When I was a toddler I was determined I was going to become a fairy when I grew up, but of course I came to realise that being a fairy was impossible. I then considered that becoming a teacher might be a good career choice. How many of you know teachers or thought about becoming a teacher? I have and that’s when some awful ideas started to grow in my mind. Firstly abuse and bad behaviour from children. Secondly wages is another negative point of teaching and of course the false impression of ‘time-off’ is a third.

My first point, the abuse of teachers by children seems to be a growing problem and this is obvious by just reading the daily newspaper, or watching the T.V. I researched and found a 41 page report of a National survey of New Zealand Education Institute members in 2007. There were 21 schools that participated in the survey. The report stated that seventy-six staff was reported as being assaulted in the 21 schools. This averages out to three or four staff assaulted physically per school in 2006.The three most common forms of assault were “pushed, shoved, shouldered;” “punched or struck with open hand;” and “kicked and stomped.”

Children’s behaviour in the classroom is a continuous problem for teachers. Why would you want to spend your entire day teaching, only to have kids verbally and physically abuse you? I know it’s not all children that treat their teachers harshly, but it’s certainly an enormous problem.

As for principals, they dedicate their whole careers to helping children succeed. Then only to be rewarded, by spending their days in an office, getting sent every naughty kid in the school to deal with. I’d call that torture, instead of the credit they deserve.

Secondly, I researched on the Ministry of Education website and discovered that the average New Zealand primary school teachers yearly income in 2010, was a shocking - $66,951. Now take that into mind! Would you think that this is a suitable pay for a year of dedicated work? That’s a definite reason why you should change your mind about being a teacher! As for new entrants in primary school, they still can’t calculate the distance from the classroom to the toilets and the time it takes to get there. Teachers should get paid way more for dealing with issues like that.

Lastly I would like to mention that ‘time-off’ is not really what people say it is! The honest truth is when teachers have ‘time-off’ in holidays, you would be sure to see plenty of teachers at school doing work. They spend half of their holidays getting ready for the next term and organising other necessary work. Now, don’t you love holidays, well if you’re a teacher you don’t enjoy holidays like we do, wouldn’t that be tedious!!

While we are thinking about time-off, I believe that primary school teachers should certainly have more sick days off. Considering that they are surrounded by children who wipe their snotty noses with their hands or sleeves; when they are supposed to be using a tissue. This is continued each time they have a nasty cold. But I can’t be too harsh, because I can remember doing exactly the same thing at Primary School. Don’t laugh, I bet you did the same too!

In concluding, what do you think about abuse given by children? Our news is crowded with reported cases and that doesn’t even count the daily bad language. Also the wages are a shocking amount, meaning this is another negative situation. As for ‘time-off’ you now know that life behind the scenes for teachers is not as easy as you might have thought. After hearing what I have to say can I ask you a question? Would you really want to become a teacher?

**By Tayla-Jay Dearlove**