402) against which the social Other exists in counterpoint. In western societies where individualism is a core value, self-control is “essentialised as a core feature of positive personal identity” (Joffe & Staerkle, 2007, p. 402). The social or external Other embodies the deficit of this valued identity and, as a perceived paucity of self-control, exists as “an instrument of exclusion and derogation” (p.396). Paucity of self-control, then, is the negative mirror image of a positive personal identity and the existence of the externalized Other enables people to locate threat within those categories with which they do not identify (Joffe, 2007). That “every social group has a set of vocabulary and images for its externalized Other” (Joffe, 2007, p. 205) suggests also that the externalized or social Other is constructed through language. Certain groups are traditionally associated with lack of self-control in some form: the unemployed, the poor, people of colour, people with mental illness, and the obese (Joffe, 2007; Joffe & Staerkle, 2007). As a consequence these aspersions of poor self-control enable these groups to be defined by the dominant culture as less valued or respected than those seen to embody self-control (Joffe & Staerkle, 2007).

2.2.1 The social Other and stand-down in New Zealand
Standing a student down is a physical expression of separation from the school community for unacceptable behaviour. According to Joffe (2007) acts of this nature “aim to rid the community of impure elements-those represented as a source of chaos” (pp 199-200). In New Zealand children of colour and those from low SES areas are disproportionately represented in statistics for school exclusion e.g. stand-down. New Zealand and worldwide research suggests that factors such as negative group stereotyping, thinking in deficits and ‘soft’ interpretations of human rights and anti-racism legislation serve to create the gaps and missed understandings that orchestrate
the school lives of children of colour (Axelman, 2006; Bishop, 2003; Myers, 2005; Parsons, 2008, 2009; Philogène, 2007; Ogbu, 1978; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Petersen, 2002). Ministry of Education statistics for school stand-down reveal that the process of stand-down may also have become attached to children of colour who are often over-represented in the statistics for low income children also (MOE, 2009a). New Zealand is not alone in the world for its high rate of short term fixed exclusion (or stand down) rates for children of colour. Australian Aboriginal students, African Caribbean students and African American students are all noted as having higher rates of short term fixed exclusion than their proportion in the general school population. Parsons (2009), refers to the complacency with which these statistics are received and the lack of action in reducing them as a kind of passive racism. Parsons (2009) emphasises the need to go beyond recording and remarking about the statistics on disproportionate rates of short term exclusion for children of colour to facing the issues that underpin them.

2.2.2 Equal in theory and by definition but not in fact

By law Māori, Pasifika, Aboriginal, African Caribbean and African American minorities are equal to those of the dominant culture and to other immigrant minorities in their respective countries. Each individual is a citizen; each has equal rights. The reality, however, is somewhat different (Philogène, 2007) and this difference is very obvious in the outcomes the children of these non-immigrant minorities receive through the education system (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). Many ethnic minorities around the world within populations similar to New Zealand fare poorly at school compared to the dominant population especially but not entirely in the area of school exclusion (Skiba et al, 2002). Significantly these minority ethnic school populations tend to be those for children of colour (Parsons, 2009). A report from The New Zealand Human Rights Commission (HRC, 2007) demonstrates this disparity between enacted legislation and evidence of outcomes when it states that;

“New Zealand generally complies with and exceeds international standards in terms of its legislation and policies on race relations” (HRC, 2007, Chapter 18, p.7)
Then in the same report also states:

“Despite considerable investment and some indications of improvement, significant racial inequalities continue to exist in health housing employment, education, social services and justice” (HRC, 2007, Chapter 18, p. 18).

British research by Parsons (2008, 2009) attributes this disparity between legislation and practice to ‘soft’ (Parsons, 2009) interpretations of legislation and ‘vague’ (Parsons, 2008) policy around racial equality. Schools through their boards of trustees and principals have the opportunity to take a hard line on racial and other discrimination and to “discuss policies and their impact on different groups” (Parsons, 2008, p. 403). What tends to happen, however, is that policy takes a “race neutral form dressed in the vocabulary of equal opportunities” (Parsons, 2008, p. 416). The resulting policy produces “sanitised and righteous bases for schools to explain away underachievement and over representation in exclusions for one group” (p.416).

The Human Rights Commission’s (2007) report and Parsons’ (2008) British research appear to be both echoes and reiterations of John Ogbu’s thirty year old research into the causes of marginalization for Māori in New Zealand in 1978. According to Ogbu’s (1978) study Māori were designated as Māori by the dominant white culture in terms of skin colour and that while “open discrimination is rare; most of it is subtle, covert and extralegal” (Ausubel, 1960, quoted in Ogbu, 1978, p. 268). Myers (2005) and Philogène, (2007) draw the same conclusions with African American populations in the United States nearly thirty years later. Ogbu (1978) argues, like Myers (2005) and Philogène, (2007) that inequality comes about through everyday interaction and concourse. He further proposes that while governments herald education as the means to eliminate inequality, if the assumptions both about the causes of inequality and the actual function of education are incorrect this expected transformation through education is unlikely to occur.

Ogbu (1978) Ogbu and Simons (1998) and Philogène, (2007) refer to the fixed, subordinate status attached to certain ethnic minorities which make up disenfranchised groups across the world. According to both Ogbu and Simons (1998) and Philogène, (2007) these cultural minorities exist in juxtaposition with the
dominant usually white majority. Essentially both the dominant majority and the involuntary minority (or social Other) are defined in terms of each other and the frame of reference for the subordinate group is negative (Ogbu & Simons, 1998). This means that the subordinate minority tends to be defined in terms of what the majority is not (Philogène, 2007); in the case of children of colour whiteness is defined in terms of blackness (Myers, 2005). As a consequence, because subordinate minorities tend to be viewed in terms of what they do not have, policy and programmes designed to eliminate inequalities tend to be framed in terms of what they must lose in order to be included (Bishop, 2003). Bishop (2003) refers to the language that predominates in these gaps in expectations as deficit discourses which ascribe “fundamental, immutable, characteristics” and “rooted identities” (Bishop, 2003, p.224) to groups in society that are in themselves diverse. Deficit discourses are negative stereotyping and ascribe group characteristics to individuals in terms of differences in social, physical, economic, and cultural definition (Bishop, 2003). Effectively they establish dichotomies; black/white, rich/poor, enabled/disabled, employed/unemployed. These dichotomies are defined in terms of the desirable opposite and the result is subordination of the conceptual opposite (Myers, 2005, Philogène, 2007). Compensatory funding and programmes which are framed by this difference tend to be designed to make Māori, white; the poor, middle class; and the disabled, enabled (Bishop, 2003).

Research suggests that the social and conceptual Other is continually constructed through language (Bishop and Berryman, 2006; Myers, 2005). The literature suggests that these social mechanisms that maintain that position are not only innate in that they are part of the “common sense” way of doing things but are also hidden in that those processes that maintain inequality are articulated through everyday casual concourse and conversation (Marková, 1996; Myers, 2005). Research by Bishop and Berryman (2006) presents an example of the difference between the social and the cultural Other as it may operate through language in a New Zealand school. In this research Bishop and Berryman (2006) collected data from Māori students about their experiences of being Māori at school. Bishop and Berryman (2006) interviewed both
‘engaged’ and ‘non-engaged’ students as well as members of whanau. In one interview with an ‘engaged’ Māori student she says:

We do a unit on respecting others’ cultures. Some teachers who aren’t Māori try to tell us what Māori do about things like a tangi. It’s crap! I’m a Māori! They should ask me about Māori things. I could tell them about why we do things in a certain way. I’ve got the goods on this but they never ask me. I am a dumb Māori I suppose. Yet they asked the Asian girl about her culture. They never ask us about ours. (p.76)

What is significant about this comment, by a student Bishop and Berryman (2006) define as ‘engaged’, reveals that the student’s perception she is treated differently because of her ethnicity. The Māori student disagrees with the teacher’s knowledge; “It’s crap!” The omission is perceived by the Māori student as undervaluing the Māori student’s culture while at the same time implying the school values the Asian student’s culture. The Māori student also perceives that the school regards her as “dumb” because she is Māori and as a consequence identifies a conflict between critical, immutable, elements of her actual identity and those she perceives as being desirable by the school (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Ogbu’s (1998) assertion is that involuntary minorities are not defined by race but about personal histories that are being constantly written and rewritten through these unresolved interactions. Myers’ (2005) research into everyday conversations about race in the United States shows how these histories are maintained and perpetuated through casual concourse; that racetalk is the norm rather than the exception. Through covertly recording everyday conversations she showed that not only do people use racetalk as a normal part of everyday conversation they also know that they should not and as a consequence racetalk tends to become hidden in natural informal dialogue and absent from more formal and public interactions. Myers’ (2005) research reports a taped informal conversation between Hedwig, the researcher, and Lanie, her friend

The service was really bad. Two black people sitting next to us in a booth got up to leave. I said, “Do you think those people are pissed too and that is why they are leaving?” Lanie said, “Oh because the service is bad? That’s why those...Oh I
stopped myself (from saying niggers). I said sarcastically, “Oh I am so happy I could just cry! I am so happy you stopped yourself!” She just whispered, “No they are still niggers. I just didn't want to say it too loud because there are people around.” (p.26)

Myers (2005) found that racetalk was such a part of everyday conversation that it is innate, “It is so much a part of the fabric of our past and present lives that it is often invisible or appears to be inevitable. The hegemony of racism makes it difficult to recognise, discuss and challenge [it]” (p. 22). Research like Myers (2005) has not been undertaken in New Zealand yet despite Ausubel’s (1960) suggestion of the covert extra-legal nature of racism in New Zealand. What Myers (2005) found suggests covert real life expressions of habitus (Bourdieu, 1986) and hidden expectations of cultural and social capital contribute significantly to any field of interaction but in an invisible way.

2.3 Managing behaviour
In the first part of this chapter it was discussed that membership of communities of practice comes about through alignment with the community’s practices. The landscape of practices that contribute to the school as a learning community, set out in table 3 (p.17) reveals the importance of school appropriate behaviour to enabling the operation of a community of learners. School personnel are required to keep the school environment safe, parents to teach appropriate rules for behaviour to their children and students to behave appropriately and positively. While learning practices are the joint enterprise of the learning community acceptable behaviour is the glue that holds it together. The previous section about the construction of the social and conceptual Other shows the relationship between behaviour and marginality in society. It also shows that what we recognise as unacceptabl e behaviour is thrust out as a means to construct positive personal and community images.

This third part of this chapter investigates behaviour to show that ensuring young people grow up behaving appropriately is an essential and historical responsibility of communities (Marková, 1996; Moscovici, 1993; Wenger, 1998). The central argument is that alignment with the rules of behaviour of any community of practice is an important factor in the community’s ability to replicate itself (Wenger, 1998).
Historically communities have always been concerned about the apparent lawlessness of young people. Over the last thirty years, however, expected responses to unacceptable behaviour have become more punitive which may have led to a perception that society is more violent than it was in the past (Monterosso, 2009; Moscovici, 1993). This is a trend which may also have had an impact on the disproportionate increase in the numbers of students stood-down from school compared to school roll and suspension statistics.

2.3.1 *We live in a decaying age. Young people no longer respect their parents*\(^2\)

The increase in stand-downs in the last twenty years might give people cause to wonder if the behaviour of children is getting worse. The reasons principals give for standing down students might suggest some alarming behaviour by children in school. In 2008 for example, the reasons principals gave for stand-down were recorded as physical and verbal assault on teachers and students, theft, arson, substance abuse, drug behaviour, alcohol and continual disobedience (MOE, 2009a). The fact that there were more than 20000 incidents of this nature in 2008 suggests a grim picture of behaviour in New Zealand schools. The issue of disruptive students in school was acknowledged by the New Zealand Government through the Revell Report (Education and Science Committee, 1995) as early as 1995 (Taylor-Smith, 1998). The Revell Report (Education and Science Committee, 1995) on the inquiry into children at risk through truancy and behaviour recommended a number of initiatives to address the issue of disruptive students in school (Education and Science Committee, 1995). In Great Britain the past twenty years has seen an increase in concern about the behaviour of children in society. In 1989 Lord Elton was commissioned to enquire into discipline in schools, the outcome of which has had a profound impact on legislation and policy around children’s behaviour in school (Hayden, 2007).

\(^2\) Inscriptio, 6000 year-old Egyptian tomb
An appetite for punishment?

There is also a view that society is becoming more punitive (Allison, 2007; Hayden, 2007; Monterosso, 2009; Moscovici, 1993; Parsons, 2009); that “Punishment [...] has once again become highly fashionable and is embraced warmly by the public who are now more angered and resentful” (Monterosso, 2009, p. 13). Monterosso (2009) suggests that any increased expectation for punishment may have come about as a consequence of fundamental changes in society. The last twenty years has seen an increase in the demand for punishment as a means to respond to unacceptable behaviour (Allison, 2007; Giroux, 1997; Monterosso, 2009; Moore, 2002; Revington & Nippert, 2004). Research, especially by media researchers (Allison, 2007; Moore, 2002; Monterosso, 2009), suggests that society is becoming more vengeful and punitive and that there is only a perception that society is less safe than it used to be (Revington & Nippert, 2004). The outcome of this is a greater demand for and expectation of punishment as a means to respond to behaviour (Allison, 2007; Revington & Nippert, 2004). This increase in the demand for visible punishment has been attributed both to the increasing intrusion of the media into everyday life (Allison, 2007; Moore, 2002; Monterosso, 2009) and to the political benefit that can be gained from appearing to take a hard line on crime (Monterosso, 2009). Through the media the life of the victim is sentimentalised and the perpetrator, demonised (Giroux, 1997) and criminalised (Monterosso, 2009); the outcome of which establishes alternative, socialised Other groups in the community that are perceived as not like us (Liu & Lásló, 2007).

Monterosso (2009) and Moore (2002) refer particularly to the way the media criminalises particular socialised Other groups in society. Moore (2002) for example provided examples of African Americans being targeted by the media in news stories making it sound as if all the crime was being committed by African Americans and Hispanics rather than people across society. Monterosso (2009) also states that “the relentless attack of those groups seen as disadvantaged or undesirable in society [...]”

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3 Allison, 2007
relies upon images, stereotypes and particularly anxiety rather than research” (p. 17). Some writers and researchers suggest that governments encourage this “popular punitivism” (Monterosso, 2009, p. 13) because a culture of fear (Moore, 2002) enables “power management and vote buying” (Monterosso, 2009, p. 13) and a “more authoritarian approach to crime and offending” (p.15). The outcome of this appetite for punishment is increased incarceration even where crime rates are falling, and the return of punitive practices like boot camps, zero tolerance and no frills prisons (Monterosso, 2009).

In schools popular punitivism has been most obvious in the trend towards zero tolerance policies (Miller, 2000). The movement began in the late 1990’s in the United States following a series of school shootings (Miller, 2000: Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Originally zero tolerance was a response;

“at the far end of a continuum of response to what has become the largely unquestioned assumption that school violence is accelerating at an alarming rate and that increasingly draconian disciplinary measures are not only justified but necessary to guarantee school safety” (Skiba & Peterson, 1999, p 372)

Eventually as schools adopted zero tolerance policies their use was often broadened to include anything from specific situations like the possession of drugs and weapons to more general infringements of school behaviour (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Zero tolerance is a one size fits all solution (Henault, 2001: Miller, 2000) that is regularly accompanied by phrases like send a clear message (Henault, 2001; Miller, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Although this message appears strong and authoritarian to school boards, communities, parents and other students there is very little research into whether the use of zero tolerance in schools reduces offending and improves safety (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). On the other hand there is evidence of zero tolerance policies discriminating against minorities (Henault, 2001; Kajs, 2006; Miller, 2000) and being unjust because zero tolerance does not take context into account (Kajs, 2006). According to Henault (2001) the use of zero tolerance policies:

“endangers the development of two concrete areas in middle and high school children’s lives: first, the development of trusting relationships with adult
figures in their lives (especially adult figures in school), and second, the development of a positive attitude towards justice and fairness in society” (Henault, 2001, p. 549).

Henault (2001) questions reactions that punish the deed without addressing the context. Henault (2001) sees the middle and high school years as a time to develop trusting relationships with adults outside the orbit of the family and as a key period in which young people develop a positive attitude towards justice and fairness in society.

Skiba and Peterson (1999) make reference to how the perception of increasing violence in society spills over into an expectation of increasing violence in school and a demand for more draconian and punitive measures to meet that violence. The media in New Zealand seem to verify the community’s expectation of violence in school with emotive headlines like “Classroom attack ringleader banned” - under the heading ‘SCHOOL VIOLENCE’-, “Rivals invade college” and “Girls’ attack on Thai pupil part of everyday ‘race hate’”. All three headlines appeared in the same edition of the Christchurch Press (3/09/2009). The three stories came from three different New Zealand cities, Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch respectively. The headlines use words in each of these headlines like ‘attack’, ‘invade’, ‘rivals’, ‘banned’ and ‘race hate’ that suggest that schools are not places of safety. The use of paralegal language in Ministry of Education documents also suggests a miasma of disorder in New Zealand schools. When principals report stand-down they fill in the reason for the stand-down under set headings like ‘physical assault on a teacher/student’ and ‘verbal assault on a teacher/student’. This environment of violence within the boundaries of the school, however, is not corroborated by research by Marsh, McGee, Nada-Raja and Williams, (2008) into physical aggression in New Zealand secondary schools. According to Marsh et al (2008) the physical assault on a student probably referred to a fight and ‘verbal assault on a teacher’ probably to ‘harsh language’ (p. 94). The word ‘assault’ is not a neutral term despite its use in legal and paralegal language; it contributes to the culture of fear - referred to by Skiba and Peterson (1999)- which has the potential to result in the expectation of more formal more punitive responses to children’s behaviour in school (Marsh et al, 2008).
Increasing violence in schools: reality or perception?

“What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders, they disobey their parents. They ignore the law. They riot in the streets inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?”

Plato, 4th Century BC.

It can be seen that both Plato in the 4th century and an unknown graffiti artist of 6000 years ago had similar concerns about ill-disciplined youth to those raised in the Revell Report (Education and Science Committee, 1995) and the Elton Report (1989). Each generation, it appears, is alarmed by the lawlessness of its youth (Moscovici, 1993). Most young people, however, survive being young and go on to be alarmed about the delinquency of their own children; older people, too, are remarkably nostalgic about their own, apparently degenerate, youth (Moscovici, 1993). Our perceptions, however, affect the way we respond (Hayden, 2007; Marková, 1978; Monk, 2005; Moscovici, 1988; Smith, David & Kirby, 2009). Principals are responsible for judging and addressing unacceptable behaviour in school in their position as gatekeepers of the school as a place of safety that is projected into the school community (MOE, 1998; Monk, 2005). Zero tolerance policies present a visible way to address the concerns of the community about the safety of the school (Henault, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

There is some evidence, however, that young people may be more violent than they were in the past. Statistics from the Ministry of Justice (2010) set out trends in youth offending over 17 years from 1992-2008. While overall child and youth offending has decreased during that time, rates for youth (years 14-16) in some reported areas have increased. Over the period, for example, the rates for youth apprehension for violence have increased to 13% above the average and this is regarded as a generally increasing trend (Ministry of Justice, 2010). Statistics collected by the Ministry of Education (2012, 2012a) also indicate an increasing trend in violence in schools. Recent data from the Ministry of Education (2012) reveals that there has been a decrease in the number of students stood-down, suspended and excluded from New Zealand schools since the
peak of 2006. The breakdown of the data, however, reveals that, while overall statistics have shown a small but steady decrease, data collected for incidents related to forms of physical or verbal violence have not decreased and in some areas show a gradual increase (MOE, 2012a). This steadily increasing trend in violence among those students who are also likely to be in years 9-11 at school might impact on the general sense of unease about safety in school.

The New Zealand Post Primary Teachers’ Association (PPTA), the secondary teachers’ union, expressed concern over an increase in violent behaviour in schools. In 2004, PPTA surveyed all secondary schools to assess the degree, type and level of bullying of staff in schools. The report on the survey stated that nearly a third of all teachers had experienced minor forms of bullying on a daily or weekly basis (Benefield, 2004). New Zealand Ministry of Education data used for the PPTA report by Benefield (2004) also revealed that between 2002 and 2003 the number of assaults on teachers by students were on the rise and that these assaults had increased from 537 in 2002 to 637 in 2003; a rise of 20% in one year (Benefield, 2004). Suspension, rather than stand-down, tends to be the response used by schools for any assault on teachers (see MOE, 2009a, 2009b). While suspensions decreased by 12.5% between 2002 and 2008 (MOE, 2009b) the percentage share for suspensions for assault on teachers has increased from 2.9% to 5% of the total number of suspensions. This together with a steady increase in the percentage share of suspensions for bringing weapons to school (MOE, 2009b) might suggest that there is some hard evidence that the society young people interact with is at least more violent than before and that this trend may be increasing.

It is uncertain, however, whether the increase in statistics reporting violence in schools has occurred as a consequence of increased expectation of punitive responses to behaviour. Essentially the increase in violence may be more perception and expectation than reality (Henault, 2001; Monterosso, 2009; Skiba & Peterson, 1999). Recent research in New Zealand “examine[d] principals’ and counsellors’ perceptions of the prevalence, determinants and prevention of physical aggression among New Zealand (NZ) secondary school students” (Marsh et al, 2008, p. 89). The research surveyed all New Zealand secondary school and received replies from approximately 60% of secondary school principals and 66% of school guidance counsellors. The
research found that, despite the evidence in research like the PPTA teacher survey (see Benefield, 2004), school principals and counsellors felt that, while fights occur occasionally, physical aggression, especially weapon carrying, in New Zealand schools is infrequent and that harsh language and absenteeism due to truancy was more of a problem. This may indicate that there is a greater perception among teachers and in the community that schools are unsafe than exists with those that are required to address issues of violence in school.

While Marsh et al’s (2008) study indicated that all but 7% of schools interviewed had procedures to deal with violence, school counsellors stated that many teachers lacked skills in managing violence and school procedures to manage violence were often inadequately carried through. Research by Chaplain (2003), the Elton Report (1989) and the Revell Report (1995) supports this view. Both Chaplain (2003) and Marsh et al (2008) raise the need for more resources and training for teachers to help them manage violence effectively; a recommendation also expressed in both the Revell Report (Education and Science Committee, 1995) and the Elton Report (1989). The research by Marsh et al (2008) also questions the difference between the evidence of physical aggression cited by principals and that cited by counsellors suggesting that school counsellors may either see more physical aggression than principals or that, perhaps, principals played down the evidence of physical aggression in the school for other reasons outside the study.

Although, according to the PPTA study, teachers were concerned about the increase in very bad behaviour it is the ongoing stress of having to manage low level misbehaviour that most teachers find wearing (Chaplain, 2003; Elton, 1989; Kokkinos, 2007; Reid, 1999). An increase in the numbers of students stood down for continual disobedience over ten years (see MOE, 2009a) may indicate either that the amount of minor and ongoing disruption has also increased or that teachers and principals are less tolerant than they were. There is some evidence that school populations contain significant numbers of children with unresolved problems that manifest as poor behaviour, that teachers have limited training to manage these children (Chaplain, 2003) and that these children tend to be over-represented in school statistics for unacceptable behaviour (Hayden, 2007; Chaplain, 2003). Identified conditions such as Attention
Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Brain Injury can present difficulties in the classroom for the teacher, the identified student and for other students (Chaplain, 2003). In a limited number of instances the student may receive some extra support. For the majority, however, the behaviour is challenging but undiagnosed and there is little hope of extra support (Chaplain, 2003).

Research by Sutton (2000) in Great Britain suggests that adolescence can be a troubled period in a young person’s. Sutton (2000) found that 10-15% of 14 year olds have emotional and behavioural difficulties and that, if those adolescents suffering “marked distress” are included, the figure rises to 22% (p. 203). According to Sutton (2000) 40% of British adolescents also suffer depression to a greater or lesser degree. Sutton’s (2000) research describes the operating styles of adolescents with emotional and behavioural difficulties as being overly sensitive and as attributing hostile intentions to others. These young people have few non-aggressive solutions, while at the same time they underestimate their own level of aggression (p. 213). Students in trouble at school are also likely to be in trouble at home (Hayden, 2007). Hayden’s (2007) research suggests that being suspended from school is just one part of a collection of difficulties for some students that overlap the student’s home, school and community existence. Truancy and minor youth offending are two of these complex difficulties that are not only located in one site. Hayden (2007) suggests that early intervention that enables parents to participate assertively in resolving their child’s behaviour can be effective.

Effective management of children’s inappropriate behaviour is an important issue for home and school. Managing behaviour has been identified not only as a significant contributor to teacher stress but also that teachers who are under stress do not manage behaviour well (Santavirta, Solovieva, & Theorell, 2007). Both Hayden (1997, 2007) and Chaplain (2003) suggest that programmes that improve teacher management of behaviour can make classrooms safer and more peaceful places for all members of the school community. Research also suggests that parents find it difficult to access the help they need for their child when problems arise (Hayden, 2007). Interventions like the Sure Start programme that provide one stop access to parents is an early intervention programme directed at workless households in Britain and
designed to eliminate child poverty. Research of the effectiveness of the Sure Star programme with low income parents showed positive outcomes where accessible resources enabled parents to act assertively with their child’s behaviour (Hayden, 2007).

One aspect of unresolved behaviour in New Zealand schools that is frequently in the news is the apparent high incidence of bullying in schools. Bullying is a difficult and growing problem in schools both in New Zealand and in other countries (Benefield, 2004; Hayden, 1997; Mooij, 2005; Nairn & Smith, 2002; Ross & Horner, 2009). Hayden (2007) connects bullying with formal exclusion from school. New Zealand schools, however, do not give bullying as a reason for either stand-down or suspension (see Moe, 2009). It is significant that the categories provided by the Ministry of Education for stand-down and suspension bear close similarity to the types of activities listed as bullying behaviour by Benefield (2004), Nairn and Smith (2002) and Ross and Horner (2009). It is unclear, however, whether some stand-down events occur as a consequence either of single actions within a bullying context or of responses to bullying. Bullying in schools is often described as an issue of school culture rather than school violence (Mooij, 2005; Ross & Horner, 2009) and that the key to reducing bullying in school is constant vigilance (Nairn & Smith, 2002). At this point, therefore, managing bullying appears to be an example of how the school as a community of practices manages discord internally. Some research makes comment about the close association between being bullied and being a bully; that children who bully have frequently been bullied themselves (Hayden, 2007; Nairn & Smith, 2002; Ross & Horner, 2009). Experiencing bullying marginalises and excludes individuals from groups within a community (Mooij, 2005; Nairn & Smith, 2002; Ross & Horner, 2009). It is particularly relevant to studies of marginality because of the potential of bullying to restrict access to full participation and therefore full membership (Wenger, 1998).

2.4 Conclusion
The joint enterprise of a school as a community of practice is to promote learning in young people (Laluvein, 2010). Ministry of Education statistics on school leaver qualification (MOE, 2007c) suggest that, in most cases and, for most students,
membership of the school as a community of learners is an effective way to achieve the
skills and qualifications of an adult learner. Wenger (1998) describes the membership
of communities of practice in terms of modes of belonging divided under the three
categories of imagination, alignment and engagement which indicates the complex
nature of membership. Membership of communities of practice requires both shared
experiences and agreed behaviours and these reciprocal understandings ensure the
school community functions through its landscape of practices. One of these
reciprocal understandings is the establishment of agreed codes of behaviour that
enable school personnel to maintain an environment of safety appropriate for learning.
The rules under which schools as communities of learners operate, described in
legislation, policy and other print matter, place the responsibility for a safe learning
environment with different communities of school personnel: principals, executive
teachers, teacher and boards of trustees. The home is responsible for ensuring the
necessary behaviours are taught and the student for behaving in an acceptable way.

Wenger (1998) emphasises the close relationship between membership and
participation. Essentially the nature of participation defines membership. Some
membership, by necessity, is defined by peripheral participation while some
membership, through lack of choice is defined by marginal participation. Marginalised
membership is an important construct for this study because of the statistical
association between established marginalised groups in society and the risk of stand-
down from school. Language about behaviour constructs marginalised groups both in
schools and in the wider community. Marginalised membership is constructed, using
oppositional language in term of behaviours undesirable and in opposition to the
dominant majority. Nevertheless marginalised groups, whether in schools as
communities of learners or in the wider society are still members and though their
membership is described as non-participatory and oppositional still create coherent
identities both in terms of how they perceive their position in the community and in
terms of how they perceive the community perceives them. Marginalised individuals,
therefore, no matter that they are constructed through the negative perceptions of the
dominant majority still have agency to act but within their marginalised identity.
Acceptable behaviour is the glue that holds communities of learners together. Traditionally societies despair of the lawlessness of youth so any evidence that our society is more violent than those of the past may be a perception. Western societies are becoming increasingly punitive and demanding visible responses to unacceptable behaviour and this might have had a greater impact on an increase in stand-downs than any perceived deterioration in the behaviour of young people. In the next chapter the focus of the school as a community of learners turns to the use of the stand-down event as a means to manage behaviour. At the point where the principal chooses to use stand-down to respond to unacceptable behaviour, the behaviour and school safety practices listed in table two on page 17 take precedence over those directly related to learning. At this point the student’s membership of the school as a community of learners is set on an outbound trajectory, albeit possibly briefly. Monk (2005) maintains that the point at which the decision to exclude a student is made a change occurs in the student’s membership of the school. This decision is not a simple matter of choice. Chapter three focuses on the interaction of factors and conceptual tools that may affect the decision making of the principal at stand-down.
Chapter three: Review of the literature: The decision to stand-down is not a simple choice

Although the central activity of the school as a community of learners is learning, establishing and maintaining codes of behaviour is crucial to the smooth and effective delivery of that learning (Chaplain, 2003; Jones, 2007). The decision to stand a student down is taken by the principal (MOE, 2009) and central to that decision is a set of behavioural standards (MOE, 2009). The framework within which the principal makes the decision to stand-down is set by legislation through the Education Act 1989 (NZ Government, 1989). To decide to stand a student down the principal must consider the behaviour of the student to be either gross misconduct or entrenched behaviour or likely to cause harm to other students (NZ Government, 1989). The gross misconduct should be “striking and reprehensible to a high degree” (MOE, 2009, p. 5). The entrenched behaviour should be likely to undermine discipline and safety standards and any harm caused as a consequence of the behaviour can be either physical or emotional e.g. distress (MOE, 2009). It was argued in Chapter 2 that the school as a landscape of practices depends on codes of behaviour. The decision to stand a student down because of behaviour changes the membership status of that student because it restricts participation (Wenger, 1998). The decision to stand a student down is only made for certain breaches of codes of behaviour (MOE, 2009a); other breaches e.g. resolving bullying appear to exist within the internal processes the community has to manage conflict.

The focus of this chapter is the role of the principal as decision maker in the practice of stand-down. This chapter argues that the decision to stand a student down comes as a consequence of rationalising a number of competing and possibly oppositional discourses. These are big discourses; philosophical or hegemonic and an integral part of the long timescale narratives that mediate decision making about behaviour both in school and in the wider community (Gee, 2010; Lemke, 2000). While the principal has the right to respond to unacceptable or dangerous behaviour by standing a student down from school that response is a choice among other responses (Monk, 2005). As
previously stated, in New Zealand in 2008 there were more than 20000 stand-down events (MOE, 2009a) a 600% increase in the past twenty years. This suggests that the choice to stand-down is being taken much more often than in the past. The decision to stand-down is not a simple matter of choice; many independent but related discourses mediate the choices principals make to use stand-down or any other form of suspended attendance to address unacceptable behaviour in school. Rationalising these “essential irrationalities” (Billig, 2002, p. 174) places pressure on the decision to stand-down. A comment by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2005) in one of its summaries of stand-down is an example of this rationalization of the “big discourses” (Gee, 2010) that mediate decision making. According to the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2005) the decision to stand down is not taken lightly by principals; what is foremost is the importance of all students attending school so they can participate fully in society (Hattie, 1999). This rationalization places the right to stand-down for unsafe or dangerous behaviour as hierarchically more important than a child’s right to education.

The increase in the number of stand-down events in the last twenty years has resulted in a revision of the guidelines on stand-downs, suspensions and exclusions from the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2007b, 2009). The guidelines created in 2007 (MOE, 2007b) were in the process of being revised and rewritten at the time that this research study was undertaken. These guidelines set out the expected practices of principals when an incident occurs that may result in a decision to stand-down a student. Information sheets provided by the Ministry of Education for the use of families at stand-down set out the expected practices of caregivers and students at stand-down (MOE, online). These practices are summarized in table 3.
Table 3 The practices of stand-down

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Parent/caregiver</th>
<th>Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimise risk by following the rules.</td>
<td>Stay calm</td>
<td>Return to school on the date given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act legally</td>
<td>Talk to the child</td>
<td>May be required to attend counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document the investigation</td>
<td>May ask to meet with the principal</td>
<td>May be able to attend some classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have confidence in the evidence</td>
<td>Talk to the principal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the student’s individual circumstances</td>
<td>Listen to both sides of the story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider the circumstances before making a decision</td>
<td>Advocate for the child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Put the facts to the student and record the response.</td>
<td>Work with the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider any denial fairly</td>
<td>Work out and agree to a shared plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act fairly.</td>
<td>Seek help and guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply the Principles of Natural Justice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inform the parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a copy of the rules/legislation if asked</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat people with respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source MOE (2007e, 2009), MOE (online)

The practices of the principal emphasise rigorous documentation and fairness. The practices of the parent emphasise, advocacy and engagement and for the student,
compliance. The guidelines (MOE, 2007e, 2009) suggest an active role for parents at stand-down while the student’s role appears more passive. Wenger’s (1998) theory of situated learning in communities of practice suggests that marginalized membership restricts agency. Stand-down, by definition, marginalizes the student because it restricts participation, it is not the student’s choice and it sets the student on an outbound trajectory (Wenger, 1998). The practices summarized above do not permit choice or agency for the student. The practices of stand-down set out in the guidelines suggest a problem solving model for parents and the principal to work through the situation that has upset the balance of the learning community. There is no requirement in the guidelines for the principal and the parents to meet; the responsibility for requesting a meeting sits with the parent. This suggests that it is desirable for parents to take an assertive role in the stand-down process. Issues discussed later in this chapter reveal that some groups of parents, specifically those overrepresented in the stand-down statistics, may find this kind of approach to the school more difficult than other parents.

Many external factors and traditional hegemonic discourses impact on the principal’s decision to stand a student down. In addition to the big discourse about the right to education, recent discourses about the impact of the globalization of Western economies on education since the end of World War Two and the ascendancy of neoliberal philosophies in education over the last twenty years have affected both the philosophies that underpin education and the processes through which education is delivered (Apple, 1996, 2006). The globalization of world economies emphasises the importance of credentials and remaining in school (Apple, 2006); neoliberal philosophies emphasise the importance of market choice. The introduction of markets into education, however, has been found to impact negatively on students at risk of marginalization in school (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). Traditional hegemonic discourses about social class and behaviour, however, may also impact on the principal’s decision. The principal, for example, may take a particular stance with reference both towards the white middle class ethos of education and towards societal views of acceptable behavior. Finally the traditional relationships and responsibilities the principal has towards belonging to a series of teams within the landscape of communities that make
up the school and wider community also have the potential to affect the nature and outcome of decision making (Goffman, 1971; Black; 1998).

3.1 The right to be safe and the right to learn: not a simple matter of choice

According to the Education Act (1989), principals, if required to make a decision about a student’s behaviour, not only need to consider the student’s right to education in the context of stand-down but also the right of other students to learn in a safe environment free from dangerous example. Parents, too, would expect that their children will be safe at school and expect that where a breach of safety occurs that the principal will act effectively. Boards of trustees also have a responsibility under the Health and Safety in Employment Act (NZ Government, 1992) to ensure that their employees can work in a safe and healthy environment. The increased and constant scrutiny of schools by the media (Moscovici, 1988, 1993), highlighted in the previous chapter especially in the area of perceived school safety might suggest that groups outside the immediate school community may also have an interest in school safety. The decision to judge behaviour as unacceptable, then, and to respond to that behaviour through stand-down, while it is the responsibility of the principal (MOE, 2009), balances a number of interests. If the outcome of that decision is to stand the student down, the provisions of the Education Act (NZ Government, 1989) have required the principal to balance the individual’s right to attend school against the rights of these other groups and individuals to deliver education, to be educated and to have their children educated in a safe environment.

The right to be educated in a safe environment appears to be at the heart of any decision to stand a student down from school. What is a safe environment for learning, however, appears to be a hegemonic definition constructed more out of what it is not than what it is. The notion of safe environments for learning are therefore, through dichotomous definition, allied with the construction of the social and conceptual Other. The child’s right to be educated is historical; the emphasis on safety
is more recent (see section 2.3). Marshall (1964) raises the importance of being educated as a fundamental prerequisite of full participation in society.

Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as a right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to have been educated. And there is here no conflict with civil rights as interpreted in an age of individualism. Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom. (Marshall 1949/1964, p81, cited in Englund, Quennerstedt & Walstrom, 2008)

Going to school, therefore, provides the means and opportunity to be educated and this is a primary prerequisite of the freedom to operate as an adult citizen. The child’s right to education is also recognized by The Human Rights Act (NZ Government, 1993), The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) and in section 3 of the Education Act (NZ Government, 1989). Laluvein (2010) also maintains that the primary outcome of insider status in the school as a community of learners is being an adult learner. The right to be educated, therefore is a long timescale discourse.

What constitutes a safe environment for learning is a complex issue. While stand-down is part of the conversation about ensuring safe learning environments, being out of school places students at risk (Becroft, 2007). Essentially there is a safety factor in the processes that exclude students from school. Being in school provides students with access to acquiring high value cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977), but being out of school or leaving school without qualifications has been identified as a risk factor for young people (Fergusson et al, 2002). Participation in classroom programmes, i.e. instructional quantity, has been identified as a significant factor in achievement (Hattie, 1999) while being out of school may place students at risk of youth offending (Becroft, 2007). Overseas research suggests a strong link between being suspended from school and crime (Christle et al, 2000, Durlak, 1998; Hemphill et al, 2006; Hemphill et al, 2007. Christle et al (2000), for example found that in The United States 85 percent of all young people in youth justice had been suspended from school.

The principal, therefore, is faced with a difficult choice between the minority of students who behave unacceptably but who still need to be educated and those
powerful voices who advocate the majority view that schools must be a safe environment for learning. The school is one part of a wider community that, like all communities of practice, has joint enterprises and shared stories that define their existence. The issues that result in a student being stood-down or suspended from school are those that also attract social exclusion in the wider community (Hayden, 1997). Stand-down as a mechanism of identity regulation at school is a microcosm of similar practices and procedures in the wider community for the regulation of a social identity. Schools, therefore, are made up of social spaces where active identity work occurs that overlaps with the longer timescales of person’s life (Lemke, 2000). Lemke (2000) describes the classroom as:

Exactly like the rest of the social world that it contributes to the formation of identities and habits of action that are formed across the longer timescales we also spend in other spaces (p. 284)

According to Lemke (2000) identity work is the business of the classroom. He describes the engagement and activity of those present in the classroom as;

Everyone in that classroom was experiencing a different lesson, was interacting with the teacher and the semiotic artifacts of the room and with each other in ways that depended on his or her trajectory up to now (p. 284)

Lemke’s (2000) research stresses the importance of context to understanding the developing identity narratives of students and maintains that no matter how much we attempt to homogenize school social spaces the world outside the school is not homogenous and that “identity development is taking place all the time” (p. 285). Effectively no matter how much we attempt to make the school safe through removing perceived unsafe students, safety is not a homogeneous concept, it depends on definition. Lemke (2000) suggests that assuming homogeneity in school social spaces denies a potent source of information for principals as individual students negotiate between the narratives of the classroom and the narratives of the larger timescales of the student’s life. Lemke’s (2000) study also reveals students to be active agents in negotiating social spaces and that the stories they tell have context.
The responsibility to decide whether an incident is sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to send a student home from school is a complex one. The decision to stand-down balances the right to education against the right to safety but the complex nature of using hegemonic dichotomous definitions like safety makes it hard to ascertain whether standing a student down actually does make the school safer. Standing a student down from has the potential to put the student at risk both in the short and long term. In addition, according to Wenger (1998) students learn from experiences, no matter what and the stand-down event will be a learning experience, no matter what. Removing a student from school also restricts participation in what Lemke (2000) refers to as the essential negotiation between the student’s developing private and public lives. Being at school enables students to engage with and rationalize the differences they come across between the private lives of home and family and the manifestation of public life they encounter at school. It is the principal’s role in the stand-down event to steer a course between these potentially conflicting discourses.

Firstly, however, the principal has to establish the truth of an incident where s/he may not have been present (MOE, 2009). The next two sections of this review (3.2 and 3.3) propose firstly that discovering the truth is not a simple matter and secondly that big discourses (Gee, 2010) have the potential to further complicate and put pressure on the principal’s decision whether or not to stand a student down from school.

3.2 “There is no truth. There is only perception.”

The decision to stand a student down requires the principal to discover the truth of an incident and then come to a decision (MOE, 2009). This section argues that truth is not absolute and that truth is a negotiation between a number of discourses: political, relational and philosophical. The key concept of this part of this chapter is that of the truth teller (Peters, 2003), a character in any narrative who is known to tell the Truth. In this narrative about what happens when students are stood-down from school the

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4 Gustave Flaubert; Madame Bovary 1856
principal is the truth teller for a number of reasons. Firstly stand-down is a process operated by the school under the Education Act (1989) and the principal speaks for the school (MOE, 1998). The principal, therefore, owns the narrative of stand-down. This is clearly indicated because the sources of information available to construct the tables of practices for both the school as a community of practice and stand-down as a practice came from school based resources. Secondly the principal has access to and responsibility for powerful, long timescale narratives (Lemke, 2000) from the school’s traditional status as provider of legitimate knowledge, which through the school’s right to credential knowledge, enables the student to participate in society (Peters, 2003). Finally acquiring school credentialed knowledge is one way young people become known to society (Boudieu, 1977, 1986) while another way is through their conduct and their ability to manage themselves in public spaces (Foucault, 1977). The practices of the principal set out in table 2 (p.17) reveals that the responsibility for providing the curriculum and deciding school appropriate behaviour sits with the principal. When conflict arises, therefore, these long timescale (Lemke, 2000) powerful school narratives about legitimate forms of knowledge (Peters, 2003) and conduct (Foucault, 1977) may subsume the shorter timescale narratives of the family and the stand-down event.

The principal’s right to judge behaviour as unacceptable and suspend attendance is not a recent phenomenon. The conditions under which the principal may suspend attendance were similar in both the Education Act 1964 and Education Act 1989. The provisions for stand-down instead of specified suspension came into use following the 1998 amendment to the Education Act (1989). A comparison of the right to suspend attendance from both the Education Act 1964 and the Education Act 1989, as it appears in the Education Amendment Act 1998 follows.
Table 4 The right to suspend attendance 1964 and 1998 compared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Act 1964 Section 130</th>
<th>Education Amendment Act 1998 Section 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| It shall be lawful for the Head Teacher of Principal of any State primary or secondary school to suspend from attendance any child who, from gross misconduct or incorrigible disobedience, may be considered an injurious or dangerous example to other pupils, or whose attendance at school is likely for any serious cause to have a detrimental effect upon himself or upon the other pupils. | Principals may stand-down or suspend students- The principal of a state school may stand-down or suspend a student if satisfied on reasonable grounds that 
  a) The student’s gross misconduct or continual disobedience is a harmful or dangerous example to other students at the school; or 
  b) Because of the student’s behavior, it is likely that the student, or other students at the school will be seriously harmed if the student is not stood down or suspended |

According to Danaher et al (2000) “Public institutions draw their authority from their capacity to speak the truth about some situation” (p. 37). Principals have had the right, historically, to judge behaviour as unacceptable and incorrigible and to send students home as a consequence. They also have the right to judge what is injurious, dangerous and detrimental not only to other students at the school but also to the student whose behaviour is judged unacceptable.
The principal holds symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1977) through the right and responsibility to speak for the school (MOE, 2009). Historically, the school draws a significant amount of its power from being a repository and a source of knowledge (Peters, 2003). The relationship between knowledge and power is long established. The phrase *knowledge is power* was first used in 1597 by Sir Francis Bacon in his ‘Religious Meditations, of Heresies’. The phrase, *scientia potentia est*, translates as *for also knowledge is power in itself*. According to Peters (2003) “power and knowledge directly imply each other. There is no power relation without the corresponding constitution of a field of knowledge” (p.211). Power, therefore, according to Peters (2003), is about knowing; the two concepts imply each other and cannot be separated. In schools that traditional concept of what is knowledge is contained within the curriculum and is defined by the syllabus of those subjects judged as worthwhile for study (Young, 2006). Young’s (2006) argument is that knowledge is admitted to the curriculum as a consequence of “competing interests” (p.734). The curriculum, then, is not independent it is created by and exists as a consequence of the power hierarchies that define and articulate the school as a learning community (Peters, 2003; Young, 2006). Furthermore, very important to studies of education in New Zealand, the curriculum and what is considered valid to study has its roots in the colonisation process and consequently the cultural validation of the concept of the social and cultural Other (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

Accessing formal knowledge has become central to the means of gaining employment and legitimacy in neoliberal society (Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Apple, 1996). Those students who, in the past, were able to leave school early and go to work, albeit often in unskilled employment, now find those jobs at best rapidly disappearing (Young, 2006). The increased requirement for credentials that has come about as a consequence of globalisation contributes to the power of schools to admit or exclude students because of the potential for and the magnitude of the consequences of failure. It has been argued that the principal of the school acts as a kind of gatekeeper when it comes to setting the rules on who can attend and who might be excluded i.e. who is or who is not entitled to access knowledge (Monk, 2005). Schools, therefore, and principals as the head of the school are imbued with power situated in the school’s
traditional role as a centre of knowledge. Furthermore, the power associated with this is endorsed by the acceptance of those within the school community, no matter how accepted or marginal, of the realities of needing to access that knowledge (Meaney, 2004).

The school also draws its power from its right to operate articulated in legislation and through codes of practice in documents from the Ministry of Education. A raft of legislation sets up complex hierarchies of legal responsibilities which are in turn fleshed out in policy documents. The authority to stand a student down from school, while conferred on the principal through the Education Act (1989), is constrained within a series of policy documents (see MOE, 2005, 2007b, 2007e, 2009). These documents are unauthored which is powerful in itself because they cannot be attributed to a single person and therefore questioned (Gore, 1998). They provide guidelines for principals on how the stand-down event interacts with the school’s and the family’s rights across the range of relevant legislation. These documents constitute part of the school’s cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), owned by the school but defined and operated by the principal (MOE, 2009). At stand-down these discourses about the right to education, the right to safety, the right to privacy and to natural justice construct just one part of “the macro realm of structures and ideologies” (Gore, 1998, p. 233) that inform and impact on the “micro level of bodies” (Gore, 1998, p.233). These documents are not openly available to the family; it is the principal’s right and responsibility to manage and control the process.

At stand-down the principal’s position is crucial not only because “only the principal may make the decision to stand-down or suspend” (MOE, 2009, p.5) but also because the principal is the person whose truth of the matter is to be believed. The principal is, effectively, the truth teller of the event (Peters, 2003). Monk (2005) reiterates this position by saying that the principal has “the role of legislator, senior police officer, prosecutor, judge, jury and character witness” (p.401); all legal and paralegal roles associated with telling the truth. Discussions around what is the truth and who is to be believed constitute an important part of the decision to stand-down a student. Peters (2003) describes truth as a metaphor constructed as a means to order and regulate statements. He maintains that truth is an image that reflects the relationship
between power and knowledge but one for which the source has been forgotten. Essentially what Peters (2003) is saying about the notion of truth is that it is a construction of embedded illusions, a consensual mechanism that maintains the relationship between power and knowledge.

Establishing the truth of a stand-down event is the responsibility of the principal who speaks for the school. An examination of the literature suggests that establishing facts, telling the truth and being believed depend on a set of rules belonging to the truth speaking subject (Simola, Heikkinen & Silvonen, 1998). These rules set out the agreed roles of the speakers and the rules of discourse within a closed community. The rules embody the knowledge of and ability to use those rules of discourse and the knowledge of and ability to use those “mechanisms of social status” pertinent to the space in which the discourse is enacted (Simola et al, 1998, p.66). According to Simola et al (1998) knowledge of the rules, the way to speak and the way to behave includes and, as a consequence, confers the right to speak. The field, as defined by Bourdieu (1986), of the stand-down event is filled with language; official documents and witness statements, telephone conversations and formal interviews. What confers the right to speak is an essential element of that field and the school, represented by the role of principal, is the party that has access to and knowledge of the rules and roles that govern the stand-down process. Externally, legislation that underpins the Principles of Natural Justice (Bill of Rights Act, 1990) also confers on the student the right to speak in his/her own defence. Internally, however, according to Simola et al’s, (1998) definition, the student’s lack of familiarity and experience of the roles, rules and rituals that govern the field has the potential to reduce the potency of the student’s voice in that field.

3.3 Pressures on the principal: rationalizing recent and traditional conceptual tools

The decision to stand a student down is a complex issue that involves rationalizing not only the pressures that have come onto principals in the last twenty years but also traditional and embedded pressures that come from how the principal positions
him/herself in terms of social difference, social learning and social sanctions. How the principal positions him/herself in terms of each and an accumulation of the conceptual tools described in this section have the potential to affect the outcome of decision making about addressing perceived unacceptable behaviour in school.

3.3.1 Recent pressures: globalisation and the age of information
Since the Second World War the way people and groups relate to each other has changed (Apple, 1996; Balson, 1992; Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006). The ways we connect with community and our responsibilities to society have altered and, consequently, so have the expectations and structures of education shifted to keep pace with this new era (Balson, 1992). There have been changes in workforce patterns with an increase of women in the workforce after World War Two (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, & Halsey, 2006). As a consequence extra pressures were placed on the home to provide adequate childcare and manage the home environment (Ball & Vincent, 2005). An increasing financial gap between the wealthy and the rest of society and the relative decrease in the value of money earned has meant that people may have to work more than two jobs to keep up with the increasing demands of a consumer driven society (Lauder et al, 2006). The longer working day has, also, meant less supervision of young people (Hayden, 2007). Globalisation of world economies has further disrupted the ties that bind people to traditional community relationships by changing the expectation of one job in one place for one’s working life to one of potentially many jobs and periods of retraining (Beck, 1999). Retraining, however, in this knowledge based economy (see Oxley & Thorns, 2007) exists in an environment for increased credentialing of knowledge that in itself is constantly expanding and credentials that are constantly degrading (Oxley & Thorns, 2007). The need for credentials, however, not only impacts on the time young people are required to stay in formal education but also the years they must remain in a dependent relationship (Hayden, 2007).

The latter part of the twentieth century has been popularly referred to as an information age (Mason, 1986). Essentially this refers to the global shift away from the production of physical commodities towards the production and manipulation of information (Mason, 1986). To some degree knowledge is the new currency (Apple,
1996, Brown, 2003). In New Zealand, the development of the Knowledge Based Economy can be tracked though its impact on the Education Sector (Oxley & Thorns, 2007). Neoliberal and neoconservative reforms of the last twenty years have placed education in a central rather than peripheral place in New Zealand society; David Lange assuming the role of Minister of Education as well as Prime Minister in 1988 was a symbolic representation of the shift of importance of education in the mind of the New Zealand government. The status and importance of education in people’s lives has changed also; in a very short time the term school learning has been superseded by the term lifelong learning (Simola et al, 2000) which broadens the scope of education and raises its importance in people’s lives and in society (Simola et al, 2000). The credentialing of qualifications facilitates entry into society and school qualifications play an important role in the acquisition of those entry level qualifications (Brown, 2003). Trading in knowledge, however, means that those students who leave school without qualifications face a widening gap between their prospects for future participation in society and those of their qualified peers (Weaver, 2007). Keeping children in school longer also creates a rich breeding ground for the conflicts between dependence and independence that were short lived in the past (Hayden, 2007).

The globalization of world economies has had a significant impact on the importance of learning in learning communities. Credentialing has, of necessity, made high status school acquired cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) more portable and more universally recognised that it was in the past (MOE, 1993). The importance and acquisition of credentialled knowledge has increased both the time young people stay in a dependent relationship and the consequences of failure. The emphasis on acquiring credentialled knowledge, therefore, is at the heart of the conflict between the big discourses about the right to education and the right to being safe. The potential for failure through un ungoverned behaviour not only affects student at risk of leaving school without qualifications but also those students whose potential for achieving qualifications may be affected by the behaviour of others (Chaplain, 2003).

The political changes that have occurred over the past thirty years also put pressure on this particular conversation. The change in the delivery of education that occurred in the late 1980’s introduced the discourses of personal responsibility and personal
choice. For the last thirty years the evolving philosophies of the free market have dominated policy about education delivery. The philosophical stance that people are free to write their own narratives (Lauder et al, 2006) has changed the expectations about the roles and responsibilities of individuals in the landscape of practices that make up the learning community. These changes to the delivery of education, referred to in this review as the new right, by changing expectations, changed the role of the principal.

### 3.3.2 Recent pressures: the new right

“All animals are equal but some are more equal than others”

Free market policies in education delivery have had an impact both on how students with behavioural special needs are regarded by policy makers and how resources for these students are allocated (Apple, 1996; Gale & Densmore, 2000; Lauder et al, 2006; Nairn & Higgins, 2007). The inception of new right philosophies in education established the market driven school and shifted the principal’s role to a management model (Smyth, 2005). This shift has, in turn, also changed the traditional relationships within the community of practice of teachers in a school (Margolis & Nagel, 2006; Smyth, 2005). This change of role has led to different expectations (Margolis & Nagel, 2006). Principals now have a role in liaising and marketing the school in the local community and beyond (Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Lauder et al, 2006; MOE, 1998) which may also have changed the relationship principals have with some groups of parents (Brown, 2003). The way resources are allocated to all students has changed but for students with special education needs (SEN), including and especially behavioural special needs, resources are allocated through identified individual need (Apple, 1996; Gale & Densmore, 2000).

The changes that have occurred in education over the past twenty years, both in New Zealand and in capitalist societies world-wide, have altered not only what children

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5 Animal Farm, George Orwell.
learn but the environment within which that learning occurs (Davies & Bansel, 2007). In the 1970’s and 1980’s, coinciding with a worsening fiscal crisis, capitalist countries like New Zealand, Australia, the United States of America and Great Britain looked towards rapidly growing economies like Japan and wondered where they were going wrong (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). The answer came from a broad group of politicians and economists generally referred to as the new right (Apple, 2006). The very breadth of its ideologies meant that presentation of its new common sense about democracy and the role of the individual in society found general agreement across many of the dominant groups who shaped policy on how government was to operate (Apple, 2006). New right philosophy encompassed a broad range of political ideology that was at the same time both liberal and conservative despite apparently opposing views on the role of the state. Liberal ideology espoused individual human rights, civil liberties and social reform that tends towards advocating individual freedoms, reduction in taxes and limiting state intervention. Predominant in the liberal view of the late 1980’s was that reducing taxes and state intervention caused people to work harder and longer (Codd, Gordon & Harker, 1990). Conservative ideology, however, looked back to traditional values such as the family and Christian morality and sought greater state intervention and control (Apple, 1996, 2006).

An ensuing alliance resulted in a wide hegemonic umbrella which has provided the blueprint for education reform in New Zealand since 1989 (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). While political liberalism and conservatism appeared contradictory both ideologies came together in the 1980’s with a view that Keynesian social welfare policies had resulted in the fiscal and social crises that were currently being faced. In 1989 the general discontent about education and the increasing cost of democracy and the Welfare State (Davies & Bansel, 2007) that had been growing through the 1970’s and 1980’s was answered by legislation in New Zealand that enabled free enterprise philosophies, policy and practices to guide and to provide a model for education policy and practice. The proposed neoliberal reform of education was based on three premises that shifted the function of education firmly under the control of the state while giving the appearance of opening up education to the freedom of the market. These three premises were that education is central to the success of the economy, that
the state will provide the means by which a person may become educated and that it is an individual responsibility to access and make use of education (Lauder et al, 2006).

On the surface neoliberal reform of education sought to establish a level playing field but behind its hegemonic reasonableness lay an acceptance that where there were winners there must be losers and those who are losers have only themselves to blame (Apple, 1996; Gale & Densmore, 2000; Lauder & Hughes, 1999). In “an age of achievement” (Blair, 1996, quoted in Heffernan, 2000, p.136), where there was merit for anyone who tries hard enough, the converse was that those who do not achieve have made insufficient effort (Gale & Densmore, 2000; Nairn & Higgins, 2007). While there was to be provision for students with educational needs, neoliberal philosophy ensured that those in need should be provided only with minimal support to discourage dependency (Lauder et al, 2006). For children on the margins this meant that funding was targeted to the individual through verification of need (see MOE, 2006, 2010, 2010a). The level of funding, however, was allocated not through assessment and establishment of need but through criteria that provided entry to a share of a contestable budget (MOE 2011).

The two founding documents of neoliberal reform in education in New Zealand: Administering for Excellence (Picot et al, 1988) and Tomorrow’s Schools (Lange, 1988), promoted a small business model approach for schools. The marketisation of education in New Zealand exposes the contradictions in new right ideology. In New Zealand, Tomorrow’s Schools removed the education boards to create self-managing schools (Lange, 1988). Triennial elections placed the governance of the school largely under the control of a group of elected parents - the board of trustees. Boards of trustees, however, had only limited control because of the retention of a centralised contract and pay scale for teachers (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). Essentially central government held the power to resource the school though the illusion of control and responsibility remained with the parents on the board of trustees (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). In addition, in 1991, the conservative National Party was elected, removed school zoning and set up enrolment schemes for oversubscribed schools (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). Enrolment schemes enabled oversubscribed schools to select students and allowed those parents with resources to move their children to what they
perceived as more favourable schools (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). The consequent potential for increased per pupil funding made it advantageous to boards of trustees through their principal to market the school to more desirable parents outside their immediate area (Brown, 2003).

In the early nineteen nineties, the Smithfield Project (Lauder & Hughes, 1999) tested two hypotheses, one in favour and one critical of, the marketisation of education in New Zealand. The outcomes of the Smithfield Project revealed the potential impact of free market education on those groups of students most at risk of school exclusion. The hypothesis in favour of free market education reform was that in a free education market parents have equal knowledge about schools and equal power to send children to the school of their choice. The hypothesis critical of free education markets was that free markets in education would polarize schools rather than balance them and school populations would be selected on ethnicity, gender and social class (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). The results of the Smithfield Project showed that low income parents did not have the luxury of not attending their local school whereas the parents of middle class children were more likely to travel further to oversubscribed schools (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). The project showed also that de zoning increased the wealth and the marketing potential of oversubscribed schools when parents elected to by-pass their local school and the consequent loss to the school was greater than just the per pupil funding (Lauder & Hughes, 1999). There was a clear indication that schools with low SES and a high percentage of Māori and Pasifika students suffered a significant drop in year nine intake over the period of the study. Year nine is the point where parents make a decision in New Zealand about which high school their child will attend. The percentage of Māori and Pasifika students was one of the benchmarks by which school SES was assessed (Lauder & Hughes, 1999) and as a consequence marketisation had the potential to cause a decrease in the school’s SES (Lauder & Hughes, 1999).

British research by Lupton (2005) described the difficulties faced by schools in high poverty areas. Issues such as transitory populations as a consequence of shifting employment, nonattendance for family and financial reasons, and reduced opportunities as a consequence of lack of funding reveal the unrecognised importance of context in school quality. Lupton (2005) showed that while schools are evaluated in
terms of academic outputs and the quality of home school relationships, the barriers to achieving these standards were greater for some schools than others and that these barriers depended on context. Research by Nairn, Higgins and Ormond (2007) of students from New Zealand secondary schools about to transition to tertiary study showed that students who bypass their local school were advantaged compared to those who remain. The research also showed that free market education does not change the existence of other discourses that speak to young people and affect their choice of life courses; those discourses of social class, home expectations and ethnicity are still important (Nairn, Higgins & Ormond, 2007). Some influences like the family and the school are important contributors to these discourses (Sfard & Prusack, 2005). The importance of these influences suggest that it is too simple to say that young people or anybody for that matter are free to write their own biographies (Apple, 2006).

Marketing the school may present a hidden consequence to students who are considered at risk of stand-down. The Smithfield Project identified the group of parents who have the potential to gain significant advantage from free market education. Those parents with the resources to make a free choice have the potential to wield considerable power in an environment specifically set up to enable them to do so (Brown, 1990). Brown (1990) defined the free market era in education as a parentocracy in that a free market approach to education enables middle class parents to promote and manufacture ideal conditions for their own children’s education (Brown, 2003). The last twenty years has seen schools vying for students both locally and internationally. Marketing the school, school branding and school reputation place extra constraints and opportunities on school principals and boards of trustees. A school’s reputation is the popular truth about the school that may cause parents to choose or reject that school as a suitable place to enroll their children (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002). Through its marketing the school community has the ability to describe which students are welcome (Nairn & Higgins, 2007). Conversely school marketing also has the potential to identify groups who are unwelcome.

Neoliberal philosophies in education promote equity not equality so resourcing need establishes equitable inequalities (Secada, 1989; see also Gale & Densmore, 2000). Funding need is established through perceptions of deficit in the minority defined by
the majority and verification of need is defined in terms of the degree of difference (Bishop, 2003). Research by Lauder et al (2006), Marsh et al (2008), Wylie, Thompson, and Lythe (1999) establish a link between low SES and education need. Funding for SES is allocated through the school’s funding allocation from the Ministry of Education, the Operations Grant, by way of the Special Education Grant (SEG) (MOE, 2010). The grant is calculated on a sliding scale with schools of low SES receiving the most funding. This suggests an inbuilt understanding and acceptance of a relationship between income and educational deficit (Brown, 2003). Allocations of funding through SEG are at the discretion of the principal and board of trustees. Some funding for behavior may be available through the school’s SEG grant (MOE, 2009c, 2010).

Some changes to education in the twenty years since the Tomorrow’s School’s legislation may also advantage students with learning and behaviour needs. The introduction of quasi markets in education together with the introduction of mandatory rights for young people in education has seen an expansion of skilled and legal services available to schools. There has been an increasing integration of children with special education needs into the general school setting, the consequent reduction of residential care and the subsequent reallocation of specialist services to schools (Hayden, 1997). Up to the end of year ten students with moderate special education needs in learning and behaviour, once identified, can be allocated to resource teachers of learning and behaviour (RTLB) and resource teachers of Literacy (RTLit) (MOE, 2011). Students with severe special needs may receive support through the Ongoing and Reviewable Resource Scheme (ORRS) (MOE, 2010a) and for students with more severe behaviour needs through Group Special Education (GSE) there is the Behaviour Support Team (BST) (MOE, 2010). In addition to this the Specialist Classroom Teacher (SCT) is available to support teachers in providing professional development and support for teachers in the classroom and the Interim Behaviour Support fund (MOE, 2009c) is available to principals in need of urgent funding to support students with special education needs. Many schools in New Zealand are also training for and adopting restorative practices as a means to manage and resolve crisis situations (MOE, 2009).
This individualisation of and focusing on individual student need (Apple, 1996) has resulted in an increased requirement for testing and assessment and therefore, potentially, greater access for schools to skilled analysis of student need. While the labeling of conditions before resources can be accessed may have the potential to marginalise children still further (Hayden, 2007), it also provides schools with a selection of educational and quasi medical experts available for the treatment of the most severe special education needs in school (Hayden, 1997). Despite this burgeoning of services, however, there has been little reduction in the number of students stood down from school and even less explanation as to why this is the case. Hayden (1997), for example, researching the situation in Great Britain points out that despite the talk about working together to provide joined up services for children the trend appears to go in the opposite direction. According to Hayden (1997) there is considerable overlap of services, that psychologists provide solutions that are not practical and that overall it is teachers who require the resources to improve their own expertise in managing children especially with moderate to severe behaviour needs (Chaplain, 2003; Hayden, 1997; Munn, Lloyd & Cullen, 2000).

Hayden (1997) specifically links market driven education provision to the exclusion of children from school and as a consequence their potential for entry to marginalised groups in society. Hayden (1997) places permanent exclusion from school as a “possible entry point into a marginalised way of life” (p. 27). In addition Hayden (1997) also raises the possibility of a connection between fixed term exclusion, as stand-down is referred to in Great Britain, and permanent exclusion.

For example is fixed term exclusion a very different type of event from a permanent exclusion or is it a forerunner, a warning of the more serious event of permanent exclusion? (p.30)

Any possible connection between fixed term and permanent exclusion suggests that some students potentially take the first steps into a marginalised way of life at a much earlier stage than when they are permanently excluded from school.

Hayden’s (1997) research, too, locates students at risk of exclusion as undesirable opposites to the ideal student of the quasi market school. Hayden’s (1997, 2001, 2007)
research, however, also indicates a high proportion of students excluded from school have special education needs. Statistics of this nature are not collated in New Zealand. The way the education of children with special needs has been managed in schools has changed considerably over the twenty years since the inception of quasi markets in education. Over this period the use of “published league tables and other indicators of performance in schools has created a climate less likely to be sympathetic to children not only producing no positive contribution to these indicators but who may also prevent others from doing so” (Hayden, 1997, p.7). While Hayden’s (1997) research raises concerns about the marketisation of education in Great Britain and its potential negative impact on non-marketable students, the Smithfield Project (Lauder & Hughes, 1997) in New Zealand raises the same concerns for different non marketable school populations in New Zealand schools. These populations are students in low decile i.e. economically impoverished areas and where there is a greater proportion of students from Maori or Pasifika families. These student populations are also those statistically more at risk of stand-down from school.

Summary

The stand-down event places pressures on principals that may depend on a number of factors prevalent in an environment dominated by new right philosophies. Inherent to these philosophies is the concept of the level playing field where everyone is free to write their own biographies (Apple, 2006). Research in both New Zealand and overseas suggests that this concept is a fallacy, that certain groups of parents are advantaged by the marketisation of education and that the new right philosophies of the past twenty years have not swept away those traditional discourses that speak to children and families about their relationship to the school (Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Lupton, 2005; Nairn & Higgins, 2007). In a stand-down event there will be more than one set of voices vying for the principal’s attention and there may be potential for middle class voices to speak to the principal in ways inaccessible to other parents (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In addition those philosophies underpinning current education policy make resourcing students with behaviour issues a problem. In an environment where resources are allocated in terms of merit (Gale & Densmore, 2000)
students whose need is identified as a consequence of something that is considered their own fault and responsibility may be regarded as a low priority (Apple, 1996).

Notwithstanding the changes that have occurred in school management and governance with the inception of new right ideologies students who are stood-down from school have behaved in ways that breach the ontological patterns of what is acceptable across communities (Markovā, 1996). There is a traditional expectation that such breaches require a suitable response (Moscovici, 1993). The school is a middle class space (Zevenbergen, 2001) and, statistically, children who are stood-down from school are more likely to attend low SES schools. Children stood-down from school are also, statistically more likely to be Māori or Pasifika students than other groups. These statistics might suggest either that individuals from certain groups of society perform more breaches than others or that factors related to similarity or difference of social class may impact subtly and invisibly on the outcomes of a stand-down event.

Bourdieu’s (1986, 2000) theory of social and cultural capital proposes the concepts of field and habitus; both relevant to a study of stand-down. The field of the stand-down event is a defined social and operational space that comes into existence for a specific purpose. Habitus is an evolving disposition that enables the individual to operate in and learn from social spaces.

3.3.3 Traditional pressures: acquiring social and cultural capital.

The key contribution of Bourdieu’s Theory of the Forms of Capital (1986) to this study is that recognition of habitus affects the field of the stand-down event in subtle ways. The field of the stand-down event develops around incidents of certain specified types of behaviour; specifically those behaviours that are considered deviant because they cross the boundaries of widely held cross societal norms and values (Moscovici, 1993). These behaviours, therefore, are not social group specific. The field of the stand-down event brings school personnel together with students and their families from social settings both similar and different to those of the European, middle class, social space of the school. Each participant’s recognition of others in the field depends not only on what they bring to the experience as an accumulation of past experience but also how that accumulation perceives and places expectations on all other participants in the field. This complex accumulation of experience, perception and expectation is habitus.
Bourdieu’s earlier research (1986) showed that the number and degree of connections we can recognise within any field eases the interaction and affects the outcome. The later concept of habitus (Bourdieu, 2000) contributes the prospect not only of recognition of lifestyle related to broad social and occupational groups across society but also that those recognitions are dynamic; they arise out of and to some degree manufacture the field in which the interaction occurs. Habitus is about how we perceive and how we are perceived by other participants in the field; it is about how we structure and how we are structured by the space in which we interact. Habitus, then, and its impact on social spaces, in particular those arising from a stand-down event, is about choice, it is about agency and how that agency may be enabled or disabled by one’s own perceptions and the perceptions of others within the field of interaction.

Habitus describes the set of dispositions that students and all others associated with the stand-down bring to the field of the interaction. Writing about field Bourdieu (2000) suggests that;

The most crucial thing to note is that the question of this space is raised within the space itself—that the agents have points of view on this objective space which depend on their position within it and in which their will to transform or conserve is often expressed (p. 169).

Field can be defined, therefore, as the “rules of the game” (Lareau, 2001, p.82) or “what’s going on” (Meaney, 2005, p.113). A field exists at that particular time for that particular interaction within a particular social space and therefore contains all those choices available to “describe who did what to whom and under what circumstances” (Meaney, 2005, p.118). The formal rules of the game for stand down are clearly set out by the Ministry of Education though, in the field of any stand down environment, variations of habitus and field “help to create different practices for any particular moment” (Lareau, 2001, p. 82). The field of the stand-down event brings together the European, middle class space of the school (Jones, 2007; Levinson, 2007; Zevenbergen, 2001) and students who, according to Ministry of Education statistics, are significantly more likely to be from low income homes and where ethnicity in one out of two instances may be Māori or Pasifika. Participants in the field of the stand-down event,
therefore, are likely to be socially disparate while the formal rules of the field are those of the middle class (Zevenbergen, 2000). An understanding of both habitus and field is essential to this part of the review because habitus provides a definition for some of the hidden but potent aspects of the field of any stand-down event.

Habitus is a concept specific to each individual and is “necessity internalised and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning giving perceptions” (Bourdieu, 2000, p.170). Habitus is about disposition; it is not only that which causes someone to behave in certain ways it is also that which causes someone to perceive in certain ways (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Perception in this case is taken in its widest sense to encompass all of the ways of knowing by which we make sense of the social spaces around us. These practices and perceptions are interrelated in that each generates the other (Bourdieu, 2000); they comprise “a structured structure which is also a structuring structure (sic)” (Bourdieu, 2000, p.170). The habitus of each participant in the field, however, has its origins and takes its expression from all other encounters in all other places (Bourdieu, 2000). According to Bourdieu (2000) habitus, although individual, displays markers along class and occupational group lines. This means that, in general terms, people within occupational and social class groupings can recognise similar lifestyle options that may not be recognised and valued outside that occupational or social class grouping. Bourdieu (2000) suggests that people whose habitus is similar recognise familiarities within the social space in which they are operating. Those who are not recognised – and who do not need to be recognised – potentially remain invisible.

Habitus is embodied capital (Reay, 1995). Bourdieu (1986) described any interaction within social spaces as consequent on displays of capital or social currency. According to Bourdieu (1986):

It is impossible to account for the functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognised by economic theory (p. 104)

Bourdieu identifies two notions of capital, social and cultural, separate from but interrelated with economic capital in any field of interaction. The term capital,
however, implies money, so any transactions, even those involving social and cultural currency, are essentially about economic capital (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999), while striving to keep financial gain hidden (Bourdieu, 1986). Getting educated, of course, is about profit; it is about becoming employed as a consequence of being able to display those accumulations of valid cultural currency promoted by the school. Qualifications, however, are not only cultural they are also social currency. Academic credentials are displayed to enable the individual to gain employment and not having academic qualifications is highly correlated with unemployment (MOE, 2008c). The risk of unemployment, however, is not only about poverty it is also about marginalisation (Wenger, 1998) and social exclusion (Levitas, 1996). Social exclusion places the individual at risk of inclusion in an underclass (Levitas, 1996) that defines and restricts a person’s access not only to economic capital but also to participation in those social relationships and cultural artifacts that enable access to economic capital (Levitas, 1996).

The more economic capital a family has the greater the potential for points of contact between the school and home that may be used to advantage in times of need or conflict (Bourdieu, 1986). Income not only enables the acquisition of school valued cultural artifacts but, as embodied social capital, also enables agency. Economic capital is not only cash but also property and time invested (Bourdieu, 1986). The more economic capital families have, the more resources they have available not only to send their children to high SES schools (Lauder et al, 1994) they can also invest time into their children’s education (McNeal, 1999) by joining sports clubs, supervising homework, participating in fundraising, joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and getting elected to the board of trustees. Family income also affects how long your children stay in education and consequently their access to higher qualifications (Peters & Mullins, 1997). Peters and Mullins (1997) reveal that family income is directly related to the years a child stays in school and any increase in family income has the potential to increase significantly the time spent in education. Conversely some families are unable to invest time in their child’s education as a consequence of household income (Hill & Craft, 2003).
While economic capital can be counted directly in terms of money (Bourdieu, 1986) both cultural and social capital are largely about closeness of fit between the individual and the institution. Essentially,

The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected (Bourdieu, 1986, p.110)

Schools as institutions are middle class social spaces (Jones, 2007; Levinson, 2007; Zevenbergen, 2001); the social and cultural capital of the school is closest to that of the middle class. Much of the literature describes the social capital of low income families in deficit to those of the dominant middle class ethos of the school. Essentially low income families are described as not possessing those cultural and social attributes and artifacts that enable the acquisition of school valued cultural and social capital. Wylie, Thompson and Lythe (1999) suggest that, not only do children from low socio economic areas tend to attend low decile schools they are also more likely to have been subject to the types of family disruptions that result in single income. Research by Wylie et al (1999) also reveals that, in New Zealand, low income families are less likely to have computers at home, to visit the public library and to have their children in after school tuition classes. Single parent families and families are also more likely to be dependent on beneficiary income (Wylie et al, 1999). Low income and reduced access to child-care affects the ability of parents to be involved with the school (Hill & Craft, 2003). Bull, Brooking and Campbell (2008) state that: “The research literature is unequivocal in showing that parental involvement makes a significant difference to educational achievement” (p. 1). Parental income, therefore, which appears to be a factor in enabling home school relationships may also enhance a student’s potential for educational achievement not only through an ability to pay the costs of education but also through time invested to acquire those cultural assets valued by the school and the consequent social networking associated with their possession. Conversely low parental income may have the opposite effect (Jones, 2007; Lareau, 2001, 2002).
The linguistic habitus of teachers tends to be that of the middle class (Zevenbergen, 2001) which suggests that both communication and recognition between socially disparate individuals may contain missed understandings. Teachers tend to use triadic dialogue (Lemke, 1990; Zevenbergen, 2001) a questioning pattern that most closely imitates the questioning styles of middle class parents. While triadic dialogue is an effective way to control the flow of conversation in the classroom it is also more accessible to those who are familiar with the language patterns of the classroom especially those directly related to the learning process. These children are more likely to be recognised and positioned as effective learners. Research by Zevenbergen (2001) suggested that middle class students tend participate in triadic dialogue while

The noncompliance [in triadic dialogue] of the working class students positions them as marginal and excludes them from content while simultaneously failing to prepare them for the interactional patterns most common in the secondary school context (p.213)

The field of the stand-down event requires students to explain their actions in an environment where there has been requisite information gathering by the school (MOE, 2009) together with the school’s accumulated knowledge of the student. In these situations there may be potential for missed communication where the student is less unfamiliar with the language clues of triadic dialogue and the teacher’s perception of the student’s school habitus is defined by deficit.

Research by Lareau (2002) suggests that social class is more significant than ethnicity when it comes to issues of mismatch between school and home through the potential impact of differences in child rearing patterns on the preferred culture of the classroom. She describes European American and African American middle class families as more similar than their equivalent low income counterparts. She described friendship patterns of middle class children as based around age group peers and located in the school compared with the multi age, family and neighbourhood friendship patterns of low SES children. She proposed that child rearing and ancillary school practices prepare middle income children for “an emerging sense of entitlement in life” (p.774) and relegate low income and work poor children to “an emerging sense
of constraint” (p.774). Eckert (2000) took this further in her descriptions of the construction of social identity in an American high school. She described the “extracurricular sphere of the public high school as [being] commonly seen as the primary site for civic education” (p.47). Eckert identified the ‘jocks’ as middle class students with their sights set on tertiary education and high income careers and their social life located within the school and the ‘burnouts' headed for factories and trade and their social life located outside school.

The social space that is created by a decision to stand down is just one of those interactions where disparate relationships have potential to impact on outcomes. Family history and school qualifications define a set of dispositions that would both recognise and be recognised within any of the social spaces that are created as school and home interact. Recognition goes both ways, however. Jones (2007) and Lareau (2001) suggest that while those whose habitus is closer to the institution “feel less distance and distrust of the school” (Lareau, 2001, p.94) both the children (Jones, 2007; Lareau, 2002) and the parents (Lareau, 2001) of working class families do notice the distance and in some cases it manifests itself as “a threat of a looming catastrophe” (Lareau, 2001, p.95). Mismatch of habitus, therefore, is recognised by those on the receiving end of difference. Jones’ (2007) study of the children of work poor mothers reveals this recognition of the boundaries between school and home:

Mom,

I like girls’ group because Mrs. Jones is nice to me. I don’t know why she is, maybe she is trying to be nice. But I care about you, Mom. Okay? I am trying to be nice

Faith (p. 159)

This short note by a grade two (age 7) child not only reveals an acknowledgement of difference very early in her school experience but also her mother’s distrust of and suspicion about that distance. Faith’s note (Jones, 2007) quoted above, however, reveals that, while relating to teachers is two way, students are also potentially active
agents in reconciling missed understandings and miss matches between the world of
the family and the world of the school.

Faith’s note (Jones, 2007) reveals connectedness to school that both acknowledges and
crosses those barriers defined by mismatch of habitus through social class differences.
Research by McGraw, Moore, Fuller and Bates (2008) suggests students connect to the
school as a community in subtle ways only indirectly related to achieving school
indicate that friendships and relationships with peers, teachers and family are a
protective factor in remaining connected to school. Eckert’s (2000) “burnouts” and
Knipnis’ (2001) “lads”, though marginal are still connected to and recognized by the
school community and what connects them to the school appears to be friendship;
their friends are in school, too. The social capital associated with having and keeping
friends within the school community may be a potent factor in keeping students in
school no matter how much school personnel may regard those friendships as deficits.
McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum (2004) describe the steps teachers can take to
increase or enhance school connectedness. McNeely et al (2204) suggest that school
connectedness may be a causal factor in preventing the kinds of social harm that
(2004) a small school size, positive school climate, the ability to participate in
extracurricular activities and tolerant discipline policies are important factors in
ensuring school connectedness for students especially those at risk of poor school and
life outcomes.

Bourdieu’s theory of the forms of capital suggests that school exclusion could be more
about lack of closeness of fit than a student’s behaviour. Owning the right stuff, saying
the right things and having the right background establishes closeness while the
opposite has the potential to create distance. The stand-down event creates a field
where the past becomes present and perceptions of accumulations of histories and
deficits have the potential to contribute to outcomes in subtle ways. Habitus, however,
does not have to be about mismatch and deficit. Habitus is also about agency; an
ability to act (Reay, 1995). The field of the stand-down event creates an opportunity for
family and school to meet to resolve a difficulty. Knowledge of habitus combined with
the potential for enhancing school connectedness could enable the school -as owners of rules of the game- to use the event as a means to renegotiate a student’s membership of the school community.

3.3.4 Traditional pressures: What do we mean by acceptable behaviour?

What is meant by acceptable behaviour is an important concept for this study; this discussion uses Moscovici’s (1988, 1993, 2000) Social Representations Theory as a framework to establish the issues that construct and express the notion of acceptable behaviour. The principal stands a student down from school because of unacceptable behaviour (MOE, 2009) but not all forms of inappropriate behaviour result in stand-down. Bullying, for example, discussed in chapter two is a common behaviour problem in schools (Ross & Horner, 2009) but bullying is not listed as a Ministry of Education category for stand-down or suspension (see MOE, 2009a, 2009b). Some of the outcomes of a bullying context, however, may result in stand-down. Ministry of Education statistical reports on stand-down list physical assault on a student, verbal assault on a teacher and continual disobedience as the most common reasons for stand-down (see MOE 2009a) while physical assault of a teacher is more likely to be punished by suspension (MOE, 2009b). In the decision-making process that results in either a student being stood-down or suspended from school, assaulting a teacher appears to be more serious than assaulting another student. The main purpose of this part of the review that examines the pressures on principals’ decision making as head of a community of learners is to investigate the issue around how does the principal know that behaviour is acceptable or not and why do other people in the community agree with the decision?

Moscovici’s Social Representations Theory (1984, 1988, 1993, 2000) proposes that communities hold consensual knowledge about what makes society work e.g. what is acceptable behaviour and how to bring up children correctly. These beliefs may appear such common sense to be almost invisible whereas, according to Moscovici (1988, 2000), they are particular, socially grounded and constructed and constantly evolving. Social Representations Theory emphasises that membership of communities is largely about behaviour (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Liu & Láslo, 2007) and Moscovici (1988, 1993,
proposes that embedded beliefs about behaviour contribute to decision making in subtle ways. Marková (1996) states that the constraints placed upon the individual by these consensually held beliefs “entrap the individual within existing forms of thinking, prohibits him or her from independent thought and enforce a particular manner of conceiving the world, events and objects” (p. 193). Thus when we react to certain behaviours that contradict our beliefs about how society should work we react in a way that is governed by these embedded beliefs. These reactions not only enable us to address discordant situations but also to assure other community members that we are part of the group (Moscovici, 1988, 1993). As head of the school as a community of learners the principal needs to be able to assure other groups and individuals within the community that the social landscape is stable (Marková, 1996).

Moscovici (1988) refers to these consensual beliefs about how society works as social representations. Social representations are socially grounded notions about what is right and how things work that are “both reality and common sense” (Moscovici, 1984, p.19). Unlike Bourdieu’s theories of habitus, social representations exist across occupational, class and in some cases political and economic systems (Marková, 1996). As forms of knowing they can be hegemonic, polemic or emancipated (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Moscovici, 1988). Where a social representation is hegemonic it is shared across the population, across social, income and ethnic groups. Respect for one’s elders is an example of a hegemonic social representation. Polemic social representations can be shared within one group but disagreed about actively between groups. Whether or not parents should be able to smack their children is a polemic representation. Finally whether a mother stays home to look after her baby or puts the baby into childcare and goes back to work is considered her choice so is an emancipated view (Deaux & Wiley, 2007). Those social representations about acceptable behaviour in children that provide a framework to this study are hegemonic in that they cross both class and cultural boundaries; they are about keeping hands to oneself and respect. They constitute a significant portion of that shared cultural knowledge that allows the individual to behave in situation appropriate ways (Jovchelovitch, 1996; Liu & László, 2007).
Social representations change over time (Durveen, 2001; Markovà, 1996; Moscovici, 1984); we do not think about acceptable behaviour in the same ways as our parents. Over time the unfamiliar becomes the familiar and seemingly unchangeable social representations, e.g. the centrality of the church in everyday life and the authority of parents, gradually evolve and change. Durveen (2001) proposes that a study of social representations makes it possible to map and reference these subtle and invisible changes in society;

Within any culture there are points of tension, even of fracture, and it is around these points of cleavage in the representational system of a culture that new social representations emerge. In other words at these points of cleavage there is a lack of meaning, a point where the unfamiliar appears, and just a nature abhors a vacuum so culture abhors an absence of meaning setting in train some kind of representational work to familiarise the unfamiliar so as to reestablish a sense of stability (p. 8)

Social representations, therefore, are tied to particular times and essentially invisible until a point of discord or tension occurs. How we come to understand practices or “habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21) comes about through stepping back and critically identifying those discourses that contribute and interact to produce and maintain the practice (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Durveen, 2001, Markovà, 1996; Moscovici, 1984).

The removal of the right to use physical punishment for the correction of children is a good example of changing social representations that is particularly pertinent to this study. Once firmly entrenched the last few years have shown in New Zealand how this attitude has gradually changed. The repeal of section 59 of the Crimes Act in 2007 reveals how general societal attitudes toward the punishment of children by their parents have changed. The removal of corporal punishment from schools which occurred with the inclusion of section 139a in the Education Amendment Act 1990 reveals that a spell of 17 years elapsed between schools losing the right to use physical punishment as a means of correction and parents losing the same right. Interestingly the rise in stand-downs coincided with the removal of the right to corporal
punishment in schools. In the same way then that physical punishment at school has become unfamiliar, perhaps sending the student home through stand-down or suspension may have become a familiar way to react to breaches of certain common sense notions about unacceptable behaviour.

Social representations about unacceptable behaviour enable us to react to unfamiliar behaviour and address it through familiar or embedded understandings (Moscovici, 1984). The significance of Social Representations Theory to this study relies on the concept that what is familiar and embedded is essentially invisible. Furthermore the more embedded a concept is the more invisible it becomes and the more invisible a concept is the more potency it has in decision making. According to Moscovici (1984), breaches of social representations become visible because they are not familiar and as a consequence we respond to that which is visible. When we respond we anchor the unfamiliar to the familiar and objectify it in terms of the familiar (Markovà, 1996; Moscovici, 1984) and that attachment has the potential eventually, through recurrent use, to become a part of reality (Durveen, 2001; Moscovici, 1984). In this way unacceptable behaviour may become familiarised to certain groups in society to the point where these linkages, once established, become hard to break because they become second nature or invisible (Moscovici, 1984).

When principals react to unacceptable behaviour by using familiar responses they also react to maintain the social landscape that both creates and is created by its traditions and by its institutions (Markovà, 1996) like the school. When a child swears at a teacher, hits another student or continually refuses to comply with school rules they step outside those commonly shared, common sense notions of our “ontological reality” (Markovà, 1996, p.180) that enable us to create a predictable and stable world (Markovà, 1996). They break the invisible rules of the symbolic social bond that defines the teacher/student relationship (Bourdieu, 1977). Ministry of Education data reveals that unacceptable language, physical aggression and disobedience are common reasons for students being stood down from school (MOE, 2009a). Notions of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, especially those that frame our reactions to behaviour that is either violent or disrespectful and disobedient towards our elders, are “taken for granted and therefore form an essential part of social representations”
(Markovà, 1996, p.192). In this way visible and expected reactions to visible breaches reassure the community of a stable world (Moscovici, 1993).

Social representations provide a core repertoire of categorisations against which individuals self-position as members of groups and respond to being positioned as Other by other groups of people (Liu & Laszló, 2007). They provide the default settings that dictate how information is shared between individuals in the group to propagate understandings not only about who I am in terms of the group but also who I am not (Lahlou, 1996). These dichotomous conversations are central to the theory of social representation (Joffe and Staerkle, 2007; Jovchelovich, 1996; Markovà, 1996; Lahlou, 1996). These are both internal and external dialogues about self-other, who I am-who I am not, what is familiar and what is not, what (and who) is visible and what (and who) is invisible. These conversations enable us to define the boundaries of the groups that make up our world (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Liu & Lásló, 2007). The stand-down mechanism locates the student outside the ‘who I am’ and, because it is the breach that is visible, acceptable behaviour tends to be defined by what it is not rather than what it is. In this situation, therefore, we think about behavior as defined by bad behavior. The part stand-down appears to play in resolving these dichotomous opposites of order v chaos, respect v disrespect and safety v danger in school suggests that situating stand-down in the context of the Theory of Social Representations may be one way to understand the process of stand-down as a mechanism of school membership.

Social representations are “permeated permanently by relations of power” (Jovchelovitch, 1996, p. 127), which enable different versions of reality to emerge and “for some groups to have a greater chance to assert their version of reality” (p. 127). The dominant majority in the case of the school is European and middle class so this version of reality dominates. Joffe (2007) suggests that groups gain their “positive sense of identity through comparison with negatively valued groups” and by creating a “powerful division between a decorous righteous us and the disruptive, transgressive them” (p.201), the dominant in-group is able to construct superior identities (Joffe, 2007). The use of words like “disruptive” and “transgressive” again suggests that these oppositional groups are created through the construction of unacceptable behavior.
Becoming anchored to an oppositional group situates the individual within a set of expectations similarly anchored to the same representation. Furthermore being located in opposition to the group changes the person’s status to one of being less valued, of less concern and denied access to the same information as the dominant group (Deaux & Wiley, 2007; Joffe, 2007; Markovà, 1996; Moscovici, 1988).

Social representations define membership in terms of acceptable behavior; in the case of this study stand-down restricts participation and therefore membership (Wenger, 1998) albeit possibly briefly. Stand-down is a response in the form of a punishment. Moscovici (1993) defines punishment responses to unacceptable behavior as either restitutory or penal in that punishment either restores the status quo or is designed to make the individual suffer. Stand-down is a penal punishment in that it excludes the individual (Moscovici, 1993). Furthermore, both Moscovici (1993) and Foucault (1977) maintain that acts of punishment are essential to organizing large associated groups of people; that a function of punishment is to encourage others to conform. Moscovici (1993) describes punishment as “an obligation” (p. 83) that punishment for breaches of social representations of acceptable behavior are acts of cohesion that, following a breach, restore “in ‘virtuous’ people confidence in their own actions” (p.83). Crime, according to Moscovici (1993), “allows a society to prove to itself that it is alive and strong” (p. 83). Some sort of punishment, therefore, is expected following a breach of hegemonic social representations of the kind addressed by stand-down and suspension because of its role in reinforcing the community’s version of reality.

The beginning of this section on Moscovici’s Theory of Social Representations (1988, 1993, 2001) stressed the importance of stand-down being used to address only certain breaches of acceptable behaviour in school. These are breaches of behaviour essential to the cohesion of society e.g. breaches of respect for one’s elders and the safety of others; they are breaches of self-governance that is essential to inclusion in adult society (Gore, 1998). The principal as head of the school as a community of practice is expected not only to deal with the “sinner” (Moscovici, 1993, p. 83) but also to reassure the community that it is stable. There is an expectation that, because the breach is visible, the response is also visible.
3.3.4 Traditional pressures: How close or distant relationships affect decision making.

Stand-down by definition is a mechanism that restricts participation in the school community as a means to regulate identity. At stand-down discord arises between elements of the student’s school identity as perceived by the school and those expectations of performance expressed by the school’s identity. That discord is about unacceptable behaviour. The school’s identity is both an inward and an outward projection. Alvesson and Wilmott (2002) maintain that identity regulation is the business of organisational management and that the purpose of identity regulation of members of an organisation is both to develop self-awareness of the individual as a member of that organization and to promote the identity of the organization to exterior groups. Furthermore Alvesson and Wilmott (2002) argue that organisational self-identity is becoming more important which, in the context of school identity, is commensurate with the increasing importance of education as a means to achieve entry to adult society. The outward projection of the school’s identity or brand as a valid provider of high stakes cultural capital sends a powerful message to desirable stakeholder groups in the community (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2002; Apple, 2006; Brown, 2003). What Alvesson and Wilmott (2002) suggest is that problem behaviour may have to be addressed because of its impact on that brand and it is perceptions about behaviour that, to a large degree, direct these identity conversations between the school and its exterior stake holders.

Unacceptable behaviour, therefore, has the potential to unravel the balance of the learning community and stand-down, because of its wide use in dealing with unacceptable behaviour, has the potential to repair the community. The practices of the learning community, as a landscape of communities of practices, were described in table two (page 28). When an incident occurs that may be addressed by a decision to stand-down those practices that relate to school safety become visible. According to the practices listed in table two (p.17) students “have good behaviour” and caregivers “establish rules of behaviour”. Incidents that result in a decision to stand-down transgress hegemonic rules for acceptable behaviour e.g. respect for elders and
property, non-violence etc. Under these circumstances it could be seen that both the individual caregiver and the student have not complied with the practices that enable the community to function. At this point the perceived practices of the individual caregiver and the student for which they are considered responsible become separated from the expected practices of parents and adolescents as communities of practice. In addition to this, although the differences may appear semantic, each school based community of practice has a different function when it comes to school safety. According to table two (p. 17) teachers establish safe learning environments, senior executive teachers attend to school safety, the board of trustees ensures school safety and principals are responsible for school safety. It is the principal who is responsible to the other communities of practice to enable the practices of each in school safety.

When an incident occurs that breaches expectations of acceptable behavior the principal ostensibly acts in a third party settlement role to a disagreement (Black, 1998). Black’s (1998) research is about how decisions about right and wrong are made and uses examples from both historical and modern tribal communities to illustrate the types of roles people play when involved in decision making about right and wrong to reveal those factors that affect the outcomes of decisions. Black (1998) argues firstly that the rules that govern social interaction of any kind are standard across cultures and secondly that the social distance and separation between parties of a judgment affect the harshness or leniency of the outcome; a view commensurate with discussions about habitus, field and accumulations of social capital from earlier in this chapter. To Black (1998) the types and outcomes of support and settlement roles people play are governed by the closeness to or distance from those involved with the parties to the disagreement. Black (1998) suggests that in decisions of right and wrong any third party may deal more harshly with those it considers marginal and unfamiliar. This distance or closeness is defined in terms of kinship, friendship and social affinity; essentially social capital. In simple terms social closeness increases the degree of negotiated outcomes and distance increases the degree of punitiveness.

Black’s (1998) research suggests that the principal assumes the role of judge in decision making that may result in the student being stood down. Monk (2005) supports this view. In any disagreement between parties the role of judge is a third party settlement
role which is more authoritative than a mediator or arbitrator but less authoritative than a repressive peacemaker.

Judges do not give opinions they give orders [...] they address the matter separating the adversaries (like mediators) make a settlement decision (like arbitrators) and if necessary enforce it (Black, 1998, p. 114).

While consensually judges are considered non-partisan, Black (1998) maintains that “judges nearly always abandon their neutrality in the end” (p. 139). The judgment process which involves hearing, deliberations and one-sided decisions eventually gravitates to one side or the other through a process of slow partisanship (Black, 1998). Furthermore Black (1998) maintains that this process of slow partisanship is governed by social gravitation and that, while kinship and other close relationships disqualify participation “other imbalances in social proximity often remain” (p. 140). Black (1998) refers to social closeness in the form of common acquaintance, gender, ethnicity and locality as factors that may affect the outcome of judgments. These factors, as they apply to the potential outcome of the principal’s decision making, have been discussed in the earlier parts of this section; e.g. the impact accumulations of social and cultural capital and the associations of unacceptable behavior with marginalized groups.

The earlier part of this chapter discussed the relative social closeness or distance created by social and cultural capital within the school community. Social closeness to the European middle class ethos of the school comes about through points of recognition (Bourdieu, 2000). Parents and students who are more socially close to the dominant ethos of the school may have more alliances to call on when conflict arises (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000). Within the landscape of practices that makes up the school as a community of learners social closeness, especially for the principal, also comes through membership of a number of the communities or teams that make up the learning community. The principal is a staff member, a member of the senior executive and a member of the board of trustees. The principal is neither a member of the caregiver community nor a member of the student community. The principal, therefore, is a member of each of the school teams that constitute the school as a community of learners. Goffmann (1971) maintains that loyalty to and within teams is
an important factor in conflict resolution and that, while individual members of teams may disagree there is a bond of reciprocal dependency that links team mates to each other (p.88).

Goffman’s (1971) analysis of the Performance of Self in Everyday Life is a useful way to foreground both how power differentials direct discussions following stand-down and why the family appears to have little agency in the process. Following the decision to stand-down there may be a meeting between the family and the school. While there is some overlap, families are separate communities of practice to schools; they have different shared stories and accountabilities (Laluvein, 2010). The school, however, not only owns the narratives that direct the process of exclusion and reintegration it also designates the place of meeting. Goffman (1971) describes the behaviour of teams and of individuals within teams in terms of performance. In any meeting between teams that team which controls the process can be described as the performers and that team not in control of the process as the audience. Goffman’s (1971) performance analogy highlights the relative disadvantage of the family especially when those hegemonic societal discourses about good behaviour have been breached. The team in control of the performance controls the flow and accessibility of information and, by definition, the family as the audience watches rather than participates.

Goffman (1971) uses the structures and language of performance to frame his analysis of how teams behave. He refers to two significant areas in his analysis as front and back regions where, in the front region, the performance is taking place and in the back region the performance paraphernalia is created and stored and discussions with and between team members take place out of sight. The front region, therefore, represents the stage and contains the common elements of setting. In the case of a stand-down event, where the principal is presenting the team view, the seating arrangements, the use of appointment times, secretaries and official documents and letters could all be seen as elements of the setting. Goffman (1971) describes the back region as; “being located at one end of the place where the performance is presented, being cut off from it by a partition or a guarded passageway” (p.115). The administration corridor of a school is a good example of this. Reception, the principal’s office and the offices of the Assistant and Deputy Principal are all largely unavailable to
students and parents except through permission and appointment. This back region, however, is available to other school staff which suggests the team memberships, dependencies and loyalties that exist between the senior management of the school and the school staff.

Goffman (1971) describes the activities of the back region as being where:

> The capacity of a performance to express itself may be painstakingly fabricated; it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed. Here stage props and items of personal front can be stored in a kind of compact collapsing of whole repertoires of actions and characters [...] Here devices such as the telephone are sequestered so they can be used ‘privately’. Here the team can run through its performance, checking for offending expressions when no audience is present to be affronted by them.” (pp.114-5)

In the stand-down event the backstage region harbours the collection of interviews, witness reports and team discussions that support the decision to invite team family to a formal performance of team education’s script of the incident.

When the principal meets with the family it is as a representative of the school teams. The rules of performance govern discussions that take place in the spaces between teams and in front of the audience team mates are expected to behave in a socially proper way (Goffmann, 1971). The principal, for example, as a member of school teams, would be expected to publically support other team members no matter what is said in private (p.95) and the same applies to any member of team family. There is reciprocity in the relationship between the practice of teams and the practices of communities of practice in that teams look outward while communities of practice look inward. That reciprocity also exists in the distinction between performance and participation because while participation is an essential element of identity (Wenger, 1998) performance is an expression of identity (Goffman, 1971). At stand-down, for inherent structural reasons the partnership model established philosophically by the Tomorrow’s Schools legislation (Picot et al, 1988) is at odds with Goffman’s (1971) and Wenger’s (1998) models that describe the criteria for interaction between groups that do not share experiences and accountabilities.
3.4 Literature review summary

The central argument of this review has been that certain incidents of unacceptable behaviour disrupt the landscape of practices that constitutes the school as a community of learners. These behaviours are hegemonic in nature so cause sanctions in wider society also. Respecting one’s elders, keeping one’s hands to oneself and behaving in a socially safe and acceptable way are important characteristics of adult membership of society and therefore important to be demonstrated in school. These behaviours are expected to be learned early in a child’s life and the practices of the school as a community of practice reflects this. Not being able to demonstrate self-governance may attach the student to marginal groups in society that may restrict the student’s membership in society. These marginal groups are problematic because of the dichotomous relationship that exists between definitions of acceptability and unacceptability. Annual statistics on stand-down released by the Ministry of Education indicate that students from recognized marginal groups in society are more at risk of stand-down than other groups.

It is clearly evident in the practices of being a principal (table 2) that it is the principal’s responsibility to decide whether the unacceptable behaviour is serious or damaging enough to warrant the decision to stand the student down from school. Legislation and policy documents establish a framework within which the stand-down occurs. The purpose of the framework is to balance the safety of the learning environment of the school with the student’s right to education. The key principle that underlies the decision making process is that of fairness. The review of the literature suggests that both recent changes to the education environment and embedded understandings put pressure on the principal. These pressures may regulate decision making in the stand-down environment. Recent changes to the education environment include the increased importance of credentialing in globalized economies and the impact of new right philosophies on education provision especially for those at risk of marginalization. Embedded understandings that may impact on decision making include the potential mismatch of habitus between low income families and the middle class ethos of the school together with our social understandings of right behaviour and how that affects our notions of membership to society. Finally, in the
stand-down environment itself the unraveling of expectations constitutes a meeting of teams where the principal’s overlap with school based teams is structurally likely to locate the family as a passive audience of the school performance.
Chapter Four Methodology

The most significant stories are often those that imply membership in or exclusion from various communities (Sfard & Prusack, 2005, p.16)

4.1 Introduction

This study investigates how being stood down from school affects the way the student and those around him/her see the student’s identity in terms of being a member of a learning community. The outcome of this investigation is to better understand how to keep those students in school who are at risk of exclusion. This research, therefore, examines reliable and valid methods to understand better the two key concepts of membership of and identity within a community of practice at a point where that community has restricted the participation of the student. The study is important because suspension has been linked to poor outcomes for students e.g. leaving school without qualifications (Fergusson et al, 2002), youth offending (Christle et al, 2005) and drug and alcohol addiction (Fergusson et al, 2002) yet there is little known in New Zealand about what happens to those students at school before the event occurs that leads to suspension. Anecdotally school principals link stand down and suspension to the point where they say almost all students who have been suspended from school have been stood down at some time. Principals suggest, therefore, that those suspended may constitute a virtual subset of those stood down. Ministry of Education statistics do not link stand-down and suspension but reveal that the ratio of students suspended to those stood down is 1:5 (MOE, 2009a, 2009b). The difference between the numbers of students stood down to those suspended presents an area of study that might provide useful information on what retains or regains membership on the boundary between inclusion and exclusion. An increased understanding of the structures, processes and stories of this boundary region may enable schools to help keep more students within an education environment.

The research methodology for this study is based on an Ethnomethodology model (see Silverman & Marvasti, 2008) because of the emphasis placed, in communities of
practice, on shared storytelling. Wenger (1998) proposed shared storytelling as a key to participation and membership within communities of practice. By identifying the shared stories of a community of practice, in this case a school, and then analysing how participants position themselves in terms of those stories it may be possible to indicate the membership position and potential identity trajectories of the students recruited for the study. Researching and understanding the gaps between participants’ stories about identity is an essential element of the notion of identity (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) and in this study that closeness or distance is identified through the participants’ choice of language when recounting their stories about school membership. Stand-down, however, is a practice in itself so as well as identifying individual stories of stand-down from school this research analysis also identifies the shared stories of stand-down as a practice within the school.

The first part of this chapter describes the research design and how ethnomethodology is an effective means to allow closeness and distance of stance within shared storytelling to be expressed and identified. This is followed by the decisions behind the construction of questions for semi structured interviews together with strategies used to recruit the sample. Conducting the interviews, however, resulted in unexpected issues that evolved from my privileged position of being an ex-principal conducting research into an area for which principals have sole responsibility in the school. My status within the research both placed constraints on and presented opportunities for the research and these issues are discussed. Detail is then provided about the analysis of data together with the feedback provided to the participants. Finally the chapter discusses the limitations, reliability and validity of the research design.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 The Ethnomethodology model

*Ethnomethodology is very much concerned with how social reality is constructed in everyday interaction. Ethnomethodologists’ primary aim is to understand how people go about doing things in their everyday lives by creating meaningful categories for themselves and others.* (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008, p.16)
Qualitative research design is suited to the study of life experiences and the telling of life histories (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Ethnomethodology is particularly suited to research in applied situations like education (Tedlock, 2000) because of its potential to enable the researcher to study the experiences, perspectives and actions of all those involved; teachers, students and others (Hammersley, 1999). This research, therefore, invites contributions from as many perspectives as possible to try to describe and understand both the everyday experience of having been stood down from school and the interplay of institutional and cultural experiences that contribute to that particular field of practice (Gubrium, & Holstein, 2000). Ethnomethodology enables stories to be told by diverse participants within the field of the study (Hammersley, 1999) so the time period for this research is limited to stories told within the six months that follow a stand down event; that period when students may be renegotiating their membership of the school community.

This study places particular emphasis on the voices of the students who have been stood-down from school. While school research often focuses on students at secondary school (Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996) the actual voices of the students are rarely heard (Nieto, 1994). Rudduck et al (1996) regard the views of students as a valuable resource especially in research into matters of school success or failure. This study takes a similar stance to Phelan, Davidson and Hanh Thanh Cao (1991) and Sfard and Prusak (2005) that students are active agents in their world and that they act as “both instigators and mediators of meaning and experience(sic)” (Phelan et al, 1991, p.226). Often the stories of students are inferred from the comments of adults (Rudduck et al, 1996) but a study by Chaplain (1996) revealed that both teachers and parents may overgeneralize or miss completely the students’ rationalization of behaviour. This study focuses on the shared stories of the stand-down experience. Stand-down is one point of crisis where students negotiate the boundaries between home and school (Phelan et al, 1991). To enable the voices of the students to be heard this study places equal importance on the contributions of all participants across all participant groups.

In addition to enabling a range of narratives, ethnomethodology also acknowledges those outside social and cultural factors and experiences that might impact on and contribute to the hows and what of what is realistically a limited but potentially a
significant period in a student’s school experience (Gubrium, & Holstein, 2000). Inherent to this research, then, is not only an understanding that the context around a stand down event is both complex and individual but also that within this context people express themselves in a socially grounded way both in terms of the immediate context of stand down and as participants in the wider context of a global society (Hammersley, 1999). This research design, therefore, seeks to construct the individual and socially grounded reality of the stand down experience through a series of conversations (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Through semi structured interviews this research asked the significant storytellers in a stand down event to tell their own stories of membership and identity.

Although the perspectives of a wide range of viewpoints were canvassed for the research, at the centre of the research is the individual student who was stood down. This means that what was said in the interviews related mostly to how being excluded from school on stand down related to a specific student. The research uses a narrative approach and each set of interviews collected and transcribed relates specifically to the shared stories of the stand down experience for one student. There are ten student stand-down stories in the sample. The reason for choosing a narrative approach to describe and understand the social reality of the stand down experience is my adherence to the view that people actively though incompletely author and write their own life stories (Gubrium, & Holstein, 2000, Sfard & Prusak, 2005). This suggests that students are active participants in rather than passive recipients of the school experience and that students at stand down, while they might not be fully engaged with the formal business of education, are still actively engaged in learning though perhaps not in the classroom sense. According to Hammersely (1999) students “both employ survival strategies and engage in adaptations shaped by circumstances and the requirements of self; education involves the articulation of selves not just the playing of roles” (Hammersely, 1999, p.1). From this can be derived that any audience, whether teacher or researcher, cannot “assume what it is going on, what ought to be going on or what must be going on” (Hammersely, 1999, p.2) within any field of interaction. Ethnomethodology research is inherently and structurally resistant to making claims about social realities not expressed or addressed by the participants (Silverman, 2000)
and is, therefore, appropriate for describing and understanding the stories of students who have been stood-down from school.

The social reality of stand-down as it pertains to notions of identity and membership has been constructed through purposeful sampling (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008) and the detailed analysis of purposeful, though semi-structured, interviews. The sample was constructed from students who had been stood down, their caregivers, teachers and school managers. The intention was both to compare and contrast notions of identity and membership expressed by and about students who had been stood down from school and thus to identify the shared stories about stand-down within a community of practice. While still acknowledging that discourses are systems of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1972), that people tell different stories depending on the audience (Sfard & Prusack, 2005) and that reporting depends as much on the listener as the teller (Vidich & Lyman, 2000) the objective was to report what was said by participants, accurately (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000). In this research what was said by participants was the modus operandi (Gubrium & Holstein, 2000); what was not said has neither been assumed nor addressed. The strict adherence to that which can be proved to represent faithfully the life world experienced by those involved in the stand down mechanism avoided replacing the social reality of stand down as expressed by the participants with “a fictional non-existing world constructed by the scientific observer” (Schutz, 1964, p.8). Ethnomethodology recognises the “essential rationality of all people” (Hammersly, 1999, p. 2) and as such their ability to tell their stories understanding and managing the social contingencies of the environment in which they are told. Assumptions and suppositions made by any third person to the discourse, therefore, would merely complicate complexity (Hammersly, 1999).

4.2.2 The research interview: questioning school conduct

The action of standing a student down from school immediately inferred a gap between the school’s expectation of acceptable behaviour from the student and the actual presentation of behaviour. Some understanding of a gap must have existed on the part of the school otherwise why would the student have been stood down? A gap might have existed for the caregivers and maybe, also, for the student. The purpose of the research interview was to ask appropriate questions of participants that might
enable them to position themselves and those they are talking about in terms of their significant shared stories of school experience. While these shared stories recounted the cultural and social capital of school experience (see chapter three) the narration was set against a background of discontinuity with consensual discourses of acceptable school behaviour. The nature of those shared stories is important to this analysis. Shared stories about acquiring qualifications, winning prizes, playing sport and going on school trips, for example, denote participation which, according to Wenger (1998), characterises insider and peripheral identities rather than marginal identities. Intergenerational shared stories of school experience also contribute to the acquired social capital of school membership. Many researchers emphasise the importance of family participation in school experience (Bull et al, 2008; De Civita et al, 2004; Jones, 2007; Lareau, 2001, 2002; Wylie et al, 1999); according to Bourdieu (1986), however, intergenerational social capital can be either positive or negative. Participation, according to Wenger (1998) is a key requirement of full membership of communities of practice. Being stood-down from school by definition appeared to at best restrict participation. All participants, therefore, were asked about the nature of the students’ participation during the stand-down event.

Although all participants were linked through the ten shared stories of a stand-down event, within the participant sample there were two distinct participant groups. One group was made up of the significant storytellers (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) of each child’s individual school experience; i.e. ten students who had been stood-down from school together with a caregiver and a teacher for each student. The research interviews for this group were about the individual student’s experience of stand-down. The second group consisted of principals and senior managers; still linked through the individual students but asked questions about the practice of stand-down as a means to manage behaviour in school. The first group was asked about school acquired and valued cultural and social capital with the intention of identifying both the distance from and closeness of the participant to shared stories of school acquired capital and the distance from and closeness of the positions of participants within individual cases studies. Questions about favourite subjects and doing homework, about doing well and about life after school all provided the opportunity for participants to position either
themselves or the student against consensually held shared stories of the expectations of school experience. In addition questions asked about family experiences of school stand-down and other issues of school conduct enabled all participants in the case study to tell the past histories of school conduct that might be perceived as contributing to the current context. Finally each participant was asked about the stand-down itself what happened and to what degree being stood down restricted the student’s ability to participate in shared school experiences.

The second group, which comprised school managers from the schools where the students had been stood-down, was asked about stand-down as a practice. The intention was to try and discover if there are shared stories about standing students down from school held within the community of practice that stands students down. While it was planned to construct the shared stories of stand-down it was hoped also to identify any exterior narratives that might contribute to the practice. Senior managers were asked why they stood students down and the potential effect that stand-down might have on the student and the family. They were asked if they saw any link between stand-down and suspension and if so how they responded to the established link between being suspended from school and potential poor life outcomes. While the intention was to construct shared stories of stand-down as a practice each of the senior managers interviewed was also linked to an individual student so provided as well the backdrop of philosophy and practice against which each stand-down was set. Because this second group was interviewed after the first group it was also possible to raise the questions about context that surfaced in the first group’s interviews.

Principals and senior teachers were only interviewed once because the intention was to construct the narratives that underpinned the practice of stand-down. The first group, however, was interviewed six months after the first interview because, for this group, the intention was to identify change. Those students who had left school in the intervening six months were not interviewed a second time. In all cases the teacher interviewed in the second interview was different to the teacher interviewed initially. Because all of the stand-down events that prompted the student’s entry to the study occurred in the second part of the year, all of the students changed year during the
study and a significant number changed school. All interviews from both groups were transcribed and both tapes and transcripts held in a secure location. Neither the tapes nor the transcripts contained any information that would identify either the student or the school they attended.

**Ethical considerations**

The conduct of the research raised a number of ethical considerations which were addressed in both the ethics consent for the study granted by the University of Otago Ethics committee and through consultation with the local iwi[^6] Ngai Tahu. These ethical considerations included mediating the power imbalances that exist firstly when interviewing children and secondly where participants came from cultural backgrounds different to the researcher. In addition the nature of the semi structured interview, together with the general area under investigation, meant that managing both confidentiality and the potential for disclosure were also important. It was essential, therefore, to the reliability and validity of the results that provisions were made to ensure that interviews were conducted appropriately (Alvesson & Skölberg, 2009: Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Conducting interviews with children and young people placed particular caveats on all parts of the research process; i.e. the way consent was gained, information collected and feedback provided (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Gollop, 2000). Power imbalances potentially exist in any research situation which involves interviews but in interviews with children and young people this is particularly important (Gollop, 2000). In the same way subtle but potent power imbalances also occur in situations where there are cultural differences. The disproportionate numbers of Maori and Pasifika students in statistics on school stand-down is well documented (see MOE, 2009a). Similarly there is a body of research that suggests Maori children face difficulties interfacing with a school system that is dominantly European and middle class (Bishop, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2008). It was important, therefore, to construct a research process where participants were best able to express their feelings and perceptions safely about stand-down from school.

[^6]: iwi (m) meaning people or tribal affiliation. Ngai Tahu is the iwi of the South Island and therefore for the University of Otago is situated.
The safety of participants especially students within the process was paramount. That any person is the best expert on themselves (Gollop, 2000) guided the process. While consent was gained from a caregiver before the student could participate the student’s consent was also gained (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Gollop, 2000). At the initial phone contact with the caregiver issues of safety were explained and discussed. A check was made about the student’s ethnicity and whether the caregiver thought this might need to be catered for at the interview. Five caregivers said their child was of different ethnicity to mine. There were four Maori and one Pasifika student. I explained the safety measures I had put in place and none of the caregivers felt there were any issues of safety for their children. At the beginning of each interview the students also had the procedure explained and they were also asked if they felt comfortable to do the interview and if there was anything else that would make them more comfortable. All students said they were comfortable with the procedure set out below.

As far as possible students directed the process of information gathering; they chose a pseudonym or nickname to maintain confidentiality (Gollop, 2000). It was signposted at the point at which the nickname was explained, however, that both the parent and the teacher would be identified also through that nickname. This was important because of the way the narratives were set up for chapter five. Participants could choose the venue and whether or not another person was present. Both Elephant and Mara chose to have friends at the interview. Before any interview began all participants were told they were able to withdraw from the interview and the research process at any time (Alderson & Morrow, 2004; Gollop, 2000) and to request that the tape recorder was turned off. During the course of the interviews some parents e.g. Bob’s mother disclosed information which she did not want included in the taped transcript. Finally all participants could decide how they would receive and reply to the transcripts of the interviews and the feedback; they were also able to add or remove information from the transcripts.

### 4.2.3 Constructing the sample

Each of the students at the centre of the study had been stood down but not suspended from school. The students might have been suspended from another school and still included in the study. The students were in years seven to eleven; i.e. aged 11
to 16. The reason for this was that in years seven to eleven the numbers of students stood down nationally rise sharply to peak in year ten and fall in year twelve (see MOE 2009). Constructing a sample from these age groups might also provide useful information as to why students in their early high school years appear to be more at risk of being stood down from school than those in other age and year groupings. This meant that, in New Zealand, participants in the sample needed to be students attending an intermediate or high school. To recruit the students it was necessary to gain permission of the caregiver for the student’s participation in the study. This was important for two reasons; firstly that the participation of the caregiver was important and secondly that it was a way to avoid students being pressured to participate by the school. The initial permission by the caregiver for participation in the study was an attempt to partially neutralise the potential impact of the power imbalance between home and school affecting the make-up of the sample.

Initially a range of schools were approached from both rural and city schools, from high to low decile (i.e. high to low SES), from private to state schools. The schools were all in the same geographical area of New Zealand and amounted to a range of schools within one provincial area. Most schools in the province were approached. Principals were invited to participate and a letter was sent to the school’s board of trustees explaining the study with an offer to speak at a board meeting. Principals were asked to approach the caregivers of up to two students who had been stood down that year and invite them to participate. The reason schools were asked to recruit only two students was to ensure that the sample was balanced across a number of schools while at the same time also to enable comparison within a school if the opportunity arose. The majority of schools asked were prepared to ask caregivers to participate. In addition to recruiting students through the schools, advertisements and articles were placed in free community newspapers. The reason for that was to gain access to participants who might find an approach from the school difficult. In these cases I approached the school following communication with the caregiver. Once a caregiver and student had agreed to participate, the school identified and sought the participation of a teacher who it considered fitted the criteria of being involved with the student and the stand down. The school also sought the participation of the senior
teacher who investigated the incident that resulted in stand down and who also worked through the stand down process. Once ten students were recruited the sample closed so the data was collected from case studies of the first ten students who had been stood down from school that year in years seven to eleven and whose caregivers were prepared to allow them to participate.

The ten students who agreed to participate came from a wide range of schools from city to rural, from high decile to low decile and from state to state integrated. The students’ ethnicity covered the range of ethnicities that make up the Ministry of Education statistical collection of students stood-down each year. The sample, therefore, was largely representative of the cohort of students stood-down from school in any year in New Zealand. Table 5 sets out information about the students interviewed over the two sets of interviews. Table 5 shows that, while most of the students came from low income families the majority attended schools that were designated as being in mid to high SES areas. The table shows, too, that three of the students changed school over the six months of the study as they moved from primary to secondary school. Four other students, however, while they stayed in school moved into the senior school. In addition four of the students moved from mainstream schooling to education provision that was peripheral though still part of the school community.
Table 5 Summary of student participants at the first and second interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>First interview</th>
<th>Second interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yr</td>
<td>School type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eth</td>
<td>Yr</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherish</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elephant</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mara</td>
<td>Pa</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missy</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr Smith</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tui</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: S= student, C= caregiver, T= teacher, P= principal, ST= senior teacher; M= Maori, E= European, Pa= Pasifika; Int= yr 7-8 intermediate school, HS= High School, SI= State Integrated, Area= rural yr1-13 school; Dec= decile, SES = Socio economic status. SEN= Special education needs, AE= Alternative Education,
4.3. The research: creating a world of its own

The intention at the outset, when the research was designed, was for the researcher to be a non-participant observer as befits ethnomethodology (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). One of the main reasons for choosing this stance was that my past experience as a high school principal might draw me into the research to become a participant. As the research project progressed, however, despite attempts to adhere strictly to the ethnomethodology model of non-participation, my past experience as a high school principal both provided opportunities and placed constraints on the conduct of the study. My experience as a principal made it easier to approach schools and to comprehend the processes and jargon of both school in general and stand-down in particular but it also had the potential to make it harder to stay neutral. I felt that, because school staff members were aware of my background, they were prepared to be very open. Both to invite open and frank discussion and, as a consequence, acknowledge the potentially sensitive confidential nature of some of the information I was careful not to include any information that might identify the schools, district or even the island where the students were situated.

This did not mean, however, that I managed to achieve the persona of a neutral non partcipant observer. As the data collection proceeded I found that the research created a world of its own (Vidich & Lyman, 2000), a field of interaction where the identity of the researcher both shaped and was reshaped by the world the research created (Vidich & Lyman, 2000). As the analysis progresses in the latter chapters of this thesis much is made of the constraints and opportunities of the narrative of the truth teller (see Peters, 2003). In both the conduct of the research and the analysis of the data the researcher must also be cast in the role of truth teller. If we subscribe to the notion that people are active agents in defining and constructing their world then the field of interaction constructed by the world of the research must also be subject to the same rules. The world of the research must be determined by the accumulated social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) of the participants including the observer; the researcher as narrator must also, therefore, be considered a participant.
The researcher as narrator sets the boundaries of the field through the questions asked and the identification of the sample. The choice of research design and research tool determines the lens through which the data will be viewed. What the researcher chooses to notice, however, must be dependent both on what the observer has already brought to the setting and to the consequences of the observer’s interaction with the setting. Vidič and Lyman (2000), suggest “The results produced by the method are no more than the reality of the observer” (p. 39). In addition to this those choices made by other participants in their understanding of the persona of the researcher narrator must also impact on the stories told. Consequently, while making every effort to achieve as neutral a canvas as possible any literature selected as background to this research and any analysis of data collected is only a construction of one of the possible realities that inhabit the field created by this project.

4.4 Data Collection, transcription, storage of data and feedback to participants
The data was collected in the form of semi-structured interviews. Once individuals agreed to participate copies of questions were sent out and an arrangement made for a time to carry out the interview. All participants were given a choice on where the interview should take place; caregivers and students were also given the option of being interviewed together. The purpose of allowing choice was to make the interview as relaxed and safe as possible. In the end most students elected to be interviewed at school and caregivers at home though two students were interviewed with their caregiver present. The schools were asked to find a quiet room for an interview lasting no more than 30 minutes. The students were offered the option of having a friend present; both Elephant and Mara took up this opportunity. At the start of their first interview the students were asked if they would provide a nickname for themselves for the project. Parents are known by the student’s nickname and the word that denotes them as a parent e.g. mother/father; similarly the teachers are known as the nickname and the word teacher. Principals and senior teachers, however, were allocated a number. All participants were asked if they minded the interview being taped. One
senior teacher did not want to be taped so notes were taken at the interview. At the end of each interview the safe storage and security of the tapes was explained together with information about the transcription of the tapes. It was explained that tapes would be transcribed and the transcript posted or emailed to the participant. Participants, especially students, were asked how they wanted to receive their transcript. Some students, for example, wanted their transcript hand delivered to them at school others were happy to have it posted or emailed home.

I transcribed the whole of each interview rather than organise the transcription in terms of themes identified at the time of transcription. The interviews were not all transcribed at the same time and I felt that what was said in one interview might become significant only when set against what was said in other interviews. All participants were given the option of altering or adding to and deleting parts of their transcript. The reason for this was that I wanted the participants to reflect on what they had said. Between the initial interview and the second interview at six months caregivers were contacted and asked about how the student was progressing and if there had been further stand downs or suspensions. Notes were taken of these short phone calls and a copy sent to the caregiver. With the letter that accompanied the transcripts contact details were provided in case any changes needed to be made and at the start of the second set of interviews all participants were asked if they wanted to change anything in the first transcript. In the end only one of the participants wanted to delete something from the transcript, some added further information. The tapes, after they had been transcribed, were stored securely at the University of Otago, hard copies of transcripts were filed under the student’s nickname. The hard copy files were kept in secure, locked storage at my home.

In an effort to ameliorate the power differential both between participant groups and between the researcher and the participants feedback was provided to all participants after the first set of interviews. Each participant was sent a list of the similarities in responses from all of the participant groups. The feedback listed similarities as either ‘most’ or ‘some’. To be included in the feedback a similar response needed to be made by the same participant group at least three times (some) or more than six times (most). All participants were invited to respond to the feedback both immediately after
the feedback was provided and, for the caregivers and students, at the start of the second interview. Some feedback from the first interviews was used to frame questions to principals.

4.5 Data analysis

4.5.1 Response as text

The nature of an interview requires the participants to explain themselves (Hammersley, 1999). In any interview the participants are asked to think with their mouths (Tzara, 1921). In this study the transcripts produced explained the participant’s perception of the nature and degree of their own and others’ participation in communities of practice. All discourses were treated as of equal value (Bhaskar, 1979). Any explanation, however, depends both on the questions asked and the participant’s perception of what is required of the explanation (Vidich & Lyman, 2000) so different contexts and different expectations may produce different responses. Any interview response studied as text, therefore, contains hidden elements that must be brought into the foreground to understand the conduct of the analysis. Any response is a performance; a storytelling designed to draw the listener in and be persuaded to a point of view. In its role as a story, therefore, interview responses contain elements of storytelling e.g. audience, narration, setting, characterisation, theme, plot and subplot (Liu & László, 2007).

The text is not finite of itself. It is a complex construction of metanarratives; exterior narratives that are drawn into the text to explain or reinforce the author’s stance (Genette, 1997, 1998). The metanarratives selected by the respondent as explanation are significant because they indicate both the authority narratives the respondent draws on in their explanation and the degree of agency each participant has in the field of the stand-down event. The metanarratives that inform the positioning of participants in a stand-down event were introduced in the review of the literature for this study. In their positioning and rationalization of the stand-down event participants may refer to the narratives of fairness, of right to education, of safety and
of market share. Participants may also refer to older, more embedded narratives about acceptable behaviour and those of social or ethnic difference.

When responding participants assume the stance of truth teller (see Peters, 2003) within that narrative at that particular time. These narratives, however, exist in hierarchies that are created by power relationships (Gee, 2010; Jovchelovitch, 1996; Marková, 1996; Wenger, 1998). The respondent’s degree of ownership and right to speak within that narrative affects the respondent’s authority and agency to use that narrative. Because the response is believed by the respondent as the truth and because truth is a mechanism of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1976) the more power the exterior narrative has in terms of the legitimate shared stories of the school as a community of practice the more agency the respondent is likely to have in the field of the stand-down event. Ownership of the narrative by the respondent and the authority with which the narrative is used, in terms of the powerful shared stories of the community of practice, should reveal the degree and nature of participation of the respondent in the practice.

The choice of narratives selected to support a participant’s explanation is significant for a number of reasons. Some metanarratives may be bigger discourses that have longer timescales (Gee, 2010; Lemke, 2001) and their length of existence is an indication both of the embeddedness and the potential intransigence of the narrative (Gee, 2010; Lemke, 2001). Negotiations that occur following stand-down bring together at least two communities of practice both with their own accumulated shared stories. Metanarratives with long timescales, owned either by the family or the school, have potency in the field of the stand-down both because of their accumulated social capital and because of their consensual common sense status as shared stories of that community of practice. It is also significant that the field of interaction that comes into existence through a stand-down event does not constitute a single community of practice (see Wenger, 1998) but an interaction between communities of practice. The community of practice significant to this study is that of the school because the school’s ownership of the practice of stand-down; families, however, only come into interaction with that practice through the instigation of the school. The positions the participants assume both in conjunction with their own community of practice and as
a means of identifying their separation from other communities indicate the distance or degree of separation from perceptions of the joint enterprise of the school (Laluvein, 2010; Wenger, 1998). In this field of interaction, too, students are members of both the family and the school and some caregivers, for various reasons may also be members of the school community of practice.

How the participants reveal their positions in terms of these metanarratives is the key task of the analysis. The literature review identified a number of metanarratives that have the potential to position the respondent in terms of closeness to or separation from the shared stories of school experience. The literature review revealed that powerful long timescale metanarratives about the school’s traditional role as provider of legitimate valued knowledge, the role of the family and the construction of the social other may mediate decision making in the field of the stand-down event. Shorter timescale metanarratives too, for example free market neoliberal philosophies of retributive justice and the significance of accredited high stakes qualifications in a globalised world economy may also become part of the position the participants assume in their explanations of what happened. Genette (1997, 1998) proposed that metanarratives can be identified in text through references to them embedded in the text. References to metanarratives in this way may come either directly through calling on the metanarrative e.g. the Education Act or indirectly through stereotypical references e.g. ‘send a clear message’ is a phrase associated with zero tolerance.

Both Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) and Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggest that the vocabulary and syntax of the text position the author in terms of the intended purpose of the text. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) suggest that, as a storyteller, the respondent draws the audience into the story by a conscious framing of the text using the basic elements of language construction. While Genette (1997, 1998) suggests that direct and indirect references identify the existence of external metanarratives in the shared stories of stand-down Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) propose that the use of vocabulary and syntactical features identify the position the respondent assumes in relation to those stories. Syntactical features, for example, like active or passive voice indicate the participation of the storyteller and the use of specific features, e.g. conditional and parallel structures, the position the respondent takes in terms of their
narrative (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). For this study Sfard and Prusak (2005), who suggest that some of the most significant stories of communities are those that “imply membership in or exclusion from various communities” (p.16), suggest syntactical clues to identify the nature of expressions of identity in individual participant responses. Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggest that identifying closeness or separations between the significant storytellers of a child’s school stories is an appropriate and effective way to understand identity. In the data analysis Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) focus on comparisons and differences between individual structural word use within responses is used more to determine the positioning of the students and their significant storytellers to construct individual school stories of stand-down.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough’s (1999) focus on structure and syntax will be used to determine the position of respondents towards school stories about the practice of stand-down.

In the end there were 54 transcribed interviews. The interviews were split into two sets: the individual ten stand-down stories with a student, caregiver and teacher interviewed twice six months apart and the principals and senior executive teachers. The data was analysed by assigning colours both to the different metanarratives referred to by participants and the different uses of structural language. From the predominant use of particular colours the dominant themes of the analysis emerged. Quotations from participants within these themes were transferred to tables. The data tables for each of the ten stand-down stories were kept separate while those for principals and senior teachers were constructed together under the themes as headings.

4.5.2 Structuring the analysis
The analysis of the data is divided into three chapters. In the first of the three chapters (chapter 5) the students as the central voice and main characters in the story are presented by their significant storytellers. Sfard and Prusak (2005) indicate caregivers and teachers as significant storytellers of an individual child’s school story of stand-down. What structures the analysis in chapter 5 is Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) analytic tool that identifies closeness or separation between expectation (designated identity) and situation (actual identity) as significant in stories of inclusion and exclusion.
Within this structure the participants position themselves in the shared stories of school experience through the metanarratives they refer to and their use of different syntactical structures e.g passive or conditional voice. Sfard and Prusack's (2005) analytic tool enables the study of identity through analysis of conversation by categorising expressions of actual and designated identity through the use of specific structural words in the narrative. Actual identity can be recognised through the use of structural words like “is” and “am” (p.16) e.g. ‘I am a good listener’ describes the situation as the person sees it. As a third person narrative a student may be referred to as ‘She is a slow learner’ again this is a reifying statement to a specified audience about what the narrator believes to be the case at the time. Statements like ‘She struggles with mathematics’ are also reifying statements of actual identity and included in the data analysis.

Expressions of designated identity can be isolated in sentences that use words like “should, ought, have to, want, can and cannot” (p.18). They are expressions of what is expected to be the case which, while subject to change, according to Sfard and Prusack (2005) tend to be more binding and intransigent than statements of actual identity. Separating those utterances that express actual identity from those that express designated identity was essential to this study because of the view that “a perceived persistent gap between actual and designated identities, especially if it contains critical elements, is likely to generate a sense of unhappiness” (Sfard an Prusack, 2005, p. 18). This suggested that degrees of closeness between actual and designated identities as they were expressed by significant narrators and how they overlap and change could provide important clues to how students renegotiate school identity and membership following stand down.

This sense of unhappiness suggested by Sfard and Prusak (2005) is explored further in chapters 6 and 7 as the emphasis moves to identifying metanarratives as they are expressed through language use in the text. While Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) analytic tool is still important because participants were still being asked to identify gaps between the actual situation as they see and the desired outcome, chapters 6 and 7 focus more on stand-down as practice. In these chapters respondents refer to external metanarratives to justify their response (Genette, 1997, 1998) and make syntactical
moves to position themselves in terms of those metanarratives (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Chapter 6 concentrates on the stances taken by each community of practice involved in the field of each stand-down event. The unhappiness expressed by Sfard and Prusak (2005) is expressed as a sense of disappointment as school personnel talk about some families do not meet their expectations and the families express the same doubts about the school. Chapter 7 reveals how one common factor in many of the stand-down stories, being bullied, became interlinked with the factors that resulted in both successful and unsuccessful reintegration to school following stand-down.

4.6 Limitations, validity and reliability of the research
While it can be argued that the chief limitation of this kind of research is that conclusions and outcomes only relate to the universe of the study (Hammersley, 1999), qualitative research design enables that which may appear invisible to become visible (Alvesson & Skölberg, 2009), in this case the practice of stand-down in New Zealand schools. Qualitative research design, through its emphasis on starting from where the participants are and asking them to reflect on a point of tension in its natural setting brings the context of events and the rationale behind decision making into the foreground (Alvesson & Skölberg, 2009). The outcomes of this study at its most basic level have the potential to contribute new knowledge to the stand-down environment and therefore inform the practice of stand-down in New Zealand schools. In addition, however, the emphasis on reintegration in this study may also contribute new knowledge to a wider context in any circumstance where a student transitions from one school environment to another.

The data collected for this study amounts to more than thirty hours of a range of significant storytellers to the practice covering the whole range of the stand-down experience. The ten students interviewed covered the full range of gender and cultural groups which are represented in statistics collated on school stand-down each year (see MOE, 2009a). Essentially there were seven boys and three girls, comprising four Maori students, one Pasifika student and five European students. The outcomes of this study can also be seen as both valid and reliable because, within the two participant
groups, participants were all asked the same questions and the data was analysed using
the same criteria (Silverman & Marvasti). Those participants in the group who were
referring specifically to a single stand-down i.e. a student, parent teacher, therefore,
were asked the same set of questions. Similarly principals and senior executive
teachers who were asked about stand-down as a process were also asked a similar set
of questions. Despite the relatively small number of stand-down events studied,
therefore, compared to the number experienced in New Zealand each year, the study
has the potential to reliably contribute points of richness to the stand-down
environment. As a consequence the experience of stand-down of these ten students,
their parents, teachers, senior teachers and principals both informs and has relevance
to the stand-down stories of other New Zealand students.
Chapter Five: A bunch of characters

Fabulous kids but, and I have never had a problem with them, but teaching them in a classroom of 30 others on a Friday afternoon would not be what I would be signing up for. Mara’s teacher.

5.1 Introduction
This research project constructed narrative studies around students stood down from schools in one New Zealand province in 2008/9. The project, however, did not investigate the stand-down event itself. Because the study took place after the stand-down event and after the student had returned to school the research set up the opportunity for a reflexive activity (Markovà, 1996) to take place about stand-down. Essentially the participants were asked to step back from the stand-down event, reflect on questions about school identity and membership following a stand-down event. Each reflexive activity brought together three participant groups all of whom reflected not only on how the stand-down affected the student but also how they perceived this effect. Central to this analysis is the question of what we might bring to a narration when the mirror upon which we reflect school identity is one of participation in and membership of the school as a community of practice. That each student participant had a school identity was undeniable but did each identity rest in concert with or in opposition to expressions of school membership as perceived by other significant storytellers? The questions asked of each participant group were largely the same; the choice of what each participant decided to bring into the field and how it was expressed was up to each individual participant. In addition to the choice of what to bring was the choice of how to prioritise; essentially, of the items raised by each of the participants, what predominated and what sat in the background?
The key feature of this chapter is consistency of narration; that is how the stories told may be consistent with or separate from both each other and those shared stories that denote participation in the school as a community of practice. We are all actors and narrators of our own and others’ stories (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) and as a consequence make active decisions when we position ourselves as storytellers (Vidich & Lyman, 2000). The central theme of each story is a perception of school membership; i.e. Am I in or am I out? Is s/he in or is s/he out? These perceptions have been set against and in concert with understandings of the background and setting of shared school stories. The stories told are set at a time closely following and a short distance from a conjuncture where a decision has been made by the school that may change the student’s membership and therefore identity of the school (Monk, 2002). The narrations, therefore, contain considerations from two points in time. Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) analytic tool takes precedence in this chapter; the concept of time as an organiser of the student’s continuum of membership is an essential background feature of this part of the analysis and is well suited to the use of Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) tool about how characters tell identity in terms of perceptions of the actual and the expected. Sfard and Prusak (2005) consider the closeness in these expressions of the future (designated identity) and the present (actual identity) as significant to notions of shared stories of school participation. Some references to external metanarratives also occur but these largely position the respondents as storytellers. The more intensive use of reference, inference and syntactical analysis as a means to identify the metanarratives of school participation takes precedence in chapters 6 and 7.

5.2 Ways of talking: ten stories about being stood down from school.

Selections from the responses of the ten student stories are set out below. They are called stories because responses from each participant have been selected by the storyteller, in this case the researcher, and woven together to create a story. The main
The theme that connects and drives the stories is how school identity and membership are expressed by significant storytellers where the setting is an event that restricts school participation. According to Wenger (1998) participation is a key indicator of both the nature of identity and of identity trajectories in communities of practice. The result is a positioning of that central character set against their perceptions of shared stories of school participation. Each central character has done something that their school principal considers requires the student to be stood down from school. They have sworn at teachers, fought with another student, punched someone, refused to obey instructions, brought alcohol to school and even set fire to a friend’s dreadlock. There is no suggestion that these behaviours are reasonable and that the school should not respond to them. By the end of the study, however, six months along from the first interview, only four out of the ten students have not been stood down again; two of the remaining six students have left school without qualifications and two others are in alternative education facilities.

In the analysis below the ten narratives have been separated into three groups according to how far each student perceives they have achieved or are on track to achieve their identified future over the duration of the study. Four of the students, Mara, Missy, Mr. Smith and Tui, were the only students in the study who were not stood down again. These students comprise the first group. Cherish, George and Mark make up the second group. They have all been stood down again, Cherish has been suspended and the two boys have left school. The final group comprises Ben, Bob and Elephant. These three students were stood down again but each has restoried their school situation to bring it more closely into line with their articulated designated identity expressed in the first interview. An initial identifies the student, parents are referred to as mother (M) and father (F) and teachers as (T). Where the responses come from the second set of interviews (6mnths) appears after the initial.

5.2.1 Mara, Missy, Mr. Smith and Tui: Back on track and narrating their own futures.
This first group of students have put the stand-down event in their past and are working towards the designated identity they described in the first interview. They
have not been stood-down again and their parents and teachers agree on their membership of the school community. Their identity trajectories within the community of practice are inbound. The most significant feature of this group of students is that an assertive and proactive parent became involved in the resolution of issues that surrounded the stand-down event. This involvement by a powerful significant storyteller (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) sets them apart from other students in the study. While Mr. Smith’s parents had an historical and continuing relationship with the school prior to the stand-down, Mara’s, Missy’s and Tui’s parents became involved with the school as a consequence of those conflicts that contributed to their child’s school environment at the time. The importance of this similarity in achieving reintegration is further examined in chapter 7.

Mara (M): who solved a problem then moved on.

Mara attends a decile 2, inner city high school. She is in year 10 at the first interview. Mara comes from a large family; she is the youngest of six and the only girl. She expects to stay in school, pass NCEA level three, go to university and become a social worker. She lives with her mother who is a widow together with some of her older brothers and sometimes their families. Mara’s mother reckons bringing up teenagers is never easy but that Mara “is all right”. She talks about her positively. She also expects her children to stick up for themselves.

MM: She’s a child she’s a teen...what do you mean is she easy? She is all right she has her moments. Like I said since [Father] died it has been me and the six kids and they have had to stick up for themselves. If she thinks she’s right she won’t back down she is quite strong minded ...but she will, if you talk to her right and you’ve got her respect she will do anything.

Many of her brothers have been stood down or truant (G and J are two of Mara’s older brothers). Mara’s mother sees being “too bright” as a problem for one of her boys and the school as actively finding reasons to remove one of her older children.

I: Has anyone in the family been stood down or suspended from school before?
MM: We’ve had a few!

I: Can you remember what happened?

MM: G? I don’t think he went to high school to be quite honest. He was stood down, he was too bright, disruptive, bored. School didn’t take his interest. I went through hell. J was not interested in school, non-attendance really. It really peeved me off because I’m trying to get him there and when he gets there they are kicking him out.

Mara’s mother is determined this is not Mara’s future which reveals Mara’s mother does not buy into accumulated narratives about disparate home school relationships (Jones, 2007). When Mara was stood down she wanted to show Mara that there are consequences for actions so cancelled her birthday party. Through her response to the stand-down, Mara’s mother showed she took responsibility for Mara’s behaviour.

MM: I went mad...a few days before her birthday. I cancelled her birthday party. I said to her I have been through all of this and I am not going through this again. I wanted her to know she won’t get away with everything and there are consequences.

Mara had been stood down for punching a student who had been bullying her on Bebo and through phone texts for about a year. Mara’s mother was torn between her role as a mother and her perception that in the same situation she would have done the same as Mara and hit the girl. Mara’s mother, however, acknowledges her role and power in the stand-down context.

MM: I guess mother shouldn’t say it but I would probably do the same. I don’t agree. I said you just can’t go round belting people.

Mara’s teacher positions Mara’s behaviour as separate from metanarratives about school violence. She makes an indirect reference to school bullying but her reference to the behaviour on Bebo as “bitchiness” and normal for girls Mara’s age backgrounds bullying as a school narrative to explain and justify Mara’s behaviour.
MT: My understanding of the situation was that she was stood down from school for hitting another student. This was not usual behaviour for her; she can be a wee bit mouthy she is quite a strong young lady but not hitting kids. It was all to do with Bebo and the gossip that had gone on Bebo all that kind of bitchiness you get around year ten girls unfortunately.

Mara’s teacher uses a number of positive present tense affirmative statements to describe Mara’s identity as a student. Mara’s teacher’s assessment of Mara’s school identity positions her close to shared stories of the achievement as the joint enterprise of school.

I: Tell me about Mara as a student at the school?

MT: Usually is a great kid... a lot of fun. She works really hard and she is a good student.

Her teacher sees Mara’s future in positive terms; she has confidence in the designated school identity she outlines for Mara. She describes her actual identity in terms of school based social and cultural capital.

MT: She’s a bright kid. I want to see her cream through her levels one two and threes then go on and do whatever she wants to do. She is a talented sportswoman and she is bright. She could do whatever she wants. She could be a prefect and that’s the reality and it’s up to her and she will.

Mara’s mother’s designated identity for Mara is also expressed in terms of education acquired cultural capital. Education, to her, increases Mara’s choices.

MM: Better be in education. I don’t think she knows what she wants to be. I hope she gets a good schooling and a good base to go on so she can choose.

At the time of the six month interview Mara has settled back into school and is achieving well towards NCEA level one. Mara’s comment shows that being stood-down is no longer a part of her school story.

I: Will being stood down affect how well you do at school?
M6mnths: Not really because I have moved on from it.

I: Did the school let you move on?

M6mnths: Yep. I’ve forgotten that I got stood down. Just moved on

She has received a Maori Prizegiving award for gaining 65 credits towards her NCEA level one.

Mara adds information to this study in that she is an example of a student for whom her agreed actual and designated identities are at odds with the incident that resulted in stand-down. What each participant in this narrative brings to the field of the interviews is an agreement that the stand-down played an insignificant part in Mara’s school life. Mara’s mother and teacher background Mara’s behaviour as a normal part of being a teenager. Mara, too, describes the stand-down as an incident she has placed in her past. All three participants in this case study describe Mara in the same way as being included and that inclusion is described in terms of her potential to acquire school provided and valued cultural capital.

Mara’s mother is an important storyteller in this narrative; she holds the key to Mara’s return to an inbound narrative. She shows this through her acknowledgement of the power she holds as a parent to manage behaviour. Mara’s family is probably the one with the lowest income of the study cohort yet Mara’s mother does not mention income as a barrier to Mara’s progress at school. Mara is a student for whom bullying contributes directly to the context of the stand-down; Mara’s teacher, however, does not regard bullying as significant. Mara uses what the school considers an inappropriate action to solve a problem. The consequence may have been that she was stood down from school but to her it was effective. Mara’s story also foregrounds the potential for bullying in school via electronic media.

Missy (My): “I am low key now”

Missy attends a rural, decile 8, area school. She is in year 10 at the time of the first interview. Missy lives with both parents in a small town half an hour by school bus
from school. Missy had been stood down for taking alcohol to a school camp. She had been stood-down at least twice before also for taking alcohol to school. She wants to go to polytechnic to study design when she leaves school and expresses this designated identity in terms of acquiring the appropriate school cultural capital to enable her to do so.

I: What do you want to do when you leave school?

My: Now? I want to get into designing. Interior designing and in my spare time my hobbies I would like to do photography...not human but on landscapes, flowers and stuff and I am going to go to polytech

I: When do you want to leave school?

My: I’ll probably finish at year twelve and after that go on to polytech

She knows she needs to get NCEA level two so that is her plan. The small school roll, however, means that she cannot study music and dance subjects at school but lack of subjects to study does not affect Missy’s enjoyment of school.

I: Do you enjoy school?

My: Yes. At the school there is nothing really there to do what I want to do in the future.

I: Why?

My: Small school. I want to get into dancing and singing. I have been doing singing for a while. They don’t really have anything for dancing apart from PE.

Her teacher says she is hard working. She makes affirmative present tense statements that express a positive school actual identity

MyT: I have taught Missy in the last half of this year I have got to know her through that... she is very dedicated to her work she just keeps on and she is actually a lovely kid...
Like Mara, bullying is one of the significant external narratives of this story and in year ten, Missy, bullied by a group of girls, chose to go into a lower class academically to be with her friends. Missy did not refer to the behaviour as bullying; instead her reason for changing class positioned her close to shared stories about the relationship between diligence and achievement.

My: I kept getting into arguments with the girls which I didn’t get along with and they would say smart comments and things so I felt uncomfortable in that class so I wanted to go down to where my friends were so then I would concentrate more and get work done.

Missy’s teacher, like Missy herself, positions her close to school stories about achievement. She says that the change in classes was not as a consequence of her ability. Missy’s teacher’s designated identity for Missy is that she will achieve.

MyT: Missy is going on to year eleven next year so I want to see her make a real effort to gain it because she is reasonably bright and she was keeping up with the year ten class she was in then she swapped to a lower ability class but it wasn’t because of her ability that she swapped so I think she is able and I would like to see her achieve and actually go for it.

By the six month interview her teacher, her mother and Missy all place the stand-down in the past and agree that the interventions and lessons learned have been effective. Missy’s teacher makes positive assertive statements about Missy’s actual identity that link her to social and cultural capital valued by the school.

MyT6mnths: I don’t know if there has been any other help but she seems to be getting on with school and getting on with things. She is very talented... she sang at the school prizegiving...she is great.

Both Missy and her mother talk about her school identity in terms of recognised school cultural capital; for example Missy has 34 of the credits she needs to get for her NCEA level one. Missy and her mother talk about her achievement six months after the first interview.
I: How is Missy doing at school now?

MyM6mnths: Great...you are doing all right ay?

My6mnths: Yeah...I think I have 34 credits altogether...At the end of this year when we do the exams our class... because we are in the cab class we don't have any external exams.

When asked about the stand-down Missy sees bringing alcohol to school as “something quite naughty”. Being threatened with expulsion if she did anything naughty again has brought her designated identity as an achiever at school into the foreground. Missy shows that she is an astute smart operator who can read context and can manipulate her world.

I: Do you intend to get stood down again?

My6mnths: No...It was just a mistake and doing something quite naughty...but I have changed...more into school ...stay at school. They said if I do anything naughty again they would expel me because I had three warnings. I am low key now...

Like Mara, Missy’s designated identity, expressed by all participants, is to gain school provided cultural capital in the form of qualifications; all participants, too, agree that Missy’s current trajectory is likely to achieve that goal. Unlike Mara, however, it is Missy’s commitment to her future at polytechnic and the realisation that further stand-downs might jeopardise that future that cause her to change her behaviour. Missy is also referred to as contributing to high stakes cultural capital events like school prizegiving which is different to Mara’s receiving a prize at a similar event. Missy’s contribution and her teacher’s choice to foreground that could be seen as an acknowledgement of social capital. Like Mara this story revealed that to change anything for students the involvement of parents is desirable; both Mara’s and Missy’s mothers intervened to change their daughters’ school situation. In both Mara and Missy’s case a parent had an assertive influence on what resulted in a positive outcome.
This may suggest that parents who react to their child's behaviour may be perceived as acting effectively as parents. This again may deposit social capital with the school that can be applied in resolving situations like stand-down.

**Mr. Smith (MS): just a normal boy**

Mr. Smith attends a state integrated, special character, decile 9 college with an attached junior school. He lives in a small country settlement and commutes to the city each day. His father is an “old boy” (past pupil) of the school whose company also supports the school.

MSF6mnths: I am an old boy from there so I know the teachers...some of the teachers used to be in youth group...that’s interesting ...we also...my company... supports the school as well so I relate to the headmaster

Mr. Smith is positioned by his mother and his teacher as sociable. His mother also appears to accept that Mr. Smith has “some fairly definite opinions” that run counter to commonly articulated narratives of school achievement. His character, therefore, might be seen as an expression of a counter identity (see Kipnis, 2001) but one which both his mother and his teacher find acceptable.

MSM: He’s not too bad. He has a nice nature and generally nice to people...aren’t you? From that point of view he is pretty good. He has some fairly definite opinions on things especially that school is boring and pretty much a waste of time and homework should be banned

Mr. Smith’s teacher also recognises the counter culture aspects of Mr. Smith’s school identity by saying that “he pushes the boundaries” and sees this behaviour in opposition to his doing “really well”. This behaviour, however, does not make Mr. Smith visible in terms of discipline because he does not “stand out” which may suggest that some boundary pushing is acceptable.
MST: He is just a kid who enjoys himself. He has a good pleasant personality and just the typical things that kids do and I see he pushes the boundaries but most times he does really well. He is not a stand out kid in terms of discipline.

Mr. Smith sets himself apart from narratives of achievement but blames his feelings about learning on the quality of his teachers. His use of swear words in his responses is also commensurate with his perception of counter identity (Knipnis, 2001).

I: Do you feel negative about learning?

MS: I did last year ...this year is all right... last year it was really crap.

I: Did going into year nine improve things?

MS: Yeah I got a better teacher this year...just last year the teachers sucked.

There are three versions of the event that lead to the stand-down and three different presentations of Mr. Smith's character. His mother casts him as a hero who looks after his mates.

MSM: I understood that he was fighting with this boy. He was more intervening on someone else’s behalf which again is fairly typical of him because he looks after his mates. So from that point of view that's how I understand it.

Mr. Smith casts himself more as an antihero; a persona that fits better with the counter culture persona articulated by Mr. Smith.

I: What happened?

MS: I more or less beat him up

I: Why did it happen?

MS: My friend was calling him names ...my best friend...then the guy threw a punch at my best friend and I sort of got involved then...that’s about it...He punched back...he got stood down as well.

His teacher, however, casts Mr. Smith as the villain. Mr. Smith's teacher refers to the incident that lead up to the fight as “pick on” and then as bullying.
MST: Part of it was also that the boys had decided to pick on an international college boy and to use some names in that boy’s language that were offensive.

I: Mr. Smith was involved in that?

MST: Yes that’s right and so the bullying that went on between the two and became agitated so in the end Mr. Smith ...there was a fight between Mr. Smith and another pupil that had started on the basis of some teasing and verbal bullying of another student.

There is also some disagreement in the participants’ expectations of Mr. Smith’s future. Mr. Smith’s plans for the future position him close to narratives of school achievement. This is important because, despite his antihero persona, his designated identity is expressed in acquired school valued cultural capital.

I: What does doing well at school mean for you?

MS: Pass NCEA and get a job...

I: That’s what you plan to do?

MS: Yep

I: What do you want to do when you leave school?

MS: I still haven’t really made up my mind about that ...sort of want to get property

Mr. Smith’s teacher and his mother express Mr. Smith’s designated identity more in terms of social than cultural capital. Both state futures for Mr. Smith, however, that are socially valued and inclusive; his teacher in terms of “good character”

MST: What I would like to see is the same for every kid at the school. That is that they look forward to the future with hope and that they are eager for the future to happen so that they have all the skills that are necessary, they have good character.

Mr. Smith’s mother expresses his future in terms of enjoyment and success.
MSM: One in which he is happy, he is successful at, feels confident and enjoys what he does really

Six months later Mr. Smith is in year ten; there have been no further stand-downs. He feels that being stood-down got him noticed as a problem student. His concerns about being a problem child, however, are stated in past tense so exist in the past.

MSM: I reckon a lot of the teachers saw me as a problem child

I: Why is that?

MSM: By the teachers not my peers...my name was mentioned and it probably came up in staff meeting or something ...my teacher last year said...oh I hear you have been in a bit of trouble

Mr. Smith still associates his school identity with a counter culture image of being in trouble. Trouble, however, seems to be located outside Mr. Smith and something that he is a subject to rather than responsible for.

I: How can you help yourself to do well at school?

MS6mnths: Not let my friends influence me to do things that get me into trouble. That’s what happened with the wheelie bin it was aww come on…I do try quite hard in tests and stuff....

Despite Mr. Smith’s impression that he has been singled out in some way as being troublesome his form teacher regards him as “pretty normal”. His form teacher acknowledges that year ten boys normally have difficulties.

MST6mnths: He is a happy boy ...lively like most year ten boys...no particularly disruptive behaviour no major discipline problems just the normal problems just the normal year ten boy I’d say. In class time he maybe loses a little bit of focus but that would be pretty average...pretty normal

Mr. Smith is an interesting character because gaps and differences do not appear to affect the outcome. These gaps and differences appear to be normalised by both the family and the school as part of growing up. Neither Mr. Smith's mother nor his
teacher acknowledges his counter culture persona as separating him from legitimate stories of school achievement. Like Mara Mr. Smith was stood down for fighting as a consequence of bullying; in his case, however, the school named him as the bully and like the other stories that involved bullying the bullying behaviour was placed in the background by the school. Mr. Smith’s family does not mention the bullying at all. Mr. Smith’s family is very different to other families in the study because of the number of connections they have with the school. Mr. Smith’s parents have decided to bypass the local school and send their children to a special character school in the city. They have taken advantage of the opportunities made available to parents through *Tomorrow’s Schools* (Lange, 1988). The family also has a commercial connection to the school and his family has selected the school on the basis of existing social capital because Mr. Smith’s father was an old boy of the school (Lee & Bowen, 2006). More than all of the other students, too, Mr. Smith contributes an example of students playing roles within the school environment that reveal he responds to his environment and realises that it requires the playing out of persona (Goffman, 1971). Mr. Smith presents a sense of characterisation of audience; he presents himself as a counter culture hero when he steps in to protect his friend. When reflecting on the stand-down in the second interview he maintains this persona as antihero, not perhaps because that is the case but because he may perceive that it is required of the interview.

**Tui (T): One of the lads with his eye on the future**

Tui attends the same school as Bob. Until recently they were in the same class; a class set up specifically to address the needs of boys considered at risk of educational underachievement. Tui’s father had him removed from the class and returned to the mainstream. Tui’s father does not talk about the special class in terms of achievement; he refers to the special boys’ class as segregated from, essentially marginalized by, the school. He also refers to the special class as a “gang” that “ousted” Tui because of his “goofing off” behaviour. Tui’s father saw Tui as marginalized in the boys’ class by both
the other students and the teacher. Tui’s father compares the sport focused separation of the special class unfavourably with being smart;

    TF: It has plusses but it also has minuses too ...it segregates the kids. [Boy’s class] this and [Boys’ class] is just a gang ...his classmates decided they didn’t want him in their class they felt he was holding them back so they ousted him out... and the teacher said he wasn’t settling in he was playing up [...]when he is goofing off he is causing trouble

He connects Tui’s being happy to his working well.

    TF: now he is quite happy to be out of the [Boys’ class]. It is more education pro. Being smart rather than being pro sport so he’s working very well

His father enrolled him at the school because another school wanted to hold him back a year. This action identifies Tui’s father as prepared to take advantage of the market driven approach to education. Tui’s father statement that Tui “is not stupid” but “distracted” shows he separates stories of Tui’s behaviour from his ability. His comment that Tui is “trying to be Mr. Big”, however, is important because it shows that, while he approves of Tui’s ability, he does not approve of Tui’s behaviour. This is an outward indication that Tui’s father has responded to Tui’s inappropriate behaviour.

    TF: That was quite a reason for him to come back here was to be in the correct year for his education because otherwise [another school] was going to hold him back so...he’s not stupid... he was very distracted and trying to be Mr. Big in a lot of areas.

Tui’s father feels that Tui’s behaviour in previous schools has made him visible and that this visibility followed him to his new school. According to his father when trouble occurs the teachers look to see where Tui is and this “troubledom” follows him from school to school. Notwithstanding that, however, he points out that it is Tui’s behaviour that has created the stories.
TF: I got a phone call from them saying such and such he was into a fight or something so I said all right I am coming down and I sat down with them and they gave me the big spiel and I said...I think he is being picked on by one or two of your teachers here ...whenever there’s trouble you look for him you know. And if he’s not here you are still looking for him and that sort of went on a bit here too...he brought that from [Intermediate] to [Another high school] to here...he brought this with him this troubledom and as a consequence...

I: The information followed him?

TF: Well yeah the report that...his behaviour is what makes such reports

Despite his behaviour at school, though, Tui’s father talks about Tui’s identity in affirmative present tense statements. Tui’s father finishes up his description of Tui’s personality with “he’s got the good basics of a good person” which links the attributes he attaches to Tui to his own representation of a good person.

TF: Yeah I do... I think he is a fantastic kid... I am a bit biased I suppose being Dad but...he’s witty, he’s smart, he thinks things through...comes up with his own perspective and will believe in it ...yeah he’s got the good basics of a good person

Tui’s teacher acknowledges that Tui is changing for the better. While he identifies him initially in terms of his bad behaviour he places “he has got better” in the second part of the sentence.

TT: he is consistently a wrong doer and he just often will defend himself to the hilt...but he has got better...

Tui talks about school in terms of school subjects; i.e. in terms of shared school stories. He has evaluated the worth and the reasons for doing homework in each of his subjects but is selective about which subjects he does the homework. That selection, however, is framed in terms of his perception of the value of the work to his own need.
T: sometimes...if it’s science homework I don’t do it...if it’s maths I do it...if it’s social studies I don’t do it...if it’s graphics I do it...woodwork...I do it...English...sometimes...because the work is mostly gay

I: What makes you decide whether you will do the homework or not?

T: I do my work but I hate science...boring bloody work...something you don’t even need... too much writing

When stood-down he was one of the few students who was provided with work to do and one of the even fewer who did the work provided. Tui’s response shows that he takes responsibility for his learning and feels he is successful.

T: No...aww... yeah I had to revise for an exam...I did that for a day and then worked for another day...

I: Did you pass the exam?

T: Yeah...

I: Do you normally pass your exams?

T: We don’t normally have many exams...usually I pass them

Tui talks about school in terms of acquiring the cultural capital needed to get what he wants in life. He has worked out what he needs, how he will achieve it and what it will cost. He plans to get his NCEA level two for his own sake not because it will get him into a course. To Tui getting NCEA level two is a critical element in his designated identity

I: What do you want to do when you leave school?

T: I want to get NCEA level two because I ...so people don’t think I am a failure and that shit

I: Any job in mind?
T: Builder…I am getting my apprenticeship from my uncle… I am going to SIT which is Southern Institute of Technology and do their 40 week course ...building courses...then I have to pay for it and my old lady is buying me a truck and so...

Both Tui’s father and his teacher are not as specific and goal focused about the future as Tui himself. Tui’s father, like Mr. Smith’s mother, expresses his hopes for Tui’s future in terms of his potential for happiness;

TF: I want him to be happy

Tui’s teacher, however, defines Tui’s future in terms of being different and better than the way he is now;

TT: I’d like Tui to get an idea of where he fits in and where he sees himself going.

Tui’s father has formed a working relationship with the dean of the year level designed to keep Tui on track. When Tui returned to school after the stand-down he went on a contract for his behaviour and a daily report. Effectively it gave him positive feedback about his work and behaviour in class; achievement and being recognised as achieving is a critical element for Tui’s designated school identity.

TF: The most helpful thing would be his dean...the thing that has really brought him on is the contract...he was stoked he was being proud of himself...everyday...the dean and the contract

By the six month interview Tui is in year 11 and he has just won a development award for rugby. His father reads from the award document which expresses achievement in inclusive, team membership and leadership terms. These are significant identity statements and an award for achievement in this area expresses significant cultural and social capital.

TF6mnths: today’s the big day...we are taking him to town for a Spirit of Rugby Award ... [reads] these awards are designed to recognise students who have made a significant contribution to their team over and above their playing ability...occasionally star players who have demonstrated outstanding
leadership qualities receive the Spirit of Rugby Award...for those students who fly under the radar but show ability and pride in playing for the school...it is a city, provincial thing...

I: Why did he get this award?

TF6mnths: He just loves rugby...he likes to be ...he is enthusiastic about it and enjoys the friendships that it produces...I guess his status at school is quite important to him

Tui has moved on from the stand-down though still likes to exercise his counter culture image in the use of swear words when talking to an adult. In his view being stood-down was a waste of time. His view of school, however, has changed over the six months of the study; it is no longer boring.

I: How do you feel now about the stand down that we talked about?

T6mnths: It was fucking stupid...basically forgot about it...

I: Do you think the stand down changed things for you?

T6mnths: No not really...a waste of time...it gave me a break from school...school was fucking boring at that stage...

I: Still?

T6mnths: No...

His teacher now talks about Tui in terms of school achievement. Tui may still be involved in incidents but his teacher sees Tui as being on the edge of problems rather than at the centre; “implicated in some way”. He also gave Tui the chance to explain which indicates a change in their relationship. He values the relationship established between school and the home

TT6mnths: I guess Tui’s dad and I worked a lot together and we have set goals for Tui...credit gathering if you want to call it anything. He has done really well...he has got 55 credits so far. I think he will probably get there. I had an incident yesterday where Tui was involved with water balloons...it is getting a
bit warmer…it seems as though Tui was implicated in some way but I let him talk it through and I said I am going to take your word here …if you let me down and I find out it’s otherwise…I will get in touch with your old man…

With 55 credits towards his NCEA level one Tui is well on the way to getting his apprenticeship and his truck.

Tui more closely than the other students parallels Eckert’s (1989) “burnouts” and Willis’ (1977) “lads” as an example of students who belong to an established counter culture that exists in opposition to the dominant school success culture. Unlike Mr. Smith’s persona Tui’s smoking on the top field and having a joke with water balloons are characteristics of his core school identity. While Eckert’s (1989) and Willis’ (1977) studies present students who tend to drop out of school, however, a critical element of Tui’s designated school identity is also the need to achieve qualifications and to maintain a status at school that is in keeping with the expressed cultural capital of the school. This part of his designated identity seems to come from a family ethos to achieve given the family’s expressed contribution to his future beyond achievement at school. Tui is one character in the study where it is most obvious that closing a gap between actual and designated identity reveals an inbound trajectory. Like Mara he has a plan for the future which requires qualifications but this is a detailed plan. Similar to all of the students in this group Tui’s story includes an assertive parent/school relationship. Tui’s father stepped in to monitor Tui’s behaviour while at the same time indicating that he did not approve of that behaviour. There was some indication of bullying behaviour by his class mates but the intervention of his father enabled him to move into an environment where he was able to achieve school recognised cultural capital. Tui’s father’s responses indicate clearly that he believes school membership is about being educated and that sport focused alternative education class does not educate students.

**Discussion**

Demographically these four students have little in common. The group comprises two girls and two boys; two Maori, one Pasifika and one Pakeha student. They attend decile two to decile nine schools in rural and city environments. Two of the students have an
accumulated history of stand-down (Tui, Missy) while the other two students have only been stood down once (Mara, Mr. Smith). What this group does have in common, however, are commonly expressed designated identities for each of the students expressed in school recognised cultural capital together with the existence of social capital in the form of a positive assertive parent/school relationship. In each story there is agreement among the characters of closeness between designated and actual identity and that these identities are expressed in terms of school participation. Except for Tui those expressions of acquisition of qualifications did not change across the six months of the study. Both Tui and Mr. Smith express counter culture persona during the interviews and these are backed up by most of the other participants in their stories. For Mr. Smith, however, that counter identity does not appear to have an impact on his designated identity. For Tui, however, changing his counter identity is an essential aspect of his reintegration. The difference between these two boys but the similarity of their outcome is an interesting aspect of this part of the study.

All of these stories also involve the input of a parent to resolve conflict. This suggests that the assertive input by a parent, for this study, is a critical element in their children’s reintegration to school. In Mr. Smith’s case this was already in evidence as a consequence of his father’s historical involvement with the school. For Mara, Missy and Tui their parents became involved as a consequence of problems at school. All three parents acted to remove their child from a situation that was causing conflict; Mara with a teacher, Missy and Tui with their class mates. The conflict in all four narratives involved some sort of bullying. For Mara and Mr. Smith the stand-down came as a direct result of an incident of bullying and for Missy and Tui bullying was a part of the school relationships they were trying to resolve. For each of these students, however, bullying has a short timescale and, following the intervention of a parent, plays a part in what is only a brief troubled interlude in their school experience.

Each of the parents in these four stories makes reference to metanarratives of personal choice and responsibility. Their responses position each of the caregivers close to narratives about the responsibilities of being a parent. Positioning themselves in this way place them closer to school generated expectations of general parent behaviour set out in table 2 (p. 17) and at stand-down in table 3 (p.46). They take responsibility
themselves, especially Mara’s, Missy’s and Tui’s parents, while also demanding the same from both their children and the school. Fighting, alcohol use and setting fires are behaviours in opposition to social representations of normal and acceptable behaviour in young people. The parents in this group of narratives not only made a strong response when their children breached those expectations but also an equally strong response to the school to resolve the context that generated the unacceptable behaviour. Confirming the expectations of the school not only deposits social capital that they can exercise in instances of trouble for their children at school but also may help to breach the gap between the child and the school that opens up at stand-down.

5.2.2. Cherish, George and Mark: Who is responsible?

Unlike Mara, Missy, Mr. Smith and Tui, Cherish’s, George’s and Mark’s parents do not take an assertive part in resolving the context that generated the stand-downs. For Cherish, George and Mark their designated identity, stated at the start of the study, has neither been achieved nor is likely to be achieved at any time in the future. Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggest that not achieving an expressed designated identity may result in an abiding sense of unhappiness. Both George and Mark leave school before they are able to achieve the qualifications necessary for them to realise their designated identity and Cherish re-evaluates her own designated identity in the light of current circumstances. While George and Mark leave school during the study Cherish is the only student who is also suspended from school. All three students have a history of being stood down from school but what characterises the three narratives that follow is that, unlike the narratives in both the previous and the next section, no one character takes responsibility for the behaviour that results in stand-down. In addition, for most of the characters, the responsibility for the resolving conflict is also described as located outside their control.
Cherish (C): an unrealised potential for self-reflexive agency.

At the first interview Cherish is a year 8 student at a decile two, inner city, intermediate school. She has a history of behaviour problems at school. She lives with her parents and her younger brother. Cherish plans to leave school with NCEA level two and either train to be a hairdresser or an early childhood teacher. Cherish, therefore, describes her designated school identity in terms of achieving school valued and provided cultural capital. Cherish has been bullied since primary school for being overweight; her response is to swear loudly or hit out. This suggests that the cause of Cherish’s inappropriate behaviour is located in school rather than at home.

Cherish’s teacher locates Cherish’s problems with her family circumstances. Her referring to Cherish’s father being stressed and starting to drink casts Cherish as a victim of problems outside the school

CT: She has said and this is very recent that dad’s lost his job …he's lost his job and this has only started this year ...it started about term two she started saying to me all of a sudden dad is really stressed and he’s started to drink...

When asked if Cherish has any difficulties at school Cherish’s teacher suggests that Cherish responds badly to the teasing she gets about her weight suggesting that Cherish’s weight and the teasing is her own fault.

CT: Education or ...? Her major major...she has a major chip on her shoulder about her weight...she is a big girl. She has been a big girl all the way through school ...it started off in primary school she got a lot of teasing so she put some walls up and she had a few patterns of behaviour to deal with that.

Her teacher refers to Cherish’s main difficulty as her friendships. By doing this she refers to Cherish’s marginalised identity in school terms. In this situation Cherish’s friendships are seen by the school as restricting her ability to govern her behaviour in an appropriate way. In situations involving her friends her teacher’s view describes an accumulated history of negative behaviour centred on non-compliance.
CT: Non-compliance...non-compliance...she will blow when asked to do something she thinks is unjust to her...so it is non-compliance issues and a lot of swearing...a heck of a lot of swearing but once she is in the mood...once she is actually in that mood of friendship... peers are much more important than anything else to her.

The intermediate school has organised counseling for Cherish’s anger at being bullied with the Social Worker in School (SWIS) and Cherish finds this helpful. Cherish’s responses identify her as someone who is self-reflective; she regards the intervention as a useful way to address issues of difference that she has identified for herself. This shows that she is an active agent who evaluates the effectiveness of interventions. She also indicates that even though the school dealt with the context of the violent incident she was still stood down from school. This suggests again the school focuses on the violence that comes from bullying rather than the bullying itself.

I: What happens when you fight with somebody, what causes it?

C: Because some people call me names sometimes.

I: Does the school deal with the fact that some people call you names?

C: Yeah they have ...I don’t get into fights anymore but when I used to they would sort it out but I would get stood down for using violence and I was ...everyone else and I got angry.

I: Are you over the angry bit?

C: Yeah I’ve got a social worker.

I: And that works well?

C: Yeah.

Cherish’s teacher separates Cherish’s classroom behaviour from her out of class behaviour; she describes Cherish’s classroom identity in terms of school valued social capital. Cherish’s, therefore, according to her teacher, has different in class and out of class identities. Cherish’s teacher describes her in class behaviour as;
CT: She is what I call my teacher assistant...she is my teacher assistant...she knows all the routines in the classroom down pat. Her work is finished on time she is the first finished and you can't pull her up about it...because it is actually done and done properly...she is very kind

She describes Cherish’s non-compliant out of class behaviour as;

CT: Yes...it is a trend. This is her trend. It is a trend from last year and she’s taken it on to this year.

This separation between in class and out of class identity shows that Cherish’s teacher has employed reflexive strategies to target that which sets Cherish apart from the requirements for membership articulated by the school. When asked for a designated identity for Cherish, however, she responds in terms of Cherish’s behaviour rather than in terms of her competence as a student. This may indicate that, for her teacher, Cherish’s behaviour dominates.

I: What would you like to see happen for Cherish now?

CT: I would like to see some more counseling ...I would like to see ongoing counseling for her.

By the six month interview Cherish has moved to year nine at the local high school and the bullying has continued. Cherish’s mother refers to her behaviour when she was asked about Cherish’s progress at school. To some degree Cherish’s Mother sees her potential violent response to the bullying as reasonable

I: How is Cherish doing at school now?

CM 6Mnths: She is getting bullied a lot in the classroom and she is still getting bullied and she said last night if that boy calls me fat one more time I am going to go up and punch him and I don’t care...she said to me... Cherish is quite honest with me

I: This bullying is it ongoing from intermediate?
CM 6Mnths: One boy in particular [name] she is friends with him and she talks to him on the phone but he calls her fat and everything in class and they write whale down on her paper

She has been stood down three times in the six months at high school. Cherish identifies her “attitude” as a contributing factor in the stand-down. This may show that while Cherish acknowledges her behaviour she does not take responsibility for it which is different to her response at intermediate school.

I: Have you had any more stand downs or suspensions?

C6mnths: Yes...Since I started this school I have been stood down twice or three times...one for weed [marijuana] and for having a lighter on me and being accused of smoking when I wasn’t...I think it partly came down to my attitude...

Immediately before the six month interview she was suspended from school. Cherish’s plans about her future have also changed in six months

I: What would you like to do when you leave school?

C 6mnths: Not quite sure...I want to get a good job that pays good ...

I: What qualification?

C 6 mnths: Just as long as I pass my level one...

I: When do you plan to leave school?

C 6 mnths: I thought I would leave school when I am sixteen but I have to stay until I am eighteen...

I: Why?

C 6 mnths...because my mum said...that is if I last that long.

After six months Cherish has re-evaluated the designated identity (Sfard & Prusack, 2005) she articulated at the beginning of the study. She plans now to leave school and get a job that pays good money. She wants to stay at school and gain NCEA level one. Getting NCEA level one is a statement about school membership associated with the
accumulation of cultural capital but a reduction of her original plans. According to Cherish this is her mother’s designated school identity for her also. Her plans, however, appear to be contingent on her ability to last at school which suggests that, unlike the first interview, Cherish sees her difference and her behaviour as outside her control. In the first interview Cherish was self-reflexive and gaining control; in the second interview that control appears to Cherish to be located outside her power to influence.

The move to high school has had a negative effect on Cherish’s school identity and identity trajectory. At intermediate both Cherish and her teacher applied reflexive thinking to moderate Cherish’s behaviour; this appears to be absent from the relationships at high school. Cherish’s improving behaviour at intermediate school, acknowledged both by her and her teacher suggests the potential for an inbound trajectory despite her association with friends considered marginal. At high school, however, the increasing restricted participation brought about by the escalation of stand-downs to suspension reveals Cherish’s identity trajectory is outbound. At intermediate, too, both Cherish and her teacher had education focused outcomes for Cherish and her behaviour was separate to this and something to be worked on. Cherish valued the input of the Social Worker in Schools (SWIS), a provision for low decile primary schools but she would have lost this resource when she moved to high school. Cherish’s narrative also raises the issue of the bullying of children who are identified as being overweight. In Cherish’s story while the reason for the bullying was well known from primary school both the intermediate and the high school locate the problem with the student who is being bullied rather than the bully. It is the reaction to the bullying that is acknowledged to trigger most of the stand-downs. In Cherish’s case her overweight appears to set her aside as being available for bullying.

George (G): who loves school because he can be with his friends.

George is a year 10 student at a decile 7 year 9-13 high school. He lives with his mother and older sister though members of his wider family, including his father, live close by. At the beginning of the study George expects to get his NCEA level 3 so he can go into
the army. George was stood down for fighting at school. He describes himself as a fighter and attributes this to his father and therefore places it outside of his control (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). That George does not see stand-down as important to his parents, emphasises the importance of the input of significant storytellers to modify notions of identity in students (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). If George perceives that his parents do not regard stand-down as important he is unlikely to change.

I: What do you think your family think about you being out of school?

G: Mum didn’t really care. Dad didn’t really care because Dad’s a bouncer that’s probably where I get my fighting from. They didn’t really care. They said you can’t really do that again.

George also sees himself as different to other students because he is Maori which is another identity feature he is unable to change.

I: What do you dislike about school?

G: Teachers remarks...like sometimes I feel singled out in classes because I am Maori... just feels like they are singling you out

His mother, however, attributes his behaviour to the way she brought him up. Like Mara’s mother she, too, ascribes some of George’s difficulties to what might reasonably be seen as positive qualities like leadership, strength, brightness. Like George she blames his behaviour on issues she cannot change, like the way she brought him up and his brightness and quickness and so locates the responsibility for the solution outside her control.

GM: I can tell you from the day I popped him out he’s been go go go ...quick to talk, quick to lift up his head... quick to walk he was walking at ten months...no he was running at ten months...always continuously. He is a really bright boy...he’s knows how to manipulate things to his advantage. He’s a great leader. He is very strong...It’s the way I brought him up but now he is a teenager everything I’ve taught him is going against me.
His teacher blames his behaviour on drugs which, as a statement of the abnormal, sets George aside as a social Other and locates the problem outside of her control.

GT: He has a tendency to come in class a bit “wired” usually because I would assume he is on drugs or something like that.

He has a history of stand down from intermediate school. When asked whether this was his first stand-down it is possible to see that he also regarded the cause of the stand-down as outside his control.

G: No three or four were at Intermediate. Two of them were five days... one was just a one day stand down.

I: What sorts of things?

G: Fighting...At Intermediate my cousin lived across the road from the school and he had alcohol in a bottle and told me to hold it and I left my shoes back at school so I ran back and got my shoes the teacher at the gate saw me with it so I got stood down for that. That and fighting.

Nevertheless George loves school because he can be with his friends.

I: Do you enjoy school?

G: Mint. I love school all my mates and that.

I: Is this your favourite school?

G: Yep all my mates are here.

George is described as confident and, according to his teacher, able academically. She shows her disappointment because there is a discrepancy between her designated school identity for him, which is that he is “fantastic”, and his actual identity, which is that he is a “pain in the butt”. The use of “could” to describe the positive and “is” to identify the negative increases the potency of her disappointment.

I: Tell me about George as a student at the school
GT: When he is at his best he could be so fantastic and he does fantastic but when he’s not he is a right pain in the butt

I: Is he able?

GT: Yes...

His teacher may attribute some of his difficulties to how he presents himself with the group of boys he sits with. She describes him as the naughtiest boy in a group who are all unmotivated and Maori. Because she identifies the students as Maori this may lend some credence to George’s suggestion that he is singled out because he is Maori. His teacher, like George, ascribes his locus of control as being external.

GT: he has good knowledge about various things but he is not focused he just doesn’t care... he comes across as though he doesn’t care... and he sits with other boys that aren't exactly the best influence on him ...they are not as naughty as him but they are just as unmotivated...they are all Maori kids in that group.

When asked about what she would like to see in George’s future she responds in terms of negative social capital. Her solutions for achieving a school recognised outcome for George are tenuous and involve “encouraging” and “hoping”.

I: What would you like to see happen for George now?

GT: I don’t know, he needs to turn his brain on. He’s a good kid...but he is just lost...he could do so well...hard because I guess teachers get sick of kids like that and more than one in your class I can understand that...just keep encouraging him I guess just keep building him up and hoping that he’ll do well.

George’s mother’s designated identity is expressed both in terms of social capital and cultural capital. She sees the gaining of a qualification as important for getting a job but acknowledges George’s lack of commitment to school work.

GM: I want to see him educated. I want to see him happy and living. That’s my whole thing with my children...as long as they are good people, happy, that’s enough for me [...] Let’s see him get his NCEA...I want him at school...He wants
to be at school...he just doesn’t want to work. He’s not stupid...he knows after school there is no in between there you have to go to work...

George, however, sees the acquisition of qualifications as something that is in his future not his present.

G: I want to get my level three qualification. Everything is cruisey as until you get to do NCEA...cruisey until I get there.

George regards his fighting as part of his actual identity. He accepts it as intrinsic so he does not express a need to change. His identity as a fighter dominated his strategy for not being stood down again. To George being a good boy is to stop fights not stop fighting. It is hard to see how this will stop him being seen as involved in fighting.

I: How are you going to make sure that next stand down doesn’t happen?

G: It’s not going to happen. I am going to be a good boy now. Normally if I watch the fight...if somebody was having a fight I wouldn’t stop it I would watch it but when I see a fight at school I will stop it.

Despite George’s intention to stay in school and get NCEA level three he was stood-down again for fighting and had left school before the six month interview could take place.

George’s story added important information about stand-down to this research study. Like Cherish he has had a series of stand-downs over his school career that has not resolved his behaviour. In addition to this all the participants express the notion that the behaviour arises as a consequence of who he is and is therefore outside their ability to change. Both Markovà (1996) and Sfard and Prusak (2005) write that commonly held views about the way a person is are hard to shift. To resolve his behaviour George appears to need to take responsibility for it but to do this would require George to step back (Markovà, 1996) from his view that he is a natural born fighter and find out why he fights. Currently there does not appear to be any significant storyteller who might engage with George on this issue. George is characterised by his teacher as not caring about or using his ability. She also links this to George being Maori, another matter
outside his control. George expresses his membership of the school in terms of his friends rather than in terms of school related cultural capital and locates this acquisition of cultural capital in his future, his designated identity, but not in his present, his actual identity.

Mark (Mk): looking for a place of safety

Mark is the oldest of the students. At the time of the first interview he is a year eleven student at a decile 7, year 9-13, rural high school. He lives with his parents and his two brothers on a farm on the town boundary. At the time of the first interview Mark was spending at least half of his programme in a special needs class. Mark had been stood down a number of times as had his older brother. He wants to leave school with NCEA level one and gain an apprenticeship to become a builder. There is an immediate discrepancy between Mark's own designated school identity and that described by his teacher. Mark's teacher sees his future as out of school in a supportive working environment where he might be able to do an apprenticeship. She is a little vague about Mark's future using words like “perhaps” and phrases like “of some description”.

MkT: For Mark now would be to find himself a niche in a working environment and perhaps be able to do an apprenticeship of some description with support if he was in the right environment of a firm employing him they could give him support.

There is disagreement also about Mark's actual school identity which is described almost entirely in terms of his behaviour. Both Mark and his Mother position him as a victim while his special needs teacher describes him as an “instigator”. Although he was stood down for swearing at a teacher, Mark identifies himself as a victim of unfair treatment. He embellishes the story to present himself in a good light.

Mk: Swearing at a teacher... I was helping out my mate in class because he had been away for a couple of weeks and we were working through our book work
and I was helping him out...helping him catch up and then the teacher got a bit angry and then told him to move up the front... I don’t have particularly good eyes and I went up to the front and he didn't like that and told me to go

I: So you swore at him?

Mk: yeah.

His mother also characterises Mark as a victim of unfair treatment. Mark’s mother seems to have been told quite a bit of back stage information (see Goffman, 1979) about the agriculture teacher that Mark swore at. The use of third person when referring to the school adds definition to the separation between home and school

I: How has the school helped Mark overcome these difficulties [problem with the agriculture teacher]?

MkM: No they weren’t prepared to move on that. To me I don’t understand how a teacher could say that they are stressed. They acknowledged that there were stress issues with this particular teacher. They acknowledged that some of this behaviour…and he is fairly dogmatic...has happened in the past...but they weren’t prepared to upset a teacher ...

Mark sees that some of his difficulties at school stem from an older brother who had been suspended from school. He feels singled out and judged because of his brother, and perceives that the family has acquired a fictionalised history which manifests in “not nice” comments by staff members. He feels teachers do not like him so he does not like them. Like Cherish and George this locates the responsibility for his behaviour outside his control.

I: Anything else?

Mk: Just you get judged a bit at school and it's not fair...another [Mark’s surname] boy

I: Do they say ...oh you’re [name]’s brother?
Mk: Yeah...I don’t like them saying that so I don’t like them and they don’t like me. If they say something nice about him it’s different…but they don’t really make it a nice thing to say when they do say something.

Mark’s special needs teacher refers to Mark as an instigator and to his classroom behaviour as disruptive and that that was the reason he was stood down from school. At the interview Mark’s teacher referred to the cumulative school record on Mark’s behaviour [Quicknotes] held by the school which constructs Mark in opposition to other students. In this extract also Mark’s teacher uses paralegal language (abusive, instigator) which reveals she draws authority from powerful external metanarratives. This reference seems to be designed to intensify the seriousness of the behaviour.

MkT: My understanding from quicknotes was that Mark was chatting back to the teachers or he had abusive language and he would not work in class and he’s often the instigator of totally disruptive methods in the classroom. Really quite objectionable in the classroom.

Both Mark’s mother and his teacher agree, however, that Mark has a historical learning problem that affects his reading, mathematics and organisational skills. His mother’s concern is that year eleven set Mark up to fail and in this way again casts him as a victim. Because Mark’s mother cannot understand the situation she cannot control it.

MkM: Why would he be in the English and the maths class he was in if he wasn’t achieving? At the end of those third and fourth years why did they set him up to fail? If they didn’t think he would achieve level one which he was clearly capable at the end of the fourth form because he had achieved three credits why has the problem arisen for this year? I can’t understand.

Mark’s teacher agrees that Mark was misplaced in year 11 and he should have been placed in a “lower” class because the work suits his style of learning better. His teacher felt that by the time Mark was referred to her he was at risk of failing NCEA literacy and numeracy. Her description marginalises his ability to participate in and therefore be a member of year eleven.
MkT: the problem I have found with him is it has to be teacher directed with choices but you have to lay out the work clearly and give him a choice about which ones he wants to do first but then it has got to be teacher directed and this is where, by the time he got to us, he was at risk of failing NCEA in literacy and numeracy.

Although Mark’s participation in the school has been restricted he participates as an insider in the special needs class. His teacher describes his socially proper behaviour and his classroom diligence. This may indicate that his perception of school membership is to the special needs class (Goffmann, 1979, Wenger, 1998).

MkT: Yes yes that’s the biggest thing he is so plausible and nice... lovely even tempered here...goes out of his way to be nice and polite ...yes...even when all this was happening even when he was stood down ...sent out of the class for a whole term to see if things could change...He works very well on a one to one or an individual basis and you can set work and he will do it.

Shortly after the first interview Mark left school without achieving NCEA level one.

Mark’s story shows the separation that can occur as a consequence of ongoing unresolved conflict between home and school. Both the home and the school have assumed positions where each blames the other. In addition to this Mark also blames an accumulated family history of stand-down for his difficulties. Each participant, therefore, is able to locate the responsibility for Mark’s reintegration outside their control. Almost everything said about Mark is about mismatch; there is no agreement either in expressions of designated identity or characterisations of actual identity. Both home and school agree that he is student with learning needs but these are also described terms of a mismatch between Mark’s learning style and that of the classroom. According to both his mother and his teacher this mismatch has been exacerbated by the transition to year eleven and the increased expectation of independent learning style at that level. This mismatch, rather than any perceived planning, is what appears to have placed Mark in the special needs. It is a community of practice within the school community of practice. In the special needs class he gains membership through his ability to participate and his behaviour begins to acquire
comments from his teacher that express school valued social capital. Mark is one of only two students in the study for whom the incident which resulted in stand-down was classroom related; the rest of the incidents occurred outside the classroom. This narrative, also, is the only one that mentioned the use of school computer notes on behaviour “quicknotes” to characterise the student in terms of their behaviour.

**Discussion**

The students in these three stories did not realise the designed school identity they provided at the first interview. Cherish wanted to achieve NCEA level two then go on to further training as an early childhood teacher or a hairdresser. George planned to achieve NCEA level three and join the Army and Mark to gain NCEA level one so he can apply for an apprenticeship in building. Each of these students have clearly stated plans for the future, they show they understand the connection between achieving school qualifications and their choice of career. By the six month interview, however, George and Mark have left school and Cherish plans to get NCEA level one so she can go out to work. Even this new plan for Cherish is stated in more nebulous terms “if I last that long”. Their parents and teachers, where they responded to the question about the future, were vaguer and in some cases negative about the potential outcomes for each student. George’s teacher wants him to “switch his brain on” and Cherish’s to get “more counseling”. Mark’s teacher responds with a suggestion for further training though this is based outside of school and in employment, something that is outside the school’s control. Probably the most positive is George’s mother’s hope that he is “alive and happy”. Unlike the stories in the previous section there is a significant discrepancy between the designated identity expressed by the students and that expressed by their parents and teachers. The students state their designated identity in terms of school provided cultural capital while the parents and teacher state it in terms of social capital, in some cases negative.

Each story in the previous section contained at least one parent who stepped forward to take responsibility for resolving the conflict which generated the incident that resulted in stand-down. They were parents who gave strong messages to their children
about expectations of behaviour and who worked assertively with the school to influence their child’s school environment. The difference between those parents and the parents of Cherish, George and Mark was that while they worked cooperatively with the school their input appeared passive and compliant rather than assertive. Each of the parents interviewed located both the reasons for their child’s difficulties and the means to resolve them outside their sphere of influence. Cherish’s mother blames the bullying for Cherish’s non-compliant behaviour. After Cherish’s move to high school her mother expects that Cherish will behave in a way that will get her stood down when she is bullied. George’s mother blames George’s behaviour on the way she brought him up, i.e. the past and on the way George is e.g. his leadership. Mark’s mother blames Mark’s behaviour on his learning difficulties. The parents associate their child’s behaviour to exterior factors such as being bullied and to characteristics of their personality and state these assertions in the form of “is” statements which suggest that, at the time stated, they understand that this is the truth of the situation. Neither Cherish’s nor Mark’s parents put forward a suggestion to resolve the difficulty though George’s mother suggests that restricting his rugby could be used as a means to manage his poor behaviour. Whether or not this would be effective, she does not appear to have suggested this line of action to the school; she is just “not happy about it”.

Laying blame and creating victims dominate these stories. Like their parents the students also locate the responsibility for their behaviour outside of their control. Cherish blames her behaviour that lead to stand-down and suspension at her new school to her “attitude”; she does not make any statement that suggests she might be about to change her attitude. George blames his fighting on the fact that his father is a bouncer. George is almost suggesting that fighting is in his blood so not something he can change. Mark blames his behaviour on the teachers not liking him possibly as a consequence of their not liking his brother. Like the reasons given by the parents for their child’s behaviour the links between the students’ problem behaviour and their perception of the source of that behaviour are questionable and external. By locating responsibility for behaviour outside their control, however, the students characterise themselves as victims of fate. Cherish’s revised designated identity where she wants to
achieve NCEA level one “If I last that long” exemplifies this. When George’s mother says “everything I have taught him is going against me” and Mark’s mother says “I can’t understand” they are both stepping back and distancing themselves from the central issue, their child’s behaviour, which was fighting and swearing at teachers.

The teachers in each of these stories have also taken positions that are unlikely to cause the resolution of the conflicts that resulted in stand-down. While Cherish’s teacher describes her as her “teacher assistant” and acknowledges her ability to produce correct work it is Cherish’s out of class inappropriate behaviour that dominates. Her teacher distances herself from this behaviour by referring to it as her “trend”. She also notes the ongoing nature of Cherish’s non-compliant behaviour by stating she brought it with her from primary school. Cherish’s mother and Cherish herself identify bullying as a consequence of Cherish’s weight as the main source of conflict for Cherish at school. Cherish’s teacher, however, places the responsibility for Cherish’s weight, “she is a big girl”, and for the “teasing” that results from it with Cherish herself. George’s teacher places the reasons for George’s behaviour with his coming to class after lunch “wired” and with his involvement with a group of boys in her class, also poorly behaved, who are Maori. While George’s teacher distances herself from George’s behaviour in her class, it is within her responsibility to manage (see table 2). Mark’s teacher casts Mark as a victim of his learning difficulties and refers to it being too late to resolve once he was referred to her. She also uses paralegal language to describe Mark’s classroom behaviour towards teachers that she has read about on the school’s electronic record. The use of paralegal language amplifies the seriousness of Mark’s behaviour and the retelling of the electronic record takes the form of an assumption of truth. In her classroom, however, she says that he is polite and helpful. For this teacher also, like Cherish’s and George’s, the problems she perceives as contributing to Mark’s conflicts with school that she perceives also need resolving are either in the past or outside her control. The teachers of these three students appear to have developed positions where, like the parents and the students themselves, they working around the issues but not addressing them.

What characterises this group of stories, where the students do not realise their stated designated outcome from school, is not only the absence of one character prepared to
step up and respond assertively to the issue that generates the conflict but also that the characters have assumed positions that cause the characters to detour around the issue. These positions appear to have become established because the students’ behaviour has become attached to commonly held notions about behaviour around obesity, being Maori, being “slow”, and being bullied. Language constructions and choice of vocabulary articulate these positions. They are constructed out of dichotomous negatives defined by the undesirable opposite (Joffe, 2007; Philogène, 2007) and expressed as the truth through “is” statements (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). George’s teacher, for example, by connecting being Maori with poor behaviour in class and lack of academic focus, hooks into racist views of colour and laziness. Cherish’s teacher’s blaming her for her weight comes out of the Protestant ethic about excess being a sin (Joffe, 2007) and Mark’s learning difficulties from the neoliberal notion that lack of achievement is an indication that you have not tried hard enough (Gale & Densmore, 2000; Lauder & Hughes, 1999; Apple, 1996). Given the forms of language used about them this small group of students may be evidence of an Other group within the school community, essentially invisible, made visible only through oppositional aspects of their school identity. For this study this group makes up one third of the cohort.

5.2.3. Ben, Bob and Elephant: Finding a place to be at school

Ben, Bob and Elephant are all still in school at the end of the study but hold peripheral or marginal identities in the school community of practice. They have managed to construct or have constructed for them an actual school identity that has the potential to realise the designated identity stated at the initial interview. Like Cherish, George and Mark each of the boys has an accumulated history of school stand-down and unresolved conflict with the school. For each of these boys, like the previous group, there is evidence of the participants taking up positions that impede the recognition of the central issue. Their continued membership at school, however, comes about, like Mara, Missy and Tui, through the intervention of a significant storyteller who resolves
the conflicts that give rise to their stand-down events. For this group of boys the significant storyteller targets specific critical elements inherent to their school identity. It is through the recognition and targeting of these critical elements that the students are able to restory school membership and articulate a place to be at school.

**Ben (B): developing an actual school identity expressed through being different**

Ben attends a decile 5, country town, intermediate school in year 8 at the time of the first interview. Because of Ben’s disability Ben’s mother wanted to be present at the interview. Throughout the interview Ben’s mother spoke for him. Ben’s mother acknowledges that Ben has “problems” but that the way she “deals” with him eliminates the difficulty. Through this, though, she defines him as different and dis-identifies with the problems at school;

BM: I know how to deal with him. I don’t have any major problems at all

Ben lives with his mother and sister. In the first interview he was unable to articulate a designated school identity. He has a history of stand down both from his current school and from a previous school in another town. Apart from picking a name, this was one of the only answers Ben gave during the interview.

I: Stand-down or stand-downs, Ben?

B: Sssssssssssssssssss

He has a connective tissue disorder (EDS), anxiety and possibly Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). At the first interview these disorders define his identity. Both his mother and his teacher at intermediate school attribute the problems he has had at school to his disabilities. His teacher describes what she feels is autistic behaviour as getting a “bee in his bonnet”. Essentially the use of the cliché reveals that she sees this aspect of his behaviour as his problem and something he should control.
BT: He gets a bee in his bonnet about something he can’t let it go and like the autism.

His mother ascribes his lack of academic progress to having a connective tissue disorder (EDS). His mother excuses his behaviour by identifying him as a victim.

BM: His EDS has overshadowed his academic progress and he also has an anxiety disorder ...

While it is agreed that he has been subjected to ongoing, sometimes violent, physical bullying over his school career his mother and teacher do not agree on Ben’s role in the context of the stand-down incidents. Ben’s teacher, for example, casts Ben as the bully while his mother again casts him as a victim. In the response that follows from Ben’s teacher she uses paralegal language to describe the incident e.g. “assaulted” to strengthen the perception of violence and pathos like “all cut and bleeding” to generate sympathy for those she perceives as the victims.

BT: and then the other one was a suspension because he assaulted two girls...punched them in the face ...one of the girls, her mouth was all cut and bleeding

Ben’s Mother places Ben into the position of victim by using passive voice to make him a recipient of violence e.g. “jammed” and by having his attempts at apology refused.

BM: He wrote a letter of apology to the girl but she didn’t accept it. He had his arm jammed in a desk and it all worked out from that...you didn’t put your own arm in the desk did you Ben?

On the other hand Ben enjoys Art and uses it as a means to de-stress in class when he becomes anxious. He was stood down for swearing at his teacher aide. The school had a zero tolerance policy for swearing at staff and the Deputy Principal believed that the policy must be applied consistently. In the context of stand-down, then, it is the school truth about Ben that predominates.

After six months he attends the local high school in year 9. His attendance has improved though he often goes home after lunchtime. His special programmes teacher
has made arrangements to keep him safe. His teacher has redefined him as a victim of tiredness.

BT6mnths: I’ve rescued him by seeing how tired he is and so rather than a stand down he needs to go home earlier and rest ...

His special programmes teacher also negotiates with other teachers to reduce the potential for confrontation. The “bee in the bonnet” is still present but has been re-storied

BT6mnths: He had two detentions he wouldn’t do and so the tutor came to me and said...well he comes to you in the lunch hour and he happily did all the work in the lunch hour here and she wrote it off.

Ben is learning photography in order to become the recorder of his class history. His special programmes teacher thinks that this will help include him and provide a possibility for a future career. Affirmative comments of actual identity are now expressed in terms of inclusion rather than difference. According to his special programmes teacher;

BT6mnths: but for a little lad who was so bad at the beginning and with some understanding he is settling in a lot better.

Most of the comments made by and about Ben at the beginning of the study construe him as different to other students. Over the six months of the study, however, through a relationship with a teacher at the school, Ben has constructed a school identity that while still identifying him as different provides him with membership that is defined by transition rather than behaviour.

At intermediate school Ben’s identity was that of a bully while his mother defined him as a victim. These are opposing roles and it was the school identity that predominated as truth teller (Peters, 2003) so Ben was stood-down. The difference between allocated roles is seen clearly in the type of language ascribed to the different roles. At college his school identity has shifted to that of victim which is closer to that of his mother’s. Ben’s special needs teacher is attempting to re-story his designated identity in terms of
school valued social capital. The timeframe of the study was too short to find out if this identity was beginning to be articulated by Ben, his mother and teachers as a designated identity. Ben’s case study also shows that different policies at different schools can make a difference to students like Ben. Special needs students like Ben are disproportionately represented in exclusion statistics in studies overseas (Hayden, 2007; Hayden and Dunne, 2001) and this case study shows that Ben’s reaction to his disabilities became caught up in the zero tolerance policies that have become prominent recently.

**Bob (Bb): a creative problem solver**

At the time of the first interview Bob is a year 10 student at a city boundary, coeducational, decile 8, year 7-13 state school. He was stood down from school for swearing at a teacher. He lives with his parents and his sister in a small rural settlement and travels to school in a nearby rural town each day on the school bus. Bob wants to finish school after he gets his NCEA level one and work with animals.

   Bb: Do something with animals I suppose...work in a zoo or something

I: When do you want to leave school?

   Bb: Probably when I get NCEA level one

Bob’s mother’s designated school identity for Bob is similar;

   BbM: I would like him to try for his NCEA because he’s got the brains to do it...

Bob is the youngest of a family of five children another two of whom had been stood down from the same school. This suggests that Bob’s mother’s narratives of her relationship with the school are about discipline issues.

   I: Has anyone in the family been stood down or suspended from school before?

   BbM: Yes two of my children... [A] got stood down for swearing at a teacher, if I remember rightly [...]Then my other son because I’ve got three boys from the
first marriage he was at [the same school] stood down and then...he didn’t actually get suspended I took him out of there before they did and he went back to his father...smoking marijuana...

When asked why Bob was stood down any positive affirmative statements his mother made about Bob’s school identity were expressed in the past tense. His mother’s use of the words “that school” suggests that she locates the blame for what has happened not only with a history of family difficulties at the school but also with the size of the school. Bob’s mother, therefore, locates the difficulties with Bob at school outside her control.

BbM: Only at that school. He was top of the school at primary school. He got the trophy for the pupil...they really thought he was marvelous at primary school. He was a great leader...he looked after all the younger ones...that was because it was only a small school. He got the end of year trophy for the most outstanding pupil

From Bob’s point of view his perceived inappropriate behaviour appears to go back to a class move at the end of year nine which has created a situation where Bob was trying to get out of his current class. His use of phrases like “got put”, “three week trial” and “they wouldn’t take me out” shows he defines himself, like his mother does, as a powerless victim.

Bb: I got put in this class which is an all boys’ class and I was given a three week trial and then I didn’t want to be in it but they wouldn’t take me out...because of my behaviour.

He is the most rurally remote of all the students in the study and this caused problems for his mother during the study. In this response she expresses her role as powerless victim in resolving difficulties she perceives caused by the school.

BbM6mnts: I have tried to explain to Bob that I can’t afford for you to go to another school because I would have to find the ride for you into town and back again.
Like his sister Bob was also stood down from school for swearing at a teacher. According to his teacher he is a “serial swearer” which suggests that there is narrative at school around Bob and his swearing. Effectively, at school swearing at teachers appears to have become associated with Bob. The juxtaposition of “serial” also has connotations of paralegal language which helps to contextualise Bob’s behaviour as criminal. Bob’s teacher also reveals that the school has a zero tolerance policy on students swearing at staff.

BbT: He’s not shy of telling teachers what he thinks and where they should go. And the school has a policy of if you swear directly at a teacher you will be stood down. He’s a pretty serial swearer.

The dean tries to use Bob’s desire to shift class as a lever to improve his behaviour. By doing this he defines Bob as recalcitrant. He describes Bob in terms of variations of bad behaviour. Like Ben, however, Bob also may be being bullied and similar to Ben, Bob’s teacher backgrounds that information and does not pick up on the bullying as a possible part of the context to his unacceptable behaviour. What follows could also be seen as Bob trying to resolve his problems using alternative and more appropriate means and then having that attempt thwarted.

I: Has he any difficulties at school that you know of?

BbT: Early on in the piece he came to me and he wanted to get out because he felt he was being picked on...his behaviour was really bad at that stage and I said I’m not going to do something for you until your behaviour picks up...you come to me cap in hand with the sort of behaviour you exhibit...

Bob is unhappy with his school identity as a naughty student. It does not sit with his designated identity “I don’t want to be”. He does not take responsibility for his behaviour blaming it on being bored and therefore the teacher’s responsibility.

I: Do you feel singled out, are you naughtier than other kids?

Bb: Sometimes...I don’t want to be ... I get bored in class.
Neither Bob’s teacher nor his mother deals with the issues that Bob is facing now. Both his mother and his teacher describe Bob as academically able but Bob’s mother places Bob’s ability in juxtaposition with trouble. Getting into trouble because they are too bright is a comment made by other parents in the study.

BbM: He is bright that is the trouble...he has got brains ...

His teacher refers to Bob being “quite able” but the use of “quite” seems to take away from the affirmation of the statement. Bob’s teacher acknowledges his ability in rugby though that too also exists outside school.

BbT: Quite able...he expressed some interest in being in the [Boys’ class] last year because he quite likes his sport ...right into his rugby outside of school

Bob’s mother recounts a story about Bob where she feels Bob got the idea that stand-down enables him to get out of school.

BbM: Bob wasn’t at high school he was at primary and she [Sister A] was at high school in her first year and she got stood down for three days and he said...what’s stood down? And I said she is not allowed at school for three days...so if you misbehave you don’t have to go to school? And the first time he got stood down I said what did you do that for? And he said... [A] got three days off I’ve got a long weekend...He tried to get stood down.

At the six month interview Bob had been removed from the boys’ class and was in a Ministry of Education funded alternative education class located on, but at the edge of, the school grounds. The physical location of the class combined with both comments made by his teacher and his escalating history of being stood-down suggests he has assumed a marginal identity in the school. When asked about his plan for leaving school it had not changed from the first interview but he talked about achieving NCEA level one more precisely. He talks about achievement in terms of how many credits he has gained so far. He has nearly achieved the literacy and numeracy requirement. He attributes his success to being on “correspondence” which means he is working separately from other students.
I: What does doing well at school mean for you?
Bb6mnths: I don't know just passing NCEA level one
I: Is that going to happen?
Bb6mnths: Yeah I am doing correspondence work...
I: is that working well?
Bb6mnths: Yeah...it's easy...I am doing Maths and employment skills, Geography and Science...
I: Passing well?
Bb6mnths: Yeah
I: When do you plan to leave school?
Bb6mnths: On my sixteenth birthday...
I: will you get NCEA level one?
Bb6mnths: yeah...
I: How many credits?
Bb6mnths: 39 probably 45 now
I: What about literacy and numeracy credits?
Bb6mnths: I've six in Maths and eight in English...

Those discourses that construct Bob as sociable exist outside the school and in the past. Bob's actual and designated identities, currently expressed by both school and home, are virtually identical and framed largely in terms of opposition and bad behaviour. Over the six months of the study Bob was stood down two more times and at the six month interview he is in an alternative education programme where he is working through the Correspondence School towards gaining enough credits to get his NCEA level one. Bob's story shows, however, that he has an understanding both of the
triggers that result in stand-down e.g. the school’s zero tolerance policy on swearing at teachers and of the progressive nature of the stand-down process. This has enabled Bob to rewrite his school identity on his own terms so that his expressed goals of getting out of the boy’s class and working towards NCEA level one have been achieved by the end of the study.

Bob has revealed that stand-down can be used as a tool to rewrite his school story. He was unable to return to the past where his actual and designated identities as top student are closely allied. In the present the only power Bob has to change his situation is to swear at teachers, get stood-down and eventually get removed from the class. It could be said that Bob has excluded himself in order to bring together his designated and actual school identity. Getting and using power drives this case study. Bob’s mother blames the school, but feels powerless to change Bob’s situation so washes her hands of the outcome. To some degree this may illustrate problems with the level playing field, new right philosophy that purports to empower parents to select a suitable school for their child. Bob’s mother’s experience reveals that this philosophy may not work in remote situations where income is also an issue (see Lauder et al, 1994). Bob’s teacher names Bob as recalcitrant when he won’t comply with the school’s strategy to alter Bob’s behaviour. Both Bob’s mother and his teacher allow past experience of the school and the family to frame Bob’s identity and guide decision making in the present which may show how past histories can work against examining the present context of individual incidents.

Elephant (E): who is always bad, apparently, according to his teacher.

Elephant is a year 8 student at a state integrated, special character decile 3 city school; he was stood down for pushing a boy onto the newly laid school cricket wicket. He lives with his mother and her partner with two half-sisters. He has a history of stand down throughout primary school. Elephant plans to leave school as soon as possible to be an engineer which suggests he has unrealistic knowledge of what is required. He is
good at mathematics and sport but ascribes his skill to his innate ability not to any impact of the school.

I: What do you like about school?
E: Sport…if there was no sport and maths I wouldn't be...
I: Is it because you have a good maths teacher or because you are good at it?
E: I am really good at maths and really good at sport

Elephant is described by all participants in terms of difference. Each participant attributes this difference to matters outside their control. Elephant casts himself as a social Other who is regarded as separate from other students because he is bad. As a consequence he appears to be able to free himself from being responsible for what happens.

E: Like I threw rocks and there was a boy with a tree hut and I always had to get picked on and I got revenge and got a rock and threw it at him and he slipped back and he had like a thing around his neck so I got stood down.
I: So is it mostly about getting picked on...getting stood down from school?
E: Yeah then I just lay it out on people...
I: Has this school and other schools stopped the being picked on?
E: No...my teacher doesn’t really care she goes on ...I am always bad apparently to her and she doesn't believe my side. She only believes the good people but then they beat me up and then I can’t say that they did...

His mother attributes Elephant’s inappropriate behaviour to his reading problems, a possibility that Elephant is ADHD and to financial difficulties.

I: Is Elephant an easy child?
EM: No...he is a not an easy child he is a very difficult child. He’s just very robust full of energy and opinions. When he was small I thought he had ADHD

I: Are they expecting him to read?

EM: Well specialist [Name] It’s about $300... I asked them if they would...the health nurse actually said they could do some funding for it and I said could you do some funding for it and they basically told me their funding has run out now.... no-one’s helping.

Elephant’s teacher finds him difficult; she attributes that difficulty to what she perceives as Elephant’s insincerity and to his not being trusted or liked by other students; i.e. in opposition to membership attributes. His teacher describes him either in negative statements or with negative connotations and both in the present tense. She also refers to Elephant’s lack of friends but regards it as Elephants own fault

ET: He’s very difficult to work with because his response is oh sorry sorry but he is totally insincere and he is always quite greasy... you know he wants to grease round you and oh sorry and two minutes later he will do exactly the same thing so he is not very popular with the children... they don’t really trust him or like him too much. We have tried to pump him up but he’s not very endearing really.

Elephant has an accumulated history of being stood-down. His comment, “from all my other schools” suggests that he has attended a number of schools.

I: Was this your first stand down?

E: No I have had several... from all my other schools.

I: Were they all about the same sort of thing?

E: Worse. Like I threw rocks

Elephant’s mother suggests that Elephant has been bullied at school and that he does not have the tools to “deal with those situations”. She believes it is the school’s responsibility to do something about Elephant’s lack of tools. Like Cherish’ mother she sees Elephant’s violent reaction to bullying as reasonable.
EM: The first time he got stood down I believe it was for fighting again I am pretty sure of it.

I: From this school?

EM: yes it was... it was [another boy] and they were fighting and the boy had told him he had no friends and Elephant got angry, pushed him down...the boy pushed him down, punched him...and he got stood down for one day and the boy got stood down for two. In that situation I don’t find that fair but I could understand why Elephant did explode because the boy was constantly doing that and the wasn’t pulled up for it and the school didn’t do anything and he was left to his own tools which he had a lack of tools to deal with these situations so he pushed him

By the six month interview he has moved with his family to another city. His year nine has already featured a number of stand downs from school. Elephant’s mother still sees Elephant as being treated differently to other students and that the different treatment comes down to Elephant’s difference to other children. She sees this difference in terms of Elephant not responding to social clues but does not see the responsibility for responding to social clues to be located with Elephant

EM6mnths: He didn't have any friendship groups he allowed himself to be lippy or interfering as his personality is and many children couldn't take to his personality.

Elephant, however, had just returned to class after having been removed from class and placed in senior classes in school for a significant period. Elephant sees himself as having friends and wants to achieve because he wants to be with his friends.

E6mnths: I wanted to learn after that because being out of class you can’t hang out with your friends as much.

Elephant has decided that his learning and behaviour are his problem. At this stage Elephant is at least articulating a changed designated identity that expresses attributes of school membership.
E6mnhths: No-one can change you, you have to change yourself. They can help you, you have to help yourself that is if you want to learn. They try to help you but you have to help yourself.

Elephant now aligns himself more with the accepted practices of students set out in table two (p. 17); that it is his responsibility to put in the effort. Notwithstanding this, however, the qualification in the final part of the following response still shows he has some way to go to take full responsibility for his school identity.

E6mnhths: I am not a perfect child, no one’s perfect but I am trying as hard as I can. That is all I can do.

Elephant’s story reveals a boy whose behaviour has been a concern since he was very young. He has had a number of stand-downs from school that do not appear to have been effective in changing behaviour. Elephant is another student in the study where ongoing bullying appears to contribute to, but is not addressed by the school as part of, the stand-down context. Like other students in the study he perceives himself to be a victim of bullying but his teacher casts him as the villain. His mother associates his behaviour not only with his lack of reading but also with a lack of social skills but appears to see this as just part of how Elephant is. Both Elephant and his mother saw his violent behaviour as a consequence of his difference and therefore outside of their control. Like Bob’s mother, Elephant’s mother describes herself as powerless to address Elephants problems at school and identifies lack of money as a contributing factor to her powerlessness. Like Tui, however, a change of school and situation provided the catalyst to enable Elephant to re-story his school identity. At the six month interview Elephant appears to have taken responsibility for his behaviour and has apparently altered his actual and designated school identity though like Ben there has been too little time to see if this new identity is articulated by other significant storytellers.

Discussion

All of the students in this group have an accumulated history of being stood-down which may indicate that being stood-down in itself is not effective at changing identity.
trajectories. Bob was stood-down only at his current school while Ben and Elephant at previous schools also. Bob, like Mara, has an accumulated family history of exclusion also. At the end of the study all of the students in this final group either are or have been in an alternative education facility of some kind. Bob is in a Ministry of Education funded alternative education programme, Ben is in a special needs programme class with an individual education plan (IEP) and some inclusion in the mainstream and Elephant has been withdrawn from class for a number of weeks because of his behaviour. By the end of the study, though, they are closer to realising their designated identity expressed in the first interview than they were at the first interview.

For each of these students there has been some sort of proactive response that has moved their actual and designated identities closer together. None of these responses have come from parents. In Ben’s and Elephant’s case it was the response of a teacher that resulted in the change and in Bob’s it was Bob himself. What marks this group of students as important to this study is that like the second group they have had previous stand-downs and positions have developed between the participants but a change of school and a fresh set of procedures has enabled Ben and Elephant to re-story their school membership and determination meant Bob was able to find a place to be at his current school. Like Mara, Missy and Tui, these three boys have been bullied and this provides part of the context of the conflicts they need to resolve and like Mara, Missy and Tui also each boy finds a place away from the bullying by the six month interview.

For all three boys significant storytellers and critical elements played a significant role in their remaining in school. For Ben his special needs teacher recognised his separateness from the mainstream was a critical element of his school identity so re-storied his actual identity in terms of that separateness. Bob’s critical element was to gain NCEA level one so he could leave school and get a job and to achieve this he needed to get out of the boy’s class. His way of achieving those two goals was to separate himself by getting stood down from school. Elephant’s critical element was that he had made friends at his new school and separating him from them, firstly by removing him from the class and secondly by threatening to hold him back a year, caused him to articulate his school identity in terms of school focused social and
cultural capital. Ben’s and Elephant’s school identities became re-storied by the move to a new school where different significant storytellers enabled a change to some of the positions taken at the first interview. Essentially Ben’s and Elephant’s mothers positions did not change but Ben’s special needs teacher and a policy decision to remove recalcitrant students from class and isolate them at Elephant’s new school changed the dynamic. What worked for Elephant, though, would be unlikely to effect change in Bob in that he wanted to get out of his current class. Bob did not like his school identity of “naughty boy” but he had tried legitimate means to be returned to his old class by asking the dean. This had not worked and the hostile and negative relationship between Bob’s mother and the dean was unlikely to effect change. Bob’s personal agency in affecting change through knowledge of how the exclusion system works characterises him as the significant storyteller in his re-storied school identity.

The change in actual identity for these three boys is most easily found in the differences in language use between the two interviews for each boy. Significantly it is the change in one significant storyteller’s language use about the student between the two interviews that marks the change in identity. For Ben it is the change in the language use by his school identified teacher while for both Bob and Elephant that change is evident in the language they use about themselves personally as members of a school community. In the first interview Ben was characterised as a bully by his teacher but by the second interview his teacher described him as a victim of his disability. The difference in phrases like “gets a bee in his bonnet” and “more settled now” from the first to the second interview marks that change. For Bob the change is most evident in the way he talks about school provided cultural capital in the form of qualifications. In the first interview Bob “supposes” he should “probably” get NCEA level one; in the second interview he is certain he will have NCEA level one when he leaves school on his sixteenth birthday. The difference in the way Elephant talks about school is more marked, however. In the first interview he “always had to get picked on” but by the second interview, however, statements like “No-one can change you, you have to change yourself” characterise his responses. In terms of personal agency between the two interviews the language shows that Elephant has been able relocate his control over his circumstances.
In terms of the markers of school membership the language used about and by Ben, Bob and Elephant was more similar to Cherish, George and Mark at the first interview but became more similar to Mara, Missy, Mr. Smith and Tui by the second interview. All three boys talk about and are talked about in terms of behaviour in the first interview but in terms of positive school social and cultural capital in the second interview. While in each case that change in language only comes from one participant in the study the evidence of a change is clearly expressed by a significant storyteller in the second interview about a critical element clearly identified in the first interview. For Ben this critical element was his difference, for Bob his wanting to leave school with NCEA level one and for Elephant his lack of friends. For these three boys, also, what made them different in the end from Cherish, George and Mark was engagement with the conflict that needed resolution for each boy; for Ben his difference, for Bob the boy’s class and for Elephant his fighting.

5.3 General discussion

Each of these stories and sets of stories presents a different view of how participation affects the nature of identity in and membership of communities of practice. While stand-down by definition restricts participation and therefore must affect identity and membership (Wenger, 1998) each of the students in the study also talked about unresolved school based conflicts that were restricting participation before they were stood-down from school. Resolving those school based conflicts that were impeding participation was the key factor in reestablishing an inbound identity trajectory for the students. Some of these conflicts had short timescales and arose out of the recent past while others were historical and had resulted in stand-downs in the past. Conflicts of short duration were more easily resolved than those that had gathered negative social capital around them. What was significant about the short duration conflicts was the degree of agreement between the participants in each story. Furthermore this agreement was expressed in terms of school valued social and cultural capital.
The assertive engagement of parents was important to this study; parents appeared to hold invisible but potent social capital in negotiations with the school. One set of parents already held significant social capital of an “old school tie” nature while another three parents initiated assertive involvement in their child’s school following and as a consequence of the stand-down. This shows the potential of social capital in the form of engagement as a means to resolve conflict. Conversely it may also confirm that historical accumulations of social capital affect the way negotiations are conducted (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Furthermore effective intervention came from parents; where students tried to intervene it was not effective and in some cases resulted in stand-down. For this study the social capital held by parents takes a similar form to that described by Brown (1990, 2003) in his discussions about the role of parents in neoliberal school settings. Positive parent engagement also superseded an accumulated past history of “troubledom” from previous schools and older family members.

Historical accumulations of unresolved conflict manifest in this study as a series of stand-down events sometimes from the one school sometimes from a number of schools. These accumulated histories of conflict were harder to resolve. Bourdieu (1986) suggests that negative social capital impedes negotiations within the field. The impact of this impediment can be seen in this study through the positions taken by participants in the conflict. Lemke (2000) suggests that the longer the timescale the more potency a story holds. For this study the longer the conflict the more entrenched the position and the more likely participants will locate the responsibility for resolving the situation outside their control. In addition in those case studies where an accumulated history of stand-down is a factor students tended to be talked about in terms of their (inappropriate) behaviour rather than as their potential as a scholar. These students, therefore, appear to become anchored in stories about their inappropriate behaviour (Moscovici, 1988, 2001).

For many of the students, teachers in particular talked about the student in terms of dichotomised expressions where the student was presented as the negative of a desirable attribute. Elephant’s teacher at the first interview is the most extreme example. These instances begin to construct that student in terms of the social Other
(Joffe, 2007, Philogéne, 2007) and breaking free of these associations once established is difficult (Joffe, 2007; Joffe and Staerkle, 2007; Markovà, 1996; Philogéne, 2007). Stand-down, therefore has the potential to be a point where these narratives may be able to be identified, intercepted and addressed. Similar to students with short duration conflict an identifiable intervention was necessary to resolve the conflict. For the students in this study, therefore, all of whom were trying to resolve school based conflict, the conflict did not resolve of itself. Things did not just get better; they required specific and targeted intervention. Those students for whom there was an intervention, by the end of the study, appeared likely to meet the education goals they articulated at the start of the study; those for whom there was no intervention appeared unlikely to meet their education goals.

Each student’s story contained a collection of versions of what happened and why it happened; for this study it is the school stories, told by the teacher, that predominate. This was a likely outcome for a number of reasons. School stories about discipline, for example, have longer timescales than those of the family no matter however many family members have been stood down in the past. School stories also have the benefit of the truth teller narrator both because of ownership of the power/knowledge nexus and because the school community of practice owns the practice of stand-down. This enables powerful metanarratives about acceptable behaviour to be incorporated in school stories that are not available to parents and students. These narratives manifest in these stories both through references to zero tolerance and school record systems and through the use of paralegal language. To resolve the context of the stand-down, however, knowing the student’s version was important. These contexts were disregarded by the school because of the perceived need to address the incident itself which, in all cases, breached hegemonic social representations of acceptable behavior.

The potential for an inbound trajectory can be seen in narratives not only about school valued social and cultural capital but also about personal accountability; the reverse also applies. In many of the narratives where stand-down contexts are resolved there is at least one participant who holds themselves accountable for the outcome. Resolution and taking responsibility are closely related in this study. Mara’s mother, Missy, Bob, Elephant, Ben’s teacher, Tui and Tui’s father all make strong statements about
responsibility. Many are the students themselves which shows the potency of first person narratives in identity formation (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). That the voices of personal responsibility do not tend to be school based reveals the important relationship between the timescales of the classroom and the longer timescales of a person’s life (Lemke, 2000) and that learning to manage oneself is a hidden but potent outcome of membership of the school as a community of practice. Some of the parents in this study, however, adopted a victim persona both for themselves and for their children. Clarke et al, (2009) suggest that individuals construct identities that articulate the position they occupy within any discussion. Presenting themselves and their children as victims may be the most advantageous position some parents had available in discussions about a stand-down event. Learning to manage oneself for the students in these stories though important remained unresolved.

5.4 Conclusion
In this study the easiest way to identify identity trajectories and therefore the membership status of students in schools as communities of practice is to listen to how the significant storytellers talk about the student. Insider status in the school as a community of practice for this study can be identified in common agreement expressed through school recognised and acquired social and cultural capital. The more common the agreement among significant storytellers the more established the insider status. Marginalised students are talked about in terms of their inappropriate behaviour. Insider status is not only expressed through qualifications, playing sport and singing at prizegiving it is also about taking responsibility. Where stand-down environments were resolved, taking personal accountability was a key factor. Ideally the student taking responsibility had the most powerful and effective outcome. Those working in stand-down environments could concentrate on how to enable personal engagement and responsibility in participants.

Stand-down in itself did not resolve the issues that caused the relationships within the community of practice to unravel; there needed to be an examination of the context of the stand-down. Stand-down, however, provided an opportunity for people to meet to become engaged in resolution. Engagement with the context resolved the context but
this tended to come in orthodox ways from parents and unorthodox ways from the students rather on the instigation of the school. Zero tolerance policies may hide the context. Early resolution of context avoided stances being taken on both sides though a new school provided a fresh opportunity. Resolving context at first stand-down has potential to reset the student’s identity trajectory. For the students in the study a change of environment of some kind had the potential to remove the critical elements that were generating the context that resulted in stand-down. Those working in stand-down environments could examine the context for critical elements and see if change of some kind will reset the student’s identity trajectory.

The stand-down event provides an opportunity to re-story a student’s school identity; at present, however, it was the parent who appeared to initiate this. For this study all parents were compliant with the school’s requests but that was insufficient. It was assertiveness rather than compliance that was effective in re-storying student’s school stories following a stand-down event. Some parents were not able to act assertively when their child was stood down. The number of points of recognition between the home and the school was significant in the parent being able to make and retain contact and act assertively when conflict arose. Long timescale negative associations between home and school work against resolution; these negative associations may also come about through family history. People working in stand-down environments could identify and recognize the nature of contact between the school and the home and work to enhance this.

The next chapter concentrates not on shared stories of school experience but on shared stories about the practice of stand-down. Stand-down had been a stand-alone practice, separate from suspension, for about ten years when the research for this study was undertaken. Over the brief period during which statistics on stand-down have been published by the Ministry of Education the numbers of students stood down from school each year had risen sharply far in excess of roll growth. One of the purposes of this study was to find out the common stories of stand-down as a practice; i.e. the reasons principals give to stand students down and the impact this has on families. In chapter six principals and senior teachers talk about the reasons they stand-down students from school. They talk about the challenges of balancing the
need to maintain a safe and productive working environment against the impact on a student’s future if they are excluded from school. The principals also reply to issues of context raised by parents in the first interviews. Parents and students evaluate their stand-down experiences and their perceptions of the effectiveness of stand-down as a means to manage and change behaviour.
Chapter 6: Talking about stand-down: narratives of disappointment

The literature suggests that there are many pressures on the principal’s decision to stand-down a student and families revealed in the previous chapter that being stood down did not resolve the school based difficulties that were occurring around the time of the stand-down. The purpose of the previous chapter was to examine the school experiences of students from the point of view of having been stood-down from school. This chapter investigates the practice of stand-down itself and brings together four participant groups to talk about the field of the stand-down event. They are the main participants of any stand-down event; the principal, the senior teacher, the parent and the student. These participants seem to be ascribed particular roles within the field of negotiation (Black, 1999); the judge, the policeman, the advocate and the perpetrator, respectively.

While the previous chapter revealed how expressions of identity trajectories can be located in the different ways participants talked about the student this chapter focuses on how participant groups refer to metanarratives to position themselves within the field of the stand-down event. Both Genette (1997, 1998) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) propose that factors external to the text affect the choices made by respondents when they generate text. Genette (1997, 1998) proposed that no text was finite in itself and contains both direct and indirect references to metanarratives outside the text. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) maintained that language choices position the respondent in terms of those narratives. Viewing the data from both Genette’s (1997, 1998) reference to metanarratives and Chouliaraki’s and Fairclough’s (1999) assertions about positioning is important because understanding stand-down as a practice within a community of practice requires not only the construction of shared stories but also the identification of closeness to or distance from those stories in explanations by participants. In this chapter Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) analytic tool sits more in the background but is still important given that stories of disappointment feature significantly across the groups of participants.
Principals, senior teachers, parents and students talk about stand-down as a practice. The principals and senior teachers talk about their reasons for using stand-down, the effectiveness of stand-down as a means to achieve particular outcomes and their engagement with the home. The parents and students talk about their experience of stand-down, its effectiveness as a means to achieve the expectations they have for education and their experience of working with the school. The benefit of distance through time elapsed enables the participants to step back from the stand-down experience and explain their point of view (Markovà, 1996). Similar to the previous chapter, how the participants rationalise the stand-down experience is revealed through the language they choose to explain themselves. Their choice of vocabulary and syntax create welcoming or unfriendly responses while their use of key phrases identify those external narratives that have the potential to throw up fences or open gates for themselves and other participants.

6.1 Knowing the rules of the game: principals and senior teachers talk about stand-down

The previous chapter found parents and students at a perceived disadvantage to the school in the field of the stand-down event. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), suggest that familiarity and a perceived detachment from the event lends schools an invisible advantage. Effectively any playing field where one side makes up the rules and carries them out is by no means level. In the first half of the chapter both principals and senior teachers have been asked why they stand students down and the syntax of their responses critiqued in greater detail than in other parts of the analysis.

6.1.1 The Principals: Judge and jury?

When research evidence suggests a link between school suspension and poor outcomes for young people (Christle et al 2005; Fergusson et al, 2002; Hemphil et al, 2006, 2007), it might be surprising that principals continue to stand students down from school. Literature reviewed for this study, however, shows that the decision to stand a student down is not a simple choice for principals; the choice is made as a
consequence of a number of competing narratives. Interviews with principals covered a range of questions about how schools worked with students and families at stand-down. The first question asked of principals at the interview was why they stand students down from school in the light of research evidence to the contrary.

Why do you think you continue to stand children down if you know that poor outcomes may result?

The first approximately 200 words of the response to this question for three principals follow. The responses of these three principals have been selected because they represent the range of answers provided across the interviews. The analysis of each response draws attention to references to external narratives; the analysis of each response develops to show how each principal uses language structures to position him or herself in terms of these narratives.

**Principal 1 (P1)**

Basically because of their behaviour or because what they are doing is totally unacceptable in the school and we want to send that message clearly to the school and the community. It’s not always around actually punishing...yes you are punishing that child but it is actually also a message about these are the standards and there is an expectation from our Board about the standards. Sometimes when I take a student to the Board on a suspension they will say to me...how come we haven’t seen this student before and at one stage some years ago they actually pulled in the whole senior management team and said would you please bring these students sooner. They are saying we do too many suspensions we give too many chances, we try too hard...bring them to us and
the family can face us and we will tell them that this school expects good
behaviour and if they don’t want to do that and they are harming other
children’s chances or the chance for teachers to teach then best go somewhere
else. That message is very clearly given at those meetings. Very clear from the
Board...don’t let it go on too long

(P1)

P1’s stance is that there is no place in her school for students with unacceptable
behaviour. She refers both to the narratives of the new right and to traditional
narratives about the responsibility of the family and about punishment to explain her
stance. Her reference to the board of trustees identifies metanarratives about market
driven education policy and her reference to standards of behaviour refers to
traditional social representations of good behaviour. Furthermore the power
differential she establishes between the board of trustees and the school and the family
refers to the truth teller narrative. She sees stand-down as a punishment because, it
“sends a clear message” an expression identified in the literature as a marker of zero
tolerance type policies (Henault, 2001). She refers to expectations of standards of
acceptable behaviour as being appropriate for school membership. What these
standards are, are not defined and P1 shows that she defines what is acceptable
through what is unacceptable. This hegemonic definition of the positive through the
negative is a structure common to the narratives of the social Other (Joffé, 2007; Ogbu
and Simons, 1998; Philogène, 2007). Her overt reference to stand-down as a
punishment reveals also that she is aware of the expectation for punishment prevalent
in society (Monterosso, 2009). P1 places these influences outside her control, however,
by revealing not only that the board makes the decision about what is acceptable but
also that she believes that unacceptable behaviour comes as a consequence of family.

The language choices P1 makes to refer to these exterior narratives enable her to dis-
identify (Davies, 2007) from the decision making. When she says “They are saying...”
she positions herself as an agent of the board and reports what the board has said. Her
use of language denotes both the relationship between the board of trustees and the
principal and senior management team and between the board of trustees and the families of students stood down from school. She indicates the power relationship both between the principal and the board of trustees and the board of trustees and the senior management team through reporting the board’s questions “how come we haven’t seen this student before?” and “would you please bring these students sooner?” There is demand inherent in the Board’s question to P1 and words like “actually pulled” and “would you please” that suggests impatience. P1 reports the relationship between the board of trustees and the families of students whose behaviour is “unacceptable” using statements like “bring them to us”, the “family can face us” and “we will tell them that this school expects”. Each of these statements reveals her perception of a power differential and sense of separation between the board of trustees and the families of excluded children. In the first statement, for example, “bring” is a command which suggests both distance and compliance. A phrase like “face us” is confrontational and suggests separation while at the same time has connotations of judgment. The use of “we will tell them” expresses the stance of the team (Goffman, 1971) in the use of the first person plural pronoun, “we” as well as separation in the use of the third person plural pronoun, “them”.

This connotation of separation reveals Principal 1 uses stand-down in her school as an “instrument of cohesion” (Moscovici, 1993, p. 83) in that it provides a general instruction to others that wayward students are not like us (Lahlou, 1996). Good behaviour, therefore in this instance defines membership. Sentence structures and vocabulary choice in the response enable Principal 1 to position those students who behave inappropriately as wayward or deviant (Moscovici, 1993) e.g.

“If they don’t want to do that and they are harming other children’s chances or the chance for teachers to teach then best go somewhere else.”

This negative conditional sentence structure places the conditions for deviance in the first part of the structure using negatives and words with negative connotation e.g. “if they don’t want [...] and they are harming [...] or the chances”. The finality of decision that they “best go somewhere else” is the conditional outcome of the sentence and places the blame on the student and their family. P1 refers to stand-down as “too many chances” suggesting not only that wayward students are unrepentant but also that
repeated stand-downs are ineffective. The use of “chances” together with the use of “yes it is a punishment” suggests not only that P1 makes a connection between punishment and remediating unacceptable behaviour but also that stand-down at P1’s school provides a second chance or an opportunity for the student and family to get it right. Consequently, however, those families who don’t get it right are also wayward.

**Principal 2**

I think the stand down one is less clear in the research around. There is some evidence that for most students a single stand down is the most severe brush they have with the school discipline systems and for most students that’s enough and they get it right and they never reappear again in a major way. For some students those stand downs do appear to just add to the pattern. So that’s there and I’m always very mindful of the fact does this mean a course of action or is this a shot across the bow. Will this make the difference or not and in some instances the stand down is yes you’re stood down and we will make it up on Saturday and Sunday school and in other instances the stand down has been used in order to engage with the family and during that time we probably spend as much time with the student and their family in home visits and that sort of thing and how are we going to get this right when they come back. Recently we had a stand down in order to allow … a couple of stand downs which gave us a bit of time to get a restorative justice process in place. Then brought them back on the first day back with their parents into an RJ process straight away. So in terms of the positive side the stand down can be used and we have used it quite successfully, less successfully with other kids in those kinds of ways. Sometimes it just simply buys us time, sometimes it’s what the hell are we going to do here.
we need to get hold of CYFS or (local drug and alcohol service) or whatever. Actually while this is happening we need you off site. Or it removes the child from the setting.

(P2)

P2 refers to the school’s position as truth teller, to social representations of ‘right’ behaviour and the construction of the social Other in his explanation. The outcome appears to set out the relationship between stand-down and two apparently desirable states; “getting it right” and “never reappearing again”. In P2’s argument getting it right and never appearing again are seen to be the desirable outcome of being stood down. Similar to P1, “getting it right” is a reference again to social representations about “right” behavior and, further to this, P2’s reference to never appearing again links into other narratives about the purpose of discipline. Firstly “getting it right” suggests that the school decides what “right” is and secondly that being invisible to authority’s gaze (Foucault, 1977) is a desired outcome for students’ behaviour in school. P2 establishes this causal link between being stood down and getting it right, and getting it right and becoming invisible by linking the three ideas in a coordinating structure; e.g. “a stand down is the most severe brush […] and they […] and they.” Inserted within that coordinating structure, however, is also a qualification “for most students”. The use of this insertion introduces the concept of a second group of students who are stood down; i.e. those in a minority group for whom stand-down “adds to a pattern”. The use of “most” suggests also that this group is a minority. For P2 the solutions for this group of students exist outside the school and outside of his control.

The counterpoint between the two groups is presented through a series of oppositional statements; e.g. “for most/ for some”, “course of action/shot across the bow”, “make a difference or not”, “quite successfully/ less successfully” with the minority group largely presented in the counterpoint. These dichotomous statements again, like P1, present ideas through structures associated with the language of the social Other (Joffe, 2007; Philogéné, 2007) where one group is set up in negative opposition to another. The principal also identifies a number of different treatments for the
unacceptable behavior (Danaher et al, 2000); “Saturday and Sunday School”, “a restorative justice process”, “CYFS [Child Youth and Family Service] or [local drug and alcohol service] or whatever”. In these statements P2 is not only referring to solutions based both inside and outside the school he is also referring to these as acronyms e.g. CYFS or named processes e.g. “restorative justice” which suggests the potential long timescale existence of these solutions. Those treatments that appear to be used with the larger group are specific and school based e.g. “Saturday or Sunday school” with a vague non-specificity for students in the smaller group e.g. “get hold of CYFS or [local drug and alcohol service] or whatever”. This suggests a sense of separation between the school and those students for whom solutions appear to lie outside the resources and responsibility of the school.

P2’s presentation is largely a front stage performance (Goffman, 1971) indicated through the generalised use of first person plural throughout the passage. In the passage “we” is used seven times and “us” once. In this way P2, like P1, becomes the spokesperson of a group rather than of an individual and this allows him to dis-identify (Davies, 2007; Gale & Densmore, 2000; Goffman, 1971) from personal responsibility for the stand-down. P2 uses first person singular only twice in the passage. He begins his response with “I think” and shortly after that says “I’m always very mindful”. These two uses of first person, however, are significant. The use of “I think” to begin the first sentence enables P2 to step into the back stage and thus reduce the potency of that statement and perhaps not lose face (Goffman, 1971) since it is a personal opinion. The use of “I am always mindful”, however, is the one point where he discloses his agency as decision maker and truth teller (Danaher et al, 2000; Peters, 2003) for the school.

Conversely the use of third person and passive constructions with students and their families reveals their passivity and lack of agency in the field of the stand-down event. Students are referred to as “them”, “they” and “students” and their actions through passive construction; “Then brought them back on the first day with their parents”. In addition it is the school that makes “home visits” to “engage with the family” which also places the home and family in a passive position. While the use of “how are we going to get this right” could suggest inclusion, this is followed up with “when they come back to school” which suggests again that it is the school that is the active agent.
Those students identified by P2 as outside the resources of the school, the “some” group, are also referred to with warehousing comments e.g. “what the hell are we going to do?”, “it buys us time” and “to remove the child from the setting”. Warehousing comments are an indication that the speaker lacks control (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) when addressing unacceptable behaviour where stand-down does not cause the student to regain their invisibility. P2’s expressions of lack of control, however, also reveals a sense of disappointment with being unable to meet the needs of this minority group of students.

Principal 8 (P8)

Because there are pressures on... levels of expectations placed on them by people who are out there who are around events such as this; students more probably staff and to a degree parents who have a degree of degree of expectation that you are going to ...that is the way you deal with some of these behaviours and they don’t quite understand or they are not privy to the discussions I have around causes and effects and consequences. I can tell you that because in the last day or two I have been considering standing down or suspending a student and when I’ve talked through the background with the student and sat back and thought about it I realise it wont make one shred of difference given what they’ve told me and where they’re at... there is a better way. However I do also feel a bit of pressure to ensure that the students of the class that was totally wrecked by this student see that something happened and that something is in place to deal with behaviour other wise they will see it is acceptable. Well they wont think it is acceptable because they are rational human beings but they know in their own minds and if they know that
something has been done...nevertheless I think that is one of the main reasons why we...Something visible. I know...I certainly know what they feel... I had a robust discussion yesterday when I said I had not decided to stand this person down I said I know you are not going to agree with me but if you were privy to all the discussions that we had and I haven't got time to relay the whole conversation...you have just got to trust me so I mean that is the sort of expectation that others have...they expect you to do this.

(P 8)

P8's reference to external narratives tends to create dilemmas which he has to resolve. His response to the question was that the reason schools stand students down is that there are levels of expectation that that will happen. P8 begins the response by stating that there are pressures on principals to stand-down students because particular groups expect it; “students, probably staff and to a degree some parents”. This comment arises out of neoliberal narratives about the client focused nature of education delivery prevalent in modern service organisations that have become market driven. P8 develops this further when he refers to “expectation” because this suggests that groups P8 associates with e.g. students staff and parents, connect stand-down to appropriate ways of addressing certain behaviours. P8 makes a further reference to external narratives, i.e. that crime is followed by a visible punishment, when he says that students “see something has been done”. He shows he agrees with this when he says; “I certainly know what they feel”. Like P1 and P2, though with a different emphasis, P8 refers to the visibility of behaviour. Unlike P1 and P2, P8 talks about the dilemma of standing students down as an action that has an impact on the whole school community. For P8 the decision to stand a student down is a dynamic decision that brings him into potential conflict with competing interest groups within the school community. While P8 acknowledges that the visibility of the response is important to those people who expect him to stand the student down for certain
behaviours he states that with any situation there is a choice either to stand-down or suspend in addition to the choice to do neither and that choice sits with the principal.

P8 steps back from the situation and analyses how he came to a decision not to stand a student down. He talks about deciding not to stand a student down despite the expectations presenting him with a dilemma. Firstly he states that stand-down (or suspension) has the advantage of being visible so students know “something is in place to deal with behaviour” but he also acknowledges that if standing the student down is not going to make a “shred of difference” and that “there is a better way” then there is no point in doing it. The response presents as a discussion with himself where he puts forward the different sides of the argument and comes to the conclusion that “you have just got to trust me”. He bases his right to make the decision on having more information; he is “privy to all the discussions”. He makes comments also about the public nature of the principal’s position when he talks of the expectations others hold while at the same time acknowledging the private nature of his responsibilities. Unlike the other principals P8’s response is characterised by use of first and second person singular which separates him from the team and reveals he takes personal responsibility for the decision to stand-down a student. That decision can be difficult e.g. “feel a bit of pressure”, and “robust conversation”.

Discussion

The responses by three principals analysed above are largely representative of the range of views of the eight principals interviewed for the study. Central to the thesis of the argument is that participants construct reality through mediating those external and internal narratives that set the rules of the game for the field of the stand-down event. These extracts from principals’ interviews foreground common external narratives when asked why they stand students down from school. Common to the responses by principals were narratives about new right policies and the construction of the social Other. These two themes are revealed expressly through the forms of language the principals use to give reasons for standing students down. One theme centres on the concept of expectations of student behavior from pressure groups within and outside the school community. Structural features like the use of zero
tolerance policies consolidate teams within the school and wider community and mediate this theme. The second theme foregrounds the increasing separation of student and school as those conflicts that drive the stand-down event go unresolved. This second theme is set against the structure of the social Other (Joffé, 2007; Philogène, 2007) indicated through those identified structures of language that suggest exclusion. In the discussion that follows the responses of other principals in the study are also included either to enhance or provide an opposing position.

**Narratives of expectation**

“It is actually also a message about these are the standards and there is an expectation” (P1)

All three principals referred to the visibility of behaviour in school and the expectation of a clear response. This was the most consistent shared story of stand-down told by the whole group of principals interviewed for the study. This expectation that other groups are watching was one of the clearest indications in the study that schools constitute a landscape of practices that rely on each other. A common story of stand-down for principals was that they are under pressure from various sources to stand students down from school, particularly for specific unacceptable behaviours. The interviews identified the existence and input of a number of high stakes teams in the education arena who expect a visible response to unacceptable behaviour and who connected that visibility to stand-down. P1 talked about the board of trustees and P8 about staff, students and parents. Like P8, P3 refers to the difficulty he has with the expectations of staff to use stand-down;

As principals you are constantly being judged according to have you been deemed to support the teachers’ point of view. (P3)

P6 also spoke about the expectations from the community that principals will stand students down for certain behaviours;

Probably the last reason is that sometimes the rest of the community expects it and, for example selling drugs would be an example, where the community has
an expectation that the schools do something that they know is a sharp
comment about it.’ (P6)

Some principals, also, made reference to the client driven nature of education. P5 for
example admitted to using stand-down to show his school has standards of behaviour
and safety to attract future students; e.g. “I use stand-down as a marketing tool.”

The interviews with principals showed the common use of zero tolerance policies in
schools to address certain behaviour. Henault (2001) and Skiba (2000) suggest that the
use of terms like standards, expectations and send a clear message to refer to
acceptable behaviour identifies with zero tolerance narratives. Zero tolerance is a
narrative of the new right and tends to exclude the context from behaviour (Henault,
2001). For most of the principals in the study, P1 for example, the use of the vocabulary
of zero tolerance is closely associated with reasons for standing students down from
school. The term, zero tolerance, however, was not used by any of the principals, just
the vocabulary associated with it. This may indicate that zero tolerance policies have
become an invisible part of the fabric of the school (Markovà, 1996,). The principals
hint at zero tolerance in more or less extreme ways. P1, for example, takes an extreme
stance on punishing unacceptable behaviour through stand-down and suspension
whereas P2 and P8 regard stand-down as a visible way to respond to inappropriate
behaviour. Another principal, P4, refers to zero tolerance policies as a having a “strict
process”. Because strictness has a positive connotation with behaviour zero tolerance
policies may be regarded as a beneficial way to address unacceptable behaviour in
school.

The supremacy of zero tolerance policies as a means to address the pressures put on
 principals in the study works against resolving the difficulties of addressing context.
Addressing and resolving context was an essential element to reducing stand-down for
students in chapter 5. Having particular responses for specific breaches of behaviour
also works against the fairness philosophy espoused through legislation i.e. the
Education Act (1989) and The Bill of Rights (1990) and through Ministry of Education
policy (see MOE, 2007c, 2009). P4 draws attention to both the hierarchical supremacy
of zero tolerance policies and that they may come into conflict with other legal requirement to act fairly;

They have a fairly strict process by which if someone swears at a teacher therefore…and even though that is probably illegal according to the prejudging thing I think there is a little bit of that happens. (P4)

P4 delineates zero tolerance as “prejudging” and makes an oblique reference to the Principles of Natural Justice (NZ Bill of Rights, 1990), a narrative about rights, which make prejudging “illegal”. P4 reveals that “prejudging” which he links to zero tolerance policies of “strict process” is probably illegal but at the same time admits “ a little bit of that happens”.

The existence of the expectations and involvement of high stakes teams in the stand-down event benefited some principals, however. P2’s use of language positioned him with his management and staff team through the use of ‘we’ and ‘us’ in his response and enabled him to dis-identify from the responsibility of taking personal responsibility for the stand-down; i.e. while still accepting responsibility he did so as part of a team. Furthermore, P1, by establishing herself and her management team as subordinate agents of the board of trustees, managed also to dis-identify herself from taking responsibility but in a more remote way than that taken by P2.

**Narratives of the social other**

For some students those stand downs do appear to just add to the pattern. (P2)

In their responses both P1 and P2 identify a group of marginal students within the student community who are separated from other students because they have an accumulated history, “pattern”, of being stood down from school. Language constructs this alternative group of students. Dichotomous structures and conditional sentence structures, colloquial language and third person pronouns effectively set aside this
undesirable, visible, group from the larger group of desirable students. The principals’ choice of language not only reveals the separation but also that the marginalisation comes as a consequence of the recalcitrance of the student and family. Both P1 and P2 talk in structures that construct a second group as an undesirable alternative to the first. P3’s use of an oppositional structure further defines the parents of wayward children in the alternate group as needing to be reminded to discipline their children;

    Early involvement with the parents in a way that can be probably more effective actually in the end. Shaming in a right sort of a way that helps the student to be self-reflective and realise they can do it differently. (P3)

In his response P3 establishes an unusual oxymoronic construction; “shaming in a right sort of way”. The argument seems to suggest that shame causes someone to behave positively. It is an example of a deficit discourse (Bishop, 2003) and therefore closely associated in the literature with those structures that construct derogated groups. Missy’s mother would disagree with P3, however; Missy’s mother, who is Maori, referred to the embarrassment of stand-down as one of the most unhelpful aspects of stand down. For some Maori the European concept of shaming is only partially covered off through the term whakamaa7 (Metge, 1986). While whakamaa translates loosely as shame in a European context it also implies shyness, distance and loss of prestige or mana for Maori. Whakamaa is an important structure of social control for Maori but one which may increase the separation between home and school if unresolved (Metge, 1986). It is important to acknowledge the invisible impact of Maori tikanga8 as a means of inclusion or exclusion in a European dominated education system especially given the higher rate for stand-down among Maori students. Subtle but significant differences between the European concept of shaming and whakamaa suggest that any notions that connect remedying behaviour by using shame should be regarded with caution in New Zealand schools.

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7 Whakamaa (m) shame. Whakamaa, however, has the added definition of uneven power relationships.

8 Tikanga (m) Custom, obligations
Sentence construction especially combined with third person pronouns was another way some of the principals afforded one group of students a negative oppositional status to the majority of the student community. P1 was one of the principals who used a conditional structure and third person pronouns to construct the conditions of loss of membership. P4 also talks about a group of students in opposition to other students and, like P2, balances the undesirable alternative in the second part of the sentence;

Some students feel success by academic success others get their mana by being noticed by other students for being naughty and things like that. (P4)

P4 refers to the second group as 'others' and it is notable that 'success' was used to delineate the first group and 'mana', a word from Te Reo Maori\(^9\), for the second group. Myers (2000) suggests that these seeming casual instances of associating minorities with negative characteristics are significant.

The use of third person pronouns in the principals’ responses identify both the students and their families as excluded while first person pronouns like “us” and “we” refer to the school team; e.g. the staff. While it is usual to refer to people separate from us in third person, in combination with other language features, it contributes subtly to the effect of setting the family aside. Not only does the stand-down event separate the student from the practices of the school as a community of practice stand-down also separates the parents from the expectations of practices of parents. P1’s use of “the family can face us” is an extreme example. It not only presents the essence of the excluded student in the simple juxtaposition of “the family” and “us”, the use of “face” also suggests conflict and an uneven power relationship where the family is recalcitrant and the power on the part of the board of trustees rests in its right to judge.

For principals an accumulated history of stand-down establishes this marginal group in the school community of practice whose membership is defined by outbound identity trajectories. Principals express disappointment about this minority group for whom stand-down does not resolve behavior. P2’s comment “What the hell are we going to

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\(^9\) Mana (m) Integrity, prestige
do with them” is a poignant indication that he does not see the school as being able to meet their needs. This disappointment is a clear example of the gap that arises where there is a discrepancy between actual and designated identity. Principals are responsible for a safe school environment but they express lack of control over the allocation of resources. There is a perception that the solutions for this minority group exist outside the school and out of their control. P 6, for example, identifies a queue for resources outside the school that comes available through suspension from school;

For us increasingly the reason that we suspend and we don’t suspend very often is in order to get ourselves near the top of the queue for help because in actual fact the trouble we have in trying to get help is we are told...oh no they haven’t been suspended they haven’t been excluded therefore... you are a high decile school (P6).

Principals and senior teachers draw attention to the accumulating relationship between stand-down and suspension and recognise that this works against resolving stand-down once the opportunity of the first stand-down has passed. Participants also acknowledge that the more stand-downs that occur the more the student and their family become separated from the school. Accumulating stand-down events towards suspension, therefore, where external resourcing for students may become available would appear to increase the outbound trajectory of the student through a change in status and therefore work against eventually retaining the student in school.

6.1.2 Senior Teachers: a variety of voices

Legislation and Ministry of Education policy imply that it is the principal who makes the decision to stand the student down but in all but three of the schools in the study it was a member of the senior management team and not the principal who had responsibility to stand students down from school. In most of the schools the principal had oversight of the decision but the decision making process was carried out by a senior management team member sometimes the deputy principal and sometimes that person in charge of the school level where the student who was stood down was enrolled. In these schools the principal of the school signed off on the decision but did
not gather, organise and make the decision about the information that lead to the
decision. The narrative of the stand-down event, therefore, was constructed by
someone other than the principal as narrator. The exception to this rule were some of
the smallest schools in the study where the principal appeared to gather the
information as well as organising and making the decision to stand the student down.
For all of the schools in this study, then, the person who investigates an incident also
makes the recommendation and possibly the decision to stand the student down.
Monk (2005) raises concern about potential for conflict of interest in the multiple roles
principals perform in any exclusion process. In this study the same potential exists
though the roles may be assumed by another member of the senior management team.

It is to be expected that, because the senior teachers were part of the same senior
management teams as the principals who were interviewed, the shared stories of
stand-down expressed by senior teachers would be similar to those expressed by
principals and this was the case. When asked about why they stood students down
from school they replied that “the stand-down is a message” (ST4) and, like the
principals, they identified a group of students who as a consequence of multiple stand-
downs were set on an outbound trajectory. Including the responses of senior teachers,
however, not only confirms that a visible response to certain behaviours the school and
the community consider unacceptable is an essential part of addressing behaviour in
school the responses of senior teachers also provide much more information about the
reasons and rationale behind stand-down. In the section that follows senior teachers
have been asked a question very similar to that asked of principals

What is your philosophy about standing students down from school?

Similar to the principals the first part of the response was selected for analysis to
provide a comparison with the principals’ response. In the section that follows the
senior teachers’ responses have been presented to show the similarities to or
differences from each other’s responses and the responses of principals.
What sets the group of senior teachers apart from the principals is that the majority said that they did not like standing students down and that they did it as rarely as possible. The first thing ST1 said was “I try not to do it actually”, ST5 “I don't like it” and for ST2 it is the “absolute, absolute last resort”. While these statements occupied the initial position in their response most of the senior teachers went on to talk about the group of students, identified by principals as having a history of being stood down from school. This may suggest that the experience of stand-down of this group of senior teachers was dealing with students with multiple stand-downs. Whether the senior teacher chose to talk about students with single or multiple stand-downs their views about and reasons for stand-down varied considerably and added rich data about the reality of stand-down in each of the schools. Most of the senior teachers, like the principals, have many years’ experience in their position. Similar to the principals, therefore, the language use of each senior teacher reveals they assume the narrative stance of truth teller in their explanations about stand-down. This suggests that school generated narratives about students together with the long timescale narratives constructed from their experience of standing other students down, like the principals, tend to dominate decision making in the field of any individual stand-down event.

There was considerable variation in the reasons senior teachers gave for standing students down. Although varied, most of the senior teachers had particular and strategic reasons for standing students down from school. Both ST1 and ST2 saw stand-down as an integral part of a process. ST1 regards stand-down for some students as part of a process that enables students who are mismatched with the school to receive the resources they need to gain entry to a more appropriate form of education.

There are occasions where I use it as part of a process so for some young folk we know [a named local alternative education programme] is the place for them or we know that there might be some other form of education that is the right place for them and to expedite their placement in one of those options. By way of helping them get to where they want to...need to go. (ST1)

ST1 identifies a group of students who need “some other form of education” but placement in those “other” programmes requires the student to meet certain criteria
which, according to ST1, requires being stood down from school. While ST1 places students with multiple stand-downs on an outbound trajectory he acknowledges that students who have multiple stand-downs from school are not having their wants and needs met by the school. ST1’s explanation resonates with one of the common narratives of chapter 5 in that all of the students in the study were working through troubled lives at school. Those students with a long term history of being stood-down from school, students like Elephant and Ben, also had long term problems that made it difficult for them to participate in school; Elephant’s reading ability, for example, was five years below his chronological age and Ben has a number of disabilities that restrict his participation. ST1’s comment connects the mis-alignment of some students with the school programme to an accumulated history of school stand-down.

ST2’s stance, however, is much different to ST1’s. He sees stand-down as just one of a series of options to respond appropriately to an incident.

We have a whole range of other things that we could do but it is really saying is we investigated the incident and as we come to really see what happened we start to discount the lower options... so we look at the incident and we look at all the options available to us before we even look at the end result of the stand down and we say is there within our school control anything that would be most appropriate? (ST2)

Stand-down is a penalty that ST2 regards as the most severe in a hierarchy of related options. This is evident through his statement that they “discount the lower options”. The team, expressed in the use of “we”, investigates the incident to “see” what “really happened”. The use of paralegal language- investigate- refers to another external narrative that enhances both the truth and the power of the team’s position. The use of “see” is a reference to how surveillance makes visible the truth about a person (Danaher et al, 2000) so it can be addressed (Moscovici, 1988). The family’s role in the investigation is unclear but the truth and the outcome belongs to the team e.g. “is there anything within our school control”. ST2’s comment “before we even look at the end result of a stand-down”, however, distances his explanation from narratives of zero
tolerance in that ST2’s decision raises the issue of appropriate rather than standard responses.

Both ST3 and ST5 see the benefit of placing distance between the student and the school after an incident and regard stand-down as an appropriate way to achieve this. ST3 acknowledges not only the importance of friends to students but also the disruption unacceptable behaviour can cause to a classroom of students.

Sometimes it is to give the school a break and the kids in the classroom a break from that student and that student to take stock... and it does dig in... some students they actually hate it. After a week off school no contact with his peer group and it starts to get a bit boring they want to be at school. (ST3)

The comment about giving the school a break echoes the outcomes of chapter 5 in that the stand-down in this context appears to occur within an environment of unresolved conflict for the student. Unlike ST1, however, use of “give the school and the kids in the classroom a break” suggests ST3 regards the unresolved behaviour as recalcitrance. ST3’s use of the demonstrative adjective “that” subtly separates the student from the school and at ST3’s school this separation is, apparently, for a week. This is significant because some schools talked about the benefit of making the stand-down a week so that any subsequent incident would result in a suspension given the requirements of the Education Act (1989). The benefit of this strategy to the schools, rather than using a series of stand-downs to build up to the allowable five days, was firstly to underline the seriousness of the action to the student and secondly enable the school to move through the process to involving the board of trustees more rapidly and thus gain access to resources. The student, according to ST3 is expected to “take stock” but that taking stock in this case is put forward as time away from friends rather than school work. This suggestion has some resonance with the comments made in the previous chapter. George, for example, goes to school to be with his friends and Elephant rehabilitates himself because he wants to be promoted with his peer group and not held back. Using time away from friends as a sanction to improve behaviour is an acknowledgement of the team aspect of school life.
ST5 raises the issue that some incidents in school have the potential to place other students in danger

When there is a case where someone’s safety is at risk ...yes...it needs to happen and more for the students to see that these are serious consequences and sometimes it’s timeout from them for the school...to get away from a volatile situation as well (ST5)

ST5 acknowledges that there are hurt feelings in the stand-down event. The juxtaposition of “timeout from them for the school” and “volatile situation” implies that the stand-down provides a hiatus that has the potential to reduce the volatility of the situation. ST5’s comment is a reminder that those teachers who administer the stand-down environment sometimes have to resolve situations where people have either been hurt or potentially may have been hurt by the actions of a student. P8 refers to an incident where a student “wrecked a class” and P6 to incidents involving drugs. Ben’s reaction to being bullied left one girl’s mouth “all cut and bleeding” and Tui set fire to another student’s dreadlock. Chaplain (2003) found students who witness violent situations in school feel unsafe and expect a reaction from the teacher to re-establish the perception of safety.

All of the senior teachers, however varied their responses and strategic use of the stand-down mechanism, assume the narrative stance of the truth teller. Each senior teacher makes a truth statement about students that can be seen in the use of present tense active voice statements about the motivation behind the behaviour of students who are stood down from school. ST1, for example, states that an alternative education facility is where the students “wants to ...needs to go” and ST3 “they actually hate it”. ST4 makes assumptions about the reaction of both the student and the family to being stood down;

The stand down itself isn’t a particularly punitive action. Really in fact some kids are quite happy and some parents see it as a damn nuisance so that the kid will be quite happy and it will be a waste of time. It is one of the few ways we have of actually sending a message a, to the student and his family or her
family, but more importantly actually to the other kids in the school... we need to be seen to be taking it seriously.

(ST4)

ST4’s comment about stand-down shows how negative and oppositional attributes to the majority group come to be anchored the minority group (Joffe, 2007; Philogène, 2007). To ST4 “some” students are “quite happy” about being stood down and “some parents see it as a damn nuisance”. In addition to the narrative stance of the truth teller ST4 has also separated out a minority group in the same way as P2 from earlier in this section. This minority group is described in oppositional status to the majority of the students –and their families- who see the school as “taking it seriously” when a student is stood down from school. The narrative stance of truth teller, however, has the potential to disregard the views of this minority. One stand-down, for example, did not enable Bob to gain entry to the alternative education programme. Except in situations where the school has a policy to stand-down for five days these misaligned or mismatched students would have to undergo a number of stand-downs as well as at least one suspension to reach the entry point for inclusion in alternative education.

The responses of senior teachers foreground a number of important issues for students in school. Firstly there is the issue of friendships and secondly that the context of the stand-down event contained hurt feelings and potentially danger. Most of the stand-down stories referred to the importance of friendships and problems that arise through students not having friends or through having friends the teacher regards as inappropriate. According to his teacher Elephant, for example, has no friends and Cherish, according to her teacher has inappropriate friends. Both Missy and Mara are bullied by students who used to be their friends and Mr. Smith got stood-down because he came to the aid of his friend. Bob’s behaviour changed when he was moved from a class where he had friends to a class where he did not and Tui was stood down for setting fire to his friend’s dreadlock. The close relationship between membership and participation is an important thesis of this study and the existence of and the relationships between friendship groups appear to be an important membership issue for students in this study. For this study, therefore, peer relationships are an important
factor of membership and participation in the community of practice of being a student at school.

### 6.1.3 Conclusions: Stand-down is the name of the game

For principals and senior teachers, stand-down is an embedded response to certain unacceptable behaviours in school despite both the acknowledged hierarchical relationship between stand-down to suspension and the possibility of poor outcomes for students. To explain their position, principals and senior teachers refer to the narratives of the new right, market-driven philosophies that have dominated education over the last three decades. These narratives appear to demand that principals take a hard line on behaviour. Principals and senior teachers explain how they are taking an uncompromising stance by linking both their language to hegemonic expressions of zero tolerance and their authority to pressure from the perceived powerbrokers of the education marketplace. The visibility of this uncompromising stance appears important. Pressure to stand-down comes from three identified client groups; parents and staff, who require a safe environment for those students who want to learn and the community where future prospective clients reside.

Instances of unacceptable behaviour are visible to the school's client groups. The principals and senior teachers in this study dis-identify from the responsibility for students learning about behaviour because they regard it as the responsibility of the home. The landscape of practices set out in table two (p. 17) also designates this responsibility to the home. The first stand-down provides the home with the opportunity to get it right and return their child to school exhibiting correct behaviour and if this does not happen and the child continues to misbehave it is considered a failing of the home. The first instance of unacceptable behaviour, therefore, provides an opportunity; any subsequent instance attaches negative social capital to students and families. Students on an outbound trajectory are afforded opposition status to the rest of the school; they are defined by their unacceptable behaviour and what sets them apart is not only their behaviour but also their (and their families') attitude to that behaviour. Their homes are described as negligent, unresponsive and uncaring. These students and their families are presented as the undesirable alternative in
dichotomous statements and the consequences of their unacceptable behaviour framed in negative conditional structures.

Most of the principals and senior teachers regard stand-down as a useful tool for managing behaviour in school for a variety of different reasons and one that the school has control over. Stand-down is also seen as part of two processes. Firstly it exists at the high end of options available to senior teachers and principals to manage behaviour. This is a range of options within the control of school management that operate without recourse to outside agencies like the Ministry of Education or the board of trustees. Stand-down also exists as the lower end of the school exclusion process. Principals and senior teachers talked most about and showed most concern for the minority group of students for whom stand-down does not appear effective. Many of these teachers expressed disappointment that they did not have effective tools to manage the behaviour of this group. In this way the narratives of stand-down for some students are exclusionary and locate the students they stand-down as marginal and thus on an outbound trajectory (Wenger, 1998).

There is some indication that some participants acknowledge the practice of using multiple stand-downs to progress towards the allocation of resources. New right education policy tends to allocate resourcing at the high end of need directed to individuals with established and recorded conditions. In the exclusion process funding only comes available after suspensions or exclusion. The senior teachers who talked about this practice saw it as a useful tool to help students who were mismatched with school but principals felt that even though the entry point for allocation has been achieved there is no certainty resources will be available. Balanced against schools being required to put students and their families through multiple stand-downs and suspensions to achieve resources is the possibility, raised in Chapter 5, that accumulated histories of stand-down result in uncompromising positions being taken by both the family and the school.

The second part of this chapter investigates the relationship between home and school following stand-down. During the interviews questions focused on perceptions of
home and school from school and home. Essentially in the interviews the individual communities of practice that make up the school as a landscape of practice were given the opportunity to comment on each other’s practices following a specific stand-down event. School personnel expressed their assumptions and expectations of home and caregivers expressed their opinions and expectations of school personnel. There were many missed understandings that rationalized in gaps in understanding and consequently expressions of disappointment. The outcomes of these discussions showed that however ‘true’ these perceptions, assumptions and expectations are they have the potential to affect the field of play of current and future stand-down events.

These discussions were important to the study because the number of times the student had been stood down appeared to be significant in defining their membership of included or derogated groups within the school community and in this study eight out of the ten students interviewed had an accumulated history of stand-down from school. The second part to this chapter foregrounds those discussions about school from the point of home and home from the point of view of school. In the first section parents and students give their perspectives on how being stood down from school affected their perceptions of their status in and relationship with the school community. In the second part of the section school personnel comment on their perception of the relationship between home and school for students who have been stood down from school.

6.2 The home/school relationship: a sense of separation

In the first half of this chapter principals and senior teachers identified the importance of the home in inculcating and ensuring acceptable behaviour in young people. Sending the student home on stand-down was an opportunity for the home to readjust their child’s behaviour to bring it into line with the expectations of the school. Where the child returns to school and reoffends both the home and the student appear to be regarded as recalcitrant. The field of the stand-down event brings together the four
main participant groups interviewed for this study: principals, senior teachers, parents and students. This second half of the chapter examines the potential stand-off between home and school that may occur at stand-down. Both the home and the school were asked questions about the home/school relationship and what was and was not a helpful contribution from the other side. The comments that follow are presented as a series of common observations by each participant group of the other.

6.2.1 Tales of disappointment: Parents and students talk about their relationship with the school after stand-down.

You talk about people not being at school and then stand people down from school …it isn’t the answer because then they are out for two or three days and that almost starts the cycle off too. (Mark’s Mother)

Responses from parents and students revealed that they recognised being stood down from school set them apart from other members of the school community. Bourdieu’s (2000, 1986) theories about habitus and field would suggest that perceptions of being separate contribute to negative social capital and have the potential to affect current and future stand-down events. These notions of separation took a number of different forms and as a consequence helped define the boundaries of a perceived excluded group within the school community. The students talked about changed relationships with teachers on their return to school and about being separated from other students through withdrawal. Some parents talked about their children being singled out and the denial of resources for their troubled children. This section is set out as a series of observations by both students and parents. These observations reveal their sense of separation from the school following stand-down. While all parents and most students admitted it was “probably fair” (Tui’s Father) that their child was stood down from school they also felt that being stood down did not contribute positively to resolving what was happening at school for their child. The parents and students talk about trying to negotiate with the school after their child was stood down. Most of the parents recognised the importance of communicating with the school in a way that
would re-include their child but many found this communication confusing, upsetting and difficult.

**The stand-down means you are treated differently to other students**

The parents expressed this separation by connecting past histories and their expectations of their child’s current and future treatment by the school. In some cases these narratives came from the parent’s perception of past family histories with the school. Mara’s Mother, for example, refers to this change in status when she was asked about the family history of stand-down; in her response she referred to the way her niece was regarded after she returned to school from being stood down;

She is getting a rep. I know what goes on in the staffroom and she hasn’t lost that rep being allowed back in the school… fresh start…bullshit.

Mara’s Mother’s proactive interventions, described later in chapter seven, have a lot to do with her understanding of the impact of the “rep” [reputation for bad behaviour] for her niece at the school. She does not want the same to happen to Mara. Mark’s Mother, too, commented on how family history might affect the treatment her son might get from the school (B is an older brother);

The [Family] name keeps coming up when we have meetings now for Mark... they will bring up [B]’s name and I don’t think that’s particularly fair we were talking about Mark and they say this is a similar situation to [B] and probably I would imagine Mark was on the back foot right from the start.

While both of these parent’s perceive their children may be treated differently to other children after they have been stood down they and other parents assume that being stood-down does not mean a fresh start. They assume that the school’s perception of the child’s social capital acquired through unacceptable behaviour will affect their child’s status as a school member, how future incidents of unacceptable behavior are addressed and even their access to school resources. Essentially parents felt that “teachers don’t forget” (Mara’s Mother) and that being stood down as well as any other past history with the school has the potential to carry forward and affect their child’s
status and treatment in the future. Missy’s Mother, for example told a story about a teacher at Missy’s school after she was sent home from school camp for having alcohol in her bag.

MyM: A certain PE teacher never forgets. Doesn’t let her forget what she’s done and especially when it comes to sporting events …he has said…and I quote from Missy… I don’t think I should let you go after what you’ve done...

I: She is a high achiever in sport?

MyM: She is. She has not gone to any sporting event at school. She has not done any.

I: What about outside of school?

MyM: No. Not even netball.

Missy’s mother perceives that the behaviour of the teacher has had an impact on Missy’s life both inside and outside school. Elephant’s mother felt that her child’s changed status affects his access to those resources essential to resolving those difficulties she perceives contributes to her child’s changed status in the school.

And I said could you do some funding for it and they basically told me their funding has run out now…I thought that’s convenient…run out for my son yet you have managed to help everybody else. (Elephant’s mother)

Elephant’s mother’s view that Elephant will be denied essential resources as a consequence of his status at the school echoes similar views expressed by Jovchelovitch’s (1996) research that suggested derogated groups were perceived as being unworthy of resources. These expectations of uneven treatment whether or not they are the reality for other participants in the field are real for Elephant’s mother and have the potential to contribute to future social spaces where the school and the family come into contact.
Most parents saw the “rep” their child gained from being stood down as affecting them in future incidents of perceived unacceptable behaviour. Parents felt that their children might be dealt with more harshly because of the stand-down. Ben’s mother for example said that; “If Ben had done what the boys had done to him he would have got stood down.” Missy’s mother said that

If it was Missy doing the bullying she would have got stood down just like that no questions asked. Basically because the parents of the three who are doing the bullying are in the elite.

Missy’s mother suggests that Missy is considered lower in status than other students and as a consequence is treated differently. She appears to imply, too, that children she considers high status are allowed to bully other children like her daughter. At the six month interview when asked if Cherish had been stood down again, Cherish’s mother also talked about an incident where Cherish was stood down for being in a group with other students who had cigarettes and a lighter.

‘That was why she got stood down but there were other kids there...one was her cousin with a lighter and cigarettes and they were fine they didn’t get stood down.

All three parents have perceived a difference in the way their child has been treated by the school since they were stood down.

It is the student’s responsibility to win back their position of trust

The students, too, comment about a feeling of separation and being treated differently following being stood down from school. Most of their responses relate to being regarded by teachers as bad because of their behaviour. Some of them perceived this as a temporary change in status while others felt the separation was ongoing and would affect the way they were treated by the school on an ongoing basis. Cherish, for example, saw her actions as a betrayal of the trust the school had in her, which
expresses a perception of change of status (Monk, 2005). She felt it was her responsibility to earn that trust back.

But the teachers treat you differently like they don’t trust you as much so you can earn their trust back.

In the same way George said that he had let his teachers down by his behaviour;

I shouldn’t have done that…I let Mr. H and Mr. O. down. They were so gutted.

Missy and Mara also talked about a perceived emotional response from teachers about their behaviour. According to Missy the teachers are angry with her;

When I went back to school the teachers were quite mad at me and they would treat me differently. They would snap at me and say I had done a bad thing [...] it was mostly just the teachers that were quite bad mannered.

Mara also thought the teachers had changed their opinion of her;

A few of them treated me like I was different...like I was always aggressive.

Mara, particularly commented that she “didn’t like it” because some of her teachers treated her “like I was a bad girl”.

By the six month interview these comments had almost disappeared from the responses; these impressions of a gap populated by anger and disappointment for most students appeared to be short lived. Some students, however, did convey a sense of long term separation and different treatment at the first interview. Bob and Elephant felt that they were treated unfairly because of their behaviour. Bob thought that he was treated more harshly than other students and Elephant that he was not believed by his teacher. Bob’s school had a withdrawal facility called “in house” where students were held separate from other students for from two hours to a number of days. Tui’s father
refers to it as “the wee cell room”. Bob talked about misbehaving then being placed “in house”;

This term I have only been in trouble twice and in house twice...It has been one of my best terms this year but if I do something wrong they just punish me real bad...normally if it was any other student if they got referred they just get to sit there for that period and then go back to class but if I do I am pretty much in there.

For Bob the expectation of separation appears much more than that of Cherish’s, Mara’s and Missy’s short lived recognition of negative social capital and subsequent readjustment. Bob’s recognition and expression of social capital project into his future expectations of treatment and seem to redefine his membership of the school as a bad boy. Bob’s perception of separation is expressed in the use of third person “they” and he measures his “best term” by being in not so much trouble. By his use of language, therefore, Bob appears more excluded than the three girls. Elephant also talks about being considered “bad” by his teacher and, as a consequence of this, according to Elephant, she disregards his side of the story and does not care about him.

No...my teacher doesn’t really care she goes on...I am always bad apparently to her and she doesn’t believe my side. She only believes the good people but then they beat me up and then I can’t say what they did.

Both of these boys construct themselves as the social Other in the school; students who are set aside and whose needs to be safe and included, according to them, are disregarded. These boys articulate accumulated negative social capital when they talk about their relationship with the school and expect this accrual to have potential to affect future social spaces where these relationships are relevant (Bourdieu, 1986, 2000; Jovchelovitch, 1996). Mark’s accumulated negative history, however, like his mother’s has, as its background story, the exclusion of his older brother. He believes this has affected the social capital he and his younger brother will have with the school so, like Bob, has projected these expectations of separation into the future.
You just get judged a bit at school and it is not fair [...] another [Mark’s surname] boy...I don’t like them saying that so I don’t like them and they don’t like me. If they say something nice about him it’s different…but they don’t really make it a nice thing to say when they do say something.

Mark’s comment shows that his separation is rationalised by an accumulated family history of relationships with the school. Further evidence of this is Mark’s parents’ decision to send their youngest son who is still at primary school “he’s a bit later down the track”, to boarding school. Whether or not the school agrees with this history it has the potential both to sidestep Mark’s taking responsibility for his behaviour and to affect future relationships between Mark’s family and the school.

**Stand-down is a confusing waste of time**

Many of the parents neither understood nor agreed with some of the communications they had with the school over their child’s behaviour. Responses from parents indicated they found communication with the school confusing, puzzling and sometimes amusing. While most of the parents in this study felt that standing their child down from school for what happened was fair most also found the stand-down itself a waste of time; that it did not help resolve the difficulties their child was having at school. Some of the parents saw standing their child down as an easy option for the school;

> I believe the teachers have a job and that is what they are paid for and I think it is too easy for them to boot kids out. (Mara’s Mother)

While schools know the rules of the game the confusion felt by parents in this study centred on structures like the stand-down process, contracts, alternative education programmes and issues like what the school expected of parents at stand-down. The misunderstandings and missed communications spanned the breadth of the stand-down event from the decision to stand down, collecting your child from school, the expectations placed on parents by schools at and following stand-down and the return to school.
Some of the parents found the reasoning behind the decision to stand their child down from school puzzling. According to Ben’s Mother, for example, Ben was stood down for swearing at a teacher aide after Ben had been pushed over by a group of students and left on the ground. Ben’s Mother understood that the reason given for Ben’s stand-down was that the incident made both Ben and the teacher aide unsafe.

With this stand down it was for Ben’s safety and the school’s safety but I honestly don’t see how the swearing incident …even though it was wrong…how unsafe a teacher aide would feel when Ben was the one feeling unsafe.

Standing the student down appears to be a common response to swearing at staff both for this study and in New Zealand schools in general (see MOE, 2009); physical assault on students, however, in Ministry of Education statistics, generates twice the percentage of stand-downs than verbal assault on staff (See MOE, 2009). Ben’s Mother was confused that Ben was assaulted but that the incident did not result in a response from the school that might have made him safe.

Some of the parents found supervising their child while on stand-down difficult. Bob’s and Mark’s parents were all working and did not want to leave them at home on their own during the day. Mark’s mother felt that he would “brood if he was left on his own all day” and Bob’s mother said “I said to the teachers it’s not working it’s punishment for me. “ George’s mother found that she could not keep George at home while he was stood down. When she was asked what George did during the day when he was stood down she said he was;

GM: An absolute pain in my behind…stayed at home did whatever he liked. I set chores for him like do the dishes, tidy up your room…he’d be gone…do none of it…He just did his normal
I: Did you talk to him?
GM: Oh yes
I: get anywhere?
GM: Oh no
All of the parents in the study made provision for their children when they were stood down but not all students paid attention and did as they were told. Becroft (2007) expresses concern about the risk to young people who are either not at school or fully supervised during the school day and stand-down provides an opportunity for students who are already in trouble to be unsupervised for a significant part of the day. Some of the parents were working and could not take time off so took the child to work with them; Bob at least was paid each time he was stood-down. The expectations teachers have of parents during stand-down is examined in the next section but the reality for this group of students was that stand-down was time off rather than timeout and in at least one case a day’s paid work.

Some of the advice provided to parents was regarded as unhelpful. Elephant’s mother provided a story about how the school perceived her as a Mother unable to manage her children;

I was supposed to teach him or make him learn because she knew what was best because she’s got three teenage daughters. I also have daughters and that was most frustrating because I also have teenage daughters and they have no learning difficulties. They have never been stood down they have perfect behaviour.

She sees it as the school’s responsibility to resolve the difficulties Elephant has at school that she does not have at home.

If he was given special classes for reading and if the teachers would just lay back on being quick to judge him for the things he is doing because if he thinks he is being attacked all the time he will not improve.

On return to school from stand-down some students spent time in school withdrawal facilities, on contracts and working with school counselors. The parents interviewed came up against these structures designed to manage and change their child’s behaviour and found them puzzling. The story told by Cherish’s mother was a good example of this. After a number of stand-downs and at her new school Cherish was
placed in a special class separate from other students because she “can’t manage”. The purpose of the class was to “prepare them for next year”. Cherish’s mother found the course confusing;

I: What is this class?
CM6 mnths: To be honest buggered if I know. I don’t even know what they do... they have breaks whenever they want... they can up and make a hot drink when they want...they can eat when they want...this Thursday they are going to either the beach or (pool) which is nice. Friday they get the day off. They are not allowed at assembly... they don’t get any notices...they are trying to prepare them for next year so they can handle different teachers every class because that is what these children can’t manage ...how does this work?

Cherish’s mother sees the course that Cherish has been placed in as very different from what she would expect of normal class behaviour in a mainstream class and cannot see how this will work to enable Cherish to be able to manage different teachers the next year.

Most of the parents in the study expressed difficulties with school systems and documents and in the next chapter some of the parents reveal how they engaged with the confusion of working with the school to their children’s benefit. The difficulties people have both with working with a system with which they are not familiar and with acknowledging the problems others have with a system that is familiar to them is a recurring theme in the literature (Bourdieu, 1977, 2000; Chaplain, 2003; Danaher et al; 2000; Hayden, 1993, 2007; Munn and Cullen, 2000). The school’s lack of response in these situations might be more about the amount of time deans have available to manage the reintegration of students following stand-down but an appreciation of the difficulties some parents might have with school constructed documents may be one way to ease the tension of an embarrassing and difficult time for parents.
Discussion

The stand-down process brings a small number of families into contact with an area of the school system that remains hidden for most families. The parents referred to narratives of separation and positioned themselves as powerless, lacking agency and confused. The stand-down process made them feel that their children would be treated differently to other children which emphasized their perception of marginalisation. Similarly the students also felt separate and obliged to win back the trust they had lost by being stood-down. This difference, in subtle ways, restricted their notions of permission to participate in the school as a community of practice. Parents for their children as students, therefore, recognised a change in membership status following stand-down (Monk, 2005). This change in status also manifested as a perceived denial of resources and access to programmes.

For some, by the end of six months, these feelings of separation had disappeared. For those students and families, however, who still expressed the sense of separation after six months there appeared to have been a change in the way they characterised themselves at school. Most of these students had long histories of accumulated stand-down at school. The period immediately following stand-down appeared to be a time where students and their families work through and try to resolve the problems raised by being stood-down from school. Students with fewer stand-downs from school appeared to be more likely to resolve their difficulties more rapidly. It was shown in chapter 5 that accumulated histories of stand-down take longer to resolve; some of the students with the longest histories of stand-down, with a bit of help, managed to reintegrate to school though the six month period was insufficient.

The parents found school discipline systems, interventions and communications difficult to understand; their expressions of missed understandings and misunderstandings often took the form of disappointment with the school for not meeting their expectations. These school ways of doing things are in themselves expressions of cultural capital and the school’s familiarity with them might make it hard to understand why others might find them difficult to follow. The next chapter
shows that those parents who engaged with the process appeared to be able to make a significant difference to the outcomes of their child’s stand-down from school. This study provided many examples of parents trying to cope with all stages of the process; many found it hard to meet the expectations placed on them following their child’s stand-down. Almost all of the parents had work or other commitments during the school day of some kind.

While all parents made provision for their children to be supervised safely during the time they were stood-down, gradual but significant changes in the nature of employment and the increasing perceived risks for unsupervised children may see the mechanism of stand-down becoming non-viable for parents. Some parents found the messages they received from the school confusing, particularly those who were expected to resolve problems they perceived as school related. Few parents said they had any problem with their child at home and expected the school to resolve issues that arose at school. Many of the parents saw these issues involved school matters e.g. relating to disabilities, reading difficulties, bullying etc. The earlier part of this chapter reveals that principals and senior teachers saw the difficulties as the child’s refusal to behave properly and therefore the responsibility of the home. This gap in expectation is one of the significant problems in need of resolution if families and schools are going to be able to work together to keep kids in school.

Summarising the home view of the stand-down process at school as a series of common impressions enables the same approach to be taken with the school view of home. In the next section principals and senior teachers talk about how they relate to the homes of students who are stood-down from school. The analysis is again presented as a summary of common impressions, this time of the home.
6.2.2 Degrees of separation: Principals and senior teachers talk about the relationship between school and home

In this section principal and senior teacher responses to questions about the home/school relationship define and illustrate the stance the schools in the study took on communication between home and school within the field of the stand-down event. Because these principals and senior teachers managed the schools of the students in the study these impressions also provide the setting against which the students were stood-down. In the first part of this chapter most principals and senior teachers commented on the importance of the input of the family in resolving those difficulties that resulted in the student being stood down from school. For the most part, however, where the problems remained unresolved and an accumulated history of stand-down eventuated school personnel seemed to express disappointment with the response of the home to their child’s behaviour. Research by Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggests that this disappointment may come from a gap between the school’s expectation of the home’s response and what the school perceives to be the case. This inadequate or inappropriate response seemed to the schools to become the cause rather than a consequence of unresolved behaviour difficulties. Unacceptable behaviour in the student, therefore, in the first part of the chapter seems to have become anchored to a social representation of inadequacy in the home. The parents and students, however, whose responses were reported in both chapter five and the previous section of this chapter saw their confusion, disappointment and sense of separation coming as a result of poor communication with and unrealised expectations of the school.

This section returns to two themes already identified earlier in the analysis: firstly that there is a small group of students within the school that are separated by their unresolved, unacceptable behaviour and secondly that this lack of resolution comes as a consequence of recalcitrance. While the responses of the first part of this chapter set up the dichotomous nature of the alternative Other group “some”, what is striking about the views expressed in this section are the characteristics attributed to the
homes and families of students who are stood-down from school. Through the use of
the language structures already identified in this analysis the principals and senior
teachers describe and define the characteristics of a group of parents, like their
children, set aside as “not like us” (Lahlou, 1996). Although invisible to individual
stand-down events these notions of negative social capital have the potential to form
part of the background stories that contribute to decision making (Bourdieu, 1986;
Markova, 1996). Those characteristics of the parents and homes of alternative other
students are set out below as a series of observations.

**Stand-down makes parents aware of the seriousness of their child’s
unacceptable behaviour**

Up until then I don’t think families treat it very seriously (P7).

The keyword in this observation is seriousness. For many of the principals and senior
teachers standing the student down from school brought the seriousness of the child’s
behaviour to the notice of the home. For most students the home acts to remedy their
child’s behaviour but for some students parents are either unwilling or unable to
address their child’s behaviour to the satisfaction of the school. There is an
observation, therefore, of a difference in expectation of behaviour between home and
school for students in the alternative Other group. This might suggest that principals
and senior teachers believe poorly behaved students come from homes where there is
poor behaviour. For Principal 7, for example, standing a student down caused the
family to take notice of their child’s behaviour; when asked about why he stood
students down he said,

Often to engage families in the process ...often up until then I might have
talked to families but I don’t think families treat it very seriously but certainly
having to have the child at home and then come back and talk ...it sets the
scene going forward from that.
P 7’s repetition of the word “often” suggests patterns that P 7 had noticed in making contact with home. P 7 had noticed that stand down brought about a change in the relationship between the home and the school. This change in relationship appears to be that, while there might have been contact with the family prior to the stand down, it was the action of standing the student down that brought the seriousness of the child’s behaviour to the family’s attention. Further to that it was “having to have the child at home and then come back and talk” -to the principal- that “sets the scene going forward”. By saying this P 7 revealed that it was these two conditions that caused families to treat behaviour seriously in the future; i.e. both not wanting to have their child at home and having to come into school to discuss their child’s behaviour. There was an acknowledgement, then, from P.7 not only of the essential input of the family in resolving inappropriate school behaviour but also that stand down both brought about agreement about the level of seriousness of that behaviour and put pressure on parents to manage their child’s behaviour.

P 6, like P 7, also acknowledges the value of stand down as a means to get the attention of the family;

Sometimes the other people in the young person’s life don’t realise how badly things are going and by standing down or suspending it provides opportunities for everybody to get together, to send up a red flag and as a result of that we get the attention of those people. (P6)

P 6 accepts the right to make judgments on a student’s behaviour and indicates that the family might not be aware of that student’s behaviour until they were stood down or suspended from school. This suggests that the school assumes it knows more than the family when it comes to the behaviour of the student. P 6 describes the stand down as “providing (sic) opportunities for everybody to get together” but the use of the image “send up a red flag” suggests a context of conflict and unequal power relationships especially when the red flag is associated with the third person phrase “those people”.

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This difference in the degree to which the school and the home understand the seriousness of the student’s behaviour was further developed by P4; he alludes to different levels of acceptance of behaviour at home and then suggests that the student’s waywardness is a normal feature at home.

I think what sometimes happens is that things move so fast we sometimes leave out the parents a little bit so they get a bit surprised by the whole lot but my experience has been that the parents are struggling just as much at home with the likes of [name]. (P4)

By suggesting that the parents were also “struggling just a much” with the student while also saying that the stand down came as a surprise, P 4 recognises different standards of acceptance of behaviour between home and school and that the strong response from the school would not result in the same level of response at home for the same behaviour. The use of the phrase, “in my experience” again suggests P 4’s assumed position of truth teller in that by calling on experience P 4 was suggesting, like P 7, that there was a noticeable pattern to the behaviour of students like ‘[name]’ and that the unacceptable behaviour at school was an overflow of what was happening at home.

There is an implied criticism of some parents’ management of their child’s behaviour at home in each of these principals’ responses. ST1, however, provides an example of the difference in response of parents who, once made aware of their child’s behaviour, react in the way the school expects. ST1 was one of the few senior teachers and principals who talked in detail about “good” students who were stood down from school once. Most other senior teachers and principals used students who had only one stand-down as a barely visible counterpoint to the alternative other group.

Other times that I stand down especially a number of first time offenders or good kids who make a really, really silly choice; if you stand them down it has a huge effect on the family. (ST1)
ST 1 comments on the effectiveness of stand down for “good kids” and relates this to the “huge effect” standing a student down can have on the family. Essentially ST 1 says that when “good kids” are stood down from school interventions by good families place sanctions on the child. ST 1’s linking of “first time offenders” to “good kids” suggests that in those cases perhaps the motive for the behaviour that resulted in stand down might be different to other (bad) “kids”. ST 1 uses soft and inclusive language when referring to the behaviour that lead to the stand down; first time offenders and good kids, apparently, make a “really, really, silly choice.” The use of a repeated intensifier “really, really” reduces the significance of the behaviour and the use of “silly choice” is a soft and inclusive way to refer to that behaviour. The use of the language of the law and crime when referring to the student e.g. “first time offender”, however, suggests that there is a difference between those students who are stood down once and other students who are stood down more than once.

Across the study it is the number of times that the student is stood down that delineates and identifies membership of this alternate other group. ST 1 also describes the circumstances of a positive outcome from a first stand down.

You invite them up for the post stand down meeting and mum and dad and aunties and uncles come in... if it is a Maori or a PI family all the extended family come in and you hold it in the planning room so we can get 14 chairs around and it is a big deal and they are the most meaningful changes by a long shot. (ST1)

In this response ST 1 indicated that “meaningful changes” came about when the whole family regarded stand down as “a big deal”. The language of this response provides a positive setting for ST1’s views on families when their child is stood down from school. The use of the word “invite” has positive connotations of being together and casual terms for family e.g. “mum and dad and aunties and uncles” continue this informality. The long sentence tacked together by conjunctions like ‘and’ rises to a climax; “the most meaningful changes by a long shot”. In this case the use of a conditional structure was part of the progression towards a positive climax and helped set the conditions for a positive outcome in this case for Maori and Pasifika students. The use of personal
language is also inclusive e.g. “you hold it” and “we can get” and gave an impression of the school and family working together. What is most important is that ST1’s response reveals the stark difference between the language used at first stand-down and that used as stand-down events accumulate.

This section suggests that while there may be different expectations of behaviour at home and at school the action of standing the student down provides the home with the opportunity to bring the child’s behaviour at school into line with the expectations of the school. Principals and senior teachers appear to see this realignment of expectation as the responsibility of the home; there is an expectation that the first stand-down provides an opportunity for this realignment to occur and when this fails to happen the inadequacy of the home becomes visible.

The parents’ closeness to the issue reduces their detachment and therefore their ability to think clearly
Some principals observed that their distance from the issue enabled them to view the event more dispassionately than the child’s parents. This observation establishes the principals as, firstly judge (Black, 1999; Monk, 2005) and secondly truth teller (Peters, 2003) in the field of the stand-down event. In addition, Bourdieu’s (1993) proposal that claiming detachment within the field confers symbolic capital and therefore symbolic power further legitimises the position principals and senior teachers take on their right to decide. The principals’ stated right to know the truth of a situation both because of their knowledge of the students and because of the position of power gained by knowing many children was claimed by both P 6 and P 3. According to P6;

I am sure parents do feel that their own children are sometimes unfairly treated. Parents love their children and are advocates for them and don’t always realise their children can be ...sometimes they have their eyes blinded. (P6)

P6’s opening statement contains two linguistic hedges “I am sure” and “sometimes”. By using hedges P 6 appears to be able to create distance from the assertion, “parents do feel their own children are sometimes unfairly treated.” Essentially while P 6
acknowledged that parents felt this way the addition of the extra words enabled P 6 to put space between the view of the parents and the view of the school. In the next sentence P 6 used two affirmative statements followed by a negative statement. In this case love and advocacy were given as reasons for the parent not realising that the unfairness stated in the previous sentence was actually fair. P 6 concluded with a clichéd statement “they have their eyes blinded”. While “love” and “advocacy” could be seen as words with positive connotation the use of that final negative assertion negates, also, their validity. In this statement the suggestion was made that their love for their child caused the parent not to be able to see what was really happening, i.e. the Truth of both the event and the way the school dealt with the event. Conversely, therefore there was the impression that being detached and unemotional enabled the Truth to become visible.

P 3’s assessment of the situation was similar except for the use of personal pronouns which appeared to include P 3 with the parents.

Most of us as parents know that our child can do wrong so if my children do wrong I am sure that other parents’ children also do wrong and we have to accept that. (P3)

The use of personal language includes “most” parents in the assertion that children “can do wrong”. This might suggest that another group of parents exists that do not know that their “child can do wrong” which has echoes back to P6’s comment. The next part of the sentence contains a conditional structure that by reiterating the original affirmative statement appears to give assertion and legitimacy to the main assertion “I am sure that other parents’ children also do wrong.” Unlike P 6, however, P3 is more direct in establishing himself as truth teller in that P 3’s use of “I am sure” to head the main clause seems to emphasise P 3’s position of being right. That assertion was followed up with: “We have to accept that” which appeared to further strengthen P 3’s position as the truth teller. The strength of P 3’s argument, however, rests on a statement that includes an auxiliary verb “can” which suggests the possible rather than the actual. Effectively use of the words “most” and “can” seem to separate rather than
include P 3 in the group of parents whose children “do wrong” despite the inclusive nature of the statement. The overall effect of this response further defines an excluded group of children within the school system who are different from other students because their parents do not know that what their children are doing is wrong. The responses of P6 and P3 set up subtle dichotomies that define the boundaries of the separation between those children and their families who have an accumulated history of being stood down and the rest of the school community. These dichotomies are couched in terms of seeing and not seeing, knowing and not knowing and rationality and irrationality.

That principals and senior teachers can identify common characteristics in families where there is an accumulated history of stand-down
The principals and senior teachers interviewed for this section constructed a picture of the homes of students who have an accumulated history of stand-down. The characteristics of that image were negative and presented as counter to the school’s desired image of students’ homes. In this construction the homes and families of students who were stood down were frequently compared with those of “good families”. According to P3 good students from good families were unlikely to be stood down from school.

Unless they are generally a good student and the thought of being in a good family who the thought of being stood down is such a big thing but specifically we don’t stand down those sorts of students. One because they don’t seem to get into trouble or because they tend not to get themselves into those sorts of situations. (P3)

While not elaborating on what either a “good” student or a “good” family was, P 3 indicates that good students from good families did not tend to get themselves into “those sorts of situations” that result in being stood down. By saying “those sorts of situations” P 3 alludes to a set of behaviours while at the same time attaching those behaviours to a group of students; essentially those who were not from good homes.
addition P 3 revealed that “good families” thought being stood down was a “big thing” and that was why their children did not get stood down. In this response P 3 introduced the idea of the cautionary effect of stand down suggesting that all students were potential offenders but might be constrained by the example presented by the discipline of others; i.e. the zero tolerance effect. P 3, however, appeared to associate this cautionary effect with children from “good” families in that those students appear to take heed of the possible consequences of “those sorts of behaviours”; essentially, therefore more a statement of cohesion (Moscovici, 1993) than zero tolerance.

P 3 also made some assumptions about the parents’ school experience and what he would consider their appropriate response to stand down. P 3 assumed that the parents of students stood down had “often” done “the same things at school”.

As for the parents and families too, though, parents really want their youngsters to do well at school. They probably did the same things when they were at school that is often the case. They probably weren’t the best students and they don’t want their youngsters to go down the same road. (P3)

According to P 3 the parents of students who are stood-down had behaved in a similar way to their children. Use of the word “best” again separates the families of students who have been stood down from desirable students. The phrase “that is often the case” shows P 3 using experience as an authority for making decisions about students. The use of statements using negative verbs “probably weren’t” and “don’t want” exist in counterpoint with similar constructions using positive verbs “really want” and “probably did” which has the effect of creating a negative mood to the sentence by way of an anticlimax. In this way P3 presents the parents of students stood down as well-meaning but hopeless and inadequate.
P 8 referred to the inadequacy of the home’s response to stand-down;

   It might make the parents angry but in the end they just sit around at home for three days and probably don’t do anything about it. Probably don’t get any consequences from their parents. (P8)

In this response P 8 suggests that while the parents were angry about the stand down that anger was not effective in changing the student’s behaviour at school. P8 is critical of parents who, when their child is stood down, allow them to “sit around at home for three days”. ST 2 makes a similar reference to the inadequacy of the parents’ response to stand-down by saying that he gives parents advice as to what students should be doing when they were stood down.

   I talk to the parents about the things they should be doing...what their kids should be doing when they are on a stand down so they are not lying in bed and playing on the play station... so I talk to the parents...you need to make this something that they need to remember. (ST2)

ST 2 assumed that, if the parents did not respond to the stand down at home their child would “lie (sic) on their bed and play on the play station.” Given that the principals and senior teachers are unlikely to have first-hand knowledge of what happens at home this view of how parents respond to stand-down is a construction only but one which was expressed frequently across this study. As Moscovici (1988, 2000) and Markova (1996) suggest these common sense views of what happens circulate in society and become invisible but potent contributors to fields of play in this case the mores of the stand-down event.

In addition to being hopeless and inadequate P1, P3 and ST3 attribute particular characteristics to the families of students who have an accumulation of stand-downs from school. These characteristics define these families as possibly from lower socio-economic backgrounds who do not look after their children, whose home are
dysfunctional and where swearing is common. P 1, for example, linked families who are ashamed of their children’s behaviour to their social class.

P1: Always depends on the socio economics status doesn't it? For some families huge shame and it's a real wow for other families it...(yawn) oh yeah well...do you expect me to look after them?
I: Is it the high socio economic families who are ashamed?
P1: Usually.

The comparison contained in the second sentence, set up by the two words “some” and “others” and followed up with the yawn, suggests that “real wow” was intended sarcastically. Those families who were ashamed were “usually” high socio economic. These parents were compared with those who do not care about “(yawn) oh yeah well” and perhaps do not look after their children “do you expect me to look after them?”

Both P 3 and P 1 also suggest that the students who were stood down might use a different and inappropriate level of language at home. Both of these principals were talking in the context of students in the study who were stood down for swearing at teachers. P3 said that;

I am not politically correct in those meetings, swear words will come out and all the rest of it so I will engage in a way that is communicating effectively with who the people are... so stand down gave the opportunity to do that. (P3)

P 3 says he adjusts the language used in meetings with parents around stand down and uses “swear words”. According to P 3 this was “communicating effectively” with “who the people are”. The suggestion is, therefore, that using swear words is an effective way to communicate with the student’s home. The fact that P 3 uses swear words to “engage” with families suggests a difference between the language used at school and the language used at home and that the language used at home was inappropriate “I am not politically correct”. P 1 also implied that language used at home might be inappropriate when she made the comment “where are children going to learn
registers of language if they don’t learn it here?” This suggests not only that the home did not teach the student appropriate registers of language but also an acknowledgement of a separation between the home and the school defined by linguistic habitus (Zevenbergen, 2000).

Finally, ST 3 made assumptions about the homes of ‘kids’ who have had several stand downs and described those homes in deficit terms.

Yes it’s the circumstances...usually the kids that have several they come from broken homes dysfunctional homes and there are lots of social issues.

ST 3 used the cliché “broken homes”, the negative prefix “dys” and the vague, clichéd expression “social issues” to describe the circumstances of students who have had several stand downs. This was similar to a response by ST 1 where the distinction was made between “first time offenders” and those parents who “lacked (sic)” a view of school and education. Both the cliché “broken homes” and the term “dysfunctional homes” juxtapose opposites in an emotive relationship. “Home” is a word that carries with it an intrinsic understanding of what home is and, although not everybody has the same understanding, the connotation of the word, home, is positive. Juxtaposing the word home with broken which has a negative connotation and “dys”, which means working badly\(^\text{10}\) creates a negative out of what might be regarded as a positive representation; that of the home.

In addition to that the terms “broken homes” and “dysfunctional homes” might be regarded as social representations in their own right objectified by familiarity out of frequency of use; social representations which in themselves could be seen as existing in a deficit relationship with the positive social representation of home. ST 3 also used a vague clichéd expression “lots of social issues” to describe the circumstances of students who have several stand downs. A family with “lots of social issues” might also be seen as being in deficit by the school. Through this response, therefore, ST 3

\(^{10}\) Cassell’s Compact English Dictionary
suggests that the group of children who have had several stand downs “usually” came from homes which were regarded by ST 3 as different to what was desirable.

**Discussion**

When asked about the home school relationship in the context of the stand-down event principals and senior teachers talked mostly about their relationship with homes where there is an accumulated history of stand-down. This emphasis on accumulated histories of stand-down may suggest the principals and senior teachers in this study regard stand-down as part of an exclusionary process. Principals and senior teachers make three observations about home/school relationships in the field of the stand-down event. These are firstly that stand-down enables the school to make parents aware of the seriousness of their child’s behaviour; secondly that schools rather than parents have the detachment necessary to make valid decisions about behaviour and thirdly that certain deficit characteristics mark the families of children with an accumulated history of stand-down. Principals and senior teachers, like the parents of the previous section, recognise a sense of separation between school and home. For the parents that separation came as a consequence of school based factors while principals and senior teachers attributed the gap to home based factors. While principals and senior teachers acknowledge that there may be differences between behaviour at home and behaviour at school this section reveals the importance they place on stand-down as a mechanism to bring behaviour considered unacceptable that they associate with home into line with school behaviour. Principals and senior teachers regard the responsibility of closing the gap between home and school behaviour as the responsibility of the home and what seems to mark the boundary between being a good family and a bad family is the response of the parents to the stand-down.

The key concept that marks the difference between observed behaviour at school and perceived response by the home is the school’s perception of the parents’ response to what the school considers serious. The principals and senior teachers, therefore, assume the position of truth teller when it comes to judging the seriousness of behaviour. They assume their right to uncover the truth of the situation both through
experience and their distance and detachment from the child. Principals and senior teachers expect the home to respond to the stand-down in a way that brings the child’s behaviour into line with the expectations of the school and the first stand-down appears to be regarded as an opportunity for parents to do this. Failure to meet the expectations of the school constructs a gap between the actual and the expected culminating in disappointment (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). This disappointment is indicated through different use of language about good families and other homes. Soft and inclusive vocabulary characterises referrals to good families and dichotomous opposites constructed through the negative of the desirable to dysfunctional homes. Sentence constructions with either the positive or the negative in the climax position are the most poignant expression of hope or disappointment in these responses.

Principals and senior teachers make reference to shared narratives of social representations of inadequate homes and parenting. These are powerful narratives because of their long timescales and objectification into narratives of the social Other. Inadequate parents are hopeless, they swear, are unaware of their children’s behaviour, are irresponsible and emotional. References to these common sense notions of inadequate parenting are powerful not only because, once established, they are difficult to change (Markovà, 1996; Liu & Lásló, 2007) but also because they enable the teller to transfer the story outside their orbit (Liu & Lásló, 2007). This differentiation is a powerful mechanism in the establishment of social identities (Liu & Lásló, 2007) in this case the identity of the school as a community of practice. This differentiation not only creates the marginal identities and outbound trajectories of students with unresolved accumulated histories of stand-down but also the principals’ and senior teachers’ expressions of powerlessness at being able to rectify it.

6.3 Conclusions

Disappointment is the common theme that runs through the principals’, senior teachers’, parents’ and students’ stories about stand-down. It is expressed through a sense of separation caused by failed expectations. These expectations, however, arise
out of powerful though invisible narratives about membership, not only to the school but also to society. The parents and students talk about fairness and the principals and senior teachers about nurture. The principals and senior teachers focused on the notion of unacceptable behaviour as a consequence of poor parenting whereas the parents focused on their child reacting inappropriately to school based conflicts. Both tales of unfair treatment and inadequate nurture enable the teller to dis-identify with the outcome which if it continues will effectively restrict the participation of the student in school.

For this study that sense of separation and powerlessness appears to come as a result of accumulated stand-downs rather than just stand-down in itself. The first stand-down provides an opportunity. All of the students and some of their parents talked about a sense of separation following stand-down but for many that had dissipated during the period following the stand-down. Because students could talk about regaining trust, putting the stand-down in the past and forgetting the stand-down they are making a statement about retrieving the membership they felt they had lost and restoring their school identity. For this study that reintegration appears to occur not only for first stand-down but also for first stand-down in that school; Tui is the best example of this being the case. It is ongoing unresolved stand-downs that result in the powerlessness and helplessness expressed by some in this study.

More than chapter five this chapter uses language to delineate and explain the positions of the participants. That separation between the majority of students who maintain and retain a positive school identity and an inbound trajectory compared to the minority who are set on an outbound trajectory is most clearly indicated through references to metanarratives. The most significant metanarratives are those about behaviour. Particular forms and structures of language position the different participants as they identify and refer to those metanarratives. A simple way, therefore, for principals and senior teachers to identify the point at which a problem with behaviour becomes an outbound trajectory would be to listen to how the students are talked about. Some of the students in this study never reach the point where the
shared stories about the student by the school or the school by the home take a negative turn. Some students and their families with help from a significant storyteller at school manage to begin to re-story their school lives and thus begin to reverse their outbound trajectory. How students and their significant storytellers re-integrate to school following stand-down even given, in some cases, a negative school history from previous schools is the subject of the next chapter. The next chapter reports on the responses made to questions about re-integration, about how the schools addressed the students’ troubled school lives, about the resources available already and those that would help keep these students in school.
Chapter Seven: Reintegration

Chapter six revealed that the two main groups of participants in the study, school personnel and family, had different expectations of each other at and following stand-down. School personnel had expectations that students would behave in an acceptable way at school and that, where this does not occur, the act of sending the student home brought the issue to the family’s attention and the matter would be resolved. Families, though, found the expectations placed on them by the school both difficult to comprehend and difficult to carry through. This difficulty occurred largely because they saw the problems as being generated at school rather than at home. Many of the caregivers, also, noticed a change of status at school for their child following stand-down. One of the outcomes of this gap in expectation for both home and school was disappointment and as a consequence of that disappointment increasing separation between home and school clearly identified in the way each talked about the other.

Chapter five revealed that these incidents of perceived unacceptable behaviour that resulted in stand-down were the surface features of the students’ distressed lives at school. Over the six months of the study, however, many of the students had managed to work through the troubled context of their school lives and, as a consequence, had found for themselves a place to be in school. It was the resolutions of context, however, that appeared to enable the student to place the stand-downs in the past rather than the stand-down itself.

This final chapter of results examines the processes that either did or did not result in reintegration for the students in the study. The chapter is in two parts. The first part of the chapter focuses on one factor common to many of the students in the study; this factor was being bullied. In the troubled milieu of the students’ school lives, bullying was raised as an issue in seven out the ten case studies. As the study progressed it was revealed both that these students were actively engaged in managing environments where they were being bullied and that resolving those environments appeared to play a role in the student’s ability to renegotiate their membership of the school community following stand-down. Six out of the seven students had been removed or had removed
themselves from the bullying contexts by the end of the study. How this resolution was achieved provides a useful context to understanding how decision making worked across the study.

The second part of this chapter shows how engagement with the stand-down process has the potential to promote successful reintegration following stand-down. Both the parents of students who reintegrated rapidly and senior teachers who worked to limit stand-down talk about the approaches they take to resolving the issues that surface at stand-down. Essentially, individual participants used existing or creative processes to turn narratives of exclusion into narratives of reintegration. Finally, across the study school personnel identified areas where gaps in resources exist and where resources considered essential to retaining students in school are perceived as being allocated by decisions outside the school’s control. School personnel, in this situation find themselves in stressful environments where there is high expectation that issues identified at stand-down will be resolved but low control (Santavirta et al, 2007) when it comes to accessing what they consider are essential resources. Some school personnel felt that inadequate resources for schools to address extreme behaviour put some students at risk of stand-down. The final task of the chapter is to identify both where those gaps in resources exist and which groups of students would benefit from greater control of resources at school level.

### 7.1 Being bullied: border skirmishes or life in a war zone?

Ross and Horner (2009) define bullying as;

> Repeated acts of aggression intimidation or coercion against a victim who is weaker in terms of physical size, psychological or social power or other factors that result in a notable power differential (p. 748)
In this study seven out of the ten case studies reported bullying, as defined by Ross and Horner (2009), as contributing to the field of the stand-down event. In some cases bullying lead directly to the incident that resulted in the student being stood-down from school; in other cases bullying was raised as part of the context of the students’ troubled school lives. Students were not stood down because they had bullied another student, however; in this study each of these seven students had been the victims of bullying. Bullying was raised as part of the context of the stand-down event when participants were asked if the student was having any difficulties at school. Few participants, though, named the behaviour as bullying. While Missy’s Mother, for example, named the behaviour of girls in Missy’s class as bullying Missy’s teacher only hinted that bullying might be going on and that it might be part of Missy’s school experience. For the most part I identified behaviours as bullying that displayed the criteria suggested by Ross and Horner (2009) i.e. that the behaviours were aggressive, intimidatory or coercive, they were repeated acts and power differentials were evident.

Bullying as defined by Ross and Horner (2009) occurred as a common denominator in most of the case studies and most of the student participants were actively engaged at the time of the study in making decisions to resolve those bullying environments. The outcomes of the study, i.e. whether or not they appeared to renegotiate their membership of the school community, nevertheless revealed the students’ level of success in managing and resolving these contexts. The range of bullying experiences varied in both duration and degree. Some bullying contexts had short and others long timescales in the students’ school experience; some involved small groups of students while others’ experiences of bullying seemed to have become part of their school narrative. To distinguish between the two extremes I have referred to the short timescale limited involvement bullying as border skirmishes and compared the long timescale bullying as life in a war zone. For this study, then, Bob’s, Tui’s, Mara’s and Missy’s bullying contexts were like border skirmishes compared to Ben’s, Cherish’s and Elephant’s ongoing experiences of life in a war zone. The analysis that follows takes Missy’s and Ben’s stories and uses them as starting points for the stories of the other students’ experiences of being bullied.
In this study, too, Mara’s story brings to the surface the use of electronic media as a means to bully children and for Mr. Smith the potential for bullying brought about by the recent influx of international fee paying students in New Zealand schools. Apart from the prevalence of bullying evident in such a small study the decision making that occurred around bullying in the study brings into sharp focus that tension that was exposed in the previous chapter between home and school. Significantly the bullying contexts in the study arose within and were generated by the school environment. It was evident as schools talked about bullying that they saw it as one of the challenges students had to overcome to gain membership of the school community. School personnel felt that the unacceptable behaviour of students as a consequence of the normal process of negotiating a place in the school community was the responsibility of the home. Many parents, though, found it difficult to try to resolve behaviour that they felt occurred as a result of contexts outside their control.

In the first part of this chapter (7.1.1) principals talk about the connections between bullying behaviours and stand-down. This is followed by the experiences of students, families and teachers and how they related to and worked through bullying contexts in the study. The common experience of being bullied across the study was a surprise especially because stand-down might reasonably be seen as a response to behaviour more associated with the bully than the bullied. Reports of being bullied from the first set of interviews caused a question about bullying and stand-down to be asked of principals in the second set of interviews. A summary of the principals’ responses follow. These responses provide an introduction to and context for the experiences of bullying for the seven students in the study where participants reported bullying behaviours contributing to the field of the stand-down event.

7.1.1 Playing cat’s cradle in the dark: principals talk about bullying behaviours in school

It is really important to listen to all sides of the story because what you actually find is who was the person who started it. (P6)
Principals were asked to comment about bullying in the second set of interviews because bullying was raised as an important issue during the first set of interviews. The principals were asked:

Many family participants commented that the student had been bullied. Do you see any connection between being bullied and being stood-down?

Responses from principals indicated that they were continually working at bullying as an issue in their schools and according to Principal 2 ‘I would hope we are getting that better.’ While most of the principals did not use stand-down for bullying they hoped that if they did they were standing down the bullies rather than the other way round. To most of the principals interviewed bullying was unlikely to result in stand-down because it was hard to quantify, was mostly verbal and recognised as happening between students. Ministry of Education statistics (see MOE, 2009a) reveal that verbal assault of another student is rarely used as a reason for stand-down. Similar to the issues raised about bullying in chapter five and later in this section students tended to be stood-down for the surface action of what might be a larger context. According to Principal 6;

We don’t tend to use stand downs for bullying. I don’t call a hard out assault a bullying I call that an assault.

In this way, while principals recognise that bullying may be the source of the incident, they are more likely to use stand-down for actions that develop from bullying behaviours.

According to principals bullying is a difficult issue to quantify both because it is a hidden problem that is hard to unravel and because it ignores the boundaries of the school. Bullying behaviours tend to be invisible not only because they happen out of sight; ‘That’s the old problem of arriving after everything’s happened then looking around...’(P2) but also because it is difficult to separate what is and is not bullying. In his response, similar to the view of Ross and Horner (2009), P 2 defines bullying as covering a wide spectrum of behaviours.
For most it will probably be a pattern [...] it will range from a response from an interaction with another student which might be a verbal or physical or intimidating type interaction not all three the same. It might be as a result of [...] verbal interaction with a staff member something like that. Most of them are about interactions towards others... that would be our pattern, not all of which would be of a bullying nature. (P2)

While P2 alludes to the interactional nature of bullying behaviours Principal 8 acknowledges bullying can arise also as a consequence of students who are not liked by other students trying to be included. In this sort of environment it is difficult to ascertain “who started it” (P6). Principal 8 implies that some students have characteristics that other students react to and those reactions may be harsh but the student goes back for more because of a need to be included. Hence the repetitive nature of negative behaviour towards students who seek membership of groups in school where they are not welcome;

In some cases the bullying is almost self-imposed...you know that song she cuts you once she cuts you twice but you still believe...some kids are all over the place and they are almost inviting reactions from other students which unfortunately can become quite harsh. (P8)

Bullying behaviours are not only restricted to the school grounds and the school day and this also makes addressing bullying difficult. Principal 6 commented on the difficulty of dealing with electronic bullying e.g. bullying on Bebo and Facebook. To P6 electronic bullying often occurs outside school but has an impact inside the school grounds and principals do not have a formal mandate to act in school on issues that arise outside school.

The thing is if Bebo is being done out of school we are on extremely shaky ground. That’s what we are told by the School Trustees Association... there’s no question that the stuff that goes on on Bebo and Facebook and by texting is nasty stuff [...]. It gives and gets and becomes very complicated. (P6)
Even though bullying is a complex issue many of the principals interviewed had processes in place for bullying behaviours. Most of the principals addressed bullying by making it visible. Principal 6, for example, applies restorative practices to bullying contexts. Restorative practices draw out the multifaceted nature of bullying behaviours as well as having the potential to reduce the power differential inherent in bullying contexts (Ross and Horner, 2009)

The best way to deal with bullying is to have a restorative process. All of the evidence is clear that the bullier takes responsibility for an understanding of what they have actually done [...] My experience is that it is really important to listen to all sides of the story because what you actually find is who was the person that started it. (P6)

Principal 4 targets negative verbal interaction in his school with the intention of making students more aware of what they are saying to each other. He sees “put downs” as an unhealthy aspect of the school culture that hides bullying behaviours. P4’s proposal is that making students aware of put downs may bring the bullying that exists underneath into the open and make it visible.

One of the concerns I have is the level of put downs that happen in the school in a casual way among the students. It is one aspect of the culture of the school I am really going to work on. The concern is that if these sorts of negative comments are happening at this level then what is happening below the level that you don’t see. It is kind of hidden because we are accepting up there. If you say no put downs are acceptable at all and that we respond to it in every case and we make sure students are aware of that it makes it much easier for the actual bullying …to start to be seen (P4)

Principal 8 was the only principal who said he would stand students down for bullying. He makes bullying visible to the students by recording all reported instances of bullying behaviours on the student’s file. He recounted a story which shows the process that might result in students being stood-down for bullying. In this story the threat of stand-down is used to resolve bullying behaviour.
Last year we had two boys in year ten who were allegedly harassing other students. They pleaded guilty I pulled out the file and showed them their student management profile and they sat with amazement when they read the incidents of harassment they had been involved in and I said if it happens again you will be stood down and rang the parents and told them...we never had another problem all year...I think seeing it in writing was a big plus they actually hadn’t realised what they had been doing. (P8)

While both Principal 6 and Principal 8 had processes in place that focus on bullying behaviours as they are identified, Principal 4 tackled the issue by seeking to change the culture which allows bullying contexts to flourish.

To the principals interviewed for the study bullying was a hidden issue that required continual input. For the most part, however, it was not an issue where they used stand-down. Difficulties in attributing responsibility and in its hidden and verbal nature made other school discipline processes more useful for addressing bullying. To address bullying principals found they needed to bring it into the open. Moscovici (1988) and Markovà (1996) suggest that issues need to be visible so that they can be addressed. Processes like restorative conferences and keeping a record of instances of harassment also enabled principals to see the context in which the bullying was occurring rather than just as a single incident. Another principal was trying to uncover bullying by exposing the culture which generated bullying. Stand-down events, however, may also provide an opportunity for schools to uncover and address bullying contexts. While schools in the study did not appear to make a direct connection between being bullied and being stood-down some parents and students reported bullying as triggering those behaviours that schools found unacceptable. Some parents interviewed for the study wanted the school to acknowledge the context of those behaviours that led to stand-down. A closer examination of any incident of perceived unacceptable behaviour that generates a decision to stand-down may enable principals to at least uncover those bullying contexts they may struggle to address currently.

The next section (7.1.2) examines the connection between being bullied and being stood-down for those seven students where being bullied appeared to form part of the
context. Two of the students’ experiences of being bullied, those of Ben and Missy, summarise the experiences of the other five students and are told in the form of two vignettes. Stories about Ben being bullied span his whole school experience and their significance to the stand-down context depend significantly on the narrator. For Missy, however, there appears to be general agreement that bullying has occurred and was occurring at the same time as she was stood-down.

7.1.2 Living in troubled times: telling tales about being bullied

The vignettes: Ben and Missy

Ben:

He came to us with a history of violence. (Ben’s teacher)

Ben was a year eight student at an intermediate school (ages 11-12) for the first interview of the study; he had one of the longest histories of being bullied of all of the students in the study. He also has an accumulated history of stand-downs from his current and previous schools. Ben’s story in chapter five revealed that he has multiple disabilities and that his mother attributes the difficulties he has at school to the school’s failure to address those difficulties. She also says that Ben is bullied at school as a consequence of his disabilities. His teacher, however, attributes his behaviour to a history of violence. The difference in these stances can be seen in the different uses both participants made of formal and informal language when referring to similar situations with Ben. Ben’s mother uses more formal language when referring to his disabilities whereas Ben’s teacher uses more formal language when referring to his violent behaviour. In each case these two participants take advantage from the invisible symbolic capital that comes as a consequence of using more formal and therefore more detached language to present their case (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).
Ben has multiple disabilities described here by his Mother.

He was diagnosed at two with EDS which is a connective tissue disorder... all his joints can dislocate at any time even though he looks pretty bright and healthy which he does...we found out at two because he didn't walk until just over two and he started walking and his knees dislocated [...] but he does have braces which he doesn’t like wearing. [...] at the moment we are going through the process of [...] going to see either a psychiatrist or a psychologist to get the final diagnosis for ASD...Autistic Spectrum Disorder...

Ben’s mother uses medical language and acronyms to describe Ben’s disabilities then drops the register to less formal to explain to the interviewer the meaning of the terms. Her use of medical language attributes detachment and legitimacy to her response. In many societies that adhere to market driven education provision targeting resources to children with disabilities based on formally identified individual need has become a feature of the education landscape (Chaplain, 2003; Hayden, 2007). Ben’s mother’s use of the language of that narrative reveals the power she feels she holds within that narrative. Through the interplay between formal and informal language, however, Ben’s special needs teacher foregrounds Ben’s violence, rather than his disability, as defining his school identity. In the following text more formal language is used to refer to Ben’s violence and less formal language to his disability.

BT: He gets a bee in his bonnet about something he can’t let it go and like the autism ...and he hasn’t been formally identified either...And so last year [the stand-down] was over an incident [where] he brought money to school to buy a play station game off one of his cobbers and the cobber had given the play station game to someone else [...]He came to us with a history of violence [...] He was going to deal to this kid and a teacher a very experienced teacher a non-confrontational teacher went to step into the situation and she got really [sworn at]... but that was when we first stepped in and then the other one was a suspension because he assaulted two girls...punched them in the face ...

Ben’s teacher makes reference to medical and legal narratives to support her view that Ben is violent. She undercuts Ben’s possible diagnosis of autism by stating that “he
hasn’t been officially diagnosed either” thereby reducing the potency of any assertion that autism is a significant factor in his behaviour. The formal use of paralegal language e.g. “history of violence”, “non-confrontational” and “assaulted” is juxtaposed with informal references to the context of incidents e.g. “cobbers”; this reveals that she regards Ben’s history of violence and the “assault” as more pertinent to the explanation than the context. Finally her use of emotive phrases e.g. “deal to this kid” and “punched them in the face” may suggest through its lack of detachment she was personally affected by the incident.

Ben’s mother foregrounds the context of the incident with the girls as bullying. According to his mother the girls in this story appear to have used his connective tissue disorder as a means to bully him. It was revealed in Chapter 5 that two girls jammed Ben’s arm in a desk and then pushed him causing his elbow to dislocate.

There has been a lot of bullying going on and Ben has kept quiet over it…but when it’s got too much and he’s turned round and said something or done something like with girls…hitting…that is so totally wrong. Ben must know that… but what lead up to the incident I am really unhappy about because he was being bullied again by the girls and he was the only one stood down. This was last year…I was just about tearing my hair out and he wrote a letter of apology to the girl and she didn’t accept it.

Ben’s mother’s use of this hybrid text (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999) enables her to put her side of the story while at the same time position herself as reasonable. Ben’s mother suggests, from the beginning of the response, that there is some justification for Ben’s unacceptable behaviour because the school is not dealing with the bullying. Her response swings back and forth between two narratives: fairness and social sanctions against violence especially towards girls. Essentially that Ben “must know” not to hit girls is balanced by her perception of the lack of action over the bullying, “he was being bullied again”. In this way Ben’s mother reveals both her disappointment “I am really unhappy” that her expectations of fair treatment are not met (Sfard and Prusack, 2005) and her frustration that she cannot control the expectation placed on her by the school. This disappointment is summarised when she said; “he was the only
one stood down” and her frustration when she said “I was just about tearing my hair out”. Ben’s mother feels she has met her responsibilities; she has brought Ben up to “know” he must not hit girls but when this does not occur she insists he writes a letter of apology which is then not accepted.

The long timescale of Ben’s history of violence overwhelms all other narratives about Ben; Ben’s teacher’s description of the incident of swearing at a teacher aide that resulted in stand-down is a good example of this.

And because she was wanting to have her lunch she went and informed Ben in the class that added to his anxiety [...] and he got very angry and he got really agitated and instead of letting it go somebody else came in and he told both of them in a very loud voice in front of the whole class to fuck off. So it was that kind of situation where in hindsight you could have averted that but you can’t always be able to stop something happening can you and everybody saw and they all know the behaviour management programme and they go home and talk to their parents [...] so you have to be consistent so that’s how it happened. (Ben’s teacher)

Ben’s teacher’s story of the chain of events that lead to Ben telling two staff members to “fuck off” shows she is aware of Ben’s anxiety, what precipitates episodes and how to avert them. What dominates the decision making is neither Ben’s disability nor the apparent mishandling of his disability by the staff member but the visibility of Ben’s violence that activated the school’s zero tolerance policy as stated in the school’s behaviour management programme. Ben’s teacher states that the decision relied on it occurring “in front of the whole class”, that “everybody saw” and having to ‘be consistent. While this makes reference to Chaplain’s (2003) assertion that other students expect a response to unacceptable behaviour in order to feel safe, it also acknowledges the expectations from parents that the school is a place of safety. This example underlines the close relationship between zero tolerance policies and market driven education policy (Skiba and Peterson, 1999) and consequently the potential impact the views of parents can have on decisions made by the school.
Ben’s experience of being bullied at school disappears from the narratives told at the six month interview. He has changed schools and is proactively removed from situations that might result in a violent outburst. It was revealed in chapter five that at his new school references to medical narratives dominate explanations about his behaviour. Ben’s story, more than any of the others told about bullying, reveals the significance of long timescale school constructed narratives and the impact they can have on decision making about stand-down. Ben has a long history of being bullied as a consequence of his disabilities but his reaction to that bullying is what is visible both to those teachers who have worked with him at a series of schools and to client groups like the teaching staff, other students and parents. Ben’s disabilities restrict his participation and therefore his school identity and membership (Wenger, 1998). The visibility of his disabilities and his violent reactions to bullying marginalise him in the school community and therefore make him available for punitive responses to his behaviour (Black, 1999).

**Missy**

She felt safer with the girls in that class (Missy’s teacher)

While being bullied appears to contribute directly to situations that lead to Ben being stood-down, for Missy a short timescale of bullying by a group of her friends was happening around the time that the stand-downs for bringing alcohol to school occurred. When Missy’s mother demanded that Missy was moved to a different class the bullying and the stand-downs ceased. Both her teacher and her mother implied that Missy’s being bullied might be a contributing factor both to the stand-down and to the change of class. Missy’s teacher suggests that being bullied was Missy’s own fault; much like comments made by the principals in the previous section.

She swapped classes...she has had problems with her peers...I could probably say two girls have been a bit catty but I am not sure exactly what went on because we weren’t told ...secret squirrel stuff... and then next thing she had been asked
to come into another class...she felt safer with the girls in that class (Missy’s teacher)

In this response she uses soft terms like having “problems with her peers” through two girls who were being “a bit catty” which locates the responsibility for the girls’ behaviour with Missy and away from the responsibility of the school. She acknowledged, however, that the behaviour was repeated, that Missy was unsafe with those students and that the school had taken the initiative to change classes for her safety. Whether or not this was bullying was hidden; “secret squirrel stuff”. Missy’s mother said she had to demand the class change from the deputy principal following a plea from Missy; “she pleaded with me to let her change classes”. In the following response Missy’s mother recounts her negotiating that class change with the deputy principal

   MyM: I had to speak to the deputy principal and we spoke about the bullying and she advised that we keep Missy in that class and I said well no I don’t think we should because she was isolated and that made her very uncomfortable to the point that she wouldn’t go to school. She didn’t want to go to school not because she was sick

   I: With your knowledge?

   MyM: Yep, I was in [City] and she was texting me that she didn’t want to go to school. It has had quite an effect on her.

Missy’s mother’s response reveals that the deputy principal was aware of the bullying “we spoke about the bullying” but wanted Missy to stay where she was. In this response Missy’s mother showed she went against the advice of the deputy principal when she demanded the class change; effectively she contested the role of truth teller and won. In addition she confronted the truth teller role with emotional reasons rather than the detachment that according to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) affords legitimacy in the field of any encounter. Missy’s mother’s success in changing Missy’s class not only reveals the potential power of parents in neoliberal education settings
(Brown, 1993) but also the existence of alternative sources of power circulating in neoliberal environments that individuals can access (Danaher et al, 2000).

Missy’s teacher returned to the subject of bullying in class at the end of the interview when she was asked if there was anything else she wanted to say. In this case she refers directly to bullying but because of the general nature of the question her response might be seen as unconnected to Missy.

I guess there should be consistency with procedures so maybe we should have some PL [professional learning] on what you should look out for in bullies. I don’t think we have done much of that[…] but to what level do you intervene and I don’t know maybe some guidelines and the severity of it so all right what do we do with that person who is doing it there …if they actually touch the student obviously you are going to get rid of them…but sometimes some of the comments or sometimes you think…did they touch them or not […]often you think…hang on a minute and you turn around and think…then you look and nothing is happening…if we stand there watching it doesn’t happen it is sneaky

(Missy’s teacher)

Missy’s teacher acknowledges both the existence of bullying and some of those difficulties associated with addressing bullying which were also outlined earlier in this chapter. She connects bullying mostly with observable unwanted physical contact between students. Like the principals in the previous section Missy’s teacher makes reference to the invisible nature of bullying and that she feels inadequate to identify bullying since she must see it happening to act. In addition, though, Missy’s teacher also raises the issue of the “level you intervene” suggesting that she recognises some level of border skirmishes as natural behaviour among students. As a consequence, despite taking a narrow view of bullying, Missy’s teacher’s response agrees with Ross and Horner’s (2009) contention that;

One critical reason bully prevention efforts struggle to achieve their objective lies in the difficulty of conceptualising and identifying bullying (p 748)
Missy’s story reveals again that schools regard bullying as a difficult issue for to address. Missy’s teacher’s comment about the point where you intervene may also be located within a much wider narrative about social learning for students at school but acknowledges that bullying is an important issue through her request for further “professional learning”. The deputy principal recognises that some behaviour that might be defined as bullying is a normal part of students learning how to get on with each other so advises against the change of class. Changing classes, however, appeared to remove the opportunity for bullying to occur which is a strategy commensurate with Ross and Horner’s (2009) contention that bullying is opportunist behaviour. The shift in classes also coincided with the last of Missy’s stand-downs from school which suggests that having and being with friends is an important aspect of school membership for young people. While both Missy’s mother and her teacher regard bullying as a hidden issue for schools, Missy herself did not recognise the behaviour as bullying rather as a problem she needed her mother to solve. Finally, Missy’s decision to bring in her mother to make the class change shows she understands the power differentials between home and school and how to make use of that understanding to write her own story.

**Discussion**

Bullying behaviours are a growing concern in schools (Ross and Horner, 2009). Chapter five revealed that each of the students in the study had encountered recently, and most were still encountering, troubled relationships with other members of the school community. For seven out of the ten students these troubled relationships could be described as involving bullying behaviours. Resolving bullying contexts was very important to this study because that resolution coincided, perhaps coincidentally, with the cessation of stand-down events. In the context of enabling participation in communities of practice schools appear to regard bullying both as difficult to address both because bullying may be located outside the jurisdiction of the school and because learning to manage conflict is one of the challenges students face when negotiating membership of the school as a community. Missy’s teacher’s comment
about the difficulty in recognising bullying when it occurs underscores both the complexity involved in understanding what bullying is and, consequently, identifying when those boundaries may be being crossed. Essentially bullying contexts occur, possibly, as a step beyond the natural negotiations and renegotiations that characterise children’s successful and abortive attempts to navigate conflicts of membership within the school community.

While Ben’s and Missy’s stories were similar in that the being bullied narrative remained hidden behind narratives of acceptable behaviour they were also different because of the decision making choices that enabled certain narratives to gain precedence over others. Across the study, in the school as a community of practice, school stories were dominant over the stories of the family. Missy, Mara and Cherish were described as unable to accept and manage perceived normal behaviour for their group. Ben, Bob, Elephant and Tui, however, had acquired negative social capital through accumulated histories of unacceptable behaviour and this overrode any bullying context. Missy, Mara and Cherish are described by their teachers as separate from their peers through an abnormal reaction to that which is considered normal behaviour. Those behaviours are referred to in soft terms about relationships and located in deficit descriptions about the student’s own inability to manage and resolve those relationships. Missy was “having problems with her peers”, Mara reacted to “the cattiness you get with year ten girls” and Cherish to “teasing” about her weight and “she is a big girl”. For Missy, Mara and Cherish it is considered their responsibility to self-govern so their reaction is the problem rather than the bullying.

Ben, Bob, Elephant and Tui have had multiple stand-downs and each has had created around him accumulations of negative social capital that, as the acquired truth about the student, cloak the bullying. Ben’s being bullied story, for example, reveals both how the potency of written histories from previous schools overrode weaker ones about unconfirmed diagnoses of ASD and how social sanctions against hitting girls caused the girls’ bullying to become invisible. There are subtle clues, too, in the responses that the other boys are also excluded by their peers. Bob is called names, which, according to his mother, might be about his weight, Tui is “being given a hard time” and Elephant has rocks thrown at him by other students. In Ben’s, Bob’s and
Elephant’s stories it is their reactions that are visible and therefore addressed. Their teachers define their actual identity, in simple present tense sentences, in terms of this negative behaviour; Ben has “a history of violence”, Bob “is a serial swearer”, Tui is “a bit of a stirrer” and Elephant is “a bit greasy’.

These negative objectifications marginalise them and dominate their school identity yet outside school each has a positive identity. According to their parents Ben “is a good boy”, Bob “is a good worker”, Elephant plays representative soccer and makes prizewinning films and Tui gets provincial awards for leadership in rugby. For these boys, there was no indication that the bullying each boy encountered in the school environment overlapped with their lives outside school. At the time of the first interview, however, it was the negative school identities that characterised the boys in the field of the stand-down not the positive, identities they held out of school. By sending them home, however, it was the parents who were expected to resolve their negative school identity. Ben’s Bob’s and Elephant’s mothers found it difficult to resolve problems at home that they perceived occurred at school. Tui’s father, however, made a connection with the school that enabled him to resolve Tui’s problems with his class.

Where participants managed to resolve bullying contexts for students in the study those students managed to reintegrate into school following stand-down. Some of the stand-downs, while they did not change behaviour, provided a catalyst to enable the environment to change so that behaviour could also change. Each resolution, however, required an intervention targeted at the causal factors that were generating the bullying context. In the six out of seven bullying contexts that were worked through over the course of the study two were resolved by teachers. The other four revealed that, despite traditional understandings about the power held by the school in decision making, some students and their parents understood and used the agency they held within the system to enable successful resolutions of bullying contexts to occur. For some students their power rested in deliberate actions that the school regarded as unacceptable. Mara, for example, had told her teacher about the bullying on Bebo but to no effect. Punching the bully stopped the bullying and the stand-down was peripheral to that outcome. Bob was unable to remove himself from the class where he
was unhappy so swore at teachers and threw chairs at other students until the school removed him from the class for incorrigible behaviour. Some participants actively used understandings of the efficacy of positive social capital to achieve results. Missy, for example, used her mother’s social capital with the deputy principal to bring about change and Tui’s father initiated a relationship with the dean. Essentially, what these stories reveal is that, while the school appears to hold the balance of power there are other kinds of power circling in the school community that can be used to effect positive authentic outcomes.

The resolution of bullying contexts required the students to be removed from the environment where the bullying was occurring. Bullying contexts in this study, therefore, did not resolve of their own accord. That the bullying contexts in this study required assertive targeted intervention to resolve them is in keeping with Ross and Horner’s (2009) findings about how positive behaviour support reduces bullying in schools. All bullying contexts that were resolved in the study required the student to be removed from the source of the bullying. Bob, Missy, Tui and Mara changed classes and Ben and Elephant changed schools. Removing the student from the context is also consistent with Ross and Horner’s (2009) study that identifies the causal variables over which the participants have control. Reducing the opportunity for both encounters and peer observation are factors over which the participants do have control. Of all of the seven case studies where being bullied was identified as an issue Cherish’s case study was the only one where a school programme actively targeted skills to enable a student to work through her response to bullying, in this case about her size, and therefore work towards resolving the context within which the bullying was occurring. The school move for Cherish, however, removed that support because it was only available to low decile primary schools and as a consequence Cherish was the only student where bullying was reported and where a resolution did not eventuate.

7.1.3 Conclusion
To move on from the stand-down and to return to an inbound trajectory the students needed to resolve or have resolved for them the conflicts that were generating their
troubled lives at school. Many of the students were being bullied at school and resolving the bullying also coincided with that reintegration. School personnel, however, neither found bullying easy to identify and address nor recognised that the students were being bullied. For the most part, then, bullying was identified, addressed and resolved either by parents or by individual students. The strategies they employed to do this revealed that they were aware of and able to access and manipulate alternative forms of power to those employed by school personnel but still circulating within the school environment. Stand-down, however, does provide an opportunity for meaningful conversations to occur (Principal 3) and each stand-down event has the potential to build capacity in identifying and potentially resolving those conflicts that fuel unacceptable behaviour. Making an event of stand-down (Principal 6) has the potential to widen the field of investigation around a stand-down event and uncover and resolve hidden aspects of context. To do this school personnel need to examine the reasons behind the shared stories they tell about bullying in school.

The use made by participants of references to powerful narratives enable them to take stances that establish their position of being right but may get in the way of resolving difficulties. The zero tolerance narrative, for example, overrides narratives of disability in this study. Stories of ongoing bullying are subsumed by long timescale narratives about the normal behaviour of teenagers i.e. they are catty and that being teased is part of growing up. For individual students in this study the longer the stories have been told the more potent they become. Stories about violence towards girls, for example, override what is happening with Ben. The long timescale nature of school stories about behaviour is able to dominate the shorter timescale stories of parents no matter how much they are also able to tap into powerful detached dialogues. That being so, however, some parents and teachers managed to step away from the comfort zones of dominant narratives and restory the school identities of not only the students in this study but also, in the case of principals, the school identities of students in their schools. The next section of this analysis examines the actions and responses of those participants who used particular strategies designed to resolve conflict and as a consequence enable students to stay in school.
7.2 Taking charge: building capacity through standing students down.

We made a decision to be quite deliberate about the use of stand downs and we are trying to turn them into a much bigger deal... Principal 6

Standing a student down is a choice available to principals to help address challenging and recidivist behaviour in school that cannot be managed through other in-school processes. Chapter six revealed that school personnel saw the stand-down process as an opportunity to bring a student’s unacceptable behaviour to the attention of their parents. Legislation, contained in the Education Act 1989, provides a structure to enable school and home to meet to discuss and resolve issues of unacceptable behaviour. Chapter six also revealed that the choice to stand-down is not a simple matter of getting home and school together to work out a plan. The field of the stand-down event is not a level playing field; both external and internal factors have the potential to have an impact on decision making. The landscape is fashioned by external pressures; one of which, for example, is the requirement to market the school as a place of safety. Internal forces, too, like the school’s past experience of the student and family and the family’s experiences of past encounters with the school, also guide the expectations of outcomes for this and future encounters. Finally, invisible but potent, are social representations of acceptable behaviour and the common sense judgments we make about people who do not comply with society’s expectations for proper behaviour. Chapter five revealed that, of the ten students interviewed for the study seven had managed to renegotiate their membership of the school community by the end of the study though some of those remained peripheral or marginal. While each renegotiation was different, for most of the students, taking responsibility for the criteria for school membership was a factor. In most but not all cases it was the student who learned those criteria and what was required to achieve them. For many of the
students, too, being stood-down was a catalyst in their eventual reintegration at school. This second half of the chapter reveals the potential of stand-down as a significant event in a student’s school career and shows how making ‘a much bigger deal’ (Principal 6) of stand-down could build capacity to keep students in school.

Initially this part of the chapter examines three of the events where being stood-down from school acted as a catalyst for effective reintegration. Of the ten students interviewed for the study Mara, Mr. Smith and Tui demonstrate most effectively how stand-down can be used to build capacity in managing student behaviour that reintegrates students following a stand-down event. Demographically these three students represent some of the margins of the study. Mara comes from an extended Pasifika family where the main bread winner died over ten years ago and Mara’s mother has had to raise a big family on government assistance. Mr. Smith, on the other hand, comes from a nuclear family where both parents work in professional occupations and Tui from a single parent family where the main caregiver is his father who is self-employed. While the backgrounds of these three students are different the factor that makes them similar, an investment of social capital, reduces the current and potential future distance between home and school inherent to a stand-down event.

This analysis of stand-down as a trigger for affirmative action on the part of parents is followed by some of the ways senior school personnel use the stand-down event to reduce stand-down both for the student and in the wider school. During the interviews some principals commented either that they had very few stand-downs or that they were reducing the number of stand-downs from school. This part of the analysis outlines what makes them similar in their approach to stand-down together with some of the techniques they use. Finally both teachers and parents identified groups and areas that are under-resourced if reintegrating students following a stand-down event is a desirable outcome. This second half of this chapter concludes with suggestions for resourcing that may help both schools and families keep young people in school.
7.2.1 Mara, Mr. Smith and Tui: Doing it once and getting it right

These three students were presented in chapter five as reintegrating rapidly into school following being stood-down with no further stand-downs over the six months of the study. By the first interview both Mara and Mr. Smith had already regained their membership of the school; for Mara all three participants in the case study referred to her in terms of school acquired social and cultural capital and for Mr. Smith both his parents and his teachers also talked about him as reintegrated. While Tui was still regarded as a bit of a lad (Knipnis, 2001) by his teacher there were signs that he was moving towards reintegration through expressions of social and cultural capital when both his father and his teacher talked about his school behaviour. One factor that separates these three students from others in the study is that all three students had been stood-down for the first time at that school. Both Mara and Mr. Smith had not been stood-down before at any stage in the past while for Tui it was his first stand-down both at that school and since he had changed caregiver to live with his father. As previously stated demographically these three students could not be more different but what is similar in all of these case studies is the affirmative action their parents took prompted by the stand-down event. Each intervention can be described as using or acquiring positive social capital that reduced the distance between home and school and enhanced the family’s relationship with the school. In Mr. Smith’s case that affirmative relationship already existed while Mara’s and Tui’s parents actively sought and applied positive points of recognition that built a relationship between home and school. These relationships can be identified as successful because the school based participant in the case study acknowledges their existence in answer to questions about the home school relationship. This is different to comments made about the home school relationship in the other case studies.

That Mr. Smith’s family already had an affirmative relationship with the school was expressed both through social capital acquired through Mr. Smith’s father’s history as an old boy of the school and through the social and potential economic capital inherent in Mr. Smith’s father’s business associations with the school.
It’s funny because I am an old boy from there so I know the teachers...some of the teachers used to be in youth group...that’s interesting ...we also...my company supports the school as well so I relate to the headmaster.

These references to deposits of social and economic capital vested in the relationship reveal how many different points of recognition exist between Mr. Smith’s family and the school. While this relationship exists through history built up over time with connections across a series of potential interactions, for Tui’s father and Mara’s mother the relationships with the school are for a special purpose; that of resolving the difficulty that arose over the incident that resulted in stand-down. In this response, Tui’s father shows how he used both the social capital he established with key personnel at school (the dean and form teacher) and the social capital he already had with Tui to work between the school and Tui to “trim his wings”.

I had his teachers, his form teacher and (dean’s) emails...anything going down you need to...phone me email me keep me in the loop... I can deal with it from this end. [...]...so we dealt with it between school and me...the teachers who were directly involved, we got together... I said to Tui...hey man he’s given me all this information he is telling me what you are up to...you are going to have to face off to me if it is serious enough so he is sort of...oh...okay and that trimmed his wings a bit. (Tui’s father)

Tui’s father set up a partnership between school and home designed to addressed Tui’s behaviour as issues arose.

Mara’s mother, also, went into school to deal with issues that affected Mara’s education. In this response Mara’s Mother had discovered she was bunking school because of a “clash” with her English teacher. She went into school to see the Head of English. Mara’s mother took an approach that did not allocate blame.

And so we had a talk. I said I don’t want her dropping out of school and not being there. It had become a big problem because she bunked and that was serious. She listened. I said I am not blaming him and I’m not blaming [Mara] ...they probably clash. I wasn’t there to blame anyone I just wanted a solution...a
satisfactory solution. [...] We were going to have a big meeting with him and her and me. But I got a phone call a couple of days later to say they were going to change Mara’s class and they couldn’t do it until I agreed. I agreed! We had to ask Mara and she agreed and she hasn’t looked back. [Mara’s mother]

The common factor in all three case studies is the authentic, robust relationship that existed between home and school at the point of the first interview. All three relationships were built in different ways; Mr. Smith’s father over time, Tui’s father as a safety net and Mara’s mother to address specific issues. Each was initiated and maintained by the family not the school and revealed the protagonist’s knowledge of the power they hold as parents and how this can be used to reduce the distance between home and school through building and maintaining school valued social capital. These relationships enabled the school to work with the home when problems arose.

All three parents were also assertive about their child’s unacceptable behaviour. They addressed the behaviour in different but affirmative ways. Tui’s father said; “you are going to have to face off to me if it is serious enough” while both Mr. Smith’s mother and Mara’s mother punished their children in a visible way. According to Mr. Smith’s mother;

He came to work with me for some of it and he went home with our receptionist who has horses and he had to muck out the paddocks with her.

Mara’s mother went against her own instincts to make sure Mara got the message about hitting people.

I went mad...a few days before her birthday. I cancelled her birthday party. I said to her I have been through all of this and I am not going through this again. She knows what I’ve been through with the boys. It is probably not fair and it probably was a bit harsh but I wanted her to know she won’t get away with everything and there are consequences. Then I found out there were many reasons. I guess mother shouldn’t say it but I would probably do the same. I don’t agree. I said you just can’t go round belting people.
Like Mr. Smith’s mother, Mara’s mother’s punishment was not only done it was seen to be done. An obvious reaction from home was one of the criteria schools saw as important in chapter six. Each school noticed the visible response to unacceptable behaviour as social capital in the form of effective parenting.

There is evidence of good relationships between home and school in most of the narratives. Cherish’s, George’s, Ben’s and Mark’s Mothers are spoken of warmly by school personnel interviewed for each case study. It is the assertiveness of these other three caregivers within that relationship, however, that make them effective. This effectiveness is also evident in Missy’s mother’s challenge to the deputy principal when she requested Missy was moved out of the class where she was being bullied. While Missy’s mother’s response coincided with Missy’s reintegration at school she did not appear to react to the behaviour considered unacceptable by the school that prompted the stand-down. Mara’s, Mr. Smith’s and Tui’s parents, however, provided feedback to the school that they also found the behaviour unacceptable through a specific punishment. This assertiveness about their children’s behaviour sets them apart from other case studies. These three parents were the only ones who made a firm statement with their children that their behaviour was wrong. This expectation of a firm response from home was expressed by principals and senior teachers in chapter six and suggests that while students and their families have needs at any stand-down event so do schools and the communities they represent. The response of these three families to their child’s behaviour, which could be seen as a visible acknowledgement of hegemonic social representations about acceptable behaviour, may also meet the needs of the school in confirming its responsibility to construct a place of safety. Mara’s, Mr. Smith’s and Tui’s parents’ acknowledgement of these external forces that mediate membership may have assisted their children’s reintegration.

That the stand-down that instigated their inclusion in the study was a first stand-down also made these three case studies different to the others. Mara’s, Mr. Smith’s and Tui’s first time status and their parent’s powerful response not only deposited positive social capital in the home school relationship but was also uninhibited by existing, invisible social capital. The fields of past negative encounters with the school deposit social capital into the school relationship with home. Participants in Mara’s and Tui’s
narratives talked about past histories of ‘troubledom’ (Tui’s Father); in Tui’s case from previous schools and in Mara’s from past family and extended family members. Mara’s and Tui’s families’ assertive responses to the stand-down event appear to have over ridden past histories to a greater or lesser extent. Greater on Mara’s part because the past histories were not directly attached to her and to a lesser degree for Tui because past histories of unacceptable behaviour accompanied his move from one school to another in the form of high status written reports. These reports together with low level “disruptive behaviour” (Tui’s teacher) at his new school may account for his teacher’s qualified enthusiasm for Tui’s improved behaviour since the stand-down. Participants in Mara’s and Tui’s narratives spoke strongly and assertively about their reintegration at the six month interview (see Chapter 5). While Mr. Smith’s parents and teacher speak of Mr. Smith’s stand-down as being in the past, however, Mr. Smith still talks about his membership of the school negatively. When asked; “What does doing well at school mean for you?” His reply was “Staying out of trouble...It is one of the biggest goals for me because I find it hard really hard ”. This response shows that while Mara and Tui appear to have taken responsibility for their behaviour, Mr. Smith still locates that responsibility outside himself. For Mr. Smith, however, with his family’s multiple covert points of recognition, that he presents himself as potentially naughty, does not seem to matter.

Despite the similarities in their rapid reintegration, Mr. Smith’s family’s invisible attachment to the school made a significant difference to the way the families talked about education and their child’s future. Mr. Smith’s mother made non-specific comments about Mr. Smith’s future.

One in which he is happy, he is successful at, feels confident and enjoys what he does really. Whatever that may be. [...] I guess development of that work ethic that he goes to school and actually has to do some work... he doesn’t just cruise ...at the moment he cruises a lot of the time.

Both Mara’s and Tui’s parents, on the other hand, gave strong positive responses about the importance of education in their children’s future. Mara’s mother, for example, told a story about shopping for school uniform on government assistance.
MM: One hot day before school went back we were getting uniforms and it was really hot. We didn’t have a car; we were bussing to get this uniform. We had to bus to [the mall] to get the quote then bus to WINZ [Work and Income New Zealand] for them to pay for it. Then bus to the school to pick it up. We were walking and it was so hot and she says I hate this walking and I said this is why you need to go to school so you get a good job and you don’t have to go plead for someone’s help for you to do something. You will have the money because you have had a good schooling.

Tui’s father acknowledges the importance of school as a means to acquire cultural capital in the form of qualifications. He uses cultural capital that Tui values and understands to make a strong comment about the importance of qualifications.

TF: Tui is going Dad Dad I’ve got some credits for NCEA level 1…there you know…you can do this through taking particular credits you can take it through to the next year. So he’s responded with that dashboard concept that I’ve thought up…if you’ve got a dash board you know how fast you are going, you know what temperature, you know how hot you are going. You’ve got all these big dials in front of you, you know where you are…you’ve got to read it…and the kids look at it and go…oh…being unaware… I’m trying to get them aware of their immediate situation. I don’t really care about the social life at school and who is doing what to who…all I want to know is what they have got in their qualifications.

While all three parents are similar in many of the factors that enable their child’s reintegration their differences are also important to this study. That Mara’s and Tui’s parents appear to lack the multiple points of recognition between home and school that are available to Mr. Smith’s family may mean that they need more visible expressions of connections with the school to enable those points of recognition to develop.

This analysis of the success of three students to reintegrate following stand-down provides useful information about how schools may build capacity to keep students in school. That these were first time stand-downs reveals the potential inherent in that
first formal opportunity when school and home come together over a student’s behaviour. The study shows, however, that realising the potential in these home school encounters is haphazard at present and that there is room for the school, as owner of the process, to manage the benefits of an authentic home school relationship better. In these three cases a firm response from a parent gave the school visible evidence that the home also found the child’s behaviour unacceptable. For this study this appears to be an important marker of school membership that helps satisfy some of those needs expressed about school safety in chapter six. These assertive and important responses, however, were instigated by parents, which suggest that, because of their success, there is potential for schools to encourage and enhance assertive responses from parents where this is not happening at present. In addition to this, the study suggests that warm relationships between home and school are insufficient in themselves unless there are a number of points of recognition already established. Ben’s mother who is warmly supportive of the school, for example, required the intervention of a teacher to reintegrate Ben into school. This study does not provide any suggestions for situations where the relationship between home and school has broken down e.g. Bob and Elephant except to suggest that earlier interventions may have retained what appears to be an essential element in students’ reintegration following a stand-down event.

7.2.2 Tricks of the trade: senior school personnel talk about reducing stand-down

I use that as a bit of a wee tool and they hate it. (Principal 8)

Chapter six revealed that standing students down might have become a standard response for schools to certain behaviours to some degree as a response to pressure from stakeholder groups to market the school as a place of safety. Senior school personnel were asked what interventions they used to reduce stand-down and to help students reintegrate following being stood down from school. For the most part these
interventions included visiting the student’s home or the parents coming into school for a meeting. Following their return to school students were often placed on contracts or daily surveillance reports. Some students were held out of class for a significant period, the greatest being two weeks, following their return to school. Suggestions from parents about successful reintegration reveal that these interventions on their own may not be sufficient. What parents appeared to need was engagement by the school in the context that generated the unacceptable behaviour.

Some senior school personnel, however, talked about the importance of retaining students in school, about low levels of stand-down in their school, and the interventions they used to reduce stand-down. In addition they talked about specific interventions used with students in their schools that they considered effective in resolving the difficulties that resulted in their being stood down from school. The responses of these three senior school personnel described below reveal how issues identified in the study, e.g. engaging with context and taking responsibility exist as a natural part of the processes they use to respond to situations that might result in a student being stood down from school. All three participants Principal 6, Principal 8 and Senior teacher 5, describe how they engage not only with the unacceptable behaviour but also with the effectiveness of using stand-down to address that behaviour.

Principal 6 described stand-down as a process that is most effective when it is used once. She shows how, by being “quite deliberate about stand-down”, it can become a meaningful experience for students and their families. She attributes the lowering of the stand-down rate to a conscious realisation that high numbers of stand-downs showed that they were ineffective. This standpoint reveals a stepping back from the use of stand-down as a response to using stand-down to improve behaviour.

We had a very, very high stand down rate about five years ago and it’s dropped very quickly because we realised how high it was and how ineffective our stand downs were. […] This year, our stand down rate has plummeted down to a very low level. We have done nine stand downs this year which would probably be half of what we would have done at the same time in the past. Part of it is we are using restorative practices more and more. We made a decision to be quite
deliberate about the use of stand downs and we are trying to turn them into a much bigger deal. We are turning it into something that the families think is a bigger issue and again that is really about making a statement, drawing attention to things and insisting that people come in. [...] We don't agree now that stand downs aren't having an effect because we are using them sparingly we actually we don't have evidence of many being people stood down again and again [...] the repeated stand downs are not usually effective.

Principal 6 insists families come into school and take advantage of the opportunity to discuss behaviour made available in the legislation. The legislation, as described in chapter one, provides the opportunity but does not require schools and families to meet. Principal six makes this mandatory because it makes the stand-down “a bigger issue” for families. In addition to this the school uses restorative practices which have the intention to provide the opportunity not only to ascertain context but also to identify and redress hurt feelings. The specific and targeted use of stand-down has reduced the number of stand-downs the school performs, especially repeated stand-downs. Both the literature and the responses of participants suggests that repeated negative interaction lays down negative social capital that has the potential to impact on future interaction. Principal 6, however, has made a conscious decision to reduce the potential for that occurring.

Senior teacher 5, like Principal 6, has made a conscious decision to limit the use of stand-down but for her it is because she associates stand-down and school exclusion.

If they are excluded from this school ....we don't like losing any ... because they will be lost...once they are excluded from here sometimes not even the Ministry picks them up ...there are kids out there in the neighbourhood who have been drifting around for months...almost a year and ...because they have been excluded from here...no-one else will take them...and the Ministry can't find anywhere...don't even try... they are lost...they are the lost children. (Senior teacher 5)

She draws attention to those concerns also raised by Becroft (2007) that dislocating students from school has serious consequences. She refers to students who have been excluded as “lost children”; a poignant reference to negative statistics associated with
children who are excluded from school. The concept of lost children also infers that students who are excluded have wandered off the path, an image used frequently by school participants in the study. While there appears to be a process to retrieve students who are excluded, managed by the Ministry, she finds it inadequate because “kids […] have been drifting around for months…almost a year”. This again echoes findings by Becroft (2007) who raises concerns about youth who are not in school during the day, linking them to youth crime.

Like Principal 6, Senior teacher 5 uses restorative chats with students to engage with the student following an incident that could potentially result in stand-down. In the research study those students who took responsibility for their behaviour re-engaged with school. Senior teacher 5’s questioning of the student described below has the potential to enable the student to tell their side of the story while at the same time provides an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions. The response that follows also gives an interesting insight into the sorts of incidents deputy principals encounter as part of their job.

Usually I try and get the students to talk with the person that …we have chats… we are starting to involve more and more a restorative chat process. That’s worked quite well so in a number of cases…Please explain…Please explain to me why you thought it would be okay to bring fireworks to…or bring a weapon to school, even though it was a replica…Please explain to me why you thought it would be okay to hit someone…so there’s all that sort of stuff and yes…stand down could be the consequence but sometimes it doesn’t have to be..

Senior teacher 5’s response sets certain actions of students outside what is “okay”; placing bringing weapons and fireworks to schools and hitting other people as unacceptable. These actions might also be considered unacceptable in many social spaces. She asks the student to explain and the outcome of the “chat” where “stand-down could be a consequence” appears to rest on the student’s response. In this way Senior teacher 5 shows she is applying the principles of natural justice that requires the accused to be given the opportunity to reply before a decision is made.
Principal 8, like Senior teacher 5 enables the student to tell “their side of the story” before making the decision to stand the student down. Principal 8 makes a specific reference to the importance of the principles of natural justice in the stand-down context. In addition to this, however, he also asks the student “how they plead, guilty or not guilty before I decide”. While this simple technique could be seen as establishing the role of the principal as judge (Monk, 2005) it also enables the student to engage in the decision making process

I really never stand the student down until I have heard their side of the story... so you try to put in place the principles of natural justice. I feel uneasy when I stand a student down on a teacher’s report without talking to the student so generally I try and hear their side of the story hear the teacher’s side of the story and then corroborate that with other students who might have been in the company at the time and then ask them how they plead guilty or not guilty before I decide.

Principal 8 further requires the student to engage with the problem by using “a wee tool” which according to him, “they hate”. By requiring the student to explain to their parents in front of him by speaker phone he uses a modern tool that enables communication and reduces the potential both for negative social capital inherent in the practices of teams (Goffman, 1971) through the parents having to come into school and for misinformation if the student was to explain at home. This technique also provides an opportunity for that strong response from the parent that appears to facilitate the reintegration process.

One thing I do use a lot is I’ve got the speaker phone on the desk and I ring the parents and get the kid to tell the parents what they’ve done. I use that as a bit of a wee tool and they hate it. Then we talk about what they did and the consequences and how to make it right and they go on their merry way again.
I: You get the same message all the way around?
That’s exactly right. It is entirely powerful when I say Gidday Mr/Mrs whatever look I’ve got so and so in the office they’d just like to tell you something and...aw...hi Mum um...
Like Principal 6 and Senior teacher 5, the emphasis for Principal 8 is engagement with not only the family but also the student. According to Principal 8 students “hate” having to explain themselves which suggests he has perceived students would rather not take responsibility for what has happened but that requiring them to do so is “entirely powerful”. In this case, however, the reference to power is not to the power he holds as principal, though he has used this to require the conversation to occur, but in the power he perceives it provides to enabling the students to “go on their merry way again” following an incident of unacceptable behaviour. While he does not name it as such Principal 8 also appears to use a restorative chat model in that in addition to explaining themselves Principal 8 involves the student and possibly the caregiver in discussions about consequences and “how to make it right”.

What characterises the approaches of these three senior school personnel in the context of a potential stand-down event is both their emphasis on engagement and their targeted use of the stand-down regulations as a tool to manage behaviour. All three senior school personnel both engage in authentic conversations with the student and the family and provide examples of how they use the stand-down event as a tool rather than a response to unacceptable behaviour. Each of these three participants revealed they used the power vested in their position and in the stand-down regulations to manage the field of the stand-down event in ways that provided an opportunity to change behaviour. Principal 6 made the meeting between home and school, recommended by the regulations, mandatory with the specific intention of making the event visible. Principal 8 made that meeting both more immediate and potentially less threatening for the parents by avoiding a face to face encounter. Both Senior teacher 5 and Principal 8 emphasised the importance of having the student explain their point of view before a decision was made about stand-down; this strategy is identified in the regulations as ensuring students have the right to natural justice (MOE, 2009).

Asking the student to explain themselves and then, in Principal 8's case, to decide if they were right or wrong potentially changes the power differential in the encounter
by empowering students with permission to negotiate. Finally each participant used restorative practices in some form to manage information within the field of the stand-down event. This strategy is also recommended in the stand-down regulations (see MOE, 2009) and has the potential to enable the hidden context of the stand-down event to become visible. Addressing the behaviour without resolving the context that generated it was a concern raised by many of the parents who participated in the research. Principal 6 and Principal 8 commented that the number of stand-downs at their schools was very low- senior teachers were not asked that question- and all three senior school personnel commented on the specific use of regulations. This may suggest that how the regulations are used may have an impact on how well students renegotiate their membership of the school community following stand-down.

7.2.3 *Te Kete Hiahiatia* 

participants talk about what they need to reduce stand-down.

At the end of each interview all school personnel were asked if there were any resources that they felt would help keep students in school. This final section summarises and contextualizes those requests. They can be added to other requests already expressed like Missy’s teacher’s request for more professional learning on identifying bullying, Tui’s father’s desire for clearer, more easily understood forms and Principal 6’s concern that she had to stand in line to access resources for students through outside providers. There was general agreement across the study that schools have few resources targeted specifically at managing behaviour and that schools need more resources to manage students with exceptional behaviour problems. When Principal 1 was asked about school funding for managing behaviour she replied;

> I don’t think there is any with a specific tag on it is there? I have been sitting here for sixteen years and I’ve never been aware of any money to manage behaviour. (P1)

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11 *Te Kete Hiahiatia (m)*: basket of wishes
The responses included below are representative of a view that there are both gaps in resourcing as schools struggle to manage students with challenging and recidivist behaviour and that those gaps arise out of the philosophy of targeted and individualised funding prominent in neoliberal discourses about education provision. New right education provision was designed primarily to save money (Apple, 2006; Lauder et al, 1999) through setting the budget available and requiring needs to compete for discretionary funding outside the core funding provided to deliver the curriculum. Two consequences may result from this method of funding exceptional behavioural needs in school. Firstly there is a time lag between identification of need, verification of need and provision of resources and secondly that there is the potential for a growing number of children diagnosed with conditions where there is an expectation of resourcing that may not, through capped discretionary funding, be available. In this section both senior school personnel and classroom teachers talk about the need for extra resources to enable schools to manage behaviour not only for funding and personnel but also for strategies to help manage situations where there are gaps in expertise at present.

Most school personnel talked about the need for extra funding to enable schools to manage students with exceptional behaviour problems. This funding might take the form of extra staff and extra space as well as extra money. Two main issues were identified by participants. Firstly a link between behaviour problems and those students who arrive at school with insufficient skills to manage the increasing complexity of the curriculum and secondly the number of students, with diagnosed behavioural conditions, who were not adequately resourced. Many teachers interviewed suggested a link between inadequate skills and poor behaviour. ST5, for example, draws attention to the connection between poor behaviour and reading levels:

> We have a lot of students who come to us ...into high school... they are still operating at level one or level two of the curriculum they cannot read above an eight year old (ST 5)

She suggests that extra specialist staff to address the learning problems students bring into high school may also improve behaviour.
And having someone who is a full time literacy coordinator in a school or learning coordinator [...] and if there is someone like that who can actually help them with their learning surely the behavioural problems will start to disappear. (ST5)

ST4 suggests a connection between stand-down in the senior school and students’ inability to manage the increasing complexity of the NCEA curriculum for students. Like ST5 effective extra resourcing requires a skilled person who is able to engage with the student. To ST4 providing students with different work in the form of “a material resource” is ineffective because the student is “not interested in doing it anyway”. He makes the point strongly, therefore, that for students in the senior school keeping up with their classmates who are doing the NCEA programme is essential to retaining students in school because “if they are at school that is what they should be doing”.

Unless you have someone working with the kid... the resources by themselves, if they are not a person resource, if they are a material resource the kid is not interested in doing it anyway so to me the number one resource would be a body that you can put in to making the effort. I think in the senior school in theory they are doing their NCEA; if they are at school they should still be doing that so any resources or any time spent should be making sure they are keeping up because usually they are not. (ST4)

In this response, therefore, ST4 agrees with other participants in the study, e.g. Tui’s father that the business of being in school is the achievement of authentic school based cultural capital in the form of qualifications. In addition, ST4’s call for “an extra body that you can put into making the effort” further agrees with other participants because he feels reducing stand-down and retaining students in school requires engagement between people.

Both ST4 and ST5 present a difficult dilemma for teachers. Achieving at high school requires students to be able to manage complexity but many students arrive at high without the necessary skills that high school programmes focused on achieving qualifications rely on. As a consequence accessing essential cultural capital through achieving those qualifications that enable students to acquire membership status in
adult life may be denied to those who do not transition appropriately to high school. Both senior teachers suggest that being able to read to a level commensurate with the complexities of the curriculum at high school is a marker of membership for high school learning communities. An inability to access the curriculum restricts participation and both ST4 and ST5 connect this with behaviour problems.

Both senior teachers recognise the importance of engagement between the student and a skilled teacher to help regain membership and retain those students in school but that engagement costs money. According to ST 4 “It all comes down to money doesn’t it?” and to ST5 “All of those sorts of things we have to take out of our discretionary funding”. This is the essence of choice that dominates new right philosophies on education funding; that is that which is not considered basic curriculum delivery is required to compete with other interests for resourcing from a capped fund. The provision of extra skilled staff to engage with students with learning difficulties is funded through the school’s discretionary funding resource and outside the funding for the delivery of the school curriculum. This suggests that schools have to choose to fund the sort of remediation of content skills and strategies required to improve behaviour. Furthermore ST5’s comments about “discretionary funding” suggest that the school has more needs competing for that discretionary funding than what is available.

Some school personnel raised the issue of problems inherent in the policy of targeting resourcing to individual students with identified special needs. The main problems seemed to be that any extra funding required outside verification that costs money and that once the verification occurred there was no guarantee of additional funding. ST5 recounts a story about a boy with behaviour problems who was diagnosed as dyslexic. ST5 infers firstly that there is a cost to being diagnosed with dyslexia and secondly that it is the parents’ responsibility to meet that cost. In this case the boy’s parents had to save up to pay for the diagnosis.

    All last year I had this boy who was in serious trouble all the time ... he didn’t quite make the stand down level...eighteen months later his parents have just
forked out the money... they have saved up for a [named testing] because we all had a gut feeling that he couldn’t cope... he is dyslexic (S T 5)

It was unclear in the data as to whether gaining the diagnosis for dyslexia resulted in extra resources that improved the student’s behaviour. Chapter five as well as earlier in this chapter contains stories about the difficulties parents like Elephant’s and Ben’s mothers had in seeking and paying for a diagnosis for behaviour problems. Like ST5’s story there were problems and delays in getting the diagnosis. There was an expectation, however, that getting a diagnosis for their child’s behaviour problems was an essential step in the process. An experienced teacher like Elephant’s teacher, though, had a number of students with diagnoses for behaviour related conditions in her class without the resources she needed to manage them;

ET: And there are thirty kids in there and three Aspergers you name it... it is a difficult class

I: Do you get much help with Aspergers children?

ET: No you don’t because they don’t qualify and they do not qualify for any teacher aide time and I have three in one room. I have one who is a very bright boy but does nothing unless he is channeled I’ve got one who’s a bit more moderate he is quite limited and another who is Aspergers and epileptic and he’s got visions and the whole caboodle. I have had a teacher aide working with him and another wee girl who has an intellectual age of six for English and Maths. [...] We are getting an autistic child who is ORRS funded next year and he yells out and does all sorts of things and I am not looking forward to that but in some cases that is probably going to be easier because he’s got a teacher aide full time...

While Elephant’s teacher is trying to manage Elephant’s, undiagnosed but generally accepted, problems with ADHD and dyslexia she has three students diagnosed with Aspergers together with a girl who has been assessed as working five years below the average age level of the class. According to her none of these students “qualify for any teacher aide time”. Her response suggests that the school has been able to provide one
teacher aide from their discretionary fund for students with moderate special education needs. Her comment that the class is difficult also suggests that the resourcing the school is able to provide is inadequate.

Many senior school personnel indicated that inadequate resourcing of students with moderate special education needs impacted on their ability to manage exceptional behaviour in the school. In some cases they commented on the increasing number of students diagnosed with behaviour related conditions. To P1 students with these conditions tend to be stood down from school because the school requires “huge resources to cope with those children”.

Some of your kids who have been stood down are your dyslexics. Some are Aspergers children and Autism children because the system needs huge resources to cope with those children. (P1)

In other cases participants identified specific issues with students or groups of students that emerge because the teacher sees those students every day; the teacher’s assessment, however, appears disregarded. Elephant’s teacher, for example, had observed a growing problem with anger in her classes, especially with boys. Her response suggests both an expectation that any potential solution exists outside the school with her reference to “the government” and “they have got to do something” and that she has no idea what that solution might be. The effect of this is a sense of powerlessness similar to that expressed by Santavirta, Solovieva and Theorell (2007) in their study about the stress on teachers caused by high expectation of performance in situations of low control.

And violence…and anger…the anger worries me especially with boys if the government doesn’t identify…I have got all those angry boys…AB’s I call them they don’t identify them…you can identify them at five probably at four […] I could pin point kids in my class who will do something very very violent. I can identify them now and I will read the paper in a few years and I’ll say…oh…they have got to do something with these angry young boys. (Elephant’s teacher)
The stress caused in situations of low control was also expressed by ST5 who commented that despite their special position in being able to observe students’ behaviour both parents and school personnel were not listened to because they were not considered to be “trained professionals”. ST5’s response also gives an example of conversations in consensual and reified universes (Moscovici, 1984) with its references to “gut feeling” and “the evidence”. In this case it is possible to see ST5’s perception of less value being placed on everyday observations.

Parents and teachers know that this kid here is likely to have this happen and because we are not trained professionals psychologists or social workers... who will listen to us?...and we know this kid needs help...now [...]Try to get our students on to RTLB help or GSE is very, very hard. Try and prove any of it...when you’ve just got a gut feeling ...I have a feeling that this child is going to get into trouble ...you have to wait to get the evidence and by then it’s too late.

(ST 5)

ST5’s response makes specific reference to the requirement for verified need inherent in resource provision for students with special education needs. Her reference to the student needing “help... now” refers to the potential time lag between identifying a problem and the potential help arriving. It has been stated previously in this section, however, both that the verification of need might be a cost on the parents and that once the diagnosis has occurred there is no guarantee of extra resources.

An inability to access help to manage exceptional behaviour problems is relevant to parents and teachers who participated in this research. The experiences of participants echo the concern expressed by Elephant’s teacher about angry boys and ST5’s response about getting a diagnosis. Mark’s mother commented both on her inability to manage Mark’s anger about his brother’s exclusion and her having to pay for private tutoring to address Mark’s inability to manage the curriculum at year eleven. Both Elephant’s mother and his teacher talked about Elephant’s extreme levels of violence and George’s mother on her son’s tendency to respond to everything with fighting. Bob’s mother told a story about Bob’s threats of violence at home.
He has terrible mood swings [...] I said you need help and he said yeah...I'm mental he usually goes on like this. Then one morning he starts...so I made an appointment for the Doctor for the Monday and he wouldn’t go. I told him on the Monday morning that I had an appointment for him that night. In the end I walked out and went to work because he was that bad. He was texting me saying you are going to come home to a trashed house ...you are going to come home to blood everywhere I am going to kill myself. He threatened me don’t go to the doctor.

While it could be argued that Bob was using his knowledge of his mother to stop her taking him to the doctor, his choice of strategy was to use violence. His mother perceived a problem she could not resolve herself so employed the best strategy she had available. This strategy was to seek help from someone who she regards has the power and knowledge to resolve her difficulty with Bob; she went to see the doctor about Bob anyway. In the same way that Ben’s Mother’s insistence on Ben writing a letter of apology was thwarted by the girls’ refusal to accept the apology, Bob’s mother’s attempts to resolve Bob’s difficulties were also thwarted.

It got that bad that a month ago I went the doctor about it. He refused to come to the doctor with me. I think he needed psychiatric help. But I got a letter back saying that they didn’t think he did. (Bob’s mother)

The doctor’s engagement with Bob’s mother’s attempt to resolve Bob’s behavioural difficulties was by letter. Unlike Tui’s father and Mara’s mother Bob’s mother’s attempts to build her own capacity to manage her son's behaviour resulted in disempowerment by an agency that had the opportunity to direct her towards alternative and more appropriate solutions but declined to do so.

Schools have trained personnel available both inside and outside the school to help resolve problems that manifest in episodes of exceptional behaviour. School based participants in the study made reference to the existence of individuals within the school like the school counselor, the RTLB and the Social Worker in Schools (SWIS) that work directly with schools and to organisations outside the school like GSE (Group Special Education) and YSS (Youth Specialties Service) where specific pathways
and protocols exist within the school to access specialist help. According to ST5, however, even though those pathways exist accessing help from outside agencies for behaviour is difficult

GSE is hard to get anyone through there …YSS …is only for…they will not deal with behavioural problems at all…they have limited resources (ST 5)

P1 recognised the potential input of school based services like RTLB and school counselors but felt that to deal with behaviour effectively the resource needed to be increased. P1 connects the incidence of stand-down to having too few specialist resource people in the district. She raised the view, common in the literature, that most serious behaviour of the sort that results in stand-down can be identified early in the child’s school life (Church, 2003; Sutton, 2000).

We need counselors, more counselors and RTLB’s… The RTLits… we need probably four for our district and we need four RTLB’s because the primary schools need help too because many of the children who are coming and end up in a stand down situation …this is not new behaviour (Principal 1)

Seeking the input of the school counselor or the pathways that direct children to the RTLB service was not the strategy chosen by Bob’s mother when she wanted to resolve her son’s mood swings. Neither did she say that she had been referred to the school counselor by either the doctor when she visited him or school personnel when Bob’s behaviour became difficult at school. Across the study while school personnel requested extra counselors and similar specialist help no participant, school or home based, mentioned either the student having been referred to a school counselor or to school counselors being helpful. One student was referred to an outside drug and alcohol counselor and one parent (Ben’s mother) mentioned the RTLB service but in connection with his disabilities and learning not his behaviour. The indication from this very small study of school stand-down is that more use could have been made of existing specialist teachers in school to help resolve the troubled situations that surface as the student being stood down from school.
Across the study school based participants reveal that the management of exceptional behaviour problems in school is under resourced. Exceptional behaviour difficulties, specifically those behaviours that are beyond the ability of the classroom teacher, middle managers or senior managers to resolve in school tend to require more resources than the school has available. Additional funding requires verification by outside professionals which may have to be paid for by the student’s parents. Even after verification, however, students with identified behavioural conditions e.g. Aspergers are usually classified as having moderate special education needs and therefore required to be funded through the school’s special education grant. The school’s special education grant is a capped discretionary fund which, if allocated to students, appears to fund only limited numbers of teacher aides. Senior school personnel felt that skilled teachers and counselors were needed to help re-engage students with school though there is some indication from the study the potential input of current specialist staffing might be underutilised in the stand-down environment. There was general consensus, however, from school based participants that managing challenging and recidivist behaviour, as a common activity that schools are required to engage in is not adequately resourced at present. In addition to this it would appear, also, that relationships and protocols between in school and community services would benefit from increased clarity and cooperation.

Two groups of students were identified as having difficulty with managing the complexities of the school curriculum at post primary level to a degree that might impact on the student’s behaviour. These two groups are those students who have not acquired sufficient level of skill to manage the high school curriculum and those students with identified behavioural conditions like ADHD and Aspergers. School based participants felt that both are not adequately catered for by current resourcing and teacher expertise. For both groups it is handling the complexity of the high school curriculum that appears to present the difficulty. At present, except in extreme cases, most students in these groups appear to be resourced only through capped discretionary funding. Whether the curriculum should change at high school is not the subject of this study but making adequate remediation a matter of choice between too many competing interests raises issues about a child’s rights under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
(The Treaty of Waitangi). Rangitiratanga (Ownership) and Kotahitanga (Membership) are two of the three basic tenets of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. If children cannot do “what they should be doing” (ST4) at high school how can they have ownership and therefore how can they have membership? The third tenet, Kawanatanga (Governorship), which is the first article of the Treaty is about compliance; all articles of the Treaty exist in a dynamic relationship with each other. How, then, can someone who does not have ownership and therefore membership be required to comply? Conversations about the relationship between owning the curriculum and being a member of the school community may be an important activity in building capacity to manage behaviour in school.

7.2.4 Conclusion
There is significant potential to build capacity in effective management of student behaviour at stand-down. The key concept to reintegration for students following stand-down appears to be engagement. In this second part of the chapter, those parents whose children reintegrated most rapidly following stand-down both took responsibility for what had happened and engaged with the process of reintegration. These parents used the knowledge they had of the existing and potential power they held with the school to build or express social capital that enabled their child to reintegrate following stand-down. This study of effective reintegration revealed that covert expressions of social capital in the form of shared cultural capital made that reintegration easier and that the more points of recognition they have with the school the less need there is to build and maintain existing social capital. These parents, too, recognised that the school also has its own needs at stand-down; an overt response to the breach of social representations of acceptable behaviour also aided the reintegration.

Successful reintegration showed that parents may have access to different kinds of power that can be effective at challenging the traditional power/knowledge nexus of the school. This understanding of the power they hold in their relationship with the school indicates there may have been bedding in of neoliberal philosophies of home/school partnerships in the twenty plus years since Tomorrow’s Schools. The four parents who utilised the power behind understandings inherent to modern
home/school relationships crossed social and economic boundaries showing that engagement by the parent, in this study, was more important than their social, economic or cultural background. The same is important for those parents who did not assertively engage with the school; being pleasant and compliant was insufficient to engage with the process and effect positive change for their children.

Those senior school personnel who appeared able to reduce the incidence of stand-down in their schools had also engaged with the process. The strategies they described not only engaged with the student and family but also with the provisions of the stand-down regulations set out in the Education Act 1989 and in policy documents from the Ministry of Education (see MOE, 2007c, 2009). These senior school personnel showed that the regulations have the potential to provide a safe framework for addressing exceptional behaviour in school. They showed that the power inherent in their positions as principals and senior teachers does have the potential to make an opportunity of the decision to stand a student down so that authentic conversations about reintegrating the student can occur. In the final section of the chapter schools expressed a need for resourcing to address exceptional behaviour in school to be a specified fund rather than a discretionary item that competes with other school needs. This resourcing needs to be sufficient to provide skilled assistance both to enable students to learn how to manage the increasing complexity of the high school curriculum and to address the learning needs of those students whose behavioural needs place them at odds with the behavioural protocols inherent in the structure of the classroom.

General concern was expressed by school personnel across the study that students with identified conditions like Aspergers and ADHD were not well served currently by being provided for through discretionary funding. Senior teachers expressed concern that the inability to resource the programmes for students with identified behaviour related conditions, currently designated as having moderate special education needs and, therefore, denied access to additional funding placed these students at risk of stand-down. The lack of effective specialist resources to aide and educate teachers in managing students with identified moderate special education needs places the classroom teacher in a situation where the expectations are high but the level of
personal control is low. The consequent disappointment and stress that flows from high expectation/low control environment may have an impact on any teacher's effectiveness in other parts of their job (Santavirta et al, 2007)

7.3 Conclusion
The two parts of this chapter participate in a conversation about reintegration for students who have been stood down from school. On the surface the first part of the chapter appears to be made up of stories about exclusion; participants from both the senior school personnel interviews and student case studies tell stories about bullying. Senior school personnel talk about the difficulties of identifying and addressing bullying and the experiences of participants reveal how social representations of acceptable behaviour have the potential to subsume stories of being bullied. Beneath the surface, however, some participants demonstrate that, by the creative use of other forms of power circulating in the school environment, they can resolve bullying settings and enable the student to regain membership of the school community. While the majority of participants who took charge were parents it is possible to see behind the actions of the parent, in some cases, the student’s strategic use of the parent’s power to step in. For any successful renegotiation of context it appeared important for the students in this study to remove themselves from the bullying setting before reintegration was able to proceed. The importance of resolving bullying contexts to the student’s renegotiation of school membership and the limited amount of school input into this part of the process suggests that at present schools may not link those events that initiate the stand-down process to other issues in the student’s life at school. Further investigation of the wider issues about the student’s school membership at stand-down may result in improved resolution of troubled school contexts and consequently create the potential for fewer future stand-down events.

For reintegration to occur there needed to be active intervention to reposition the student within those narratives of social representations breached by the event that initiated the stand-down process. Many of these renegotiations show neoliberal discourses of taking responsibility and self-governance at work. They show astute
management of those factors inherent to the field of the stand-down event. That the school owns and operates the stand-down process created both constraints and opportunities for participants because, within the field of the stand-down event, schools also have needs. Those participants who managed to satisfy the needs of the school while at the same time addressing the needs of the home and family resulted in the most rapid reintegration. In some cases the strategy chosen was unconventional drawing on and using unconventional sources of power within the school environment. Other students in the study, however, had to have an adult step in to activate the process that enabled reintegration to occur. While neoliberal utterances about taking responsibility and self-government marked the students’ final responses about reintegration students had no power within the field to start the process of conventional reintegration. An effective partnership between home and school, however, the original intention of the Tomorrow’s Schools legislation, where each recognises and values the other’s skills and authority has the potential to achieve positive outcomes from the stand-down event.

Particular currently available factors make it easier for students to reintegrate to school following stand-down. A positive working relationship between home and school, for example, appeared efficacious to enabling the process of reintegration to occur. In the same way applying the stand-down legislation rigorously in terms of Ministry of Education policy documents also has the potential to reduce stand-down. In addition first time stand-down experiences for the participants involved were most successful because past stand-down and behaviour events appeared to lay down negative social capital that interfered with desirable effective problem solving environments in future events. This would suggest that while stand-down has the potential to create an environment where positive conversations might occur, the effectiveness of stand-down as an environment for problem solving might also reduce with every subsequent event. Those senior school personnel who applied the requirements of the stand-down legislation rigorously also expressed either low or reducing levels of stand-down in their school. These senior school personnel ensured meetings were held with caregivers and demonstrated compliance with the principles of natural justice. They gave the student and family right of reply before making the decision to stand-down
and used restorative practices that enabled the context of the event to be uncovered and hurt feelings caused by the event to be addressed. The stand-down legislation for these stand-down events was robust enough, if applied rigorously, to promote fairness and enable positive outcomes.

Despite the possibilities inherent in current provisions school personnel raised concern about the lack of resources available to manage behaviour problems in school and parents found difficulty in accessing resources to help them resolve their children’s behaviour. New right education policy that requires funding to accompany identified individual need caused difficulties for parents and schools alike. Low income families found themselves having to pay for the verification process; once verified, however, there was an expectation that their child’s needs would be addressed. Except in very extreme cases, however, that resourcing had to come from the discretionary area of school funds but perceived behaviour problems with their connotations of personal responsibility may have low priority. In addition, though, the schools in this study may be underutilising the resources they have available in the form of school and community based specialists. Finally the plight of students arriving at intermediate or high school unable to access the curriculum is a major concern raised by this study. These students have restricted participation through behavioural and other disabilities including inadequate reading ability. Restricted participation is one of the markers of marginal identities in communities of practice. Marginal identities are on outbound trajectories. They are at risk of the sorts of objectifications associated with the literature of the social Other and therefore more at risk of punitive action should difficulties arise between them and the school.
Chapter eight: Stand-down, a time for listening.

8.1 Conclusions

The school as a learning community is a landscape of communities of practice. The relationships between these communities of practice and therefore within the school as a learning community depends on understandings and expectations of the roles and practices of each community (see table 2, p. 17). While the joint enterprise of the school as a learning community is to develop and verify the community of adult learners it is expectations of acceptable behaviour that maintain the balance between and within its constituent parts. Unacceptable behaviour causes these understandings and expectations to unravel and the practice of stand-down is one strategy that is used by school personnel to enable those understandings and expectations to reestablish.

The practice of stand-down also constitutes a community of practice and it is school personnel who own the narrative while students and their families are peripheral participants. The degree to which a person is able to participate in any community of practice is a key element of this study. Wenger’s (1998) theory of situated learning in communities of practice, which forms the basis of this study, inextricably links participation and membership. Full membership means full participation and inward trajectories in communities of practice provide the pathways to full membership.

Standing the student down from school, by definition, restricts participation and therefore membership of the school as a community of practice. Whether and to what degree participation remains restricted in the six months following the stand-down event denotes the key enterprise of this study.

The practice of stand-down is important because of its hierarchical relationship to suspension and exclusion. Stand-down can be seen as both the most punitive of a range of in-school options to manage extreme or challenging school behaviour (ST2) and the least punitive of a range of options that potentially cancel the student’s membership of that school. These options, suspension and exclusion, are linked to a series of poor life outcomes for young people (Durlak, 1998; Fergusson et al, 2002; Hempill et al, 2006, 2007). While students stood down from school represent only a small percentage of students on the general school roll, all principals and senior
teachers interviewed agreed that being stood-down constituted a virtual superset of students suspended and excluded from school. Because of the disparity between the numbers stood down and those suspended (see MOE, 2009a, 2009b), for the majority of students stood-down from school, there is some form of renegotiation of membership and reintegration to school following stand-down. The stand-down event, therefore, together with an examination of the reasons behind the decision to stand-down provides a window through which to view what happens, in a minority of students, to cause what is essentially an in-school practice to progress to a practice of exclusion.

The decision to stand a student down identifies a gap in expectations of behaviour between the perceived actual behaviour of the student and the designated behaviour set down by the school. To Sfard and Prusack (2005) gaps both arise out of and create disappointment. Those disappointments that inhabit the field of the stand-down event are important because they are about maintaining the social landscape that enables the individual to behave in situational appropriate ways (Jovchelovitch, 1996; Liu & Lásló, 2007). Negotiating situational appropriate ways of behaving are essential not only to the student engaging with the school as a community of learners but also with the longer timescales of life outside and beyond school (Lemke, 2000). Stand-down, therefore, presents an important opportunity to school personnel as owners of the narrative to manage behaviour as well as identity for both school membership and to some degree membership beyond school. Significantly for this study those strategies by school personnel and family members that enhanced the student’s participation in school following a stand-down event resulted in the most effective reintegration.

In this study membership and identity were described by students and other significant storytellers using stand-down as a focus. The key marker of reintegration for this study was how likely the student would achieve the education goals they set for themselves at the start of the study. This is an important standard because of the joint enterprise of the school as the trajectory towards achieving those expressions of cultural capital that enable young people to be recognized as adult learners. Sfard and Prusak (2005) suggest these expressions of designated identity are immutable and that closeness between actual and designated identity is essential to happiness. Except for
Ben who did not speak for himself all of the students and their parents expressed expectations of school acquired cultural capital in the form of qualifications linked to life beyond school. Six months after being stood down, however, only some of the students had reintegrated fully to school while others regained only peripheral or marginal participation status. In addition two of the students had left school entirely before they could achieve basic entry level qualifications to institutions beyond school like employment or tertiary study. Those students who fully reintegrated to school according to the terms of this study expressed shared stories, understandings and accountabilities in terms of participation in the joint enterprise of the school; these expressions are key aspects of Wenger’s (1998) modes of belonging. These understandings, expectations and accountabilities were also expressed by other significant storytellers of their narrative like caregivers and teachers.

The conclusion and summary of the study that follow is in two parts. In the first part understanding the practice of stand-down is viewed from the perspective of three participant groups: the students, the parents and school personnel. The second part focuses more on how the specific structures of Wenger’s (1998) theory of situated learning in communities of practice enlighten the study and enable conclusions to emerge. The main message of the conclusions is that the most important factor in school membership is the student’s actual and potential participation in the school as a community of learners. The decision to stand a student down provides an opportunity for both school personnel and family to meet, engage and listen to stories of participation and membership. Because of its ownership of the stand-down narrative and thus the narrative of the truth teller the choice of taking up that opportunity to listen tends to rest with the school.

8.1.1 The stand-down practices of being a student, a parent and a principal

At stand-down, for the students, parents and principals in this study, an important difference existed between home and school. The students and their parents were
trying to resolve the context that was restricting participation and find a place for the student to be at school. Most school personnel, especially principals, were trying to maintain the perception to high stakes client groups that the school was a safe place for learning. This distinction is clear in table two (p. 17) where students are engaged in the practice of having friends and getting on with teachers, parents were engaged with getting their child to go to school and principals are engaged in school safety and managing conflict. This demarcation of roles and practices, because of the general agreement in Ministry of Education documents and research suggests that these expectations and understandings maintain the balance of the school as a community of learners.

The contexts around these practices come into conflict with any incident that may result in stand-down. This study revealed that while the practices of each community are clearly delineated in table two, at stand-down different expectations and understanding existed between family and school and that the gap in these differences generated a sense of disappointment. This disappointment seemed to arise out of the different practices that came into the foreground prior to and as a consequence of the stand-down event. Essentially all of the students talked about being unhappy at school at the time of the stand-down but parents found it hard to help their child with problems that they perceived were happening at school. Principals, however, talked about the pressures on them to send a clear message to the rest of the school and to the community that they took a firm stand on unacceptable behavior that they perceived as the responsibility of the home. Both stances, family and school, express a sense of disappointment with the perceived performance of the other.

**Being a student at stand-down**

All of the students said that, at the time of the stand-down, they were unhappy at school. For all of the students the unhappiness was perceived as school based and affected their ability to participate in school. For some of the students this unhappiness was short lived for example being wrongly placed in a class while for others the unhappiness had a long history that spanned their school lives. Ben's
disability, for example, impacted directly on his ability to participate in school. For each of the students the incident that resulted in their being stood-down arose directly or indirectly from trying to resolve this unhappiness and for seven out the ten student stories that unhappiness involved their being bullied at school. In some cases students used what the school considered inappropriate means to resolve the context that was restricting their participation and as a consequence was stood-down e.g. Mara punched the girl who had been bullying her on Bebo. For other students the incident appeared to come out of the identity that had been constructed around perceptions of that context e.g. Elephant was involved in naughty behaviour because he perceived himself as bad. It was the degree of success the participants had in resolving these contexts of unhappiness that determined how well the student had renegotiated their membership of the school community by the end of the study.

Many of the students found being stood-down from school a waste of time. It was a waste of time both because it took them away from school and because it did not resolve the context that was causing them unhappiness at school. The students who found stand-down a waste of time fell neatly into two groups; those who felt stand-down took them away from being at school and doing their work and those who felt it separated them from their friends. Those students who were more work focused reintegrated to school following stand-down more rapidly than those who talked about the social aspects of school. For the students in this study, therefore, both the shared stories and the accountabilities of the school as a community of learners are important to membership. That membership, however, the shared stories and accountabilities are more than just acquiring cultural capital in the form of qualifications. Membership in this study was as much about accountabilities to and with friendship and peer groups as it was about school learning.

Most of the students said that it was fair to be stood-down from school for what they did though all of them said that they did not have the chance to tell their side of the story. This was confirmed by their parents. Not having the opportunity to have their say is important to this study firstly because of the importance of resolving context to renegotiating membership and secondly because the practice of stand-down requires the school to observe the Principles of Natural Justice (NZ Bill of Rights, 1990). That
the students felt that the context of the incident had not been told suggests that the Principles of Natural Justice (NZ Bill of Rights, 1990), as a metanarrative of the practice of stand-down, may have been over-ridden by other more powerful narratives. Some of the students also tried to resolve the contexts of their troubled lives at school by using legitimate means, e.g. telling a teacher. None of the students had any success at addressing context in this way. This apparent lack of agency for students suggests that these students at stand-down did not have access to legitimate sources of power to address the context that they perceived restricted their ability to participate in school. Enabling student voices, however, as shown through this study reveals sources of useful information that may otherwise remain untapped by the school.

Notwithstanding the lack of access to legitimate sources of power this study revealed that students do have considerable agency to resolve difficulties at school but, for the majority of the students in the study, this might be considered inappropriate by the school. Nevertheless those students who used inappropriate solutions found them effective. Mara, for example was stood down for punching a girl but the outcome was that the bullying stopped. Mark was continually stood-down until he was placed in the special needs class where he felt safe. The schools were aware of each difficulty but other metanarratives had back-grounded them e.g. Bob needed to learn how to get on with people so he was left in a class where he was being bullied until he could demonstrate he could behave so he used non-legitimate strategies to be removed from the class instead. In addition Ben’s and Elephant’s mothers’ attempts to have their stories of bullying addressed were over-ridden by their children’s histories of violence and naughtiness. Missy was different to the other students because she showed she understood that while she did not have agency her mother did and she used that knowledge to achieve the class change.

**Being a parent at stand-down**

For most in the study being a parent at stand-down was a disempowering experience. Of all sets of participants the parents had the highest expectations of their child achieving school qualifications that would enable them to have a happy and secure future so found the stand-down experience disappointing. This sense of
disappointment confirms Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) view of the importance to future happiness of gaps between expectations and perceptions of reality result in disappointment. The parents knew the difficulties that their children were facing and felt the school should have investigated the issues that they perceived contributed to the stand-down. Parents tended to assume the role of advocate for their child and told detailed stories about bullying, learning difficulties and missed understandings with the school. A minority of the parents felt their child’s behaviour was reasonable given the nature and duration of the difficulties their children were having at school though most found the school’s action to stand-down reasonable. The parents sense of disempowerment was expressed when they perceived that they were expected to resolve a problem at home which was happening at school and that this was difficult. The parents in this study, therefore, were a rich source of information for the school that appeared to remain untapped.

How parents engaged with the school following stand-down was important to the outcome for their children. Parents who made an assertive input following stand-down were most successful in helping their child reintegrate to school. These parents tended either to have already established positive social capital with the school or they established a relationship with someone at school that would increase the number of positive points of contact they had with the school. These parents increased their participation in the school and, as a consequence, increased their child’s participation also. All of these parents, too, through their participation in the stand-down process acknowledged that the school also had needs to be met; Mr Smith’s parents made a visible response to their child’s behaviour by making him clean up a horse paddock. Where accumulations of negative social capital existed, e.g. a history of stand-down for the child and the wider family parents expressed negative expectations of working with the school. Nevertheless all parents complied with the requirements of the school at stand-down, i.e. they supervised their child and talked to them about the incident. Even so most parents found the process of stand-down confusing and difficult. They found it hard to engage with the written communications, the regulations and the contracts that accompanied the process. This was made easier if the parent could
engage through already established positive points of contact with the school e.g. SWIS, a dean etc.

Being a principal at stand-down

There were expectations on principals to stand students down from school. This pressure came from other staff, some parents and the community. Standing a student down was viewed by most principals as a visible response to unacceptable behaviour that is the responsibility of parents. In larger schools senior executive teachers carried out the stand-down in consultation with the principal; in smaller schools the principal collected and collated the information that lead to the decision to stand the student down. Most senior executive teachers said that they did not like standing students down from school which again suggests a sense of disappointment. All principals and most senior executive teachers made reference to metanarratives of the new right when asked to talk about why they stood students down from school. These narratives were dominated by references to zero tolerance approaches to maintaining a safe environment for learning. The references to zero tolerance approaches suggest that the importance of addressing the visibility of the incident overrode the context (Henault, 2001; Skiba & Petersen, 1999). The many references to unacceptable behaviour, the home and inadequate resources suggest that, for principals and senior executive teachers, both the cause of the incident and the solution exists outside the school.

Principals and senior executive teachers identified two distinct groups of students who are stood-down from school; those for whom they perceived stand-down worked and those for whom each stand-down becomes part of a pattern. These two groups can be distinguished most effectively through the different language which is used with each. Students in the minority group were talked about almost entirely in terms of behaviour rather than achievement. These students for whom stand-down was described as adding to a pattern were a minority group but principals and senior executive teachers talked mostly about them rather than those for whom they perceive stand-down is effective. This suggests that for most of these principals and senior executive teachers stand-down is regarded as the start of an exclusionary process rather than as part of a reintegration process. Principals and senior executive teachers talked about
disappointment, about miss matched students and vague solutions that exist outside the school. Some principals and senior executive teachers talked about students with inadequate levels of achievement being vulnerable to being stood-down from school though most talked about behaviour inadequately learned at home putting students at risk of stand-down. This reveals the impact of the truth teller narrative on the practice of stand-down. School personnel appeared to express a direct link between behaviour and achievement. The practices described in table 2 (p. 17) place the responsibility for behaviour appropriate to learning on the home. Acceptable behaviour, learned at home, therefore, will mean that the student will achieve. The practices described in table 2, however, were constructed by education based personnel. These practices, therefore are part of a school based rather than a family based narrative.

How principals and senior executive teachers described their approaches to the home at stand-down indicated the potential success of the encounter in reintegrating the student with school following stand-down. For the most part principals talked about the home as a passive consumer of the stand-down process yet unsuccessful stand-downs were perceived as an inadequacy of the home. This could be seen best in the language principals and senior executive teachers used when referring to encounters between the school and home. The purpose of the encounter was to bring the behaviour of the student in line with expectations of behaviour at school. Some principals, however, actively engaged with students at stand-down and sought ways to avoid missed understandings between home and school. One principal enabled the student to put his side of the story by asking him if he was guilty or not guilty; one principal made an event of every stand-down to ensure all aspects of the incident and its context were aired. Like those parents who actively and assertively engaged with the stand-down process these stand-downs resulted in the most effective reintegrations to school.

Engagement is the name of the game

Awareness of the impact of the truth teller narrative on stand-down as a practice may increase the opportunity for reintegration following stand-down. School personnel, specifically the principal and senior management own the narrative and construct the
stories. External metanarratives determine how these stories are constructed. This research revealed that when external narratives about fairness in the form of the principles of natural justice (NZ Government, 1990) directed the process the outcomes were not only more satisfactory for the home they also reduced the incidence of stand-down for the school. This reduction was not expressed by schools where zero tolerance narratives and narratives of the social Other directed the process. Despite the power owned by school personnel in the stand-down event this study revealed that both parents and students could access alternative forms of power circulating in the school environment to address context and affect positive outcomes. The legitimate power available to parents in the form of assertive intervention was most effective while the students tended to have access to non-legitimate forms of power that, potentially, resulted in stand-down. Some students who used this power, however, found it effective and therefore positive. As schools engage with families at stand-down there is potential to enhance the legitimate power of parents and to investigate the reasons why students behaved in the way they did.

Each student required active intervention to occur to resolve the context before the stand-downs ceased. Where this intervention involved assertive engagement by at least one powerful adult the reintegration was rapid though the essentially passive nature of the relationship between home and school at stand-down might work against this. Positive points of social capital enhance engagement while negative social capital disrupts engagement. Some parents were able to engage with the school following stand-down in such a way that promoted positive points of contact despite established negative capital with the school. The earlier the engagement occurs the better but both Tui’s and Ben’s situations reveal that any new situation e.g. a change of school, also provides an opportunity. What these opportunities suggest is that, despite accumulations of stand-down event and long histories of negative social contact between home and school, each stand-down event provides an opportunity for active engagement between home and school. For this study parents held the key to that engagement. Schools, therefore, have an untapped source of information in parents that was rarely accessed in this study.
8.1.2 Membership and identity in learning communities at stand-down

While the joint enterprise of schools as communities of learners is becoming an adult learner (Laluvein, 2010) it is adherence to codes of acceptable behaviour that also denotes membership. For this study, therefore, there is a close relationship between assumed acceptable behaviour and achievement. The nature of acceptable behaviour is assumed because, like many social representations (Moscovici, 1988), what is acceptable is defined by what it is not (Philogène, 2007). Wenger (1998) describes membership of communities of practice in terms of modes of belonging (see figure two, p. 14). Three factors delineate modes of belonging: engagement, alignment and imagination. How individual members of the community position themselves in terms of these aspects of the modes of belonging to schools as communities of learners defines their identity in and membership of that community of practice at that time.

At stand-down these modes of belonging relate to behaviour. Each school as a community of learners constitutes a landscape of practices which is not only in many ways similar but also in many ways different in each of the ten case studies in the study. The purpose of this summary is to show how the practice of stand-down provides a window to understand identity where membership has been affected through restricted participation.

Stand-down occurs as a consequence of non-alignment between the student and the school. The previous section suggests that that non-alignment is understood to also exist between the home and school at stand-down. The purpose of the stand-down event is to realign the student- and possibly the home- with the school. This is important because non-aligned students may create marginalized identities which eventually have the potential to place the student outside the school. Modes of belonging are also about being able to imagine and engage with the school’s identity of being a student; i.e. achievement and behaviour. Students, therefore, must imagine themselves in terms of the joint enterprise of the school and engage with the school’s shared stories and histories of learning. Much of the literature reviewed for this study suggests that some students through birth or other circumstances may be restricted from full participation in the school as a community of practice (Bishop, 2003; Bishop
& Berryman, 2006; Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 2000; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Lemke, 2000; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Hayden 2007; Meaney & Irwin, 2005; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Parsons, 2009; Zevenbergen, 2001). Many of the students and families interviewed for the study also fit into the categories identified by the literature as potentially restricted from full participation and therefore potentially already marginalized at the time of stand-down through factors outside their control.

Ministry of Education statistics (see MOE, 2009a) and research (Bishop, 2003; Bishop & Berryman, 2006; Bourdieu, 1977, 1986, 2000; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Lemke, 2000; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Hayden 2007; Meaney & Irwin, 2005; Ogbu & Simons, 1998; Parsons, 2009; Zevenbergen, 2001) identify ethnicity and poverty as factors in the marginalization of children. Five out of the ten students interviewed for this study came from ethnic groups identified by the Ministry of Education (2009a) as at greater risk of being stood-down than other ethnic groups. In addition despite the majority attending mid to high decile schools eight out of the ten families described themselves as low income. Furthermore overseas research connects greater risk of exclusion from school to the student having special education needs (Hayden, 2007; Parsons, 2009). While these statistics are not collected in New Zealand in this study four out of the ten students were acknowledged by schools as having either verified or identified special education need. For the ten students interviewed for this study, however, ethnicity and poverty were not the key factors that defined either marginalization or inclusion at stand-down; rather individual positioning and repositioning of the student in terms of the modes of belonging (Wenger, 1998) defined the student’s identity both during and at the end of the study. Students with verified and identified special education need, however, did not fare as well; all of the students in this group remained either peripheral or marginal to or outside the school community by the end of the study.

In this section the conclusions of the study are presented in terms of how individual participants align, engage and imagine themselves in terms of both achievement and behaviour to the joint enterprise of the school as a community of learners. This summary shows that stand-down provides an opportunity not only to understand the marginalization of young people in school but also to reverse outbound and marginal
trajectories and return the student to an inbound or to legitimate peripheral participation in school (Lave and Wenger, 1992).

**Inbound trajectories mean shared stories about modes of belonging**

Principal 3 described stand-downs as a point where authentic conversations about students can occur. This research study confirms this. The stand-down regulations (MOE, 2009) recommend but do not require families and schools to meet at stand-down. For this study where people meet and take the opportunity to talk about stand-down good outcomes happen for young people. Mara’s mother meets with the deputy principal as does Missy’s mother and Tui’s father meets with the dean. When he changed schools Ben’s special needs teacher met regularly with Ben’s mother. This study found that parents are a rich source of information for schools about the context of stand-down and that resolving context is an important precursor to the student reintegrating to school. Conversely where significant contributors to school reintegration do not communicate e.g. Bob’s mother and dean, the reverse applies. All of the participants in narratives where there were accumulated histories of stand-down had established stories and expectations of the other party that were not born out in the interviews. Bob’s mother, for example had used a number of strategies to change Bob’s unacceptable school behaviour and the different meetings the dean described showed he had spent a lot of time talking with Bob about his behaviour. The practice of stand-down in Bob’s story, as it was for the other five students who did not fully reintegrate to school, did not involve shared stories and shared accountabilities. Bob’s mother and his dean, therefore did not share their experiences and plans to resolve Bob’s behaviour.

The six month period following a stand-down event appeared a significant period for many of the students. In this period many of the students realigned themselves with the school. Tui’s story is particularly important because it shows that in the six months following the stand-down something changed that enabled the participants to share stories. This story showed, too, the gradual shift in storytelling that enabled the stories about Tui to come further into line. Both Cherish’s and Ben’s stories showed how
changes in situation enabled and disabled shared storytelling. Ben’s story shows a shift towards agreement between parties about the joint enterprises of behaviour and achievement while Cherish’s, on the other hand shows a shift apart. These shifts in storytelling are significant to the eventual identity trajectory of the student. The close relationship between shared stories and reintegration in this study suggests that the first six months following stand-down is a time for close monitoring and paying attention to the stories told about and by the student.

For most of the students interviewed their shared stories of school as a community of practice involved friendships. This study found that finding a place to be with friends is an important aspect of the joint enterprise of being a student. Furthermore this study identifies a disparity between the importance students and school personnel place on friendship as a factor in both school identity and school membership. In this study friendship appears to be essential to students’ participation in school and therefore to identity and membership. School personnel, however, tended to regard friendships as not enhancing the student’s school identity. To some degree, central to most of the stories was a theme of either non-alignment with or aligning oneself inappropriately with friends. Most of the student stories were about relationship difficulties with and about friends at the time of the stand-down and some of the incidents that resulted in stand-down came directly out of those difficulties. Each told stories of friendship: e.g. being placed in a class away from your friends, being bullied by someone who was your friend and going to the assistance of a friend. Some school personnel referred to friendships as either unimportant or inappropriate for some students. Cherish’s friends, for example, were considered detrimental to her success and reintegration to school and Elephant was identified as marginal by his teacher because he had no friends. Resolving these relationship difficulties appeared to be the key enterprise for the students at stand-down and their resolution essential to reintegration.

Each of the students at the start of the study was asked to imagine their achievement in terms of school outcomes. Each of the students and their parents, at the start of the study had high expectations of achievement voiced as school provided cultural capital in the form of school qualifications. On the whole teachers had lower expectations of the student’s potential than the students and their parents but where there was close
agreement in both potential achievement and in behaviour outcomes then the student was more likely to reintegrate rapidly. Again Ben’s and Tui’s interviews showed a shift towards agreement over the six months of the study and Cherish’s a shift away and this again was an indication of their changing school identity trajectory over the study. Where there was a wide space between parties both parties imagined the other in terms of dichotomous opposites. The other party was described in terms of the undesirable other. Parents and students said they felt separated and treated differently and schools said that homes neither cared about nor wanted to supervise their children. This again was not borne out in the interviews. The interviews about each student within each narrative may have contained misunderstandings but each participant revealed that they cared about the both the incident and the potential outcome. The more separated home and school became the more extreme the claims about the other side.

The students where the distance was greatest were those who were defined as different; for this study those students who were narrated as different appeared marginalized and available for stand-down. Some had verified and identified special education needs while others were described in dichotomous opposite to desirable students: for example; George was “wired”, Bob was “too smart” and Mark had “limited ability”. The most extreme stories were Ben at his intermediate school where tales of violence completely overrode his disability and Elephant whose limited reading ability was not addressed because of his behaviour. In addition while Cherish’s overweight would not define her as having special education needs the bullying that arose from perceptions of her being overweight was considered her own problem. While being overweight might not be considered a ‘special education need’ Cherish, and to some degree Ben and Bob, had special needs at their schools because their weight appeared to make them available to be bullied. Neither the students with identified or verified special education needs nor students like Ben, Bob, Cherish, George and Mark achieved either an inbound trajectory by the end of the six months of the study or agreement between the school and the home about their potential for achievement and acceptable behaviour. The stories about the students with physical and behavioural differences in this study have been told in an earlier chapter but the best
any of them could achieve is Elephant’s and Ben’s limited peripheral participation while Mark has left school and Cherish is on an outward path.

Understanding the identity trajectories of students at stand-down, therefore, is a useful tool in predicting the student’s successful or eventual reintegration to school. For this study to understand the identity trajectories requires listening to the shared stories of the stand-down for each of the significant participants in the stand-down. Where identity trajectories are inbound there will be close agreement about the student’s alignment with acceptable behaviour and acquiring school provided cultural capital. Outbound identity trajectories tell disparate stories of dichotomous opposites while marginal and peripheral identities reveal restricted participation. The difference between peripheral and marginal identities is the degree of legitimization of the identity in terms of the joint enterprise of the school. The difference between Ben and Bob defines this difference. In his marginal position Bob is still available for exclusion while Ben’s behaviour is no longer referred to in negative terms. The key, then, to identifying the potential marginalization of children at stand-down is to listen.

8.1.3 Stand-down provides the opportunity for authentic conversations

The current stand-down regulations recommend but do not require families and schools to meet at stand-down. Those schools that enabled these meetings to occur also provided the opportunity for authentic conversations about the student’s membership of the school. These meetings also provide an opportunity to listen. Even if meetings occur there are still potential barriers to listening. The narrative of the truth teller, the long timescale experiences of schools in working with behaviour, the need to satisfy the expectations of client groups for a safe environment for learning and embedded notions about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour all worked against listening to the context of the incident. In this study the principals and senior teachers had the power through their ownership of the narrative while the parents had the information. Some principals and senior teachers had useful techniques to access that information. In this study, too, there were legitimate peripheral participants who were
able to access information that uncovered context. Ben’s special needs teacher, for example, reversed the school stories about Ben’s disabilities by listening to his mother. There was also the involvement of two SWIS counselors in this study; both peripheral by definition to the school but both able to access information important to reintegration. Schools have a number of other peripheral roles that could be used to access information; the RTLB, for example, and the school counselor. Neither of these roles was used at stand-down for any of the students in the study and only a minority of the students had had any other involvement with the RTLB or the school counselor. Understanding why these peripheral personnel do not appear to be used at stand-down may provide considerable insight to the perceived role of stand-down in school.

Finally, in this study authentic conversations occurred more effectively the more positive points of contact the family had with the school. As context went unresolved the distance between the home and the school increased. Closeness between home and school was essential to reintegration for the students in this school and as the gap widens it became filled with stories of negative social capital that were not shared by other significant storytellers. Exposing and resolving context at the first decision to stand a student down, therefore, is more likely to result in successful reintegration than if the stand-downs accumulate. Tui’s and Ben’s stories, however, indicate that this window of opportunity opens whenever there is a new situation e.g. change of school and in Tui’s case change of school and change of caregiver. Making an “event” (Principal 6) of first stand-down in any situation, therefore, has potential to reduce subsequent accumulations.

8.2 Recommendations
This research study found that, for the ten students in the study authentic conversations between home and school at stand-down had the potential to enhance reintegration to school following stand-down. These conversations may be inhibited by metanarratives which, while external to the field of the stand-down event, have the potential to influence outcomes. Furthermore the assistance available to students with verified and identified special education needs appears uncertain at present. From the
evidence of this study these students appear at greater risk of stand-down than other students. This, and the status of low income students in high decile schools, warrants further investigation.

Recommendations from this study:

1. That there is closer monitoring of the use of the guidelines for stand-down (MOE, 2009)

2. That it is mandatory for schools and families to meet at every stand-down event and where this is difficult there is provision for a legitimate peripheral participant to work between the home and school.

3. That families are provided with a legitimate peripheral participant from the school to ensure the stories of the stand-down event are shared stories.

4. That schools report to boards of trustees on the provisions for reintegration for the student following stand-down. These recommendations should be signed off by the family.

5. That further investigation is carried out into the resources schools have available to enable students with identified and verified special education needs to participate fully in education.

6. That where a student has identified or verified special education needs this information is included on the statistical collection at stand-own

7. That the possibility that students stood-down from school tend to be from low income families even if they attend high decile school is investigated further.

8. That school personnel receive further professional learning on recognizing and addressing bullying contexts in school.
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