


## MOST TEACHERS ARE BULLIED

A national online survey of more than 800 school teachers has found that 99.6 per cent have been bullied in the workplace. According to the University of New England's Dr Dan Riley, who led the research, the results show that the target of bullying is usually lower in the staff hierarchy than the perpetrator. 'The report reveals that the most persistent bullies were identified as the school executive staff and then the principal, and that the typical victim is a teacher,' he said. The report recommends that members of school leadership teams eliminate staff bullying.

*LINKS: www.schoolbullies.org.au*

## SHOOTING THE MESSENGER

What do you do when a teacher reports chaotic classrooms, significant student discipline problems, chronic staffing shortages and the manipulation of exam results? If you're in England and you're the General Teaching Council (GTC) Professional Conduct Committee, you find the teacher guilty of unprofessional conduct and suspend her for a year. That's what the English GTC did at a disciplinary hearing of Alex Dolan, a Science supply teacher who used a hidden camera to film a documentary, 'Undercover Teacher,' at four high schools in London and Leeds in 2005 that was shown on Channel 4's *Dispatches* after Leeds City Council failed to secure a High Court injunction against the broadcast that year, since the identities of students had been obscured. The judge in that injunction hearing ruled that the program served important public interests, but that view was not shared by GTC Professional Conduct Committee chairman Ralph Ullmann. Ullmann told London's *Dail Mail*, 'Covert filming of pupils by a registered teacher is unacceptable, other than in wholly exceptional circumstances.' The problems Dolan filmed, which included brawling, throwing furniture, climbing and running on desks, and using fire extinguishers against other students, were presumably typical rather than wholly exceptional circumstances. While the disciplinary lists of the GTC Professional Conduct Committee usually identify a teacher's school, the names of the four schools in Dolan's case were, curiously, not listed, even though they had been identified in the documentary. The GTC Professional Conduct Committee ruled that the publication of the schools' names could have a potentially adverse impact on students. Kevin Sutcliffe, deputy head of news and current affairs at Channel 4 and *Dispatches* commissioning editor, said it was unfair to discipline the whistleblower. 'The messenger should not be shot,' Sutcliffe said. The GTC had failed to face up to and deal with the serious problems that the documentary uncovered, Dolan told *Press Gazette*. 'Programs like *Dispatches* have an important role to play in drawing to the attention of the public matters of concern...in schools,' she said. 'I find it beyond comprehension that the GTC can spend three years investigating me when they should be looking on their own doorstep.... The GTC conduct committee (is) out of touch with what really concerns teachers, parents and pupils and (has) missed a chance to act as a catalyst for change,' she said.

*This month's Grapevine is by Steve Holden, Editor of* **Teacher.**

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