STOP Bus Bullies

The Vodden Report 3:
An Agenda for Change

Paul Vodden & Nathalie Noret, 2019

Ben's Story, by Paul Vodden

On 12th of December 2006 our 11-year-old son, Ben, took his own life after being bullied on the dedicated school bus. Had it just been his peers he may well have withstood the bullying, but the bus driver decided to join in and, in our view, this took the situation to another level. As Ben saw it, here was an adult, someone to look up to and who represented authority, taking part in his denigration. Since Ben died, we have campaigned to raise awareness of the issue of bullying on dedicated school buses. We want to help change the current situation to try and make sure no other family suffers the horror of losing their child.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Paul Vodden lived in Southwater, West Sussex with his family, when in 2006 he suffered the tragic loss of his son Ben Vodden. Paul now resides in Essex and is a dedicated campaigner to highlight the issues surrounding bullying on dedicated school buses. Nathalie Noret is a senior lecturer at York St John University. Her research focuses on experiences of bullying in adolescence and the impact such behaviour can have on mental health.

The authors wish to thank all the participants who took the time to complete the surveys and who shared the study with friends and colleagues. Thank you for sharing your experiences, without which this study would not be possible.

Follow our work
You can keep up to date with our work on bullying on school buses, and on the journey to and from school more broadly by following us on social media and visiting our webpage.

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INTRODUCTION

BRIEF OVERVIEW

Bullying is a frequent experience for many children and young people. Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour which can occur repeatedly and over time, and where there is an imbalance of power which makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves (Olweus, 1991; Whitney & Smith, 1993). Such aggression can include physical acts, such as hitting and kicking, verbal acts, such as name calling and insults, indirect bullying, such as being ignored and having rumours spread about you, and cyberbullying which is bullying that occurs through technology and social media (Björkqvist, Lagerspetz, & Kaukiainen, 1992; Hinduja & Patchin, 2008, Marini, Dane, Bosacki, & YLC-CURA, 2006). Identifying the prevalence of experiencing bullying can be challenging due to the different methods employed (Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). However, evidence suggests that between 10% and 33% of pupils report being bullied in school (Hymel & Swearer, 2015).

While a wealth of research has been conducted on experiences of bullying in school, little research has examined experiences of bullying on the school bus. For the purposes of this study, we define the school bus as a private bus journey, where the only passengers are pupils, typically from the same school. We are not referring to journeys pupils take on public buses (public transport). The journey on the school bus typically involves a high number of pupils travelling in a confined space with minimal adult supervision. These characteristics of the school bus journey are risk factors for bullying behaviour (Raskauskas, 2005). Furthermore, if bullying does occur there is very little a pupil can do as they are confined in the space for the duration of the journey, and peers may feel too intimidated to intervene (Raskauskas, 2005). Despite the apparent risk factors associated with the school bus journey, pupil experiences of travelling on the school bus has, to date, attracted little research attention.

THE JOURNEY TO SCHOOL: TRAVELLING BY SCHOOL BUS IN THE UK

Identifying the number of pupils who travel to school can be challenging as national statistics tend to conflate travelling to school by public transport (which can include buses) and travelling by private school bus which are typically private services involving pupils from the same school. The UK's Department for Transport (DfT) conducts a national survey on a regular basis. Key findings from these surveys are summarised in box 1.

Box 1: Department for Transport Travel surveys (DfT 2014, DfT 2018a, DfT 2018b)

In 2014
➔ 5% of 5-10 year olds and 29% of 11-16 year olds travelled to school by bus.
➔ The school bus was the most common means of transport for secondary school pupils.
➔ The average journey for primary school pupils was 1.6 miles, taking approximately 13 minutes. For secondary school pupils, the average journey was 3.4 miles, taking approximately 25 minutes.

In 2018
➔ The average journey distance remained unchanged.
➔ 6% of primary school pupils and 33% of secondary travelled to school using *other* means, which included by bus.
➔ The Department for Transport also produced a report on school transport presented by ethnicity of pupils. The report highlighted that between 2013 and 2017 of those pupils aged 5 to 16 years, 13% travelled to school by *local bus* and 4% travelled by *private bus*.

School buses typically carry 50 to 70 children and young people on the journey to and from school. The Department for Education (DfE) (2014) recommends that travel time to school

should be no more than 75 minutes for secondary school pupils, and 45 minutes for primary school pupils.

SAFEGUARDING ON SCHOOL BUSES: GOVERNMENT POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Different bus providers, schools, and local authorities have different approaches to safeguarding on school bus journeys. The role of bus drivers is essential to ensure the safety of their passengers as part of their legal duties. Despite evidence highlighting the experience of bullying on school buses, there is limited guidance on safeguarding children and young people on the school bus. The Department for Education (DfE) (2017), in their guidance on preventing and tackling bullying, highlight how schools have a responsibility to tackle and prevent bullying which occurs outside school grounds:

"School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre".

Furthermore, DfE (2014) in their home to school travel and transport guidance outlines statutory guidance regarding school transport. Regarding poor behaviour, the guidance outlines that:
➔ The DfE expects schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour on the journey to and from school, and to utilise sanctions where necessary to address poor behaviour (page 19).
➔ The DfE also highlight that local authorities can withdraw the provision of transport in response to poor behaviour (page 19).

Focusing specifically on safeguarding, the DfE (2014, page 18) states:
"It is the responsibility of the individual local authority to ensure the suitability of its employees and any contractors or their employees by undertaking the required safeguarding checks on those whose work or other involvement will bring them into contact with children, or more widely, vulnerable adults. This should include bus drivers, taxi drivers and escorts, as necessary."

While there is no specific guidance on how best to safeguard children and young people on the school bus, the DfE suggests that local authorities should conduct regular audits of children and young people relating to personal safety and security. These audits should examine behaviour on the school bus, as the DfE (2014, page 8) states:
"The audit should consider data relating to personal safety and security, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school".

While policy highlights the duty of local authorities to audit school journeys (DfE, 2014), and provides schools with the powers to discipline pupils who bully others outside school (DfE, 2017), there is no statutory regulations regarding the supervision of children and young people on school buses. Drawing parallels with school trip guidance, the DfE (2018) outlines that the number of staff required to supervise children and young people should be guided by a risk assessment. The National Union of Teachers (NUT, 2008) outlines guidance (see box 2) on adult to pupil ratios which should be seen as the minimum requirement for school journeys (specifically focusing on school trips).

Box 2: Guidance on adult to pupil ratios for school trips

➔ Years 1-3 (ages 5 years to 8 years):   1 adult per 6 pupils.
➔ Years 4-6 (ages 8 years to 11 years):   1 adult per 10-15 pupils.
➔ Year 7+ (ages 11 years +):   1 adult per 20 pupils.

While the journey to and from school to home is different to a school trip (National Education Union, 2018), clear guidance on the supervision of children on such journeys is lacking. Drawing parallels with school trip guidance highlights the supervision required to adequately safeguard children and young people. In their guidance on planning safe school trip journeys the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) (2012) suggest that the ratio of adults to pupils requires careful consideration. The ATL (2012) suggests that ratios should be increased if a school bus is a double decker bus, to ensure further supervision of pupils on each level. Greater adult supervision would arguably reduce the pressure on bus drivers to monitor pupil behaviour and intervene in any bullying they witness whilst driving. Under low supervision levels, pupils are at an increased risk to engage in unsafe behaviour (such as bullying), due to the lack of adult supervision and limited consequences for poor behaviour (Sampasa-Kanyinga, Chaput, Hamilton & Larouche, 2016).

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BULLYING ON SCHOOL BUSES: STATE OF THE EVIDENCE.

While the issue of bullying on school buses has attracted little research attention, studies to date have highlighted the impact of the behaviour on pupils and school bus drivers. Raskauskas (2015) reviewed video tape recordings of school bus journeys over a one-month period. In total 30 bus journeys from one school district in California were reviewed, the recordings ranged from 10 to 44 minutes long. The videos were observed to examine experiences of bullying on the school journey. Raskauskas (2015) also examined whether the fulness of the bus (the number of the pupils on the bus) impacted on the frequency and severity of bullying, alongside whether pupils without friends on the bus were at greater risk of being bullied. Results of the observations identified 53 incidences of bullying across the 30 bus journeys, and more bullying occurred on afternoon journeys (the journey home) compared to morning journeys (the journey to school). Physical and Verbal bullying were the most frequently observed types of bullying, males were more likely to perpetrate acts of bullying, however no gender difference was found in experiences of being bullied. Findings of the observations also highlighted that more bullying occurred on fuller buses. Finally, the observations also examined the impact of the presence of friends. Results of these observations found that of those who were bullied on the school bus; 20% appeared to have no friend, 56.7% had a friend who was not involved in the bullying, and 23.3% had a friend who was involved in the bullying.

Conducting research with pupils on their school bus experiences can be challenging, therefore a number of studies have conducted research with school bus drivers. deLara (2008) examined experiences of observing bullying and aggression in a sample of 30 bus drivers from school districts in New York. Of the 30 bus drivers, 90% (N=27) had witnessed verbal bullying, 70% (N=21) had witnessed psychological intimidation, 27% (N=8) had witnessed physical aggression and 20% (N=6) had witnessed sexual harassment. While many of the drivers in this study reported intervening in incidences of bullying approximately 25% of drivers felt that bullying was likely to occur on their bus without them noticing. The drivers in this study also offered strategies for managing bullying on school buses, these strategies are summarised in box 3.

Box 3: Driver suggestions for tackling bullying (quoted directly from deLara, 2008).

1. Seat children close to the driver who are susceptible to bullying or being victimised;
2. Separate children who are fighting or having difficulty and assign seats;
3. Be "aware of everything" and watch for the moods and signs of troubled kids;
4. Talk with bullies about being respectful on the bus;
5. Intervene before anything happens, and discuss the day with the kids;
6. Maintain a good relationship with each child;
7. Ask about interests and hobbies;
8. Try to engage potential bullies in positive conversations; and
9. Above all, talk to the students with respect.

Surveys of bus drivers and transport officials regarding bullying, and bad behaviour more generally, have been conducted. In their survey of 2,595 transport officials in the US, Hendrix, Kennedy and Trudeau (2019), found that 25% of the total sample reported bullying as a common experience. Witnessing such behaviour on the bus is obviously challenging for bus drivers, whose focus should be on the safe driving on the bus. This impact is highlighted in Goodboy, Martin and Brown's (2016) survey of 117 public school bus drivers in the US. They found that witnessing bullying was related to anxious driving and job stress. In addition, qualitative research with bus drivers has highlighted that while drivers intervene in bullying behaviours, they often feel unsupported by education officials (Brown, Karikari, Abraham & Akakpo, 2018; Hogenkamp & Bolden, 2019).

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BULLYING ON SCHOOL BUSES IN THE UK.

To date, the majority of research on bullying in school buses has been conducted outside the UK. Identifying the prevalence rate in the UK is challenging due to the lack of published data. Unpublished data, however, provides some indication of the prevalence of the behaviour. Results of the Bullying Intervention Group's (BIG) secondary school survey of 9,814 pupils found that 13.09% (N=941) of participants reported experiencing bullying on the bus to or from school, and 57.16% (N=4,109) of participants reported witnessing such behaviour (A. Katz, personal communication, 10th July 2017). Furthermore, in 2014, the Department for Travel survey highlighted that 9% of primary school pupils and 6% of secondary school pupils were accompanied to school by an adult due to fears about bullying. Furthermore, two large scale surveys (Vodden 2014, 2015) have highlighted the prevalence of bullying on school buses, these two studies are summarised in box 4.

Box 4: Summaries of the Vodden Reports (Vodden 2014, Vodden 2015)

The Vodden Report 2014
- → Conducted a survey examining experiences of bullying and was distributed through social media. The survey recruited a sample of 254 participants.
- → Participants reported on experiences of bullying in 2012, and 48% of participants reported that they experienced bullying on the school bus.
- → The most commonly experienced form of bullying was verbal bullying, followed by physical bullying.
- → 30% of participants reported that the bullying lasted more than a year, and 31% reported that the bullying had started on the school bus.
- → 16% of participants reported that the driver knew about the bullying and did nothing, and 7% of participants reported that the bus driver actively participated in the bullying.

The Vodden Report 2015: In the driver's seat
- → Conducted a survey of 94 school bus drivers reporting on their experiences of witnessing bullying.
- → Of these 94 participants, 25.3% (N=23) reported that they had received training on working with children and 20.9% (N=19) had received training on how to manage incidences of bullying on school buses.
- → Regarding bullying, 67.4% (N=62) of participants reported witnessing bullying on the school bus, 68.8% (N=55) had witnessed physical bullying, and 98.9% (N=79) had witnessed verbal bullying.
- → Regarding managing bullying on the school bus: 33.7% (N=29) of drivers reported that their company has a procedure in place for managing bullying, 9.6% (N=8) reported that another adult was present on the bus, and 38.3% (N=31) of drivers reported that their bus had CCTV in place.

The effects of bullying on school buses have been reported, suggesting mostly negative outcomes. Whilst victims reported low self-esteem and depression (Vodden, 2014), many note their overall experiences as negative (Henderson, 2009). For example, Allen, Young, Ashbaker,

Heaton and Parkinson (2003) reported that only 67% of perpetrators were disciplined for their behaviour, and many victims received no constructive help (Vodden, 2014).

THE CURRENT STUDY

The state of the evidence highlights that bullying on school buses is a relatively under-studied aspect of bullying in children and adolescents. The review of the literature highlights the unique nature of school buses and how this relates to a range of risk factors for bullying behaviour, which are summarised in figure 1.

Figure 1: Risk factors for bullying on school buses
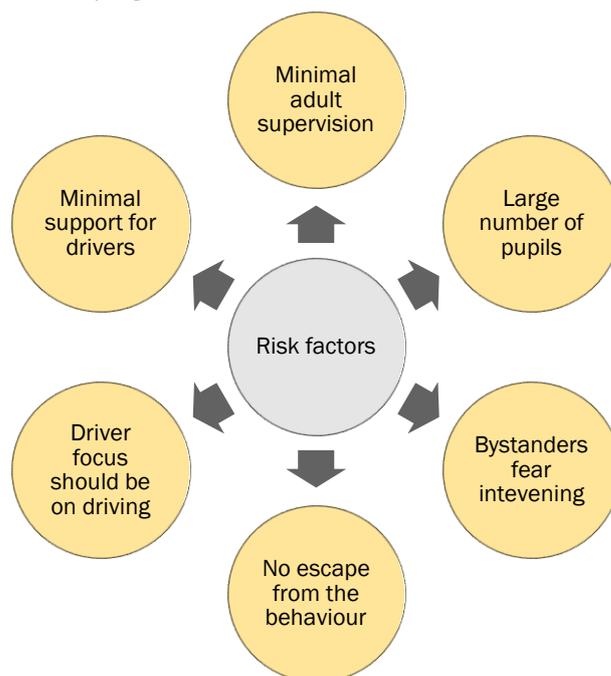
Therefore, the aim of the current study is to further examine the issue of bullying on school buses, to better understand the policy framework, alongside pupil and bus driver experiences of bullying and their perceptions of the usefulness of different interventions to tackle bullying. Specifically, we aim to address the following research questions:

1. How many local authorities in England adhere to the governments recommendation to conduct audits on safety on school transport? What strategies do local authorities use to monitor pupil safety on the journey to and from school?

2. What are bus drivers' experiences of witnessing bullying on school buses? What approaches are used on their buses to ensure safety and how effective did participants perceive such strategies to be?

3. What are young adults' recollections of bullying on school buses? What approaches were taken to ensure safety in school buses, and how effective did participants perceive such strategies to be?

METHOD

LOCAL AUTHORITY SURVEY

The aim of the local authority survey was to examine adherence to the Department for Education's guidance on home to school travel (DfE, 2014). While this guidance does not include any guidance on how to safeguard pupils on school buses specifically, the guidance suggests that local authorities should conduct regular audits with children and young people relating to personal safety and security.

A survey was created for the purposes of the study and which examined whether local authorities had conducted an audit on sustainability, and personal safety and security on school transport. The questions related to the DfE (2014) guidance on auditing personal safety and security and provided participants with the opportunity to expand on their answers. The survey was emailed to all local education authorities in England (N=152). Responses to the survey were received from 79 (52%) local education authorities, 11 (7%) authorities reported they have no private school buses operating in their region.

BUS DRIVER SURVEY

The aim of the bus driver survey was to examine experiences of bullying on school buses, alongside the use and perceived effectiveness of interventions such as the use of CCTV. A survey was conducted for the purposes of the study. The survey included questions on experiences of witnessing bad behaviour and bullying, perceptions of feeling safe and in control, alongside reports of reports of being distracted while driving the bus. Participants were also asked about whether they had received any training on tackling bullying on the school bus, alongside questions on the effectiveness of using CCTV and other interventions.

The survey was distributed on social media sites for bus drivers, for example bus and coach driver Facebook groups. In total, 68 participants completed the survey, 85% (N=58) were male and 15% (N=10) were female. As shown in figure 2, the majority of participants reported having driven a school bus for five years or more.

Figure 2: Length of time participants have been driving a school bus.

%	Less than six months	Six months to a year	One to five years	Five years or more
%	6	7	19	68
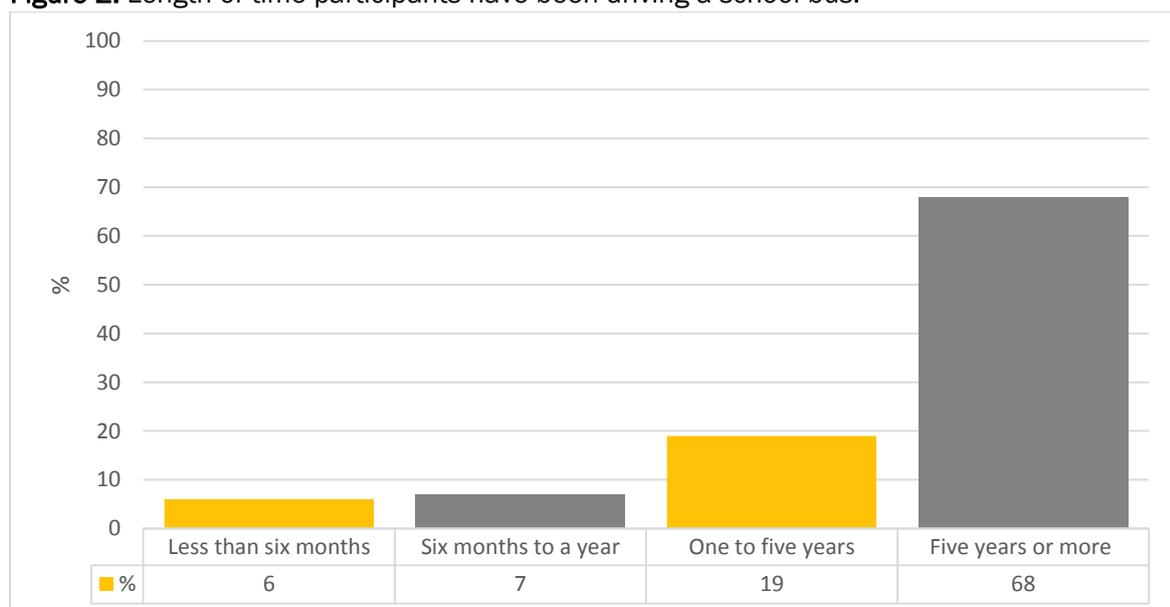
YOUNG ADULT SURVEY

The survey for young adults followed a similar structure to the bus driver survey. The focus of this survey was also to examine experiences of bullying on school buses, alongside the use and perceived effectiveness of interventions such as the use of CCTV. The survey included questions on experiences of and witnessing bullying, perceptions of feeling safe, alongside reports of reports of being distracted while driving the bus. The survey was distributed via email to university students aged 18 to 25. The invitation to participate in the study explicitly stated that the focus of the study was on experiences of bullying on private school buses. In total, 76 participants completed the survey, 82% (N=62) were female and 17% (N=13) were male, one participant did not report their gender.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

The results from each of the three surveys are presented separately. All sections of the questionnaire are presented. In places the number of participants may not reflect the total sample size for the survey as some participants did not answer all questions. Some percentages may exceed 100% as some questions allowed participants to provide more than one answer. Participants qualitative comments are also presented.
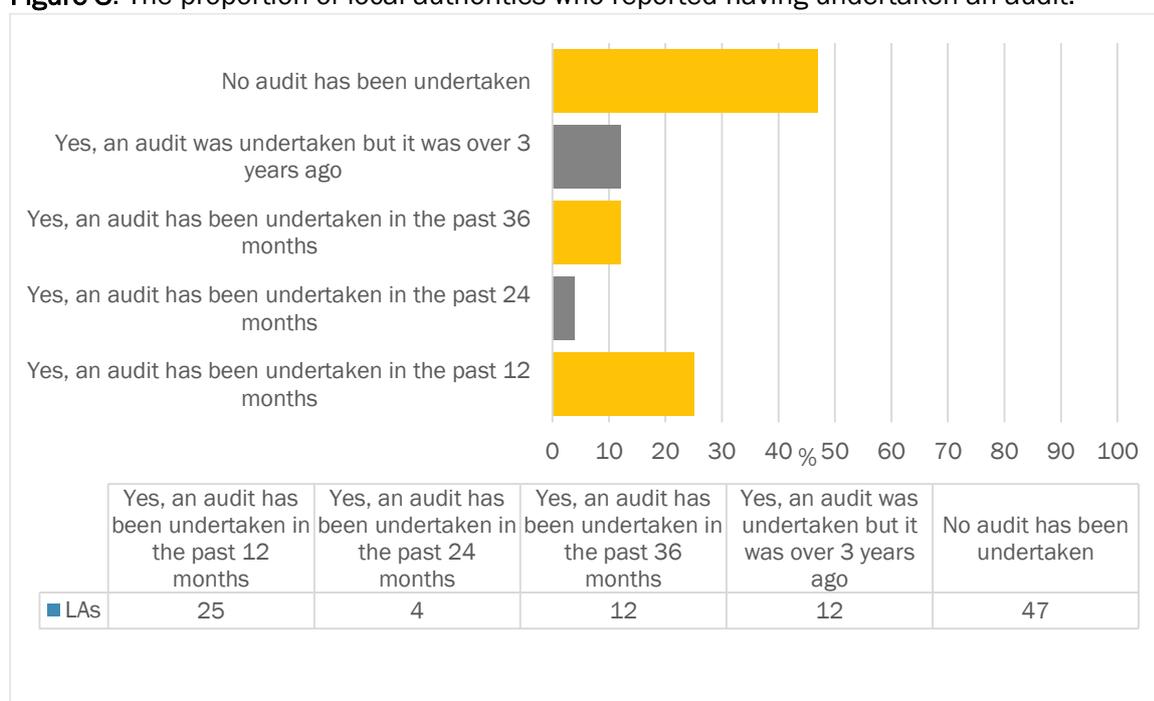
AUDITING INFRASTRUCTURE

Question: On page 8 of the Home to school travel and transport guidance the DfE (2014) suggest that "*Local authorities should audit infrastructure in accordance with any relevant guidance and the requirements of any infrastructure implemented. Specific school routes audits are considered good practice. The specifics of the audit and how often it should be reviewed are for a local authority to decide on as appropriate*". Has your local authority undertaken an audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within your local authority?

Figure 3 shows the proportion of local authorities who reported having undertaken such an audit. As this figure shows, 47% of respondents indicated that no audit has been undertaken, however 25% reported that an audit had been undertaken in the past 12 months.

Figure 3: The proportion of local authorities who reported having undertaken an audit.

	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 12 months	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 24 months	Yes, an audit has been undertaken in the past 36 months	Yes, an audit was undertaken but it was over 3 years ago	No audit has been undertaken
■ LAs	25	4	12	12	47

Participants were provided with the opportunity to provide more information related to their response, several local authorities offered additional comments in response to this question. These comments included the following:
➔ In (location omitted) we have over 7,000 recognised bus stops and as such any pro-active audit is not considered to be realistic.
➔ A transport scrutiny board has been reviewing transport provisions for CYP & ASC over the past 2 years. The board reviewed costs, policies and service delivery, making recommendations throughout.
➔ I am only aware of home to school transport routes for children and vulnerable adults with SEND and we are constantly reviewing routes. I am not aware of anything being done locally in relation to mainstream bus provision.
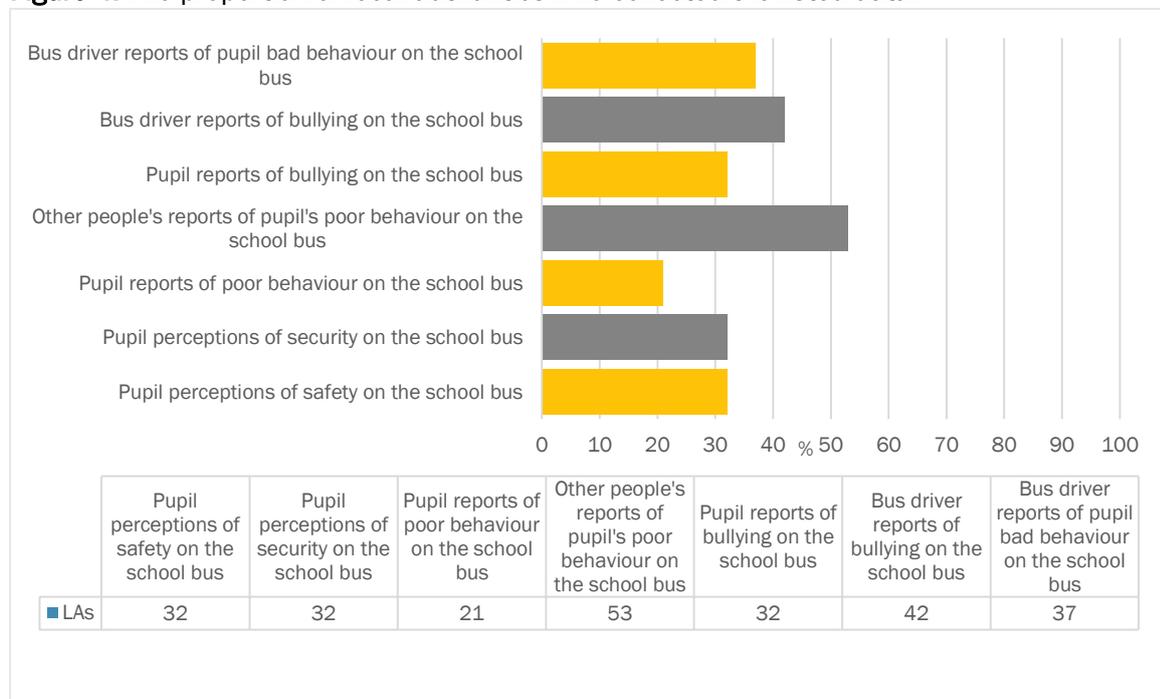
AUDITING PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY

Question: Also, on page 8, the DfE (2014) states " *The audit should consider data relating to personal safety and security, and other factors that influence travel choices, such as poor behaviour on school buses and/or the incidence of bullying on the journey to school"*. We're particularly interested in pupil's experiences travel to school on private buses (not public transport). In your last audit, did you collect data on any of the following (please tick all that apply).

The findings of this question are presented in figure 4:
➔ Over half of the participating authorities collect reports from other people on pupils' poor behaviour on the bus.
➔ Approximately a third of authorities collect data from pupils directly:
  o 32% collect data on pupil perceptions of safety on the bus.
  o 32% collect data on pupil perceptions of security on the school bus.
  o 21% collect data on pupil reports of poor behaviour on the school bus.
  o 32% collect data on pupil experiences of bullying on the school bus.

Figure 4: The proportion of local authorities who collected the listed data.

	Pupil perceptions of safety on the school bus	Pupil perceptions of security on the school bus	Pupil reports of poor behaviour on the school bus	Other people's reports of pupil's poor behaviour on the school bus	Pupil reports of bullying on the school bus	Bus driver reports of bullying on the school bus	Bus driver reports of pupil bad behaviour on the school bus
▪ LAs	32	32	21	53	32	42	37

MONITORING SYSTEM FOR BULLYING ON SCHOOL BUSES

Question: Do you have a monitoring system so that information on bullying in school buses can be shared with you?

As shown in figure 5 the majority of local authorities have a form of monitoring system which is either used specifically in relation to bullying on school buses, or a more general monitoring system.

Figure 5: The proportion of local authorities who reported having a monitoring system for bullying
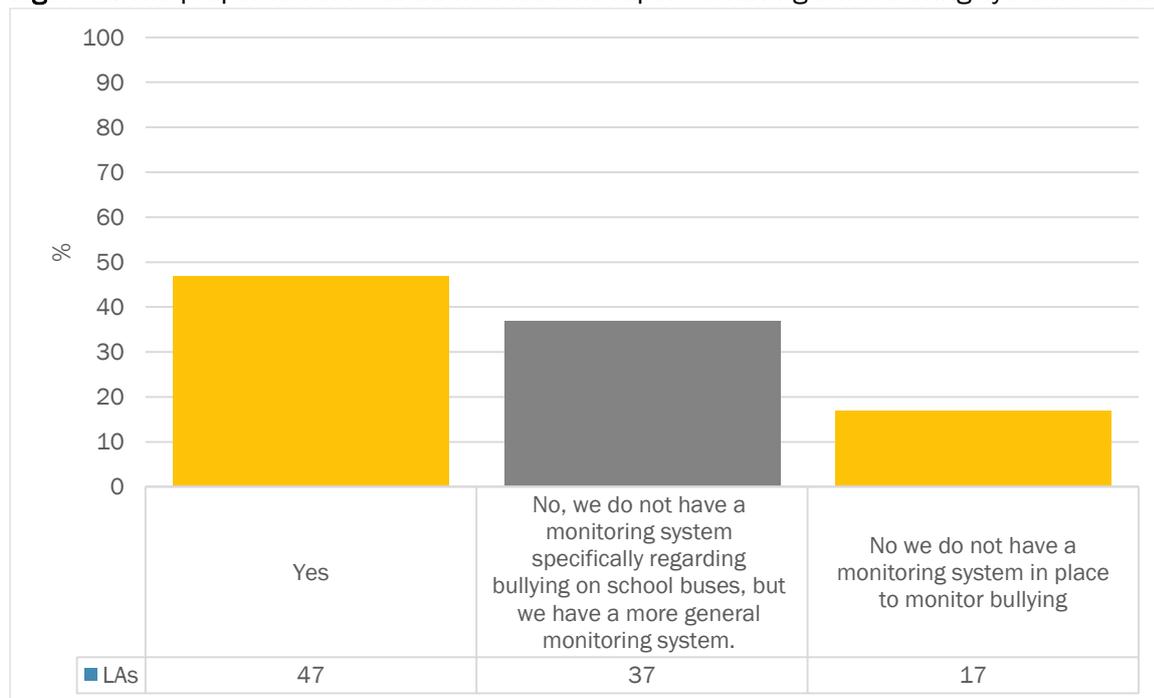
Several local authorities added comments in relation to their monitoring systems:
➔ I am specifically employed to deliver education to students regardless bullying and be the first point of contact if problems occur.
➔ On many routes we have bus monitors (normally year 11, 12 & 13 students) who monitor behaviour on the buses and report back to staff.
➔ We have a contract compliance system that ensures concerns are dealt with.
➔ All our SEN transport has passenger assistants on board who would deal with and report to us and the school.

Question: Do you have a referral system so that information on bullying in school buses can be shared with you?

As shown in figure 6 the majority of participating local authorities have a form of referral system which is either used specifically in relation to bullying on school buses, or a more general system.

Figure 6: The proportion of local authorities who reported having a referral system for bullying

	Yes	No, we do not have a referral system specifically regarding bullying on school buses, but we have a more general referral system.	No we do not have a referral system in place to monitor bullying
■LAs	79	39	14
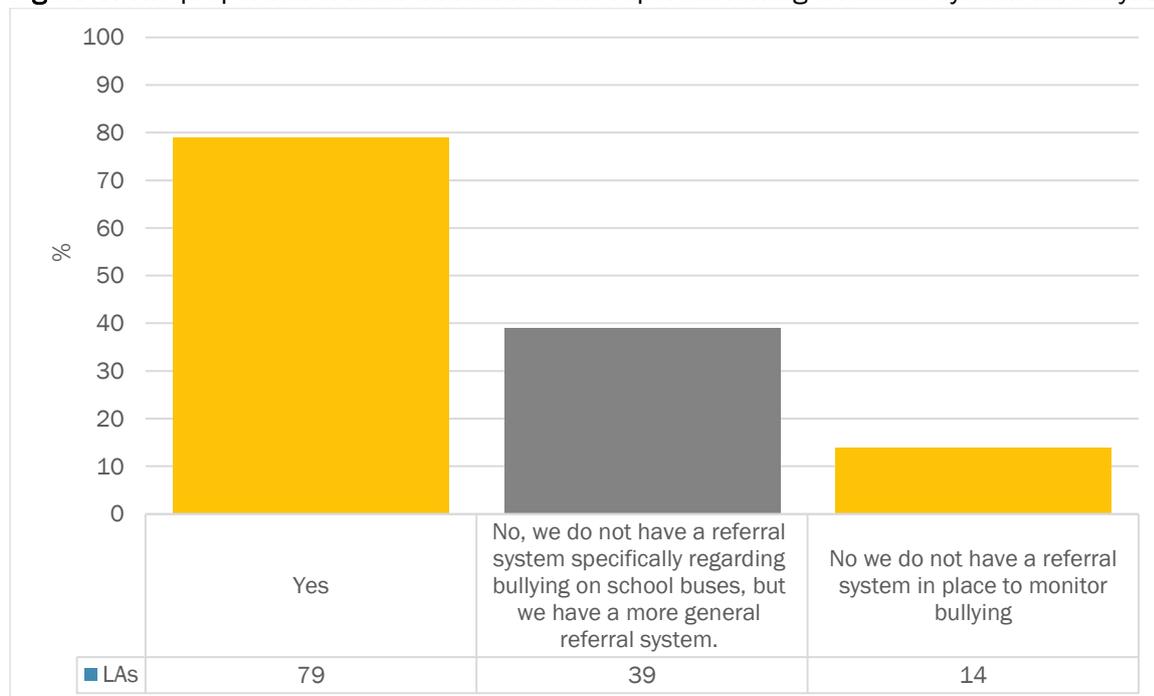
Several local authorities also added comments in relation to their referral systems, these included:
➔ The authority has an accident/incident protocol. Any incidents on transport, including bullying, should be reported to the transport team by a parent, school or transport provider.
➔ If we have any bullying issues, we send them to the school to investigate and deal with, if they want a warning letter or ban sent out from the transport team if they request this.
➔ Specific email address and a database where complaints and concerns are logged and dealt with.
➔ We refer all instances of bad behaviour, including bullying directly to the school for them to deal with under the relevant legislation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A number of authorities included additional information on the provision and monitoring of school buses in their local authority region.

These comments included:
➔ Regular monitoring for misbehaviour is carried out in conjunction with the Schools to ensure misbehaviour is kept to a minimum. A Code of Conduct is issued to all 'entitled' pupils
➔ Although the local authority has not formally audited the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure, there is regular review and monitoring of all education transport arrangements and continuing dialogue with relevant parties regarding the development of any new or changes to existing foot/cycle paths or changes to school/academy vehicle/pedestrian access points etc. As indicated above the local authority has no specific mechanism in place to report any issues of alleged bullying on education transport. However, arrangements are in place for any education transport related issues to be reported to/from the local authority's education transport team, school/academy and/or contractors and for appropriate action to be agreed as and when required by all parties.
➔ We conduct an annual survey of users of the SEN Transport service, asking them questions directly related to their experience of the service, but not specifically bullying.
➔ The Road Safety team has responsibility for the delivery of road safety education, training and publicity; as well as promoting and encouraging the use of sustainable transport across the Borough.
➔ We have a comprehensive school transport monitoring process in place, a Service Assurance Team who regularly meet with operators, travel on buses and interview staff should an incident be reported.
➔ All of our in-house transport services have a driver and at least 1 passenger attendant. Any instances of bullying, challenging or disruptive behaviour is reported by the crew, and investigated by managers. Currently, none of our services have CCTV on board the vehicles.
➔ Monitoring operations are carried out during the year, however, we are very aware that school journeys provide an opportunity for bullying so we are dependent on schools and operators reporting incidents to us.

RESULTS: BUS DRIVER SURVEY

FEELING SAFE AND IN CONTROL ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire included questions on how safe drivers felt while driving the bus, and their perceptions of pupil behaviour.

➜ As shown in figure 7, many bus drivers (81%) reported feeling safe while driving the school bus.

➜ The majority of bus drivers also reported feeling in control when driving the school bus

Figure 7: Participants reports of feeling safe while driving the school bus
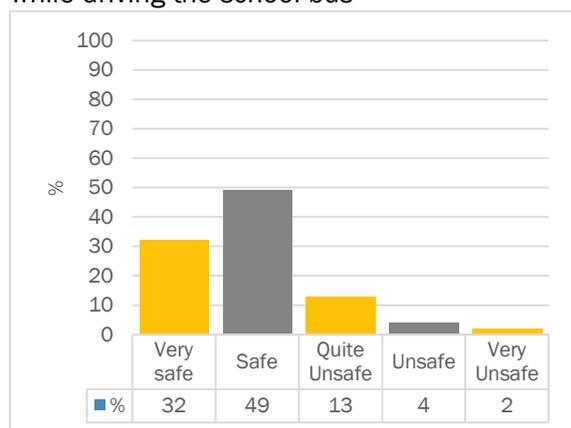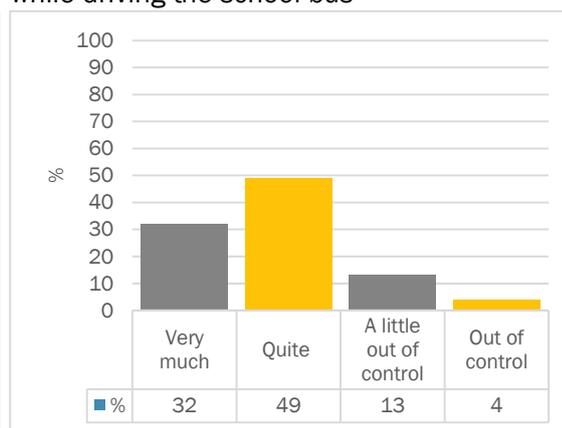

	Very safe	Safe	Quite Unsafe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe
%	32	49	13	4	2

Figure 8: Participants reports of feeling in control while driving the school bus

	Very much	Quite	A little out of control	Out of control
%	32	49	13	4

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Bus drivers were also asked about the general behaviour of pupils on their school bus.

➜ 56 (84%) reported being distracted by pupil behaviour.

➜ As shown in table 1, participants were asked to report on pupil's behaviour on the school bus. Overall drivers reported that pupils were typically well behaved, with the majority reported high prevalence of pupils not leaving the bus clean and tidy.

Table 1: Participants perceptions of pupil behaviour on school buses

Pupils…	All pupils	Most pupils	Some pupils	Few pupils	None
Are good listeners	1 (2%)	21 (31%)	28 (41%)	14 (21%)	4 (6%)
Are polite and courteous	4 (6%)	37 (56%)	11 (17%)	11 (17%)	3 (5%)
Follow instructions	7 (11%)	29 (43%)	15 (22%)	13 (10%)	3 (5%)
Leave the bus clean & tidy	3 (4%)	9 (13%)	19 (28%)	24 (35%)	13 (19%)
Are threatening	1 (2%)	4 (6%)	12 (18%)	25 (37%)	26 (38%)
Are disrespectful	4 (6%)	13 (19%)	20 (29%)	23 (34%)	8 (12%)
Are rude	5 (8%)	9 (13%)	22 (33%)	23 (34%)	8 (12%)

COMMENTS ON FEELING SAFE AND PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Bus drivers were asked about pupil behaviour and how safe and in control they felt when driving the school bus. They were provided with the opportunity to comment further on their response. These comments included:

FEELING SAFE & IN CONTROL

→ I'm a very safe driver and the school buses provided are safe and well maintained.
→ I have driven school buses on various occasions throughout my vocational driving career (30 years). In general, I feel very safe, but have answered safe because there have been occasions when some bad experiences have tarnished my usual 'very safe' status. These are the exceptions to the rule.
→ I only feel safe because I have been driving the same route for 14 years.
→ In control if you make it clear to the students and children from the start in a friendly and fun way I believe that if you go about it in a militant way the student pick up on this behaviour and use it to their advantage to test you as am individual.

ON PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

→ Children are very intimidating, and that is why I have finished driving school buses. I have not yet found a school where the children are not unruly on buses, and also have fun in damaging the fittings.
→ Some children will not stay sat down.
→ Children not following safety instructions.
→ They have no respect for authority and think they are free to do whatever they wish.
→ Children out of seats, running about, shout, playing loud music and not belted in seats.
→ Loud music, shouting and screaming, if you ask for it to be kept down you are told they can do what they want. Called Police on one occasion and they refused to attend and advised report to school.
→ Pupils fighting.
→ I have had coke bottles being thrown around the coach, one time the bottle ended up under the brake pedal.
→ Bottles being thrown.
→ Usually at the beginning of a new School year when younger pupils play up, not travelled before and think they are the big I am!!!
→ Children climbing on seats or standing up even though they should wear seat belts have distracted me. I have always stopped in a safe place and addressed the coach.

ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

→ Can't have eyes on the road and on what's happening very dangerous.
→ Constantly having to stop the bus to deal with a situation between school children.
→ Although they are told to wear seat belts once you have moved away from the school off come the seat belts and they are running up and down the bus.
→ As the driver you are not allowed to control or eject the children and they know this and play on it.
→ Impossible to be in full control with an average of 50 pupils on board.
→ Once and I stopped the bus and they were told until they stopped we weren't moving.

BULLYING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire included questions on bus drivers experiences of witnessing bullying behaviour.

➔ 60% (N=41) of participants reported that they had been distracted by bullying behaviours on their buses.
➔ As shown in figure 9, 80% (N=51) of bus drivers reported witnessing bullying on their buses, 17% (N=11) reported witnessing a lot of bullying, and 63% (N=40) reported witnessing a little.
➔ 76% (N=47) of bus drivers reported believing that bullying on school buses is a serious issue.
➔ Verbal forms of bullying were the most frequently witnessed forms of bullying reported by bus drivers. These included being teased, being called names, being yelled at, see table 2, appendix I.

Figure 9: Participant reports of witnessing bullying on the school bus

	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Unsure
%	17	63	16	5
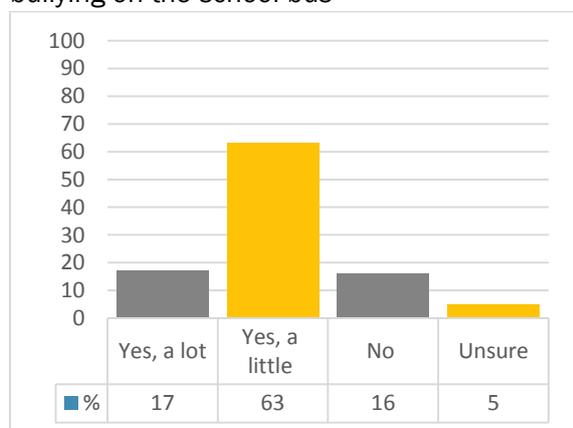
Figure 10: Participant perceptions of the seriousness of bullying on the school bus
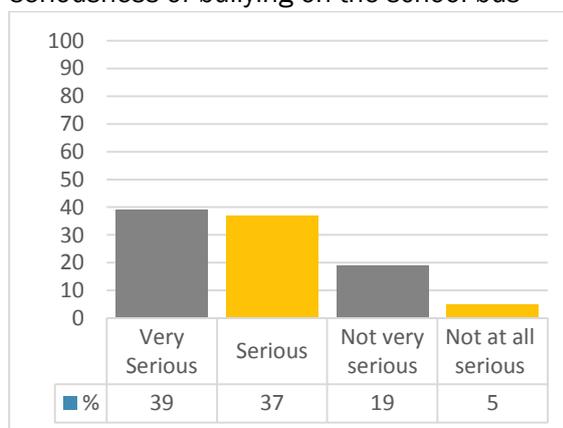
	Very Serious	Serious	Not very serious	Not at all serious
%	39	37	19	5

Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on some of their answers, responses included the following comments:
➔ Mainly year sevens get bullied by year tens etc.
➔ Had to report a situation to the school staff as see what was going on that was thanks to training in my old job as a childcare manager.
➔ Bullying was occurring due to another student's different appearance with clothing etc.
➔ They are quite openly bullying on it. When I intervene, they say they haven't done a thing.
➔ Reported to my employer and the school. The company complete county council paperwork as well.

BULLYING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

Participants were asked how they responded to bullying they witnessed on their school bus. Participants could select more than one answer. Responses to this question are shown in figure 11.

➔ Few participants (7%) reported doing nothing about the bullying they witnessed.
➔ The most frequent response was reporting the incident to the school.

Figure 11: Participant reports of their response to witnessing bullying on the bus

	Stopped the bus and spoke to the pupils	Suggested the victim(s) move seats	Advised the victims to sit closer to you	Spoke to the bully/ bullies	Reported the incident to your manager	Reported the incident to the local authority	Reported the incident to the school.	Nothing	Other
■ LAs	49	36	41	38	57	13	63	7	15

Note: Percentages will exceed 100% as participants could select more than one answer

Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on some of their answers, responses included:
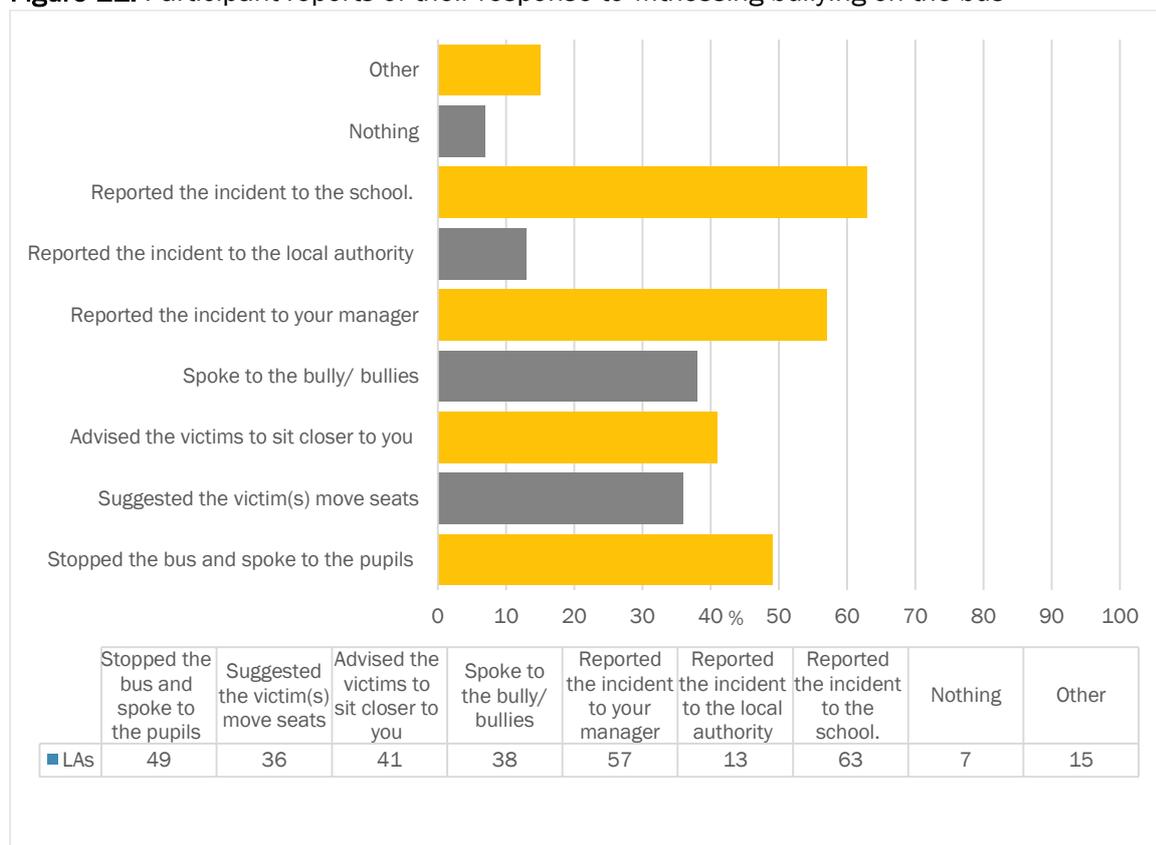➔ In most cases the procedure is to report to my employer through a formal report system, so the manager is usually involved rather than any direct report to a LA. However, some schools have a responsible transport teacher and they actively encourage reports from drivers about incidents or issues and in those cases I have constructively made use of the facility. I have also sometimes suggested that a student being bullied comes to sit closer to me on the vehicle where I can better see what is going on.
➔ I also spoke to the student that was the victim and made it clear that these people are people to ignore and are simply jealous and have their own issues that they are taking out on themselves I stated be the bigger person and ignore it and if it was to get physical speak on the coach to let me now and any other areas to tell an adult in charge.
➔ My employer report it to the local authority and the company kept its own records as well.
➔ In some cases, I have returned the bus to the school with everyone on board.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire also included questions on whether bus drivers had received any training regarding how to manage bullying on their bus, and their perceptions of the usefulness of CCTV and the presence of another adult when managing pupil behaviour.

➔ 21% (N=14) reported that they had received training on how to tackle bullying on the school bus.
➔ 66% (N=45) of respondents reported that their bus had CCTV.
➔ 4% (N=3) of respondents reported that another adult was on the bus.
➔ As shown in figure 12, the majority of participants believed that CCTV and the presence of another adult is helpful in managing pupil behaviour.

Figure 12: Participant perceptions of how helpful CCTV and the presence of another adult is when managing pupil behaviour

	Do not have	Very helpful	Helpful	Neither	Unhelpful	Very unhelpful
CCTV	10	39	25	10	12	5
Another adult	36	36	12	8	3	5
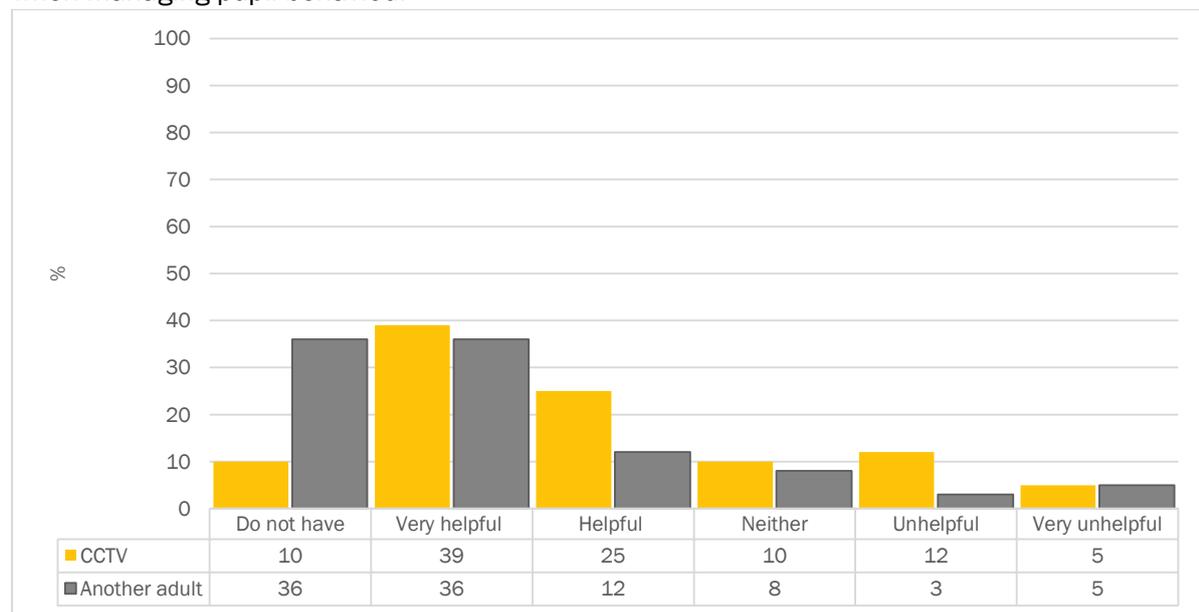
Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on some of their answers, responses included:
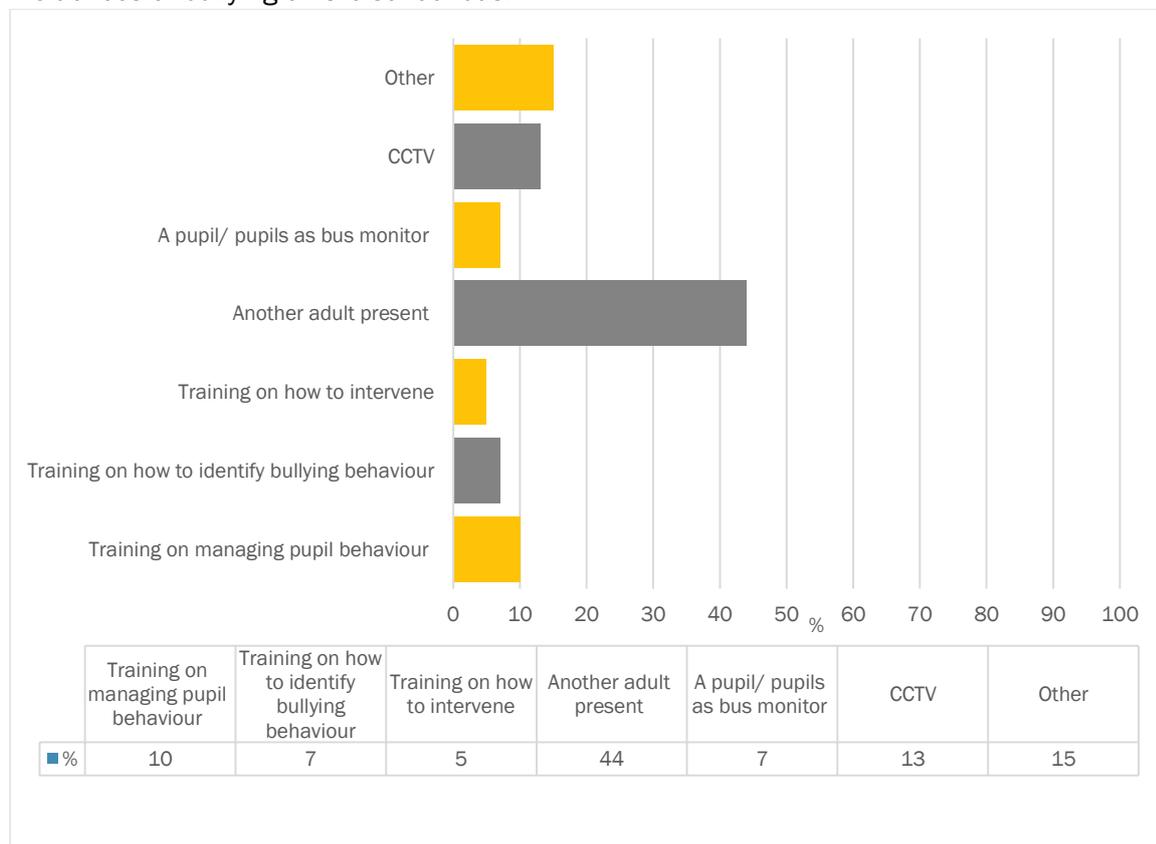➔ In some cases, we have passed CCTV footage to the schools and local authority.
➔ I think CCTV is a key for evidence in bullying and misbehaving children. I think it is important to have sound and a good number of camera's spread over the bus. In some cases, my employer had to use hidden cameras as the children would try and damage them.
➔ Without doubt the evidence available from CCTV is very helpful. It is even more helpful if sound is also available coupled to the images. I have also been aware that in the event of accidents CCTV evidence is incredibly useful.
➔ All on CCTV but a kid was in last years of school, so school did nothing I had to continue to take them to and from school.
➔ Should have 2 members of school staff but they won't get on as the kids are so badly behaved.
➔ Some schools have teachers in attendance while loading up but none travelling.
➔ Well obviously, if another adult were present who could deal with behavioural issues and allow you to concentrate on driving that would be great - but few LAs seem to have the funds for this and recruiting escorts is often very difficult.
➔ I have had another adult on some school runs and they take little notice on some occasions. One school even had a PCSO on it and the children would swear at them.

The final section of the questionnaire asked participants about their perceptions of the one strategy would be most helpful to manage bullying and incidences of bullying on the school bus.

➔ The most frequent response to this question was '*another adult present*' on the bus.
➔ Few participants thought training would be particularly helpful.

Figure 13: Participant reports of strategies that would be helpful to manage pupil behaviour and incidences of bullying on the school bus.

	Training on managing pupil behaviour	Training on how to identify bullying behaviour	Training on how to intervene	Another adult present	A pupil/ pupils as bus monitor	CCTV	Other
■%	10	7	5	44	7	13	15

Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on some of their answers, responses included:

➔ I have selected training to help manage pupil behaviour, but in reality, this is only part of the solution. CCTV for example or the ability to have an additional adult would all help. The training also needs to explain how a driver could deal with anti-social or bullying behaviour in specific sensitive cases. I appreciate this is a survey aimed at drivers, but I very strongly believe that the solution should also include parents, governors, teachers and others involved in the day to day provision of school transport. It is a collective responsibility to get the culture better developed. I firmly believe that some form of statutory requirement for all schools to have a session at the beginning of each academic year to explain the dos and don'ts on home to school transport and the implications of anti-social behaviour and/or bullying is something we should seek to achieve. Often pupils/students are not aware of the implications of their behaviour and should be given some clear indication of the possible results of their actions.
➔ Better training for pupils on safe travel, respect and manners. A driver cannot manage the vehicle safely into days traffic and monitor pupils.
➔ To be made to be held accountable for their actions by being banned and consequence from police school and parents. Children will only learn if they are made to account for their actions.

At the end of the questionnaire drivers were provided with the opportunity to expand on their answers. These responses are provided verbatim below. The responses have been grouped by themes as the responses typically related to 1) the challenge of driving and monitoring behaviour, 2) the importance of positive relationships, 3) the role of the school, 4) examples of bullying, and 5) thoughts on training and interventions.

THE CHALLENGE OF DRIVING AND MONTORING BEHAVIOUR

➔ A driver main role is to drive the bus. Given more duties and responsibility without significant benefits will mean more driving leaving the job. The job will become not worth while doing.

➔ Driving a bus does not allow opportunity to monitor passengers for bullying all the time. Noise draws the driver's attention but the physical safety of all passengers and road users takes priority over childish behaviour.

➔ If pupils get excluded from buses schools have to supply taxis and they don't want to do that.

➔ Teachers are often worse than the children. Sitting back the front and chatting for the whole journey.

➔ Being given different school runs am &pm as well as each day is very unhelpful as pupils do not know their limits. Drivers also fail to engage as they think it's only 30 mins...and the pupils will be gone. 70 seaters are not helpful as you cannot see to the back seats.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

➔ I have always treated the children like I like to be treated and find that works well in the area I work in.

➔ You must communicate and have boundaries but be aware of bullying as this can cause problems for the pupil being bullied like mental health.

➔ I feel that if you can get a rapport with the pupils you normally find that the majority will respect what you say and will support you. However, I do not drive to the same school every day and it is therefore difficult especially when a new intake starts in September when they appear to test the driver's reaction to their bad behaviour.

➔ Bad behaviour gets worse as they go up the years and becomes more of a problem at times it feels like them v you. As a driver I report all to my manager and the school bus manager so the school is aware of the situation on that route, as a new drive I feel kids will push you as a driver and take the chance start things on others as they know you don't know them that well I also think a regular driver and a strong mind helps keep them respect you as a driver as long you polite and seek them I don't get much trouble now.

➔ I genuinely believe with children it's how you treat them, if your gonna shout and get stressed with them or let them see anything is getting to you there gonna do it more for the reaction. I have 3 of my own children and I know the stricter you try to be the more they play up so the kids on my run have always been treated the same I'm polite smile and say good morning etc but they also know that if they do misbehave I will stop the bus and speak to the school I'm regard to any behaviour or bullying issues as we had an incident of a boy taunting another on the way home within my first few days and the school were told immediately. I don't agree with needing a second adult present, but I do stand by the point that all school buses should have CCTV and drivers have training I.e. the passenger assistant one that I've done.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

➔ In general, the schools are not interested once they are out of school or on their way to school, the authorities pass the buck but hold you responsible for under 14s not wearing seatbelts or injuries, parents do not accept responsibility but look to place blame elsewhere. Some schools check seatbelts are in place on leaving school, but these are taken off when out of sight of school. The driver has responsibility but no authority and little backup.

➔ I believe the school holds the key to bullying on board school buses. CCTV can be made available to identify the culprits with appropriate action taken by the school. Some of the better schools have the outlook that they are responsible for the child until he/she reaches their front door - and that any misbehaviour is a slur on the school reputation (resulting in

exclusion) - others that their duty of care to schoolkids ends as soon as they board the bus. There should also be avenues that kids can report any wrongdoing to their teachers anonymously rather than be labelled a "grass" or a "snitch". Schoolkids themselves should learn the early warning signs of vulnerable children, the affect of bullying long term and their part in tackling it. Thank you.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING
➔ I only witnessed one particularly bad example of bullying when a child's head was superglued to the seat back resulting in them having to be cut free. The school dealt with the matter immediately after I notified them, and the bully was excluded from bus travel for the remainder of the term. Parents were also called to the school same day.
➔ The school bus driver himself emotionally bullied a schoolgirl for 2 half years.

INTERVENTIONS & TRAINING
➔ Pupils are not trained on basic bus safety etc. i.e. sitting/seatbelts/leaving the bus. Drivers are not route trained therefore are concentrating more on going the right way than on the kids.

FEELING SAFE & IN CONTROL WHILE DRIVING THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire included questions on how safe young people felt when travelling on the school bus, and their perceptions of the bus driver being in control.

➔ The majority of young adults (73%, N=51) reported feeling safe when travelling on the school bus. 27% (N=19) reported feeling unsafe to some extent.
➔ The majority of young adults reported feeling as if the driver was not in control, as shown in figure 15.

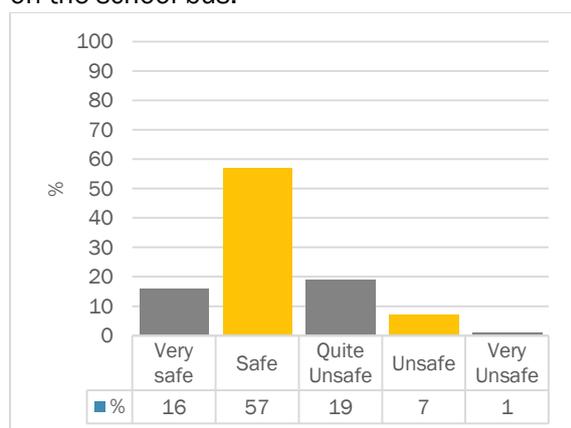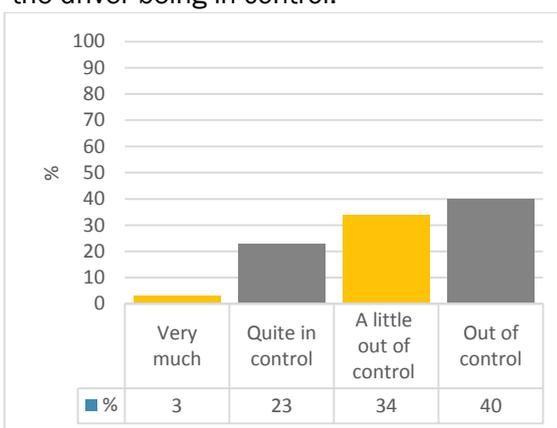**Figure 14:** Participants reports of feeling safe on the school bus.

Figure 15: Participants reports of their the school the driver being in control.

	Very safe	Safe	Quite Unsafe	Unsafe	Very Unsafe
%	16	57	19	7	1

	Very much	Quite in control	A little out of control	Out of control
%	3	23	34	40

PUPIL BEHAVIOUR

Young adults were also asked to recall the general behaviour of pupils on their school bus.
➔ 56 (80%) reported feeling the driver had been distracted by bad behaviour.
➔ As shown in table 3, participants were asked to report on pupil's behaviour on the school bus. Overall drivers reported that pupils were typically well behaved, with the majority reported high prevalence of pupils not leaving the bus clean and tidy.

Table 3: Participants perceptions of pupil behaviour on school buses

Pupils..	All pupils	Most pupils	Some pupils	Few pupils	None
Were good listeners	0	13 (19%)	29 (41%)	27 (29%)	1 (1%)
Were polite and courteous	0	17 (24%)	17 (24%)	35 (50%)	1 (1%)
Followed instructions	2 (3%)	22 (31%)	22 (31%)	25 (36%)	2 (3%)
Left the bus clean and tidy	0	12 (17%)	12 (17%)	34 (49%)	5 (7%)
Were threatening	0	9 11%)	8 (11%)	23 (33%)	17 (25%)
Were disrespectful	2 (3%)	21 (30%)	21 (30%)	16 (23%)	3 (4%)
Were rude	1 (1%)	22 (31%)	22 (31%)	15 (21%)	1 (1%)

Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on their answers regarding their memories of feeling safe and pupil behaviour on the school bus, these responses are provided below.

AGE DIFFERENCES
➔ In my earlier years I felt unsafe, but as time went on and I became older I started to feel safer.
➔ As I got older, I felt safer but in year 7 I would catch public transport on the way home to avoid getting the school bus.
➔ There was a segregation of years throughout the bus.
➔ I always knew I was going to get to/from school safe but I was still always slightly scared of verbal bullying that tended to occur, especially in younger years.
➔ Bullying towards younger students.

UNSAFE
➔ Safe enough that he was away from things being thrown, but unsafe as some pupils spoke in a condescending attitude which can be distressing given the loudness which occurred. Intimidating as some pupils could create a shouting match.
➔ Never checked seatbelts even though they knew nobody wore them and always drove over the speed limit.
➔ Drivers were prone to distractions from pupils on the bus as they were loud and sometimes shouted abuse at other pupils and/or the driver.
➔ Drives too fast sudden stops and aggressive with his driving.

DISTRACTED BY BAD BEHAVIOUR
➔ People standing up before stops refusing seat belts.
➔ He dealt with bad behaviour, but never seemed distracted from his driving duties.
➔ In rare circumstances, the bus driver would try to enforce discipline on students if behaviour was exceptionally bad.
➔ They seemed to ignore everything unless children tried to talk to them then they would be told to stay back.
➔ If people were throwing things across the bus, he would get distracted and shout at them.
➔ The driver would sometimes have to tell children to sit still.
➔ Having to check the rear-view mirror whenever there was messing about or something.
➔ Would sometimes have to remove people.
➔ Once we bumped a car on the side of the road because the driver was shouting at two people to stop a fight.
➔ He would have to physically stop the bus on the side of the road to tell those at the top of the bus to behave.
➔ On one occasion on the A52, two boys were fighting upstairs against the side windows and the entire window fell out and shattered onto the main road. No one was injured.

BULLYING ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire included questions on young adults' recollections of being bullied or witnessing bullying on the school bus.

➔ 52% (N=36) recalled being bullied on the school bus, and 77% (N=48) reported witnessing bullying on the school bus.
➔ Participants were also asked whether they were bullied on the school bus and in other locations. As shown in figure 18, 20% (N=13) were bullied on the bus only, and 36% (N=24) were bullied on the bus and in other locations.
➔ The majority of young adults reported feeling that bullying on the school bus is a serious issue, see figure 19.
➔ The most frequently reported behaviours experienced and witnessed included being teased, being insulted and being called name, see table 3 and 4 (appendix II and III).

Figure 16: Participant reports of being bullied on the school bus

%	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Unsure
%	6	46	42	6
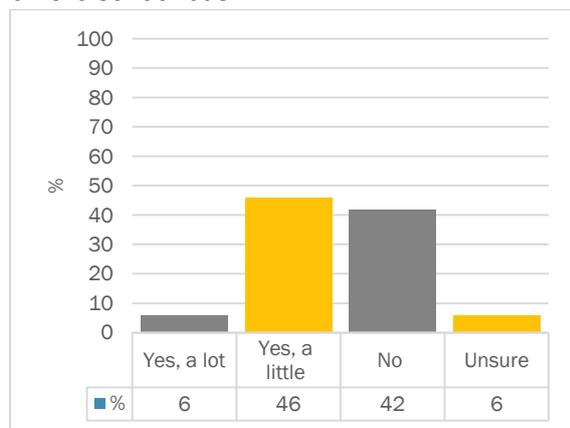
Figure 17: Participant reports of witnessing bullying on the school bus

%	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No	Unsure
%	32	45	18	5
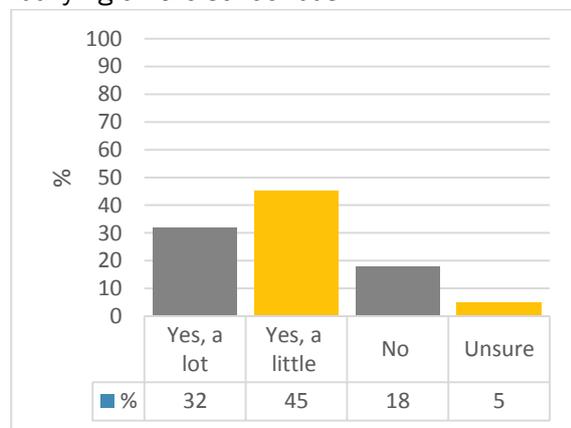
Figure 18: Participant reports of being bullied on the school bus and in other locations

%	Not bullied at school	Bullied on the school bus only	Bullied on the school bus & elsewhere
%	44	20	36
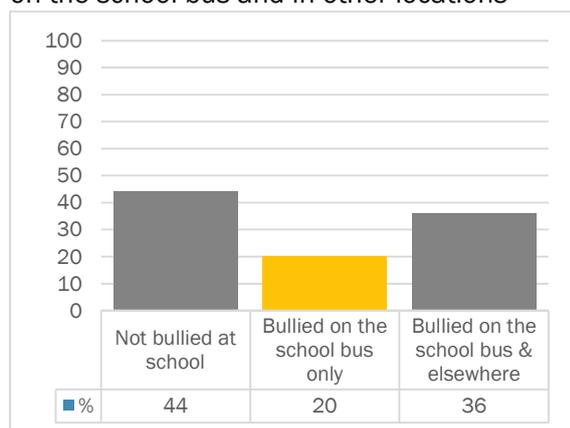
Figure 19: Participant perceptions of the seriousness of bullying on the school bus

%	Very Serious	Serious	Not very serious	Not at all serious
%	34	42	21	3
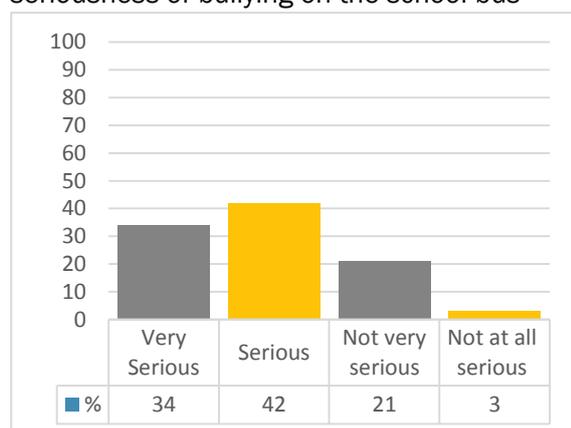
Participants were asked how bus drivers responded to bullying they witnessed on the school bus. Participants could select more than one answer. Responses to this question are shown in figure 20.

➔ The majority of participants (55%, N=46) reported that they felt nothing was done about the bullying that occurred on the bus.

➔ Following this, the most frequent response was that the bus driver spoke to the school (46, 55%).

Figure 20: Participant reports of what did the drive do in response to the bullying you experienced?
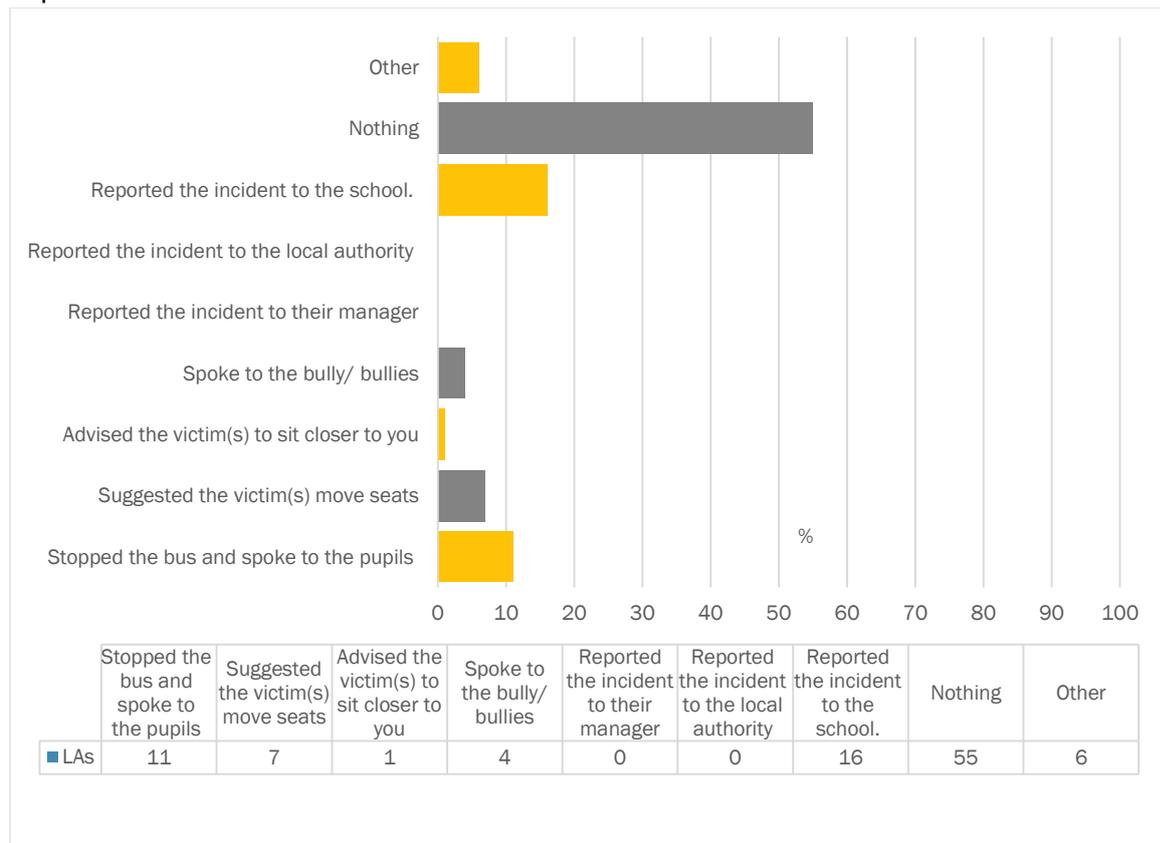
	Stopped the bus and spoke to the pupils	Suggested the victim(s) move seats	Advised the victim(s) to sit closer to you	Spoke to the bully/ bullies	Reported the incident to their manager	Reported the incident to the local authority	Reported the incident to the school.	Nothing	Other
LAs	11	7	1	4	0	0	16	55	6

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES ON THE SCHOOL BUS

The questionnaire also included questions on whether bus drivers had received any training regarding how to manage bullying on their bus, and their perceptions of the usefulness of CCTV and the presence of another adult when managing pupil behaviour.

➔ 49% (N=30) of respondents reported that their bus had CCTV
➔ 12% (N=7) of respondents reported that another adult was on the bus
➔ As shown in figure 21, the majority of participants believed that CCTV and the presence of another adult is helpful in managing pupil behaviour.
➔ When asked about what strategies would be most effective, the majority of young adults selected 'another adult present', see figure 22.

Figure 21: Participant perceptions of how helpful CCTV and the presence of another adult is when managing pupil behaviour

	Did not have	Very helpful	Helpful	Neither	Unhelpful	Very unhelpful
CCTV	41	2	13	8	25	12
Another adult	36	36	12	8	3	5

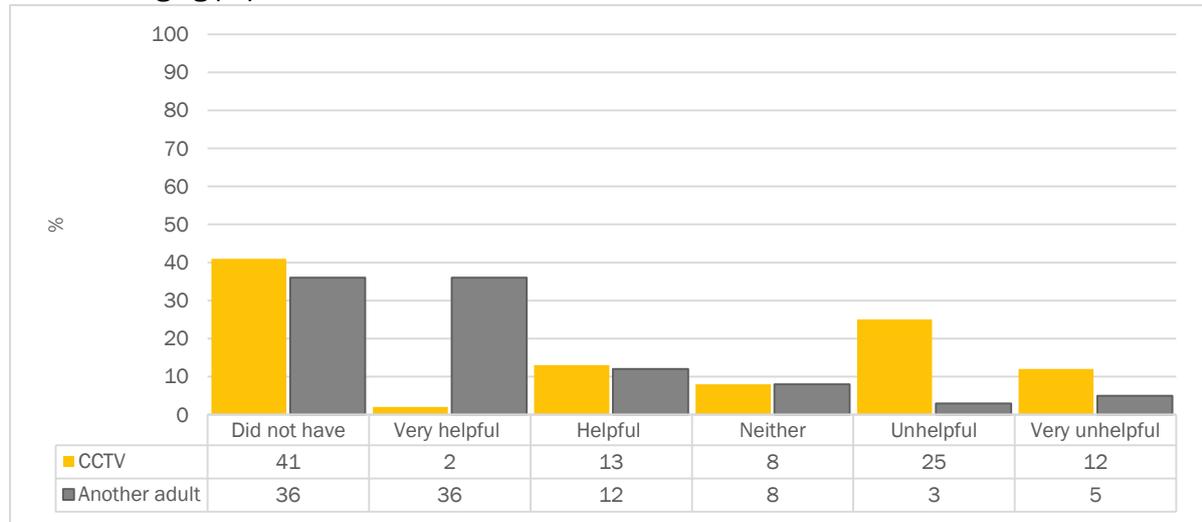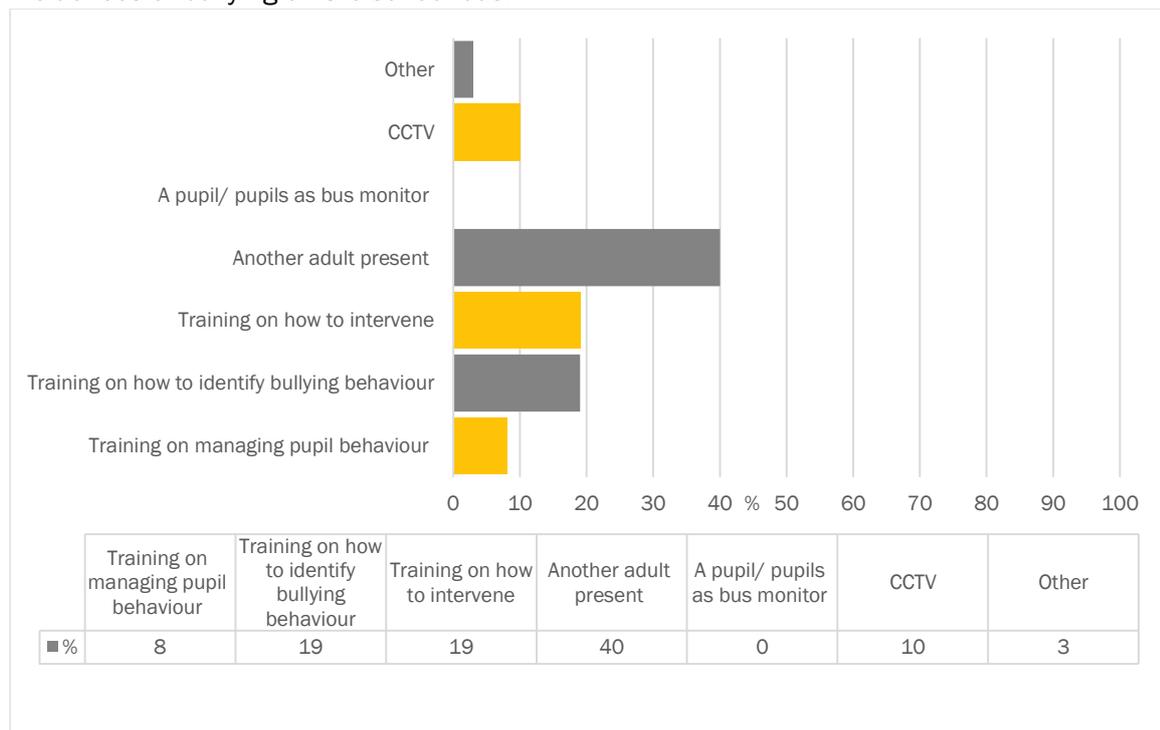**Figure 22:** Participant reports of strategies that would be helpful to manage pupil behaviour and incidences of bullying on the school bus.

	Training on managing pupil behaviour	Training on how to identify bullying behaviour	Training on how to intervene	Another adult present	A pupil/ pupils as bus monitor	CCTV	Other
%	8	19	19	40	0	10	3

Participants were provided with the opportunity to expand on some of their answers regarding the use of CCTV, another adult on buses, and other interventions. Responses included:

CCTV
➔ Bus had cameras but everyone knew that they didn't work.
➔ Blue tac was put over the cameras.
➔ There was CCTV from the front of the lower and upper deck. So the driver could see what was going on, I am not sure if this was recorded for later use.
➔ I think it would be helpful.
➔ Many of the bus's CCTV didn't work.
➔ Numerous people got caught fighting via CCTV and received punishment from the school.

ANOTHER ADULT
➔ Sometimes another driver was present.
➔ It was a high school bus and so no older adult was present.
➔ They didn't get involved.
➔ From what I can remember, it was as if they did not have the authority to say anything.
➔ I do believe this could be helpful in preventing bullying. Knowing there is the presence of an adult would deter students from being rude and mean to others and could help reduce bullying instances on buses. However, having another adult on the bus could be impractical in practice as this would pose an extra cost to the school. The school may not see it necessary to appoint an adult on the bus if they do not believe the bullying situation to be serious.
➔ I didn't have an adult, but I don't think it would've helped because some pupils would try and square up and intimidate them I believe.
➔ I have been on several private school buses, few had another adult present. When there was one there was no bad behaviour.
➔ In the rare times there was another adult on the bus, bullying was reduced significantly.
➔ I just think drivers need to be a bit more assertive and authoritative when it comes to dealing with aggressive and disrespectful behaviour. I often think they are a bit scared to apprehend them because kids of today's era are quite threatening.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS & EVALUATION

The aim of the current study was to build upon the previous Vodden reports (Vodden, 2014; Vodden, 2015) and further examine the issue of bullying on school buses, to better understand the policy framework, alongside pupil and bus driver experiences of bullying and their perceptions of the usefulness of different interventions.

Regarding witnessing bullying on the school bus, 80% (N=51) of bus drivers and 77% (N=48) of young adults in this study reported witnessing bullying on the school bus. Furthermore, 52% (N=36) of young adults recalled being bullied on the bus. The most common forms of bullying witnessed on the bus included more verbal acts of aggression, including being teased, being called names, and being yelled at. These findings support previous research (e.g. Raskauskas, 2005; Vodden, 2014; Vodden, 2015) which suggest that bullying can be a frequent experience on the school bus. The study also highlighted that some young people are bullied only on the school bus, and not in other locations (20%, N=13 reported this). Typically, 50 – 70 pupils travel on the school bus under the supervision of only one adult (the bus driver). Those being bullied may feel trapped and unable to escape the bullying, and those who witness the behaviour may not feel comfortable in intervening due to the lack of adults present (Raskauskas, 2005). The qualitative data collected from participants highlights that the school bus can be an intimidating setting, particularly for younger pupils. Future research should examine pupils' perceptions of the school bus, and their reactions to bullying behaviour to help inform intervention programmes.

Witnessing bullying can be distracting for the bus driver; both drivers and young adults reported this. Qualitative comments highlight the challenges for drivers; they are responsible for the safe transport of pupils and yet feel responsible to also monitor and intervene in bad behaviour and bullying. Only 21% (N=14) of drivers in this study reported that they had received training on how to tackle bullying on the school bus, which is consistent with previous studies (Vodden, 2014; Vodden, 2015). Yet bus drivers appear to utilise a range of strategies to manage the behaviour, for example stopping the bus and speaking to pupils, moving pupils around, and reporting the incidents to the school. Qualitative comments from the bus drivers raised questions around what happens when bullying is reported to the schools and managers. Furthermore, drivers raised concerns around the challenges of managing bullying behaviour when their focus should be on safely transporting pupils and driving the bus without distractions.

Participants were also asked about anti-bullying initiatives on the school bus. Regarding CCTV, 66% (N=45) of bus drivers and 49% (N=30) of young adults reported that their bus had CCTV. Some of the qualitative data highlights that the usefulness of CCTV is dependent on how others (e.g. the school) subsequently manage incidents of bullying. But overall, both drivers and young adults felt that CCTV can be useful in tackling bullying so long as the cameras were of high quality and also recorded sound (otherwise more verbal behaviours can be missed). Regarding additional adults on the bus, a high proportion of bus drivers and young adults felt that this would be helpful in tackling bullying on the school bus. Yet only 4% (N=3) of bus drivers, and 12% (N=7) of young adults reported that another adult had been present on the bus. Qualitative comments regarding the presence of another adult were mixed; some participants felt that pupil behaviour would be more positive, whereas others felt that it would do little to improve behaviour. Both bus drivers and young adults raised concerns about the costs associated with such an intervention. They surveys also provided participants to consider what other initiatives would be useful in tackling bullying on the school bus. Comments from bus drivers suggested that pupils should receive training/ lessons on appropriate behaviour on school buses. Future work in this area should examine and evaluate a range of interventions to tackle bullying on the school bus.

Currently, in England, the policy on managing bullying on the school bus is rather complex. Schools have the power to discipline pupils who bully others outside the school grounds

(DfE, 2017) and local authorities have a duty to audit the school journey (DfE, 2014), yet the responsibility for managing and intervening in bullying on the school bus is unclear. Findings from the survey of Local Authorities in England highlight that 53% (N=42) of participating authorities had completed an audit of the school journey in the previous three years. While the majority of authorities have monitoring and referral systems for monitoring bullying (or poor behaviour more broadly), only 32% (N=26) of authorities had collected data on pupil reports of experiencing bullying on the school bus. The findings of the survey highlights that there are areas of good practice, for example the use of bus monitors, and the communication of problem behaviour between Local Authority and schools, yet the effectiveness of such strategies appears to need evaluating.

The current study is one the first in the UK to focus on the issue of bullying on private school buses, reporting on data collected from multiple sources including bus drivers, young adults and local authorities. The study also collected data on drivers and young adults' perceptions of what interventions can be helpful in tackling bullying on the school bus. The findings of the current study, however, should be considered in light of some limitations. The sample size for both the bus driver and young adult survey was rather small. Participants for the bus driver survey were collected through social media as such those with an interest in, and experience of, the topic may be more likely to participate. Future research should collect data from a larger sample using a more diverse sampling strategy. Furthermore, while young adults' recollections of their experiences of bullying in school have been found to be reliable (Rivers, 2001), future research should focus on the current experiences of adolescents, to further inform the development of policy and interventions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study, alongside the previous Vodden reports (Vodden, 2014; Vodden, 2015) highlight the prevalence and impact of bullying on school buses. Given the nature of the school bus, and the involvement of schools, local authorities, parents/ guardians and pupils, a whole community approach is needed to 1) raise awareness of bullying on the school bus, 2) develop appropriate interventions to tackle the behaviour and support those who witness and experience bullying, and 3) better understand the effectiveness of interventions used to tackle school bus bullying.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National policy on the school journey should be reviewed and revised as appropriate, to more clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of pupils, parents, schools and local authorities in tackling bullying on school buses.

2. There should be a rigorous mapping and evaluation of interventions currently used by local authorities, bus companies and schools to promote positive behaviour and tackle bullying on the school bus, and on the journey to and from school more broadly.

3. There is a need to develop and evaluate awareness raising materials for schools and bus companies that a) raise awareness of the issue of bullying on the school bus, and b) provide guidance on how to respond to bullying on the school bus.

4. Conduct research on the school journey more broadly. The focus of this study has been on the experiences of bullying on private school buses. Research should also examine pupils' experiences of bullying while walking to and from school, and on other modes of public transport including the train and bus.

5. A national network should be established, to include those with an interest in safety on transport, for example those from anti-bullying charities, the transport industry, academics and young people, to take this work forward.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Bullying is a complex social behaviour which can occur in a number of locations. This report supports the previous Vodden reports in highlighting the prevalence of this behaviour on private school buses. Such buses are quite unique in that they include minimal adult supervision, and where typically the only adult present (the driver) should be focused on safely driving the bus, rather than monitoring and managing pupil behaviour. The findings of this study highlight the potential benefits of using CCTV and the presence of another adult to manage school bus bullying, alongside other possible interventions. Crucially, policy and guidance need to more clearly outline how pupils can be safeguarded from bullying on the journey to and from school to ensure we start to tackle this issue and reduce the impact of being bullied on the school bus for all involved.

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Table 2: Participant reports of witnessing bullying on the school bus

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Being hit	13 (21%)	16 (25%)	25 (40%)	8 (13%)	1 (2%)
Being kicked	25 (40%)	17 (27%)	14 (23%)	6 (10%)	0
Being tripped	17 (27%)	18 (29%)	17 (27%)	10 (16%)	1 (2%)
Being pushed or shoved	9 (15%)	8 (13%)	22 (36%)	20 (33%)	2 (3%)
Having things taken from them	9 (15%)	16 (25%)	19 (30%)	14 (22%)	5 (8%)
Being yelled at	6 (10%)	3 (5%)	32 (52%)	13 (21%)	8 (13%)
Being called names	3 (5%)	4 (6%)	34 (53%)	12 (19%)	11 (17%)
Being insulted	5 (8%)	13 (21%)	25 (40%)	10 (16%)	9 (15%)
Being teased	2 (3%)	9 (14%)	22 (35%)	20 (32%)	10 (16%)
Being threatened	16 (16%)	20 (32%)	15 (24%)	5 (8%)	6 (10%)
Having rumours spread about themselves	15 (34%)	16 (25%)	19 (30%)	6 (10%)	7 (11%)
Being left out or excluded from a group	9 (15%)	16 (26%)	20 (32%)	10 (16%)	7 (11%)
Having their secrets shared	17 (27%)	11 (17%)	22 (35%)	7 (11%)	6 (9%)
Being ignored	8 (13%)	16 (25%)	24 (38%)	7 (11%)	8 (13%)
Having nasty notes written or spread about them	25 (38%)	9 (14%)	21 (32%)	6 (9%)	5 (8%)
Being the object of daggers or dirty looks	18 (29%)	14 (23%)	15 (24%)	7 (11%)	8 (13%)
Receiving nasty or threatening electronic messages	26 (43%)	13 (21%)	13 (21%)	6 (10%)	3 (5%)
Receiving prank telephone calls	32 (53%)	12 (20%)	13 (21%)	1 (2%)	3 (5%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing messages posted on a social media site.	33 (55%)	13 (22%)	10 (17%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing photos or videos posted on a social media site.	36 (60%)	14 (23%)	6 (10%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)

Table 3: Participant reports of experiencing bullying on the school bus

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Being hit	43 (58%)	20 (27%)	9 (12%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Being kicked	53 (72%)	14 (19%)	6 (8%)	0	1 (1%)
Being tripped	30 (41%)	13 (18%)	23 (32%)	5 (7%)	2 (3%)
Being pushed or shoved	17 (23%)	21 (28%)	23 (31%)	10 (14%)	3 (4%)
Having things taken from them	33 (45%)	12 (16%)	17 (23%)	9 (12%)	3 (4%)
Being yelled at	26 (35%)	12 (16%)	20 (27%)	12 (16%)	4 (5%)
Being called names	17 (23%)	13 (18%)	24 (32%)	12 (16%)	8 (11%)
Being insulted	16 (22%)	15 (20%)	23 (31%)	13 (18%)	7 (10%)
Being teased	11 (15%)	11 (15%)	29 (39%)	14 (19%)	9 (12%)
Being threatened	42 (57%)	15 (20%)	13 (18%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)
Having rumours spread about themselves	29 (29%)	21 (28%)	15 (20%)	5 (7%)	4 (5%)
Being left out or excluded from a group	23 (32%)	11 (15%)	19 (26%)	14 (19%)	6 (8%)
Having secrets shared	36 (49%)	16 (22%)	13 (18%)	7 (10%)	2 (3%)
Being ignored	28 (38%)	12 (16%)	18 (24%)	10 (14%)	6 (8%)
Having nasty notes written or spread about them	50 (68%)	15 (20%)	5 (7%)	3 (4%)	1 (1%)
Being the object of daggers or dirty looks	22 (30%)	15 (20%)	18 (24%)	11 (15%)	8 (11%)
Receiving nasty or threatening electronic messages	53 (72%)	9 (12%)	10 (14%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Receiving prank telephone calls	49 (67%)	13 (18%)	8 (11%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing messages posted on a social media site.	57 (77%)	11 (15%)	4 (5%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing photos or videos posted on a social media site.	59 (79%)	12 (16%)	4 (5%)	0	0

Table 4: Participant reports of experiencing bullying on the school bus

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often
Being hit	17 (27%)	16 (25%)	15 (24%)	12 (19%)	3 (5%)
Being kicked	22 (35%)	9 (14%)	20 (32%)	9 (14%)	3 (5%)
Being tripped	14 (22%)	8 (13%)	18 (29%)	13 (21%)	10 (16%)
Being pushed or shoved	11 (18%)	11 (18%)	13 (21%)	17 (27%)	10 (16%)
Having things taken from them	10 (16%)	12 (19%)	18 (29%)	12 (19%)	11 (17%)
Being yelled at	13 (21%)	7 (11%)	19 (30%)	12 (19%)	12 (19%)
Being called names	6 (10%)	6 (10%)	22 (35%)	16 (25%)	13 (21%)
Being insulted	8 (13%)	4 (7%)	19 (31%)	18 (29%)	13 (21%
Being teased	4 (7%)	6 (10%)	18 (29%)	20 (32%)	14 (23%)
Being threatened	22 (36%)	14 (23%)	13 (23%)	5 (8%)	7 (11%)
Having rumours spread about themselves	19 (30%)	9 (14%)	23 (37%)	9 (14%)	3 (5%)
Being left out or excluded from a group	10 (16%)	11 (18%)	19 (30%)	15 (24%)	8 (13%)
Having secrets shared	20 (32%)	16 (25%)	15 (24%)	6 (10%)	6 (10%)
Being ignored	14 (22%)	12 (19%)	17 (27%)	12 (19%)	8 (13%)
Having nasty notes written or spread about them	29 (46%)	14 (22%)	11 (17%)	5 (8%)	4 (6%)
Being the object of daggers or dirty looks	13 (21%)	11 (17%)	14 (22%)	15 (24%)	10 (16%)
Receiving nasty or threatening electronic messages	33 (52%)	14 (22%)	11 (18%)	3 (5%)	2 (3%)
Receiving prank telephone calls	36 (57%)	12 (19%)	8 (13%)	3 (5%)	4 (6%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing messages posted on a social media site.	35 (57%)	13 (21%)	7 (11%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)
Having nasty, hurtful or embarrassing photos or videos posted on a social media site.	35 (57%)	14 (23%)	6 (10%)	5 (8%)	2 (3%)