An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Initial Inspection

INITIAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	St Joseph's Convent
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Dublin Road Longford Town
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	18178R

Date of inspection: 16-06-2021

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Department of Education

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.education.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*.	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** The minutes of the board meetings that were checked contained a record of a child protection oversight report. Where there were child protection cases which were not reported to Tusla the board was provided with all the required documents, correctly redacted. However, these documents were not subsequently retained in the case file and the minutes of the board meeting did not record the board's oversight decision in each case.	

• ***Action Advised***: Redacted documents provided to the board for the purpose of oversight should be retained in the case file and the oversight decision of the board should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.	
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.)*	**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 very good.

A comprehensive whole-school plan outlines how all three strands of the curriculum are to be delivered across a two-year cycle and effectively guides classroom practice. Individual teachers' timetables indicate that the appropriate time is allocated to the teaching of discrete SPHE lessons. Teachers plan clear objectives for the teaching of SPHE and monthly progress records indicate that that the Stay Safe programme is implemented appropriately. SPHE is carefully coordinated across the school and implementation is regularly monitored.

During group meetings with pupils, they enthusiastically articulated their knowledge and understanding of the key concepts of the SPHE programme and described a broad range of learning experiences including group work, talk and discussion, role play and video scenarios. They displayed a very good understanding of friendship and bullying and expressed confidence in how interpersonal issues are managed by school staff. They displayed a positive sense of self-esteem, demonstrated a very good understanding of healthy living and outlined the various strategies they have learned to ensure their own personal safety in real life situations and in the online environment.

The school communicates regularly with parents and policies related to SPHE, child protection and anti-bullying are available on the school website. In the online questionnaire completed as part of the evaluation almost all parents who completed the survey indicated that their child is safe and well looked after in school and treated with respect by staff.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management welcomes the very positive findings in this Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection. The Board of Management regards concerns/issues in relation to Chid Protection of utmost importance and endeavours to continually upkeep the highest standard with full implementation of procedures.

The Board of Management was very satisfied that the overall quality of, and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe programme was ranked as very good. The BOM would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their dedication to the teaching, learning and compliance with all aspects examined within this report.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

The Board of Management will endeavour to ensure that any recommendations made by the inspectorate are implemented. The Board of Management has noted the finding of substantial compliancy in Check 6. The additional information and action required in respects of this check has now been fully addressed.