An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Initial Inspection

INITIAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Ballyduff B 2 National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Ballyduff Co. Waterford
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	15540Q

Date of inspection: 11-11-2021

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WHAT IS A CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION?

A Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection (CPSI) is a focused inspection of the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017*. These procedures provide direction and guidance to school authorities and to school personnel in relation to meeting their statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015. They also provide direction and guidance in relation to the continued implementation of the best practice, non-statutory guidance set out in Children First National Guidance 2017. The CPSI inspection model examines the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017* in schools through conducting ten checks based on the procedures.

The CPSI inspection process consists of two inspections: an **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** and a **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection**. The two inspections are typically carried out in a school within a relatively short timeframe. This is a report on an Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION?

During an initial CPSI, inspectors:

- Engage with learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe
- Invite all parents to complete an online parent survey that explores issues relevant to school climate and parents' awareness of the school's child protection procedures, including the school's anti-bullying procedures
- Hold meetings with:
    - Designated Liaison Person (DLP) / Deputy DLP
    - Chairperson of board of management
    - A sample of school personnel
    - The SPHE coordinator
- Review the following documents:
    - Board of management minutes
    - Child safeguarding statement and risk assessment
    - Relevant school plans
    - The school's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Review child protection records, where these have been created.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The checks conducted during this inspection are based on the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.*

The first section of the report indicates the extent to which the school was compliant with each of the checks conducted by indicating, in respect of each of the stated checks, whether the school was:

- Fully compliant
- Substantially compliant
- Partially compliant

- Not compliant

Some of the checks may not be relevant to a particular school, for example a school that has never had a concern in relation to child protection will not have any child protection records. In such cases, the report indicates that the check does not apply to the school by stating *Not Applicable* after that particular check.

It should be noted that the term 'school personnel' as referred to in this inspection report is used as a generic term to cover all adults who are involved in the operation of the school. It covers employees and voluntary workers and includes parent association members when they are working in the school. These personnel include, for example, teachers, special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaners, voluntary workers in the school, paid or voluntary tutors, and parent association members helping with aspects of the work of the school.

Where a school is less than fully compliant with a particular requirement, the report provides some additional evaluative comment on the check. It also advises actions that the school should take in order to comply more fully with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

The report also provides an evaluative comment on the school's planning for and implementation of the Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum and the Stay Safe Programme/ Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme as evident during the inspection. In providing this overview, reference is made to the appropriate quality level of the Inspectorate's Quality Continuum:

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Fair
- Weak

A *Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections* was published on the website of the Department of Education in January 2019 and can be accessed at www.gov.ie. This Guide details how CPSIs are carried out and also provides the framework used by inspectors in arriving at judgements about a school's compliance with the aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures 2017* that are checked during the inspection.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Report
The checks detailed below derive from the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*. These procedures are designed to ensure that schools provide a safe and secure environment for all our children and through appropriate curriculum provision, provide for the incremental development of the life skills that will empower students to keep themselves safe. In order to meet these aims, the procedures set out a number of requirements on schools relating to communicating with members of the school community about child protection matters; training of school personnel and board members in respect of child protection; reporting about child protection to the board of management; and fulfilling certain reporting and record keeping obligations in relation to child protection matters. They also detail the mandatory aspects of the curriculum that are designed to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the *Stay Safe* programme.

Aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* checked	**Fully Compliant** **Substantially Compliant** **Partially Compliant** **Not compliant** **Not applicable**
1. The school has communicated the required aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* to relevant stakeholders.	**Fully Compliant**
2. A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.	**Fully Compliant**
3. The board of management reports that it is aware of and discharges its responsibilities to provide information to all school personnel relevant to child protection and to ensure that available training is undertaken by all or some members of staff as required.	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** All members of school personnel who were interviewed were aware of most aspects of the procedure to be followed if they have a child protection concern. Some staff were not aware of the reporting procedure for certain concerns. • ***Action Advised***: School management should ensure that all school personnel are aware of the all aspects of the procedures to be followed if they have a child protection concern.	
4. The board of management reports that it is aware of its responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school personnel and report that they discharge these responsibilities.	**Fully Compliant**
5. A child safeguarding statement and risk assessment have been prepared in line with the template and requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.*	**Fully Compliant**
6. The minutes of the board meetings that were checked contained a record of a child protection oversight report being provided in line with the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.	**Fully Compliant**

7. Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined.	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** The file examined contained a full record of the concern which included all correspondence relevant to the concern and all names of the relevant individuals. Parties referenced were not assigned a unique identifier number. • ***Action Advised***: School management should ensure that all parties referenced in files are assigned a unique identifier number. Guidance note 3 of the supporting documents and templates on the Department of Education website provides relevant advice in this regard.	
8. The procedures to report child protection concerns were fully implemented in the records examined.	**Fully Compliant**
9. The procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel were fully implemented in the records examined. *(These personnel include, for example, teachers, special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaners, voluntary workers in the school, paid or voluntary tutors, and parent association members helping with aspects of the work of the school.)*	**Not Applicable**

10. Curriculum Check	
There is a programme for Social Personal and Health Education for all children in the school.	**Yes**
The Stay Safe Programme is implemented within the school	**Yes**

The overall quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the *Stay Safe* programme is good. The plan provides a general overview of the areas to be addressed on alternate years and identifies a range of complementary resources to support programme implementation. A review of topics covered in classrooms, of the communication with parents and interaction with pupils indicate that practice in some areas has developed beyond the scope of the whole-school plan. It is recommended that the plan be updated to reflect and consolidate the good practices noted and to inform developments in this subject area into the future.

Pupils who participated in the group meeting carried out during the inspection, spoke with confidence and enthusiasm about aspects of their learning, including healthy eating, physical fitness, farm safety, friendship and bullying. Pupils also displayed good knowledge of topics relating to new life, and growing and changing. There is scope to further develop the approach to teaching language for the sensitive areas of RSE systematically and developmentally throughout all classes.

The pupils described an appropriate range of learning experiences in SPHE which included opportunities to engage in talk and discussion, have external speakers and engage with audio visual presentations. They highlighted the communications boxes in classrooms which serve to extend their range of options for expressing concerns and/ or posing questions. Extending the use of drama as a methodology in SPHE and further developing the approaches to promoting and supporting psychological wellbeing were identified as areas that pupils would like to see in the future development of provision in this area.

Almost all parents who participated in a survey implemented as part of the inspection were positive in their responses to questions relating to relevant school policies and procedures. They expressed confidence in the school's ability to deal with issues of child protection and bullying and indicated that the school is a positive and welcoming place for parents and pupils.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management and Staff of St. Michael's NS, Ballyduff Upper welcomes the very positive findings in this initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Report carried out by the Department of Education Inspectors in November 2021. All teachers and members of the Board of Management are satisfied that the report reflects the inspection carried out in St Michael's NS.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The following actions have been taken following on from the recommendations contained within the initial report. Each action is listed according to the checks within the report:

Check 3: All teachers in the school have been made aware of their responsibilities as a mandated person and the actions which they have to take if they receive an allegation or have a suspicion that a child may have been abused, neglected or at risk of being so. This took place as an information session involving questions and answers for all teachers.

School management have highlighted Child Protection Procedures to school personnel, and copies of the procedures are available and easily accessible to all personnel.

School management have re-informed all school personnel of all aspects of the procedure to be followed if they have a child protection concern, since initial inspection

Check 7: The DLP has ensured that each person referenced in child protection files has been assigned a unique identifier number as per guidelines.

Check 10: Our schools SPHE plan has been updated to reflect and consolidate good practices in the school and to inform developments in SPHE into the future. A Substance Use policy is currently being formulated for the school, with input from all stakeholders. The use of drama as a methodology in teaching aspects of the SPHE curriculum will be reviewed and extended by the teaching staff of St. Michael's NS. Approaches to further promote and support psychological wellbeing will be investigated and adopted by the school, where appropriate, whilst language relating to the sensitive areas of RSE will be taught systematically and developmentally throughout all classes. New resources relating to the above recommendations will be acquired by the school, to aid the teaching of SPHE and improve the overall learning opportunities for students of St. Michael's NS, within the area of SPHE.