

Child Protection Monitoring by the Inspectorate

Context

The Department of Education and Skills published new *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* in December 2017, following the commencement of all sections of the *Children First Act 2015*.

- A fundamental principle of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* is that all schools must keep pupils/students safe from harm while attending the school or while participating in school activities. In this regard, the Procedures outline four main types of abuse: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse
- Boards of management and principals of schools are responsible for fully implementing the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*
- School patrons have an oversight and quality assurance role in the implementation of these procedures by boards of management
- The patron has particular responsibilities when allegations of abuse are made against a school employee or against a member of the board of management
- The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for developing child protection procedures for schools. The Department has also put in place a range of oversight measures to quality assure these procedures.

Child protection and school inspection

As part of the Department's oversight measures, the Inspectorate checks on compliance with the key aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* during **all** school inspections. The level of checks on compliance depends on the inspection being conducted.

- **Level one checks** are undertaken in the course of incidental inspections, curriculum evaluations, subject inspections, programme evaluations, evaluations of provision for pupils with special educational needs and follow-through inspections.
- **Level two checks** are undertaken in the course of whole-school evaluations (WSE), WSE-MLLs, Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Schools, Evaluation of Centres for Education (Youthreach) and Evaluation of Schools Attached to Special Care Units.
- The Inspectorate is currently developing a model of inspection focused solely on the implementation of the Child Protection procedures. **Level three checks** will be undertaken in the course of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection (CPSI) model.

The table below provides details of level one and level two checks undertaken in the course of inspection.

Child Protection Checks Undertaken During School Inspections		
Level	Primary Inspection Models	Checks undertaken
One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incidental Inspection 2. Curriculum Evaluation 3. Evaluation of Provision for Pupils with Special; Educational Needs – Primary 4. Follow Through Inspection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school. 2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.
	Post-Primary Inspection Models	
One	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incidental Inspection 2. Subject Inspection 3. Programme Evaluation 4. Follow-Through Inspection 	
Level	Primary Inspection Models	Checks undertaken
Two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole-School Evaluation 2. Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning 3. Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Schools 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school. 2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment. 3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons. 4. The Child Safeguarding Statement meets the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. 5. The records of the last three board of management meetings record a child protection oversight report that meet the requirements of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017. 6. The board of management has ensured that arrangements are in place to provide information to all school personnel on the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2017 7. School planning documentation indicates that the school is making full provision for the relevant aspects of the curriculum (SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Wellbeing). 8. Child protection records are maintained in a secure location.
	Post-Primary Inspection Models	
Two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole-School Evaluation – Management, Leadership and Learning 2. Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS Schools 3. Evaluation of Centres for Education (Youthreach) 4. Evaluation of Schools Attached to Special Care Units 	

Draft arrangements for Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSIs)

Level three checks are currently under development and will be conducted through additional specialised inspections called Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSIs). The aims of these specialised inspections are:

- To monitor the extent to which the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are implemented in a sample of schools
- To publish written reports on the implementation of *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* in a sample of schools
- To report to the Department of Education and Skills on the extent to which the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* are implemented in a sample of schools
- To gather information to inform the development of child protection and safeguarding policy by the Department of Education and Skills and by other government departments and agencies involved in child protection.

These inspections will involve inspectors enquiring into how:

- The board of management is fulfilling its **responsibilities** under the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*
- The school's child protection **policy** meets the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*
- The school's child protection **recording procedures** meet the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*
- The school's child protection **reporting procedures** meet the requirements of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*
- **Provision is** made for Social Personal and Health Education and Stay Safe in Primary Schools and for SPHE, including well-being and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools.

Initial proposals in respect of how CPSIs may be conducted were shared with education partners in April 2018 as part of a consultation and briefing process. Following agreement with the education partners, a research exercise was undertaken in schools to allow school-based experience to inform refinement of the proposals. Following further briefing and consultation with the education partners to take place in September 2018, additional details of the CPSI process and the checks to be undertaken during CPSIs will be published in advance of the trial usage of the model during the last quarter of 2018.