An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Final Inspection

FINAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Etchen's National School
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Mullingar Road Kinnegad Co. Westmeath
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	19848S

Date of inspection: 09-03-2022

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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 a Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING A FINAL CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION?

During a final CPSI, inspectors:

- Engage with learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe
- Conduct a focus group meeting with representatives of the parents' association / parent representatives on the board of management to 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 was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.

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.	**Fully Compliant**
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.	**Fully Compliant**
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.)*	**Fully Compliant**

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 was very good.

The whole-school plan for SPHE was comprehensive in its coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. Clear guidance for the timing and teaching of the RSE and Stay Safe programmes was included. Collaborative leadership of the review of the SPHE policy and programmes was in evidence and commendably, it was clear from the outcomes of this review that pupils' wellbeing, including digital wellbeing, was prioritised.

Pupils in the group discussions competently and confidently shared their learning outcomes and learning experiences across a wide variety of topics in SPHE. They were very positive regarding the variety of teaching methods they experienced during their SPHE lessons. Pupils used language very effectively when demonstrating their knowledge of SPHE topics, and in many instances were able to link this knowledge to their own life experiences. In some of the groups, pupils were not as confident around their knowledge of the correct language and terminology for body parts. All teachers should ensure that sufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their learning in RSE using the appropriate language.

It was noted during the evaluation how the school actively encourages the pupils to share their learning in SPHE with their parents, and the parents who met with the inspectors provided concrete examples of this. The parents also commented very favourably on the very positive school climate and atmosphere they experience. They spoke of the highly effective communication systems put in place by the school to ensure that they are fully informed with regard to school policies and procedures, including those that relate to child protection, SPHE, RSE, and Stay Safe.