An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Initial Inspection Report

INITIAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	S N Cnoc An Mharcaigh
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Melview Longford
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	07518E
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	26/02/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	13/10/2025

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 (revised 2023)*. 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 (revised 2023)* in schools through conduction 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.

How to read this report

The checks conducted during this inspection are based on the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023).*

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

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.

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 (revised 2023)*.

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:

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Requires improvement to achieve a good standard
- Requires significant improvement to achieve a good standard

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 (revised 2023)* 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 (revised 2023)*. 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.

Responsibility for ensuring the school is fully compliant with these checks rests with the board of management. The Inspectorate will monitor the board's progress in achieving full compliance.

Aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* checked	**Fully Compliant Substantially Compliant Partially Compliant Not compliant Not applicable**
1. The school had communicated the required aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* 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 (revised 2023).*	**Fully Compliant**
3. The board of management reported 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 reported 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 (revised 2023).*	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** The school had prepared a child safeguarding statement and risk assessment appropriate to the school's context, including reference to relevant policies and procedures in place to minimise the risk of harm. The child safeguarding statement was reviewed annually and a record of the review was maintained. The child safeguarding statement was completed on the mandatory template available on gov.ie. • ***Action Advised*:** The board should ensure that the correct template - mandatory template 2, available on gov.ie – is used to carry out the annual review.	

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 (revised 2023).*	**Fully Compliant**
7. Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined.	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** All files were maintained in a secure location which was accessible only by the DLP and DDLP. A hardcopy file which contained a full record of the concern, and all correspondence relevant to the concern, was available for all child protection concerns. Each file reviewed during the inspection had been assigned a serial number. Unique codes had not always been assigned to relevant parties referenced in the child protection files reviewed. • ***Action Advised*:** All relevant parties referenced in files should be assigned a unique code. The school should consider using Guidance Note 3, available on gov.ie, to support effective record keeping.	
8. The procedures to report child protection concerns were fully implemented in the records examined.	**Substantially Compliant**
• ***Additional Information:*** A written record of how the concern came to the DLP's attention as well as the required records of communication between the DLP and registered teachers and the parent/carers of a child, where relevant, were maintained. In cases where Tusla was consulted, the dated record of the consultation and the advice given were maintained. The full name of the Tusla official was not always recorded. • ***Action Advised*:** All records of consultation with Tusla should include the full name of the Tusla official.	
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 was a programme for Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) for all children in the school.	**Yes**
The Stay Safe programme was 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 supported the implementation of a balanced and comprehensive programme over a two-year cycle. Teachers were provided with very clear guidance regarding the delivery of the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), and the Stay Safe programmes. This guidance included details related to teaching methodologies, learning outcomes and experiences, resources, and assessment. To build on this very good practice, it is advised that the plan outlines the language associated with key sensitive topics in RSE to be covered at each class level. A review of individual teachers' timetables indicated that appropriate time was allocated to the teaching of discrete SPHE lessons.	

Pupils who participated in focus group meetings spoke about the emphasis on friendship in the school, the respect they had for each other, and the strategies they used to promote positive well-being. They described their lessons as enjoyable and reported engaging in a variety of experiences, including games, drama, storytelling, poster-making, watching videos, and participating in pair and group work. Pupils used subject-specific language competently and were able to share key messages they had learned in the Stay Safe and RSE programmes. They demonstrated a clear understanding of how to identify different types of bullying behaviour and were aware of what to do in such situations. They confidently recalled many areas of their learning in SPHE, including *Safety and protection, Secrets and telling, Taking care of my body, and Growing and changing.*

Almost all parents who completed the online parental survey, administered as part of this inspection, indicated that their child was safe and well cared for in the school and that their child was treated with respect by their teachers. Additionally, almost all parents knew who to approach in the school if they had concerns about child protection or bullying and expressed confidence in the school's ability to address their concerns. A small number of parents were unsure whether their child learned about relationships and sexuality in school. The school is advised to further develop its communication channels with parents in this regard.

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