

Anti- Bullying Policy

Summary:

The Governors of Strangford Integrated College acknowledge that students and staff of the College have the right to live their lives in peace and safety so that they can get on with their work. They have the right also to be treated and respected as individuals.

This policy supports the maintenance of a calm and supportive school environment where effective Teaching and Learning can take place.

It aims to:

- reinforce our key aim of eradicating any form of bullying at Strangford Integrated College.
- support the victim/victims of bullying.
- provide a whole school structure to identify and deal with negative and devaluing behavior.
- reinforce the core values of the Strangford Integrated College Community.

Policy Number: 2022/32

Revision: 4

Previous: 2021/13,
2019/10

Board of Governors
Submission for Ratification:
September 2023

Chairperson:



Principal:



This policy replaces any previous policies and is valid from:
1st September 2023.

To be reviewed & updated by:
1st September 2025.



Article 12 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child.

Inclusion & Diversity

The College aims to establish an inclusive community where all students and staff are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of individual differences including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability.

Rationale

Bullying behaviour of any kind by any member of the College community to any other member(s) of the College community is completely unacceptable. All students have a right to learn in a safe, caring environment which is free from the threat of emotional or physical harm.

Everyone in the College community is valued and is entitled to have their rights protected.

The College aims to promote positive relationships and endeavours to provide a learning environment free from bullying behaviour, including students' journeys to and from school and their experience of school trips and external events.

In addition, the College aims to foster an environment of openness in which students, parents/carers and staff feel comfortable to report any bullying behaviours which they feel are taking place.

Aims

- Raise awareness and promote understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- Ensure students and parents/carers know how to raise a concern about bullying behaviour
- Encourage students and parents/carers to report bullying behaviour
- Ensure an appropriate response to all reported instances of bullying behaviour
- Provide support for students who experience bullying behaviour
- Encourage those students who engage in bullying behaviour to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour
- Ensure robust monitoring and review procedures are in place following incidents of bullying behaviour
- Provide up to date training for staff and governors

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

The Legislative Context:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- **The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25**
- **WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003**
- **THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER) (COMMENCEMENT NO.2) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007**
- **The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010**
- **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

DE Guidance:

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017 – to be read in conjunction with the following:
Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016
Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017
- **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019**

Definition of Bullying

The College uses the legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as defined in the 2016 Anti-Bullying Act:

(1) In this Act 'bullying' includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication, (b) any other act, or (c) any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), 'act' includes omission.

The phrase 'is not limited to' in the definition above gives the College the legal discretion to define a one off incident as bullying behaviour. This may be particularly the case when the behaviour takes the form of electronic communication. For example, repetition can occur through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

The phrase 'emotional harm' is defined as distress or anxiety intentionally caused by scaring, humiliating or affecting a student's self-esteem.

The phrase 'physical harm' is defined as intentionally hurting a student causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

The term 'omission' is defined as where a student is deliberately left out and where there is a wilful failure to include a student. Examples could include purposefully excluding a student from a group of friends' activities or group work in lessons.

Terms of Reference

The College will use the following language when applying the policy:

'student displaying bullying behaviour' and 'student(s) experiencing bullying behaviour'.

Language including 'bully', 'victim' and 'perpetrator' is not considered appropriate and its use will not be accepted.

It is important to avoid labelling and stereotyping individual students and to focus instead on the behaviours.

Motivating Factors

There are many factors, and combinations of factors, which may motivate a student to display bullying behaviours towards another student(s).

Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- Religious beliefs
- Political opinions
- Racial group
- Age
- Academic ability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender orientation
- Physical appearance
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs
- Social/economic status
- Family circumstances
- Looked After Child status Vulnerable Students

Whilst the College understands that any student could experience bullying behaviours, it is also aware that some groups of students are potentially more vulnerable than others to this behaviour. This includes members of the College's LGBTQ+ community and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As such, the Personal Development curriculum draws attention to the vulnerability of such students as part of the College's preventative measures.

Procedures

How to Report a Concern?

Any student, parent/carer or member of the College community who has a concern about bullying behaviours involving College students should report it to the Form Tutor or Head of Year. This can be done in person, through a telephone call or in writing.

- Both the Positive Behaviour Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy apply to behaviour which takes place:
 - on the College site
 - during school trips, external events or extra-curricular activities
 - while students are wearing their school uniform in public e.g. travelling to/from school via public transport
 - at a bus stop/train station or other public place outside of school hours
 - when a student is accessing education elsewhere e.g. at another school, EOTAS centre, FE College or work experience/community placement

It also applies to behaviour which takes place electronically, regardless of the time of day or location. Any alleged bullying behaviour concerns involving member(s) of staff should be directly addressed to the Principal through the Complaints and Concerns Policy.

Recording Information

All incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported to the College must be recorded in the Bullying Concerns Section of the Behaviour Management Module within SIMs, which is part of the C2k system in schools. This will be done by either the Head of Year or appropriate School leader for the student who is alleged to be displaying bullying behaviour. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

Legislation requires all schools to include the following information in every recorded instance:

- Where it occurred
- The motivating factors/underlying themes (where known)
- The methods (i.e. verbal, written, electronic or combination thereof)
- How it has been addressed

The purpose of recording information is to promote and sustain a safe and effective learning environment. The SENCO may also be involved in the decision making process.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

The team will take the following additional aspects into consideration:

- Whether the actions of the student displaying bullying behaviour were intentional
- the level of harm intended and/or caused
- the student's(s') capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour and how this could have been affected by other significant factors including SEN
- any perceived or actual imbalance of power between the student(s) displaying bullying behaviours and those experiencing it, e.g. physical, psychological and/or intellectual

The College recognises that not all socially unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Equally, not all unacceptable behaviour online is cyber bullying.

All members of the College community must participate in the development of the shared understanding of what does and does not constitute bullying behaviour.

As such, the College recognises the need to work on an on-going basis with students and parents/carers to help them understand the differences between behaviour which is unacceptable and that which is bullying of a bullying nature.

Alleged bullying and/or socially unacceptable behaviour which the College decides does not meet the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through the College's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Alleged bullying behaviour which the College decides does meet the legal criteria of bullying will be dealt with through the Anti-Bullying Policy and the remainder of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form will be completed and uploaded to SIMs along with any other written evidence collated by either the Form Tutor, Head of Year or appropriate member of the Core Leadership team of the student who is alleged to be displaying bullying behaviour.

The College's approach will be based on its understanding that bullying is not 'fixed' by solely issuing a consequence and that students on both sides of the issue require support to address and resolve it. In addition to the provision of intervention and support, the College will issue a formal consequence to any student(s) deemed to be displaying bullying behaviours. Further information on the College's range of consequences is available in the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Students and parents/carers should be aware that the College may also apply its Suspension and Expulsion of Students Policy in individual cases and may also refer individual cases to external agencies such as Social Services and/or PSNI.

Any parent/carer who is unhappy with how an incident has been dealt with by College staff should contact the Principal who will deal with the issue in line with the College's Complaints and Concerns Policy.

Intervention and support

Strangford Integrated College advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour and interventions will focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved. Intervention and support provided to students involved in bullying behaviours – either displaying or receiving them – will be taken from the intervention tables in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour document and will be based on the following principles:

Intervention and support will:

- be child-centred
- promote resilience
- involve post-incident learning and reflection
- promote reparation
- be based on restorative approaches
- be evidence based
- be evaluated

Preventative Measures:

The College has in place a number of measures to promote inclusion and prevent bullying behaviours. At the core of this lies the College's ethos of acceptance of all members of the College community through celebration of differences as well as similarities, as outlined in the Pastoral Care Policy.

In addition, the following measures are in place:

- Consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy, including the promotion and rewarding of positive behaviour
- The creation and maintenance of positive relationships
- Creation and maintenance of an ethos which promotes aspiration, achievement and restoration
- Promotion of the welfare and wellbeing of students
- Provision of effective guidance and support
- Reduction/removal of barriers to learning
- A robust and relevant Personal Development Programme and promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Active collaboration with external partners including transport services and specialist external agencies
- Whole school awareness of and participation in national Anti-Bullying initiatives such as AntiBullying Week/Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- An expectation that all members of the College community work collaboratively to prevent bullying
- Appropriate and relevant staff training

Roles & Responsibilities:

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support – internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Principal and CLT

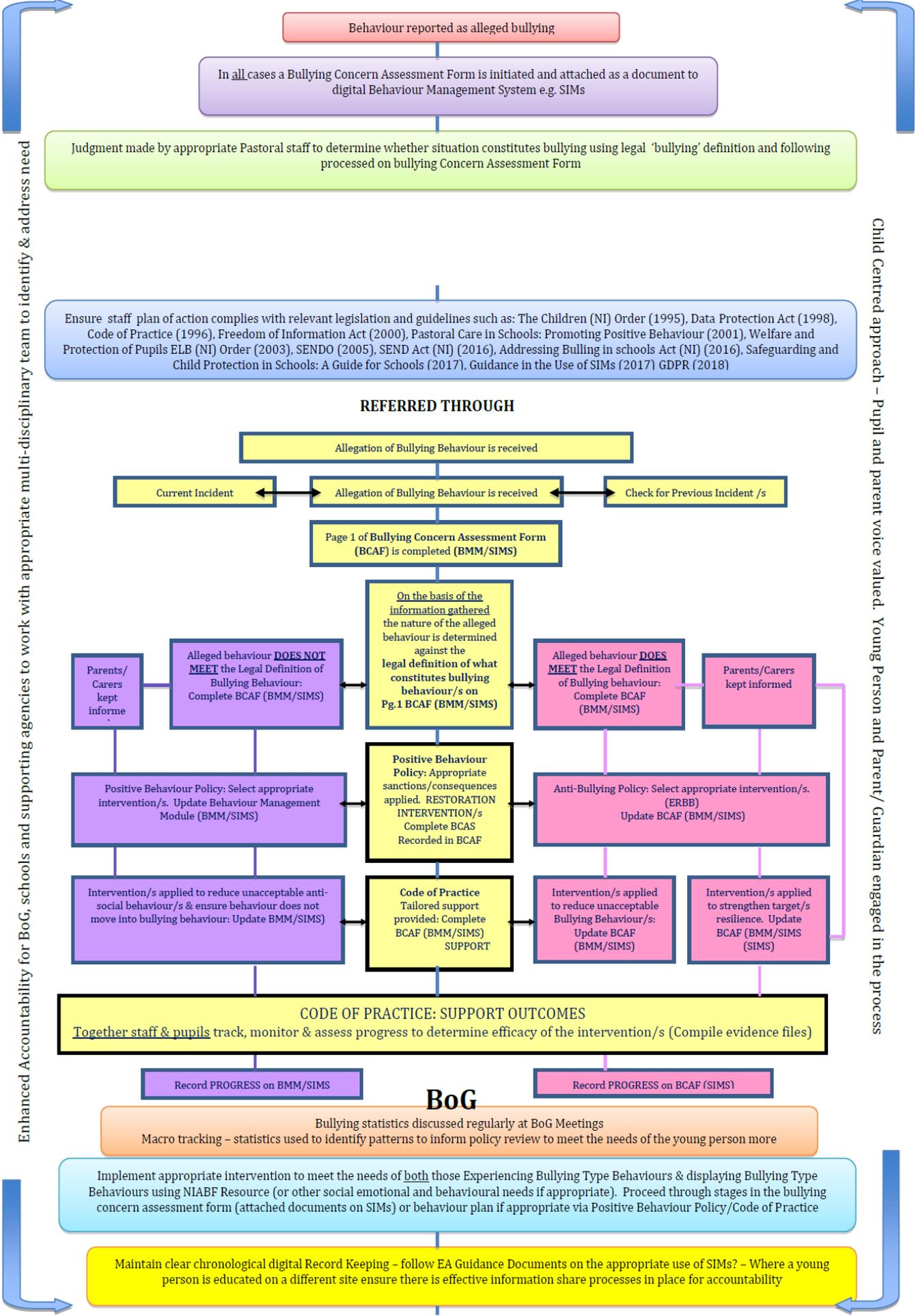
- Ensure that the school community, including students and parents/carers, are involved in the policy review process
- Ensure that all incidents of alleged bullying behaviours are recorded
- Ensure that records include motivation, method, how each incident was addressed and the outcomes
- Review the effectiveness of interventions used and their outcomes, amending them as required
- Ensure that the policy is as accessible to students and parent/carers as possible, in terms of language, content, placement and availability
- Analysis of data from SIMs to identify themes, trends and patterns to ensure early intervention and effective reporting to Governors
- Liaison with the Teacher in Charge of Personal Development to ensure that any themes, trends or patterns are addressed as part of the PD curriculum
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of the complaints process Policy Review: Legislation requires the College to review its Anti-Bullying Policy at least every four years.

The college will, however, review the policy every two years in order to be able to review current practices and issues in a timely and effective way. Students will be involved in this process via the Student Council, focus groups and student surveys; parents/carers via the PTA and staff through focus groups. As part of this process, all reports of alleged bullying behaviours will be taken into consideration. All students, parents/carers and members of staff will be provided with access to the policy.

The Board of Governors:

- Have oversight of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensure that the policy is effectively implemented
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed at least every four years
- Ensure there is a whole-school Anti-Bullying approach though determining the preventative measures to be taken to prevent bullying
- Ensure that preventative measures are kept under review and are fit for purpose and consult with students and parents/carers as part of this review process e.g. through surveys
- Engage with Governor training as appropriate
- Monitor Anti-Bullying measures and reported incidents through a standing item on agendas, using this to inform the School Development Plan where necessary
- Identify trends and patterns to inform further development of policy and practice
- Have a duty to ensure records are kept of bullying incidents.

PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR DISPLAYING BULLYING TYPE BEHAVIOURS



Enhanced Accountability for BoG, schools and supporting agencies to work with appropriate multi-disciplinary team to identify & address need

Child Centred approach - Pupil and parent voice valued. Young Person and Parent/ Guardian engaged in the process

BoG

Bullying statistics discussed regularly at BoG Meetings
Macro tracking - statistics used to identify patterns to inform policy review to meet the needs of the young person more

Implement appropriate intervention to meet the needs of both those Experiencing Bullying Type Behaviours & displaying Bullying Type Behaviours using NIABF Resource (or other social emotional and behavioural needs if appropriate). Proceed through stages in the bullying concern assessment form (attached documents on SIMs) or behaviour plan if appropriate via Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Practice

Maintain clear chronological digital Record Keeping - follow EA Guidance Documents on the appropriate use of SIMs? - Where a young person is educated on a different site ensure there is effective information share processes in place for accountability

Targeted Intervention Table

Pupil Displaying bullying behaviour	Type of behaviour	Intervention
Level 0	Socially Unacceptable behaviour	Informal conversation with pupil to enable them to identify appropriate amendments to their behaviour
Level 1	<p>Low level bullying behaviour</p> <p>If following assessment, a behaviour or incident is deemed to be low level bullying, select from the following level one interventions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion with the pupil to enable them to identify appropriate amendments to their behaviour - Parental support may be appropriate at this stage. - Restorative work should be undertaken. - Pupils may be referred to the Senior Anti-bullying ambassador team for peer mediation. - Closely monitored and reviewed by HoY
Level 2	<p>Mid -level bullying behaviour</p> <p>If following assessment, a behaviour or incident continues or is deemed more severe, select one or more of the following level two interventions- which may comprise part of an IBP.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A meeting with pupil and parent to agree on individual support. - Regular feedback on interventions - Conflict resolution - Pupils may engage in the Support Group Method - Pupils may be referred to the Senior Anti-bullying ambassador team for peer mediation. - Closely monitored and reviewed by HoY
Level 3	<p>Complex Bullying behaviour</p> <p>If, following assessment a behaviour is deemed more complex and/or resistant to change, select from the following interventions.</p> <p>A pupil may present with many additional needs or risk factors.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RAMP drawn up in liaison with pupil displaying bullying behaviour. - Close monitoring by key member of staff - Pupil may participate in EA led wellbeing programme - SENCO will be consulted on bullying behaviours - Parental involvement is vital at this stage. Parent may need to consult with GP. - Possible involvement of external agencies. - Possible class move - Closely monitored and reviewed by AVP and SENCO/DT as appropriate.

Level 4	<p>High Risk bullying behaviour</p> <p>If a behaviour raises significant concerns, such as Mental health, criminal or safeguarding, select from the following interventions.</p>	<p>Refer to relevant external agencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gateway - PSNI - CAMHS - EA support services <p>Regular monitoring by AVP and Vice Principals.</p>
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