

# Report finds rise in angry adult threats

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WINES

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Principals say bullying is not just happening on the playground. Photo: Janie Barrett

THE number of principals threatened with violence by parents jumped by a third during the past year, a nationwide survey has found.

A quarter of principals surveyed reported receiving threats from angry parents - up from 19 per cent in 2013 - the Principal Health and Wellbeing Survey Report found.

One in four also said they had been physically abused, mostly by children.

A Bendigo principal, who chose to remain unidentified, said she had been abused by violent parents and had called police on occasion.

"It is something that is happening more frequently and it's really sad," she said.

The principal said often it was adults parenting their children alone and struggling to cope with financial and other pressures.

She said the school had put in place a list of conditions for staff, students and parents which outlined the appropriate way to behave towards one another.

She said they included promising to speak with respect and to follow appropriate protocols.

Eaglehawk North Primary School assistant principal John Morton said he experienced one episode of aggressive behaviour from a parent in the past 12 months.

He did not believe the issue of violence towards principals was wide spread.

"We haven't found it a problem at our school. People do become agitated but we are careful how we handle them," he said.

The survey, of 3675 principals and assistant principals from primary and secondary, independent, Catholic and government schools, also saw an increase of on average five hours a week extra work. Almost half of the respondents worked between 46 and 60 hours per week, and a quarter worked more than that.

Mr Morton said people who take on managerial roles in schools are often motivated by the work and would not do so if they did not enjoy it.

"People who take these jobs are often motivated by the extra workload," he said.

**- With The Age**