ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Anti-Bullying Policy

Omagh High School exists to serve the unique academic, physical, social and emotional needs of pupils who are in a special and critical period of their lives as they change from childhood, through adolescence to adulthood. The staff of Omagh High School is committed to creating and maintaining an orderly, trusting and caring environment where teaching and learning are exciting and pupils are assisted as they develop responsibility. All aspects of the school's organisation, curricular and extra-curricular activities are child-centred and designed to meet with all of the developmental needs of the individual so that all may experience success. A culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists, with clear expectations that all pupils will achieve to the very best of their ability. Therefore, the staff (T/NT) endeavour to safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school.

The values of Omagh High School emphasise respect for each individual and encourage openness and tolerance. By its nature, bullying is contrary to these values and is unacceptable.

The ethos of Omagh High School is important in helping to address the issue of bullying and in minimising its incidence. (Signs and Symptoms of Bullying – refer to Appendix A.) However, bullying must also be addressed in more specific ways. Preventing and countering bullying require an awareness of bullying type behaviour and a collective vigilance on the part of all members of the school community.

The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to:

1. help in the understanding of what constitutes bullying type behaviour;
2. indicate approaches to preventing bullying and to respond to bullying type behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

The 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016' states that **"…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." This includes omission.

For the purposes of this policy and in line with the 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016', emotional or psychological harm is defined as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem. Physical harm is defined as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Where there is evidence that a pupil or group of pupils has been involved in 3 or more repetitious behaviours involving the same target/s with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm then this will constitute bullying type behaviour.

Methods of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms, the three main types being physical, verbal and emotional.

Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of –

    (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

These methods can be described as, but are not limited to, saying, writing or using online contact and platforms to say mean and hurtful things to or about others, make fun of others, call another pupil mean and hurtful names, tell lies or spread false rumours about others, try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s or extort from, blackmail or exploit another.

The use of mobile phones, email and web based chatrooms has led to the rise of cyber bullying. Cyberbullying may be defined as "the use of technology through digital devices like cell phones, computers and tablets over the internet most commonly using social media, SMS, instant messages and emails to harass, humiliate, threaten, embarrass or target another person/s."

In short, cyber bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by an individual or group against a target using, for example, electronic forms of contact and social media platforms.

    (b) any other act, or

Other methods of bullying behaviour commonly include physical bullying and can be described as, but are not limited to hitting, kicking, pushing, shoving around, locking a pupil/s inside a room, material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions and other direct/indirect acts.

    (c) any combination of those,

The Act acknowledges that various methods of bullying behaviour can occur separately or together.

The Act also specifies that methods of bullying behaviour include omission. This includes a pupil being intentionally left out and where there is a wilful failure to include a pupil. Other examples include a pupil being excluded or left out of a group of friends, voluntary group activities, games or voluntary class group work.

Exclusionary bullying behaviours are as serious as other verbal or physical acts.

While **repetition** is an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, **one-off incidents** may also be treated as bullying. Examples include (but are not limited to) a one-off planned fight or a one-off cyber bullying incident where there is repeated viewing or sharing of a post even if there is only one post. A one-off incident which causes significant levels of emotional or physical harm to one or more pupils may also be considered as bullying type behaviour especially where there is an **imbalance of power**, for example, a senior pupil physically assaulting or intimidating a junior pupil.

Furthermore, **the intention** of causing physical or emotional harm to a pupil or group of pupils underlies all forms of bullying behaviour. If a pupil continues to display bullying behaviour after the school has implemented interventions to respond to the situation, resolve the concern and restore relationships then **the intention to cause harm** is clearly evident. The school reserves the right to use discretion in assessing an individual's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours, for example, due to special educational needs.

Each member of the school community has a role to play in helping to prevent bullying and in creating an atmosphere in which it is not allowed to develop. In Omagh High School action will be taken to seek to prevent bullying by encouraging active participation from all members of the school community in the following ways:

(a) By promoting and maintaining an ethos which encourages consideration and respect for others and which is firmly based on the values of Omagh High School;

(b) By educating pupils about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards others;

(c) Works in partnership with parents / carers through the development of an open system of communication through the homework diary, parent/teacher meetings, telephone, Friends of Omagh High School parents' association;

(d) By addressing bullying and related issues through assemblies, the LLW programme, visiting speakers and workshops as well as in other subjects;

(e) By building confidence, self-esteem, resilience and emotional literacy through, for example, planned workshops, LLW programme, school assemblies;

(f) Implements a whole-school reward system which regularly and consistently acknowledges, affirms and celebrates positive achievement and behaviour by placing records in homework diary, school assemblies, pupil of the month, Head of House awards;

(g) Works effectively with appropriate outside agencies to support the care and welfare of the pupils, for example, EWO, PSNI, Theatre companies for workshops, Young Enterprise, Social Services, Mentors, School Counsellor, SEN Support Services, CAMHS, ASAS, PPDS[1], Translink;

(h) By ensuring effective supervision of locations within school where bullying is likely to occur and highlighting to pupils, with the support of parents, the importance of appropriate behaviour when travelling to and from school;

(i) By providing Safe Havens to support vulnerable pupils, for example, through seating plans, supervision of movement between classes, 'back playground' activities, concerns box, breakfast club, extra-curricular activities;

(j) By ensuring that pupils and parents are aware of school policy on the use of mobile phones and similar electronic devices within school as well as the acceptable use of the internet within school (through the Mobile Phone Policy and the Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy);

(k) By utilising prefects as mentors to Year 8 House Groups;

(l) By ensuring high levels of pupil participation through the promotion of active class, school and Strule councils on matters relating to the identification, reporting, addressing and monitoring of incidents of alleged bullying behaviour;

(m) Class role plays;

(n) Drawing up class / school anti-bullying thought for the day and/or pupil aide memoires;

(o) By liaising closely with the PSNI in relation to the 'Anti Bullying Ambassador' programme;

(p) By encouraging a strong sense of belonging to school through participation in extracurricular activities i.e. sport, music, art, drama, extra-curricular break/lunch/ after school activities, breakfast club, meet & greet;

(q) By having clear procedures for responding to bullying, which are kept under regular review;

(r) The annual NIABF Anti-Bullying Week activities;

(s) Pupil questionnaires /audits;

(t) Provides effective guidance and support by involving pupils in target setting, self-assessment and evaluation of outcomes for IEPs and Risk Reduction Action Plans;

(u) Contribution to school policies such as: promoting positive behaviour and reward systems, anti-bullying, assessment and marking, school uniform etc.;

(v) Consultation with parents, carers, governors, staff (T/NT) in relation to current policy and practice using responses to inform policy amendments and review

(w) By having a standing item on the agenda of each Pastoral Team meeting where incidents of alleged bullying are discussed;

(x) By having a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board of Governors where a report on bullying is presented.

RESPONSE TO AN ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT

Staff are expected to respond to alleged bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in the Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

Within school a continuum of **socially unacceptable behaviours** may exist. These behaviours infringe upon everyone's right to be safe. Socially unacceptable behaviours become bullying behaviours when the information gathered by school staff clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour meets the criteria listed i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour is/was intentional, targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils, repeated, causing physical or emotional harm or exclusionary in nature.

Where a reported incident does not meet these criteria, it will be dealt with following the positive behaviour management policy in school.

Procedures for dealing with Bullying

Bullying is unacceptable and a culture of openness is the best way to counter such behaviour. It is the responsibility of each member of the community – pupils, staff, parents and BOG – to report instances of bullying or suspicions of bullying, in the understanding that all such reports will be listened to, taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

In each instance, the priority should be that the vulnerable child (target/s) feels supported and that the individual/s responsible for bullying is made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable, appropriate interventions implemented and the bullying stops.

It is accepted that the precise interventions implemented will vary from incident to incident. However, the broad guidelines below apply:

(a) Incidents of alleged bullying should initially be reported by pupils, parents or other members of staff to the House Teacher who will liaise with the Pastoral Leader.   There is also a 'concern/help box' which pupils may use to communicate their concerns. However, it is recognised that on occasion, the report may be made to the Pastoral Leader, Vice Principal or Principal. A record of any report will be taken (following Procedures to be followed when Supporting Pupils who are Experiencing (Target) or Displaying Bullying or Alleged Bullying Behaviours – Appendix B) and passed to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) who will keep an overview.

(b) The Pastoral Leader will investigate and complete the BCAF.

(c) Pupils directly involved will be asked to give a written account of the incident;

(d) Parents of all pupils directly involved will be contacted promptly;

(e) If necessary, referrals to outside agencies will be made in accordance with 'Procedures to be followed when Supporting Pupils who are Experiencing (Target) or Displaying Bullying or Alleged Bullying Behaviours'.

(f) Support will be provided for both the target pupil/s and the pupil/s displaying bullying type behaviour (Appendix C)

(g) The target/s will be given practical advice and support (Appendix C);

(h) The completed BCAF will be attached in BMM SIMS;

(i) The situation will be monitored and reviewed by the Pastoral Leader / Vice Principal to ensure the welfare of all pupils involved;

(j) A summary report will be given to the Vice Principal as a standing item on the agenda of all Pastoral meetings.

(k) A summary report will be given to the BOG as a standing item on the agenda of all BOG meetings.

Responses to Bullying   (TO INCLUDE RESTORATIVE MEASURES)

A range of responses may be used in dealing with incidents of bullying. The response/s to be used will depend on the severity and persistence of the bullying. It is intended that the person/s responsible will learn from what has happened and change his/ her/ their behaviour. Education and awareness raising are effective ways of challenging bullying and encouraging individual pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. This may include the pupil's involvement in a programme of mentoring, counselling or referral to an outside agency. LLW classes, assemblies and group work with the PPDS[1] may also be used more generally for this purpose.

In addition, sanctions, in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy, to be considered are:
(a) Verbal reprimand from House Teacher / Pastoral Leader / VP / Principal
(b) Verbal or written apology
(c) Full Report
(d) Formal meeting with parents
(e) MAST meeting
(f) Exclusion from class / ICE
(g) Suspension
(h) Expulsion

PPDS[1] – Pupil Personal Development Services EA

Recording incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school

While pupils are travelling to and from school, representing the school at another location or availing of an educational experience at another venue they must follow the school's code of conduct demonstrating respect for all members of the community and their property. Incidents of bullying at any such time will be dealt with in the same manner as if they had occurred on the school premises.

Hence, Omagh High School will keep a BCAF record (Appendix D) of ALL bullying or alleged bullying incidents that occur while:

(a) on the premises of the school during the school day including after school activities or while on the premises between 08.00 and 08.55. This includes the school building, the school grounds within the perimeter fence and car parks;

(b) travelling to or from the school during the school term i.e. while wearing school uniform to travel directly to school at the start of the day and directly from school to home at the end of the school day (including after school activities) when on foot, on the school bus, on a 'school' taxi to an off-site educational provider, on a 'school' taxi to home;

(c) the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school, for example, whilst on a school trip, a school visit, representing school, playing on a school team, attending another school/FE college under local Area Learning Community arrangements, attending a Strule activity or learning experience; or

(d) the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

These records will be generated by the Pastoral Team or Principal depending upon the nature, time and location of the incident or the manner in which it is reported or observed.

POLICY CONSULTATION PROCESS

Regular consultation (Appendix E) with Omagh High School community will be undertaken on an annual basis to ensure the efficient monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy. In so doing, meaningful ways of giving the pupils their voice, listening to the views of pupils, parents, carers, staff and governors will be employed in order to gather data to inform the review of the policy and the school development planning process.

Methods of consultation may include carrying out an annual whole-school baseline audit involving pupils, parents, carers, staff (T/NT) and governors after the October half-term break; questionnaires; on-line surveys; school council; class councils; Friends of Omagh High School consultation; responses to the policy when posted on the website; and focus groups in school.

The results of consultations will be analysed and feedback provided to all participants.

In turn, results will be used to address concerns, improve support provided, inform and guide amendments to the policy and procedures, identify CPD requirements, inform the SDP and monitor and evaluate policy efficacy thus promoting equality, good relations and diversity within Omagh High School.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Omagh High School is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. All staff and Governors will be afforded the opportunity for safeguarding training including relevant Anti-Bullying Policy training. A record of all such training will be kept and updated as necessary to inform future training needs based on PRSD outcomes, baseline audit responses and the School Development Planning process. (Appendix F)

RELATED POLICIES

The efficacy of the Anti-Bullying Policy is dependent upon the use of other linked school policies.

All socially unacceptable behaviours are managed under the Positive Behaviour Policy procedures – see the current policy for details.

Code of Practice action plans are drawn up, tracked, monitored, assessed and reviewed through the implementation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy – see current school SEN policy for further details regarding procedures etc.

Should physical restraint prove necessary, it will be undertaken in compliance with the school's Safe Handling Policy – see current policy for further details.

Incidents relating to e-safety will be managed with reference to the E-safety Policy requirements – see current policy for further details.

Further details relating to the 'preventative measures' can be found in the statutory personal development curriculum / pastoral care policy.

Monitoring and Review

The Board of Governors and Principal will, on the basis of evidence gathered, monitor the Anti-Bullying Policy by using performances and other data to:

- Determine how effective the school's preventative measures are in reducing levels of and opportunities for bullying behaviour, severity and frequency of incidences by noting reduction/increases, monitoring response times etc.;
- Identify patterns and trends, measure impact on levels of achievement, evaluate the efficacy of interventions and the support provided;
- Determine how effective the policy's processes are in identifying underlying motivation, promoting and maintaining restoration;
- Ensure that the policy through consultation and participation is successfully identifying current needs and addressing them appropriately;
- Inform and guide policy development and review through feedback received from baselining surveys with parents/carers, staff, Governors and pupils;
- Ensure that policy concerns are identified quickly and addressed through the ongoing School Development Planning process.

As such, a summary report will be given to the BOG as a standing item on the agenda of all BOG meetings.
In response, the Anti-Bullying Policy will be kept under review. The preventative measures will be reviewed by the Board of Governors at intervals of no more than four years. Additionally, it may be necessary from time to time to make policy amendments as the result of the feedback from baselining audits/debriefing processes and when changes to legislation occur. Amendments may also be made in response to issues arising from a current situation and/or from data generated to identify existing behavioural patterns and trends.

All policy reviews and amendments (Appendix G) will be dated and signed by the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Principal to ratify the process. Details of consultations and resultant amendments will also be detailed. (Appendix E)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Signs and Symptoms

The following signs may suggest that a pupil has been or is the target of bullying type behaviour and that the situation warrants investigation:

Unwillingness to attend school / truancy

Anxiety about travelling to and from school / avoiding regular travelling times

Underachievement

Loss of concentration / enthusiasm / interest in school / changed behaviour

Repeated non-specific reasons for visits to the person responsible for pupil welfare – headache / stomach ache

Unexplained changes in mood especially before returning to school after holidays / weekends

Physical signs of anxiety – stammering / nightmares, sleep difficulty / loss of appetite / nausea / withdrawal

Physical bruising / torn clothes

Loss of self-esteem / confidence / mood swings

Books torn or destroyed / missing possessions

Reluctance to say what is wrong

APPENDIX B

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN SUPPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING (Target) OR DISPLAYING BULLYING OR ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour reported as alleged bullying

⬇

Maintain a clear chronological record of all accounts and conversations or interviews

⬇

Record an initial Bullying Concern on SIMS and create the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) for that incident. This should be attached as a linked document in SIMS at the end of the process.
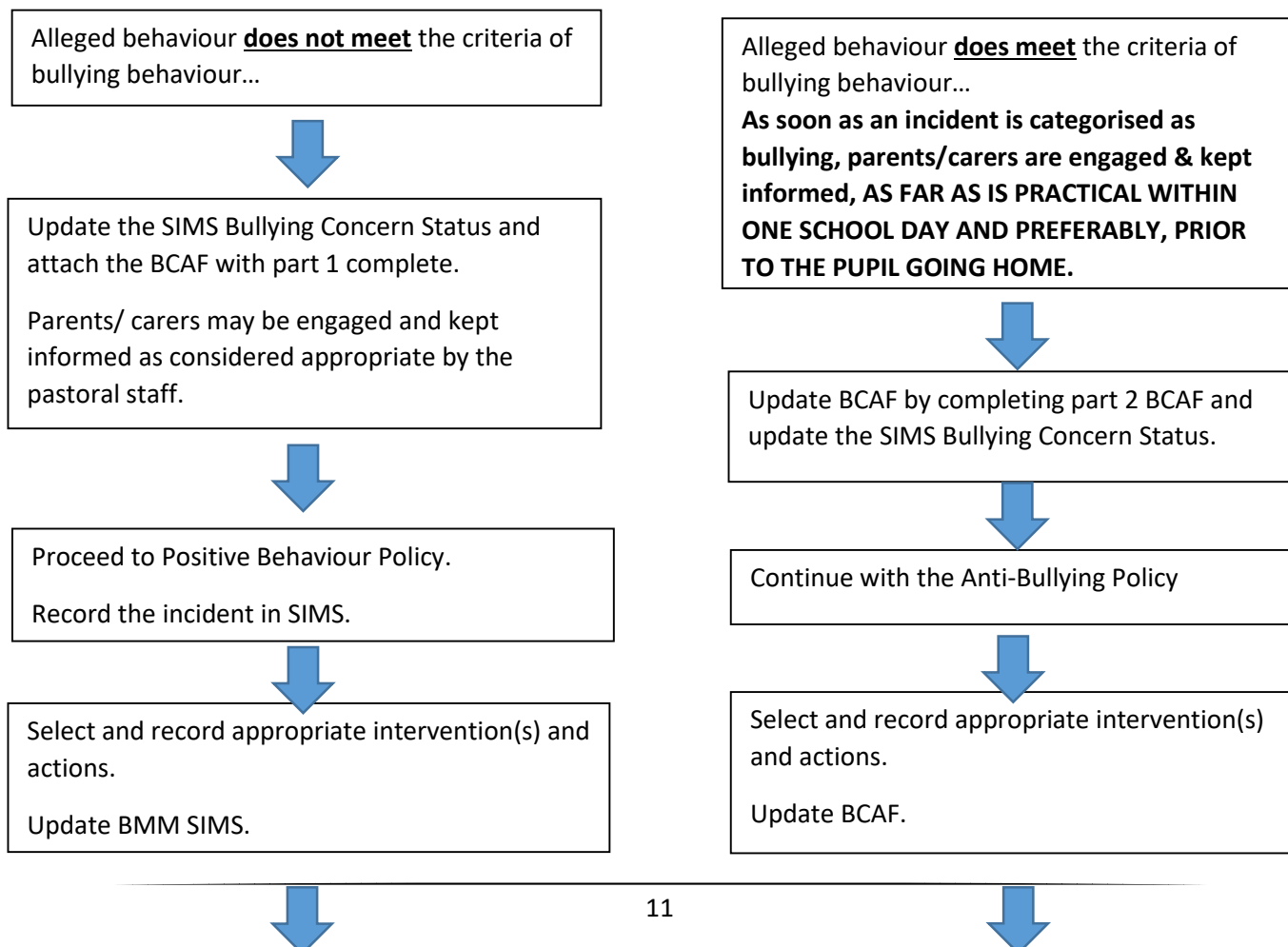
⬇

Gather information on the current incident and access information on SIMS Behaviour Management Module (BMM)

⬇

Part 1 of BCAF is completed in Word and saved to a private folder.

The House Teacher / Pastoral Leader / Head of Pastoral Care / Principal use the criteria to determine the nature of the alleged behaviour.

Alleged behaviour **does not meet** the criteria of bullying behaviour…	Alleged behaviour **does meet** the criteria of bullying behaviour… **As soon as an incident is categorised as bullying, parents/carers are engaged & kept informed, AS FAR AS IS PRACTICAL WITHIN ONE SCHOOL DAY AND PREFERABLY, PRIOR TO THE PUPIL GOING HOME.**
⬇	⬇
Update the SIMS Bullying Concern Status and attach the BCAF with part 1 complete. Parents/ carers may be engaged and kept informed as considered appropriate by the pastoral staff.	Update BCAF by completing part 2 BCAF and update the SIMS Bullying Concern Status.
⬇	⬇
Proceed to Positive Behaviour Policy. Record the incident in SIMS.	Continue with the Anti-Bullying Policy
⬇	⬇
Select and record appropriate intervention(s) and actions. Update BMM SIMS.	Select and record appropriate intervention(s) and actions. Update BCAF.
⬇	⬇

Tailored Interventions implemented to reduce the level of unacceptable, anti-social behaviour(s) to ensure behaviour does not move to bullying behaviour, perhaps through the SEN Code of Practice.

External, multi-agency support is required / is not required.

Update BMM SIMS / records.

Interventions implemented by Pastoral Leader to strengthen target(s) resilience. The Code of Practice may be used to develop agreed Action Plans for both targeted pupil/s and pupil/s displaying bullying behaviours in consultation with the SENCo / Pastoral VP and where necessary, draw up a Risk Reduction Action Plan.

Interventions implemented to reduce unacceptable bullying behaviour(s).

External, multi-agency support is required / is not required. Pastoral VP to convene and chair such MAST meetings. SENCo / Pastoral VP to complete any subsequent referrals for support agencies.

Pastoral Leader to track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the outcomes of the implemented interventions. Pastoral Leader to discuss outcomes with Pastoral VP.

Pastoral Leader to record outcomes on BCAF. (BCAF Part 3 and Part 4)

Pastoral Leader to forward a completed BCAF to the Pastoral VP and attach BCAF in SIMS as linked document.

Pastoral VP to save a copy of the completed BCAF in a private folder in SIMS.

Outcomes used to inform summary report to BOG

<u>**APPENDIX C**</u>

Practical Advice for Pupils

Omagh High School encourages pupils to show respect and tolerance in their relationships with all members of the school community.

Pupils are encouraged to
- say **NO** to bullying
- know and understand what bullying means and the consequences of bullying type behaviour
- be active not passive in response to bullying type behaviour – speak out / tell about / report incidents of such behaviour
- listen to, support and help pupils who have been or are the target of bullying type behaviour
- develop a range of assertiveness strategies to use in the event of an alleged bullying incident
- take personal responsibility
- take collective responsibility
- develop loyalty to Omagh High School and the members of the school community.

Support for Targeted Pupil/s

Discussion and agreement of a tailored Code of Practice Action Plan identifying SMARTE target/s; relevant success criteria; outcomes and assessment procedures.

Action plan to be recorded in Part 3 of the BCAF.

Staff and pupils together track and monitor progress to ensure the efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review.

Update the BCAF Part 4 and share with key partners.

Support for Pupil/s Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Discussion and agreement of a tailored Code of Practice Action Plan identifying SMARTE target/s; relevant success criteria; outcomes and assessment procedures.

Action plan to be recorded in Part 3 of the BCAF.

Staff and pupils together track and monitor progress to ensure the efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review and to ensure that the implementation of strategies identified and agreed will result in the reduction / removal of unacceptable bullying behaviour/s as well as an enhanced ability to empathise with others and the restoration of relationships.

Update the BCAF Part 4 and share with key partners.

(Strategies – DE SEN Resource File, 'Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' pages 272 – 279.
Interventions – NIABF's 'Effective responses to bullying behaviour', pages 16-19.)

A section on **Information and Guidance on the Issue of Bullying** is in the Homework Diary.

APPENDIX H

REFERENCES

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

Cooperating 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

Strategies – DE SEN Resource File, 'Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties' pages 272 – 279.
Interventions – NIABF's 'Effective responses to bullying behaviour', pages 16-19.