

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Principals and Boards of Management of
Primary and Post Primary Schools
in relation to the Principal’s Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) to the Board
in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary
Schools 2017.**

This FAQ document is intended to provide guidance to principals and boards of management of recognised schools in relation to the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR).

This FAQ document must be read in conjunction with the [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017](#) (hereinafter referred to as “the procedures”) and in particular sections 9.4 to 9.8 inclusive of chapter 9 of the procedures. It should be noted that many of the questions addressed in this guidance document are inter-connected and readers should therefore be careful not to read individual questions in isolation but should read this document in its entirety.

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1. What is the purpose of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) to the Board?

The purpose of the CPOR is for the board of management to be provided with and to review certain information at every board meeting so that the board can and does satisfy itself that the relevant child protection reporting requirements set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 are being followed.

2. How often is the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) provided to the Board?

The principal's report to the board of management must include a Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) at each board of management meeting.

In the case of an emergency board meeting to deal with a single item issue, the CPOR report is not required.

3. Is there any template to help the Principal in relation to providing his or her Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) to the Board?

As an aid to principals in preparing a CPOR, the Department has published a template available here ([Optional Template E](#)). The information in this FAQ will also assist principals and boards in understanding the CPOR reporting requirements set out in [sections 9.4, 9.5, 9.6, 9.7](#) and [9.8](#) inclusive of chapter 9 of the procedures.

4. In what circumstances must documents be provided to the Board for oversight purposes as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)?

While the reporting requirements in the CPOR may appear extensive, it should be noted that the requirement to provide the documents specified in this report applies only where cases of a specific type (as set out in [sections 9.5 to 9.7](#) inclusive of the procedures) arise in the school. Where any such case does arise, it is essential that the board of management is provided with the information necessary for it to have oversight of compliance with the relevant reporting requirements, particularly where the matter relates to a member of school personnel.

Specific documents must be provided to the board where the Principals CPOR report indicates one or more cases under any of the three headings listed in the CPOR as follows-

- Allegations of abuse against members of school personnel (see [question 5](#) for the information that must be provided).
- Other child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school i.e. cases that do not involve any allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel (see [question 6](#) for the types of cases that must be reported on under this heading).
- Child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils (see [question 7](#) for the types of cases that must be reported on under this heading).

Specified documents (see [question 9](#)) must be provided in respect of each such case reported.

5. What must be provided in the Principals CPOR to the Board in respect of allegations of abuse against a member of school personnel?

The information that shall be provided in the CPOR where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of school personnel is set out in [section 9.5](#) of the procedures and in the CPOR template published by the Department available here ([Optional Template E](#)). Specified documents (see [question 9](#)) must be provided to the board of management in respect of each such case reported.

6. What types of cases must be reported on under the heading “Other child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school (i.e. cases that do not involve any allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel)”?

The types of cases that must be reported on under this heading in the CPOR are set out in [section 9.6](#) of the procedures and in the CPOR template published by the Department available ([Optional Template E](#)). Specified documents (see [question 9](#)) must be provided to the board of management in respect of each such case reported.

7. What types of cases must be reported on under the heading “Child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils”?

The types of cases that must be reported on under this heading in the CPOR are set out in [section 9.7](#) of the procedures and in the CPOR template published by the Department available ([Optional Template E](#)). Specified documents (see [question 9](#)) must be provided to the board of management in respect of each such case reported.

8. What information must be provided under the heading “Summary data in respect of reporting” in the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)?

The information that shall be provided in the CPOR under the heading of “summary data in respect of reporting” is set out in [section 9.8](#) of the procedures and in the CPOR template published by the Department available here ([Optional Template E](#)).

It should be noted that the summary data under this heading in the CPOR relates to the overall number of cases/reports arising since the last board meeting and is therefore **not** a summary of the number of cases/reports recorded under the first 3 headings in the CPOR.

9. What documents must be provided to the Board of Management?

The procedures require that certain documents must be provided in respect of each case referred to under any of the three headings in [question 4](#) of this guidance and as set out in sections 9.5 to 9.7 inclusive of the procedures.

In all cases the documents listed below from (1) to (5) inclusive must be provided to the board. The documents listed from (6) to (8) inclusive must also be provided, where relevant, in cases concerning allegations of abuse against members of school personnel-

1. Copies of all records and notes pertaining to how the allegation and/or concern came to be known to the DLP (*You may use [Optional Template A- Part A](#)*).
2. Copies of any records and notes pertaining to the seeking of Tusla advice in relation to the allegation and/ or concern and to the advice given (*You may use [Optional Template A- Part B](#)*).
3. Copies of any reports submitted to Tusla (as per [sections 9.5.2, 9.6.2 or 9.7.2](#) as applicable).
4. Copies of any other records of communications with Tusla, An Garda Síochána or any other party in relation to the allegation and/or concern (including any acknowledgement of receipt of the report by Tusla).
5. Copies of any statement provided to a member of school personnel under [section 5.3.8](#) of the procedures (*You may use [Optional Template B](#)*).

The following must also be provided, where relevant, in cases concerning allegations of abuse against members of school personnel-

6. Copies of any notification issued under [section 5.6](#) of the procedures (*You may use [Optional Template D](#)*) (**see Note A under**)
7. A copy of the chairperson’s notes or records pertaining to his or her seeking of Tusla advice in relation to the allegation and the advice given (**see Note B under**)
8. A copy of the report submitted to Tusla by the chairperson in respect of the allegation and any acknowledgement of receipt of that report by Tusla (**See Note B under**)

Note A – Regarding **6 above**, this notification applies only to cases where a parent of a pupil in the school made an allegation of abuse against a member of school personnel.

Note B - Regarding **7 and 8 above**: An emergency meeting of the board must be held (in accordance with [section 9.5.6 to 9.5.9](#) inclusive of the procedures) and the documents at 7 and 8 must also be provided to the board at that meeting in cases where-

- An allegation of abuse has been made against a member of school personnel and the DLP has not sought any advice from Tusla in relation to the matter and has not reported the matter to Tusla or
- An allegation of abuse has been made against a member of school personnel and the DLP has not reported the matter to Tusla in circumstances where Tusla has advised the DLP that it should be reported.

Important note:

See also questions [10, 11](#) and [12](#) inclusive for further information about the provision of documents to the board as part of the CPOR. Questions [9 to 12](#) inclusive should be read in conjunction with each other.

10. Is there a template to help Principals record the documents provided to the Board as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report?

To assist principals in recording documents provided to the board at board meetings as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) the Department has published a template for recording documents available here ([Optional Template F](#)).

11. Should the documents be anonymised/redacted to conceal the identities of parties involved?

The records provided to the board of management as part of the CPOR must be anonymised and redacted as necessary to ensure the identities of any children and any other parties to whom the concern or report relates are not disclosed **except** in the case of any records provided in respect of cases under [section 9.5](#) of the procedures (Allegations of abuse against members of school personnel).

It should be noted that these records must be treated in the strictest confidence by all board of management members and board members shall be cognisant that **they are to be reviewed solely for the purposes of oversight of the reporting requirements set out in these procedures.**

Board members are also reminded of their duty to maintain the confidentiality of board meetings and must not disclose or discuss matters discussed at board meetings unless explicitly authorised by the board of management to do so. A board member who breaches this requirement may be removed from the board by the patron in accordance with the relevant provisions of section 16 of the Education Act, 1998 and in relation to such breach may not be protected in any legal proceedings taken against him or her by the general indemnity provided to board of management members under section 14(7) of the Education Act, 1998.

Important note:

See also questions [9](#), [10](#), and [12](#) inclusive for further information about the provision of documents to the board as part of the CPOR. Questions 9 to 12 inclusive should be read in conjunction with each other.

12. How are the documents provided to the Board of Management?

The relevant documents shall be provided to the board of management members **at the board meeting not before.**

All documents provided at the board meeting shall be recovered after the matter has been dealt with and placed on the appropriate case file by the DLP.

The documents shall not be circulated separately to the meeting.

The documents shall not be retained by any members of the board.

It is a matter for the board to determine how many copies of the documents shall be provided. For example, it may choose to have one set provided for the entire board or it may choose to have one set provided per member or per two members. Whichever approach is agreed, great care must be taken to ensure that all copies are recovered and accounted for after the matter has been dealt with.

Important note

See also questions [9](#), [10](#), and [11](#) inclusive for further information about the provision of documents to the board as part of the CPOR. Questions 9 to 12 inclusive should be read in conjunction with each other.

13. What must be recorded in the Board minutes in respect of the information/documents provided as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)?

The minutes shall-

- (a) Record the number of cases/reports detailed under each of the four headings in the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) (see questions 5, 6, 7 and 8 inclusive). This can be done by detailing the number of such cases within the minutes themselves or alternatively by appending to the minutes a CPOR template completed by the principal for the period in question. Where a CPOR template has been appended to the minutes, the minutes shall clearly record this fact.

- (b) In respect of each case in which documents were provided to the board meeting (see question 9), the minutes shall specify the documents that were provided. This can be done by detailing the documents provided in respect of each case within the minutes themselves or by appending to the minutes the template for recording documents (see question 10) in respect of each such case. It should be noted that the minutes shall not name any employee, any children or other parties referred to in the documentation but shall record the matter by reference to the unique code or serial number assigned by the DLP to the case/parties concerned. Where the template for recording documents has been appended to the minutes, the minutes shall clearly record this fact.

14. In an Education and Training Board school, is the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) provided to the Board of Management of the school?

Yes, in relation to an ETB school, the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) must be provided to the Board of Management of the ETB school in question. The CPOR requirements are the same for ETB schools as they are for all other schools. See also Question 15 below.

15. In an ETB school (where the ETB is the employer of school personnel), should the CPOR include details of cases where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of school personnel in the school?

All of the requirements of the procedures in relation to the CPOR apply equally to all Boards of Management, including Boards of Management in ETB schools. This means that in relation to any allegations of abuse made against members of school personnel in an ETB school, all of the information and records specified in section 9.5 of the procedures must be provided in full (without redaction or anonymisation) to the Board of Management of the ETB school.

It should be noted that the purpose of the Board of Management's review of these documents is solely to review whether, based on the information available to the DLP and any Tusla advice available, the relevant reporting requirements were followed. This oversight of the reporting requirements by the Board of Management of the ETB school is entirely separate to any actions that may need to be taken by the ETB as the employer from an employment perspective.

Any further actions that may need to be taken in respect of the employee against whom the allegation has been made must be undertaken separately by the ETB as employer and must be carried out in accordance with the relevant procedures in Chapter 7.

16. Is there any guidance available on the use of unique codes or serial numbers on child protection cases files and in the minutes of Board of Management meetings?

To assist schools on the use of unique codes and serial numbers, the Department has prepared a separate [‘Guidance Note on the use of unique codes or serial numbers’](#).

17. Key points in relation to the documents provided to the Board at each Board of Management meeting as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)

The following are key points for the principal and board members to note in relation to the documents provided to the board at each board of management meeting as part of the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) -

1. The documents shall be provided to the board of management members at the relevant board meeting (not before).
2. All documents shall be recovered after the matter has been dealt with and placed on the appropriate case file by the DLP.
3. The documents shall not be separately circulated to or retained by any members of the board.
4. The minutes of the board of management meeting shall specify the documents provided to the board meeting as set out in [question 9](#) of this guidance and as specified in [sections 9.5.2, 9.6.2](#) and [9.7.2](#) of the procedures.
5. The minutes shall not name the employee, any children or any other parties referred to in the documentation but shall record the matter by reference to the unique code or serial number assigned by the DLP to the case/parties concerned.
6. It should be noted that these records must be treated in the strictest confidence by all board of management members and board members shall be cognisant that **they are to be reviewed solely for the purposes of oversight of the reporting requirements set out in the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.**
7. Accordingly, under no circumstances shall the board members enter into any discussion or investigation in relation to the substance or credibility or otherwise of the allegation, concern or report in question when undertaking this oversight role.
8. **The purpose of this review is solely to review whether, based on the information available to the DLP and any Tusla advice available, the relevant reporting requirements were followed.**
9. The records provided to the board of management must be anonymised and redacted as necessary to ensure the identities of any children and any other parties to whom the concern or

report relates are not disclosed **except** in the case of any records provided in respect of cases under [section 9.5](#) of the procedures (Allegations of abuse against members of school personnel). In respect of such anonymised/redacted records, board members **shall not** enter into any discussion or investigation in relation to the identity of the children or other parties in question when undertaking this oversight role as specified in [sections 9.6.4](#) and [9.7.3](#) of the procedures

10. Where an allegation of abuse is made against a member of school personnel great care shall be taken to ensure that the board members' oversight of the reporting requirements do not impinge on any future actions that may be required to be taken in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedures.
11. Any discussion, investigation or decisions in respect of any further actions to be taken in respect of the member of school personnel against whom the allegation has been made must be undertaken separately and in accordance with the relevant procedures in chapter 7.
12. Where a child protection concern arises from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils it should be noted that any discussions or decisions in respect of any further actions to be taken in respect of the alleged bullying behaviour shall be undertaken separately in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the relevant procedures set out in the Department's [Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools](#)
13. Board members are also reminded of their duty to maintain the confidentiality of board meetings and must not disclose or discuss matters discussed at board meetings unless explicitly authorised by the board of management to do so.
14. A board member who breaches the confidentiality requirement may be removed from the board by the patron in accordance with the relevant provisions of section 16 of the Education Act, 1998 and in relation to such breach may not be protected in any legal proceedings taken against him or her by the general indemnity provided to board of management members under section 14(7) of the Education Act, 1998.