



Bí Cineálta Policy

Sapientia et Virtute With Wisdom and Courage

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

This Policy/Statement of Strategy was ratified by the Board of Directors	Date 22 nd April 2025
This Policy will be reviewed in:	April 2026
This policy was reviewed by:	The Board of Directors



Mission Statement

Regina Mundi College is a Voluntary Secondary School, founded by Miss Daisy Corrigan in 1961. It is under the supervision of a Board of Directors. The ethos of the school is Christian, based on the philosophy, official teaching and practice of the Roman Catholic Church, while respecting other traditions, values and beliefs. Our aims as educators are :

- To cherish excellence in each member of the school community
- To develop in each student a strong sense of responsibility
- To promote and encourage the potential of each student
- To accommodate and nurture the ability of all our students
- To prepare students for further education, the world of work and to become committed members of society

We aim to achieve these goals through the dynamic partnership that exists between students, parents' staff and management

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Directors of Regina Mundi College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The board of directors acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* on gov.ie.

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	Feb 2025	Survey
Students	Feb 2025	Survey
Parents	Feb 2025	Survey
Board of Management	May 2025	Board Annual General Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Ongoing continuous basis, when appropriate	Informal meetings/phone calls
Date policy was approved: 22 nd April 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures):

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour.

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Regina Mundi College proactively addresses these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies that Regina Mundi College use to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:

- > implementing the SPHE curriculum
- > implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- > having regular conversations in SPHE with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- > referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for most of these services it is 13 years old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour.

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies used in Regina Mundi College to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following:

- > maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- > challenging gender- stereotypes
- > encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour.

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies used in Regina Mundi College to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following:

- > fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- > having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- > encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- > providing reading material and textbooks that represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the library

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour.

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies used in Regina Mundi College to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following:

- > ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- > ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- > celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- > organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect

Preventing sexual harassment.

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero- tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies used in Regina Mundi College to prevent sexual harassment include the following:

- > using the updated SPHE specifications at post--primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- > promoting positive role models within the school community
- > challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

The preventative strategies listed above are used by Regina Mundi College to prevent all types of bullying behaviour.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

A Trusted Adult.

The concept of “a trusted adult” can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff at Regina Mundi College let students know that they can talk to them. Students who witness bullying behaviour are supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. At Regina Mundi College this is as follows:

1. class teacher
2. year head
3. deputy principal
4. principal

If unsure who to inform, the trusted adult should inform the principal or deputy principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating safe physical spaces in schools.

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students. Hidden spaces in hallways, around staircases and in the schoolyard can be areas where there is a greater risk for bullying behaviour to occur. Schools could consider increasing visibility in these areas such as using mirrors, planting shrubs to avoid students congregating in these areas or increasing supervision.

Regina Mundi College takes the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- > good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- > the removal of visual barriers from windows such as posters
- > school staff supervising at break times are always active and visible.
- > Regina Mundi College has murals, artwork and signage to help promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect
- > each classroom door has a window to aid visibility

Students can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment. The inclusion of spaces within Regina Mundi College for collaborative learning can also play a part in fostering a sense of belonging. Regina Mundi College school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community.

Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Regina Mundi College takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

Regina Mundi College offers a range of organised activities during break times with a view to accommodating a range of preferences and interests. Some of the organised activities during break and lunch time include:

- > chess club
- > coding club
- > school newspaper (Monthly Mundi)
- > debating club
- > Irish conversation club

Regina Mundi College has the above supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

1. class teacher
2. year head
3. deputy principal
4. principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved

- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures):

Determine if Bullying behaviour has occurred

The definition of bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within Regina Mundi's Code of Behaviour.

If an individual is involved, the student is engaged with and asked their account of the incident(s). It also may aid the process if the student involved writes down their account of the incident(s).

If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

Regina Mundi College is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, we as a school are required to support the students involved. When the bullying behaviour continues in school, we should deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

Record and Address

It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken. The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- > Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- > Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- > Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > Consider the age and ability of those involved
- > Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > Take action in a timely manner
- > Inform parents of those involved

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations.

Approaches such as restorative practice and mediation should only be used to address bullying behaviour when the teachers involved have been trained in how to engage in these methods and the students involved have agreed to their use.

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form and type of

bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.

Forms of Bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Physical bullying behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.> Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
Verbal bullying behaviour	Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
Written bullying behaviour	Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.
Extortion	Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.
Exclusion	Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
Relational bullying behaviour	Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”; a group of students ganging up against one student; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumors about a student; giving a student the “silent treatment”; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.
Online bullying behaviour	Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media

	<p>platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.</p> <p>This form of bullying behaviour can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps. > posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent. > making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students. > excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game. <p>excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.</p> <p>As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an “offline” experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.</p>
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Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

Disablist bullying behaviour	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need.
Exceptionally able bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents.
Gender identity bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity.
Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community.
Physical appearance bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or

	criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body.
Racist bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”.
Poverty bullying	Behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources.
Religious identity bullying	Behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity.
Sexist bullying	Behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex.
Sexual harassment	Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

These records should be retained in accordance with Regina Mundi College’s record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Staff will provide the specific year head with a copy of the record to be placed on the student’s file. This will assist in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

Support is available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

NEPS provides psychological support to primary and post-primary schools, focusing on students’ wellbeing, academic progress, and social-emotional development. Their service model includes:

- > **Direct Casework:** Working one-on-one with students who need psychological support.
- > **Indirect Casework:** Collaborating with teachers and parents to provide guidance on student support.

NEPS also assists schools in managing bullying issues by:

- > Advising on best practices for prevention and intervention.
- > Providing training to teachers and staff on fostering resilience, social skills, and conflict resolution.
- > Helping schools develop strategies to promote positive peer relationships.

Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's professional learning support service for teachers and school leaders. It encourages continuous professional development through reflective and research-based teaching methods.

Oide's key contributions include:

- > Providing training and resources on curricular developments.
- > Supporting school improvement initiatives aligned with national priorities, such as student wellbeing.
- > Offering professional learning to help schools prevent and address bullying effectively.

Webwise

Webwise is an online safety initiative that promotes responsible internet use among students, teachers, and parents. It is co-funded by the European Commission and focuses on:

- > Creating educational resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into the curriculum.
- > Offering guidance for parents to support their children's online activities.
- > Running awareness campaigns on cyberbullying, online wellbeing, and digital safety, with input from the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel.

National Parents Council (NPC)

The NPC is the official representative body for parents of students in early years, primary, and post-primary education. Established in 1985 and recognized in the **Education Act 1998**, the NPC works to empower parents as active participants in their child's education.

To support parents in addressing bullying, the NPC:

- > Provides training sessions, both online and in-person, on bullying prevention and intervention.
- > Helps parents develop strategies to support their children in handling bullying situations.
- > Advocates for strong parent-school partnerships to create safer learning environments.

Tusla

Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, is responsible for child protection and welfare services in Ireland. Schools should contact Tusla if bullying behavior raises child protection concerns.

Guidance on when bullying becomes a **child protection issue** is provided in **section 2.4** of the procedures, and Tusla's contact details are available in the Resources Guide.

An Garda Síochána

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

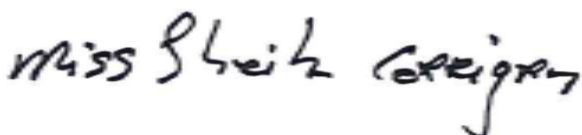
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each Board of Director meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

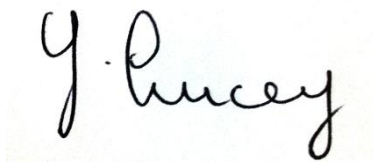
This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.



Signed:
Miss Sheila Corrigan – Manager

Date: 22nd April 2025



Signed:
Ms. Yvonne Lucey – Principal

Date: 22nd April 2025