Child Protection Policy

Sapientia et Virtute With Wisdom and Courage

Child Protection Policy

This Policy/Statement of Strategy was ratified by the Board of Directors	**Date 14th May 2026**
This Policy will be reviewed in:	**May 2027**
This policy was reviewed by:	All Stakeholders.



Child Protection Policy and Procedures

The Board of Directors recognises that child protection and welfare considerations permeate all aspects of school life and must be reflected in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. Accordingly, in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills' Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Regina Mundi College has agreed the following Child protection Policy.

The Board of Directors has adopted as policy the Child Protection Guidelines for Post-Primary Schools as published by the Department of Education & Science and is guided by the DES circular 0065/2011 and Children First 'National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children' 2011.

Circular 0065/2011 outlines new 'oversight arrangements and these are incorporated into the guidelines which follow. Copies of all relevant documents are available from the Principal or may be viewed on www.education.ie and www.dyca.ie

What to do if a student reports a Child Protection Issue

You Should:

- Listen Compassionately
- Use open non-specific questions where, what is being reported is unclear
- Make a careful record of the report on a **Pink Student Welfare Report Sheet**, using the young person's **own words**
- If the person reporting is an adult, invite him/her to provide a written account of the matter, date, time and sign it
- Report the matter immediately to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)
- Keep the matter strictly confidential

You Should Not:

- Question the person reporting, other than to seek clarification
- Make any judgemental statements
- Give any undertaking of secrecy
- Start to investigate

In the event that the DLP decides not to report the allegation/concern to the Health Service Executive, the member of staff who reported the matter will be informed of why action is not being taken.

The member of staff who reports an allegation to the DLP may be asked to attend a Child Protection Conference. The DLP will consult with the Board of Directors before responding to such a request.

A member of staff reporting an allegation/concern or suspicion in good faith has the legal protection of qualified privilege at common law and is also protected under 'The Protection for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act' 1988. The freedom of Information Acts and the Data Protection Acts will apply to records.

Summary of Board of Directors' Responsibility in Child Protection

- To provide students with the highest possible standard of care in order to promote their well-being and protect them from harm
- To adopt a Child Protection Policy in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools
- To adopt without modification the child protection procedures for post-primary schools as outlined in the circular 0065/2011
- To designate a senior member of staff as the DLP for the school. It is expected that the DLP will normally be the Principal and in the case of Regina Mundi College the Deputy DLP will be the Deputy Principal. The name of the DLP's will be displayed prominently around the school
- To ensure that all records relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely
- To adhere to DES requirements for Garda Vetting in respect of all school personnel and apply through recruitment, selection and appointment procedures to all employees and volunteers
- To ensure the school's child protection policy is available to parents/guardians and the school community

The DLP will inform the Board that a report involving a student in the school has been submitted to the Health Service Executive (HSE). The DLP will inform the Board of cases where information is sought from the HSE but where no report is made. The DLP will be responsible to maintain all relevant contact details for the HSE and An Garda Siochana.

If the allegation is against a school employee, the Chairperson meets the employee privately, gives details of the allegation/concern to the employee with a copy of related documentation. The employee is afforded an opportunity to respond in writing to the Board. If the Protocol Authorising Immediate Action has been invoked by the Principal, an emergency meeting of the Board is called. Legal advice should be sought.

If the nature of the allegation/concern warrants immediate action, or the ratification of action under the Protocol, the Board will direct that the employee absent him/herself from school with immediate effect. The strictest confidence is to be observed.

Any further action required by the Board will be informed by the investigations conducted by the HSE and/or An Garda Siochana. Such action will be taken in compliance with the Disciplinary Procedures which applies to Regina Mundi College and the Board of Directors.

Finally, the Board undertakes to ensure that a review of the Child Protection Policy will be undertaken on an annual basis and will put in place an action plan containing appropriate timelines to address those aspects of the policy which have been identified as requiring further improvement.

These Child Protection Procedures should be read in conjunction with the Regina Mundi College Confidentiality Policy.

N.B. In line with Child Protection Policy a teacher must be present in the classroom when a visiting speaker is addressing students.

For 2026/27 The Designated Liaison Person is: Ms Yvonne Lucey, Principal

Deputy Designated Liaison Person is: Mr Paul Finn, Deputy Principal

Categories of abuse are:

Physical Abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

It may involve the lack of responsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

It also includes parents or carers failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-givers
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

Emotional Abuse

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment so as to cause severe and adverse effects on a child's emotional development,

It may involve conveying to a child that they are:

- Worthless
- Unloved
- Inadequate
- Valued only insofar as they meet the other persons needs

It may include:

- Not giving the child the opportunities to express their views
- Deliberately silencing them
- 'Making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

It may also feature age of developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children including:

- Interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability
- Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning
- Preventing participation in normal social interaction

It may involve:

- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger
- The exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment although it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

This may involve:

- Physical contact including assault by penetration (e.g. rape or oral sex)
- Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing

Non-contact activities involving:

- Children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
- Children in/or watching sexual activities
- Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Woman can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **This policy is in place for ALL students**

4. Appendix 1: Checklist for Annual Review of the Child Protection Policy.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted a child protection policy I accordance with the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary ad Post Primary Schools'?	Yes
As part of the school's child protection policy, has the Board formally adopted, without modification, the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools'?	Yes
Are there both a DLP and a Deputy DLP currently appointed?	Yes
Are the relevant contact details (HSE and An Garda Síochána) to hand?	Yes
Has the DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
Has the Deputy DLP attended available child protection training?	Yes
Have any members of the Board attended child protection training?	Yes
Has the school's child protection policy identified other school policies, practices and activities that are regarded as having particular child protection relevance?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the Departments "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools" are available to all school personnel?	Yes
Has the Board arrangements in place to communicate the school's child protection policy to new school personnel?	Yes
Is the Board satisified that all school personnel have been made aware of their responsibilities under the "Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools"?	Yes
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any child protection reports made to the HSE/An Garda Siochána by the DLP?	Yes
Since the Board's last annual review, was the Board informed of any cases where the DLP sought advice from the HSE and as a result of this advice, no report to the HSE was made?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that the child protection procedures in relation to the making of reports to the HSE/An Garda Síochána were appropriately followed?	Yes
Were child protection matters reported to the Board appropriately recorded in the Board minutes?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all recordings relating to child protection are appropriately filed and stored securely?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the Parents' Association has been provided with the school's child protection policy?	Yes

5.

Regina Mundi College

Protocol Authorising Immediate Action in Child Safeguarding Matters

In accordance with Appendix 3 and Section 7.3.6 of the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025

Approved by: Board of Directors, Regina Mundi College

Date of Approval: 14/5/2026

Date of Review: May 2027

1. Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to establish clear procedures for authorising immediate action where a child protection or safeguarding concern involving a member of school personnel necessitates their immediate absence from Regina Mundi College.

This protocol has been developed in accordance with Appendix 3 and Chapter 7 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025*, issued by the Department of Education and Youth.

The protection, safety and welfare of students are paramount and shall take precedence in determining the necessity for immediate safeguarding measures.

2. Scope

This protocol applies to all employees of Regina Mundi College where circumstances arise that necessitate immediate precautionary action to safeguard a child or children.

It shall be implemented in conjunction with:

- The Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025, particularly Chapter 7 and Appendix 3.
- The Children First Act 2015.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, including subsequent addenda.
- The school's Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.
- Applicable employment legislation, disciplinary procedures and principles of fair procedures.

The purpose of the meeting shall be to inform the employee of the allegation and the precautionary action being taken.

The employee shall be advised of their right to be accompanied by an appropriate person of their choice, including a colleague, trade union representative or other support person.

The Principal shall explain that the direction to absent themselves is an interim safeguarding measure, without loss of pay, pending consideration by the Board of Directors.

5.3 Written Confirmation

The employee shall be advised of the matter in writing.

The written notification shall confirm:

- The precautionary nature of the action.
- That the employee is being directed to absent themselves from school with immediate effect.
- That the absence is without loss of pay, subject to the relevant Departmental approval arrangements.
- That the measure does not constitute a disciplinary finding or imply guilt.
- That the matter will be considered at an emergency meeting of the Board of Directors.

5.4 Record Keeping

The Principal shall prepare a written record of the meeting, including the date, time, persons present, information communicated and safeguarding action taken.

This record, together with the written notification, shall be retained securely on the relevant case file in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Schools 2025.

8. Actions Following the Emergency Meeting

Immediately following the emergency meeting:

- Tusla shall be informed whether the employee has been formally placed on administrative leave.
- Where administrative leave is not imposed, advice shall be sought from Tusla regarding alternative safeguarding measures, and Tusla shall be informed of the measures implemented.
- Where the Department is the paymaster, it shall be notified immediately of the Board's decision.
- Where administrative leave is imposed, the necessary approval for continuation of pay and substitute cover shall be sought.
- Any administrative leave shall be reviewed by the Board of Management at least once per school term.

Any subsequent disciplinary action shall be conducted separately in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures and following consultation with Tusla and, where appropriate, An Garda Síochána.

9. Confidentiality and Fair Procedures

All matters arising under this protocol shall be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

Information shall be disclosed only to those who are required to know for the purpose of fulfilling their safeguarding, governance, statutory or employment responsibilities.

The school shall respect the rights of all parties, including the right of children to protection and the right of employees to fair procedures.

The activation of this protocol shall not be regarded as a determination of wrongdoing.

10. Adoption and Review

This protocol shall be formally confirmed by the Board of Directors of Regina Mundi College as part of the completion and adoption of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement.