



**An Roinn Oideachais**  
Department of Education

# **A Guide to Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections**

**Inspectorate**

**January 2024**

## INTRODUCTION

Ensuring that children enjoy a safe and secure learning environment in schools and education settings is a key concern for everyone who supports the development of children. The Department of Education acknowledges the strong culture of child protection that exists in our schools and that schools take their responsibilities in relation to child protection and welfare very seriously. It also recognises that child protection is a shared responsibility among parents, teachers, school leaders, those involved in the management of schools and school patrons, as well as those who work in the agencies and Departments that support schools and child protection arrangements.

The Department of Education has an important oversight role to play in ensuring that all our children receive the highest quality of care and protection in our schools. As part of the oversight and quality assurance role of the Department, the Inspectorate is required to implement Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSI). These inspections focus in an in-depth way on school compliance with key aspects of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*.

This Guide sets out how we conduct Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in Irish primary and post-primary schools, centres for education<sup>1</sup> and other learning settings and is effective for inspections commenced on or after 21 October 2020. The Guide was developed in the light of our experience in schools and in consultation with the education partners as required under Section 13(8) of the *Education Act 1998*.

Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections are carried out in accordance with section 7(2)(b) and section 13(3)(a)(i) of the *Education Act 1998* and the *Code of Practice for the Inspectorate* (Department of Education 2015) which is available at [gov.ie](http://gov.ie). During an inspection, a school's board of management and its staff are obliged to accord the inspectors "every reasonable facility and co-operation" in the performance of their duties (section 13(7), *Education Act 1998*).

## CONTEXT

Under the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the Inspectorate is required to monitor and report on schools' compliance with the 2023 Procedures. The Inspectorate's monitoring work in this regard is one of a range of quality assurance and oversight measures to ensure that schools and their staff are operating in compliance with the Children First Act 2015. The 2023 Procedures are also designed to provide guidance and direction to school personnel and school authorities in relation to meeting their obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and in the continued implementation of the best practice, non-statutory guidance set out in Children First National Guidance 2017.

The Children First Act 2015 placed certain statutory obligations on all schools and on all registered teachers, who are referred to as mandated persons in the Act. Mandated persons

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this guide, the term 'school' is used to refer to schools, centres for education and other learning settings. The term 'principal' includes centre coordinators.

are required to report concerns of child abuse at or above a threshold of harm directly to Tusla. All sections of the Children First Act 2015 came into effect on 11 December 2017.

Children First National Guidance outlines the statutory obligations that apply to mandated persons and the statutory obligations that apply to organisations such as schools under the Children First Act

2015. Children First National Guidance also sets out the best practice, non-statutory obligations which are in place for all individuals, including teachers, and for all sectors of society. The statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 operate side by side with the best practice, non-statutory obligations.

## **AIMS OF CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION (CPSI)**

The aims of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model are to:

- Monitor the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* in a sample of schools annually
- Publish written reports on the implementation of *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* in the sample of schools inspected
- Report to the Schools Division and to the Child Protection Oversight Group (CPOG) of the Department of Education on the extent to which the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)* are implemented in the sample of schools inspected
- Gather information to inform the development of child protection and safeguarding requirements by the Department of Education and by other government departments and agencies involved in child protection.

## **CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION PROCEDURES**

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSI) are based on an inspection framework that is informed by the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. Essentially, the inspections comprise ten overarching checks, each of which has a number of sub-checks. The inspection framework, that is, the ten checks and sub-checks, is set out in Appendix 1 of this Guide.
- CPSI inspections are also designed to promote best practice in school leadership as it relates to child protection. During these inspections, inspectors engage with the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or Deputy DLP, the chairperson of the board of management, and a sample of school personnel.
- CPSI inspections also involve inspectors engaging with primary school learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe, and with post-primary learners about their learning in SPHE and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).
- CPSI inspections also seek to elicit the views of parents about school atmosphere and climate, communications about child protection policies and procedures, their child's learning in SPHE, and their knowledge of who to approach if they have a child protection concern.
- 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.

- Both inspections follow the procedures outlined in this Guide.
- The Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection report and the Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection report are published simultaneously on the gov.ie website.
  - Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools (CPSIBF) are typically conducted in conjunction with a CPSI in the recognised school associated with the boarding facility. They include inspection of the school's boarding facilities, the management of those boarding facilities and the arrangements in those facilities to ensure compliance with the *Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Boarding Facilities associated with Recognised Schools 2023*.

## KEY FEATURES OF CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION

### What notice is provided in advance of a CPSI?

Between twenty-four and forty-eight hours' notice is typically provided for a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection. Notification is by phone call to the principal or the most senior member of the teaching staff available. The Inspectorate also conducts unannounced Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSI) in a sample of schools.

### What will the school need to do in advance of the inspection?

Prior to the CPSI inspection the assistance of the principal is required to:

- Distribute a letter from the Inspectorate to all parents telling them about the inspection that is due to take place and inviting them to complete an online parent survey as part of the **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection**
- Make the practical arrangements for the meetings, including checking the availability of the chairperson of the board
- Ensure the relevant documents are available for the inspection
- Complete a self-report form in relation to Garda vetting of staff.

### How long does a CPSI take?

The inspection takes up to two school days, which may be consecutive or non-consecutive. The inspection is generally conducted by two inspectors.

### What will happen during the CPSI?

During the inspection inspectors will:

- Engage with primary school learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe and with post-primary learners<sup>2</sup> about SPHE and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). The written consent of parents and of post-primary learners will be obtained in advance of the learners' participation in focus

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<sup>2</sup> Where the school has a students' council, officers of the students' council will be included in the sample of learners.

- groups with the inspectors<sup>3</sup>
- Invite all parents in the **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** to complete an online parent survey that explores issues relevant to school climate and parents' awareness of the school's child protection procedures, and 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
  - Members of the schools parents' association (in the **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection**)
- Review the following documents:
  - Board of management minutes
  - Child safeguarding statement and risk assessment
  - Relevant school plans, monthly progress records (primary) and timetable data (post-primary)
  - The school's IT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)<sup>4</sup>
- Review child protection records

### Review of documents and files

- Schools are not required to create any new documents for the purpose of a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection.
- The documents reviewed include records in relation to child protection concerns (including individual case files, disclosures made, actions taken, records of concerns brought to the attention of the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), records of interactions with Tusla and records of advice provided by Tusla.
- The purpose of the review of child protection files is to determine if the correct recording and reporting procedures were followed in respect of child protection concerns.
- Inspectors do not remove files, records or other documents from the school; they do not make a copy of any part of a file or record; and no personal data relating to any person referred to in a file is recorded by the inspectors.
- The general framework of child protection legislation, with the duties and obligations it imposes, and the pre-existing statutory functions of the Inspectorate under sections 7(b) and 13(8) of the Education Act 1998 provide the legal basis for inspectors to access and review individual child protection case files.

### When will the school receive feedback on the inspection?

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection will conclude with a feedback meeting between the inspector(s) and the principal. The Designated Liaison Person will be invited to attend this meeting also in schools where he/she is not the principal. At this meeting the inspector will discuss the findings of the inspection and afford the school an opportunity to respond to those findings. Shortly after the inspection the school will receive a draft inspection report and the analysed data from the online parent survey.

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<sup>3</sup> In special schools and in primary schools that only cater for pupils up to second class the inspector may request the teacher to engage with learners about a number of topics in SPHE/RSE to replace the focus group meeting with learners

<sup>4</sup> The inspector will discuss with the school principal if the school's AUP outlines the school's approach to remote or distance learning and how the school informs parents of their approach

## OVERVIEW OF INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

BEFORE THE INSPECTION VISIT	Inspectorate Activity	<p>Provide between twenty-four and forty-eight hours' notice of the inspection via phone call</p> <p>Forward a letter to the school telling parents about the inspection, seeking consent for their child to participate in a focus group during the inspection, and inviting the parents to complete the online parent survey</p> <p>Outline the documents required for the inspection and the meetings held during the inspection</p> <p>Forward the Vetting Self-Report form to the school</p>
	School Activity	<p>Complete and sign the Vetting Self-Report form</p> <p>Distribute the letter inviting parents to complete the online questionnaire to all parents (<b>Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection</b>)</p> <p>Ensure that all necessary documents are available for the inspection</p> <p>Make the necessary practical arrangements for the meetings</p>
DURING THE INSPECTION VISIT	Inspectorate Activity	<p>Request class lists and list of school personnel from the principal</p> <p>Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Child protection records</li> <li>○ Minutes of board meetings</li> <li>○ Child safeguarding statement, including risk assessment</li> <li>○ School plan for SPHE and <i>Stay Safe</i> (Primary schools) and the school plan for SPHE and RSE (Post-primary Schools)</li> <li>○ School timetable (post-primary schools) and a sample of individual teachers' timetables (primary schools)</li> <li>○ A sample of monthly progress records (primary schools)</li> </ul>
		<p>Hold meetings with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A sample of school personnel</li> <li>○ The Designated Liaison Person</li> <li>○ The Deputy Designated Liaison Person</li> <li>○ The chairperson of the board of management and, if available, other board representatives</li> <li>○ A group of learners</li> <li>○ SPHE/RSE co-ordinator (where there is an SPHE/RSE co-ordinator in the school) and/or principal</li> <li>○ Representatives of the parents association (in the <b>Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection</b>)</li> </ul>
		<p>Provide oral feedback to the principal and DLP (in cases where the DLP is not the principal)</p>
	School Activity	<p>Principal makes available any records, documents and arranges meetings that are required</p>
AFTER THE INSPECTION VISIT	Inspectorate Activity	<p>Forward parental survey data to the school</p> <p>Issue of draft report for factual verification and for school response</p> <p>Publication of the final report on the gov.ie website</p>
	School Activity	<p>Response at factual verification and school response stage, if relevant</p>

## INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

The inspection framework for Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections derives from the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. Those procedures are designed to ensure that schools provide a safe and secure environment for all children and that, through appropriate curriculum provision, they provide for the incremental development of the life skills that will empower students to keep themselves safe.

### The inspection framework consists of ten overarching checks based on the Procedures (revised 2023)

The main checks relate to requirements around the preparation of a Child Safeguarding Statement and communicating with members of the school community about child protection matters in general and about the Child Safeguarding Statement in particular. They also include checks on the provision of information and relevant training to school personnel and board members in respect of child protection; the board's awareness of its Garda vetting obligations; reporting about child protection to the board of management; and fulfilling certain reporting and record keeping obligations in relation to child protection matters. The mandatory aspects of the curriculum that are designed to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools and through SPHE and the *Stay Safe* programme in primary schools are also included in the checks.

### The ten overarching checks are further divided into a number of sub-checks

These sub-checks are the specific actions that schools are required to take in order to be fully compliant with the main check. The sub-checks for each main check enable the inspector to arrive at a judgement as to the extent to which the school is compliant with the main check.

The full inspection framework for Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections is available in **Appendix 1**.

## THE JUDGEMENTS MADE BY INSPECTORS DURING A CPSI

Through examining the evidence available for each sub-check in the framework, inspectors form a judgement as to the extent to which the school is compliant with each of the main checks in the framework. Inspectors use the following scale to describe the school's level of compliance:

- *Fully compliant*
- *Substantially compliant*
- *Partially compliant*
- *Not compliant*

In forming a judgement as to the overall quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the *Stay Safe* Programme in primary schools and the SPHE curriculum and RSE programme in post-primary schools, inspectors make reference 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*



## REPORTING

Two reports will be published: an **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** report and a **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** report. The reports state the extent to which a school was compliant with each of the ten overarching checks undertaken during each inspection.

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)*.

Each report also provides an evaluative comment on the school's planning for and implementation of the mandatory aspects of the curriculum which are Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the *Stay Safe* programme in primary schools and SPHE and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools.

The **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** report and the **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Report** will be published in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Publication of Inspection Reports* (September 2015). This means:

- The school will have the opportunity to factually verify each draft report. The school will have five working days in which it can point out any errors of fact in the report to the Inspectorate prior to its finalisation.
- Each finalised report will be re-issued to the school and the school will have 10 working days in which to respond to the report. Normally, the response will be published in line with the *Guidelines for the Publication of Inspection Reports*. The school response stage is an important opportunity for the school to set out how it intends to address any actions advised in the CPSI inspection report.
- The finalised reports and the school's response to each will be published simultaneously on the gov.ie website.

## FOLLOWING UP ON NON-COMPLIANCE

In accordance with the Inspectorate's procedures for following up on non-compliance with child protection procedures, the Inspectorate will continue to engage with a school that is not compliant with aspects checked during a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection until the school becomes fully compliant.

Typically, the Inspectorate will follow up on non-compliance noted during an **Initial Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** during the **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection**.

The Inspectorate will use a range of actions to follow-up on non-compliance noted during a **Final Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection** depending on the nature of the non-compliance. These actions may include further Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections.

## RESOURCES TO SUPPORT SCHOOLS

The Department has developed a number of templates to support schools in their implementation of the [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#)



[\(revised 2023\)](#).

All of these templates are on the child protection page of the gov.ie website ([gov.ie](#)) or through clicking [here](#).

The following three templates are mandatory. Schools **must** use them in order to be fully compliant with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools:

Child Safeguarding Statement Template which includes the risk assessment template	Checklist for Review of the Child Safeguarding Statement
	Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Child Safeguarding Statement

The following six templates are optional - schools **may** use these if they wish:

Record of how the allegation and/or concern came to be known to the DLP and record of DLP's phone call seeking advice of Tusla ( <i>Sections 5.1.1 and 5.3.3</i> )	Template statement from DLP to a member of school personnel as to the reasons why a report has not been made to Tusla ( <i>Section 5.3.8 of the Procedures</i> )
Record of DLP informing or not informing a parent/carer that a report concerning his or her child is being made ( <i>Section 5.3.6 of the Procedures</i> )	Template written notification from DLP to a parent where a child protection concern about a member of school personnel has been raised by a parent ( <i>Section 5.6.2 of the Procedures</i> )
Template Check List for preparing the Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)	Template for recording documents provided to the Board of Management as part of the CPOR

In addition, the Department has also developed a number of supporting documents which schools **may** wish to refer to:

Child Protection Case File Checklist	Guidance note on the use of unique codes or serial numbers
Communications Checklist – Child Safeguarding Statement ( <i>Sections 8.11 and 8.13.6 of the Procedures</i> )	FAQs in relation to the Principals Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR)
Guidance note on how the board should record its oversight of cases in the minutes	

### **Contact:**

Schools may e-mail general queries in relation to the child protection procedures to department's dedicated e-mail address: [childprotection@education.gov.ie](mailto:childprotection@education.gov.ie).

## **CONCLUSION**

This *Guide* has been produced and issued in line with Section 13(8) of the *Education Act 1998*. The Inspectorate is committed to reviewing the operation of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model from time to time following consultation with the education partners. The most up-to-date version of this *Guide* will available on the gov.ie website [here](#).

## APPENDIX 1: CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

The inspection framework for Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections derives from the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. It consists of ten overarching checks based on the 2023 Procedures. The overarching checks relate to requirements around the preparation of a Child Safeguarding Statement and communicating with members of the school community about child protection matters in general and about the Child Safeguarding Statement in particular. They also include checks on the provision of information and relevant training to school personnel and board members in respect of child protection; the board's awareness of its Garda vetting obligations; reporting about child protection to the board of management; and fulfilling certain reporting and record keeping obligations in relation to child protection matters. The mandatory aspects of the curriculum that are designed to develop students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours through Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools and through SPHE and the *Stay Safe* programme in primary schools are also included in the checks. The ten overarching checks are as follows:

1	The school has communicated the required aspects of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> to relevant stakeholders.	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 <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> . <sup>5</sup>
2	A Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a deputy DLP have been appointed in line with the requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> .	7	Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined.
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.	8	The procedures to report child protection concerns were implemented in the records examined.
4	The board of management <sup>6</sup> reports that it is aware of its responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school personnel and report that they discharge these responsibilities	9	The procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel <sup>7</sup> were implemented in the records examined.
5	A child safeguarding statement and risk assessment have been prepared in line with the template and requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> .	10	The quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the <i>Stay Safe</i> programme in primary schools and of the SPHE curriculum and the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme in post-primary schools, as evident during the inspection.

<sup>5</sup> See appendix 1 for clarification in relation to the provision of a Child Protection Oversight Report in centres for education (Youthreach centres)

<sup>6</sup> In schools under the ETB the CE of the ETB reports that he/she is aware of his/her responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school employees and reports that he/she discharges these responsibilities.

<sup>7</sup> In the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the term 'school personnel' is used as a generic term to encompass 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.

Each of the ten overarching checks is divided into a number of sub-checks. These sub-checks are the specific actions that schools are required to take in order to be fully compliant with the main check. The sub-checks for each overarching check enable the inspector to arrive at a judgement as to the extent to which the school is compliant with the main check. The sub-checks for each of the main checks are set out below.

**Check one** relates to the way in which a school communicates various aspects of its child protection procedures to its community and to the public. The sub-checks involve the display of the name of the school's Designated Liaison Person, or DLP, and the Child Safeguarding Statement near the main entrance to the school. It also includes the provision of the Child Safeguarding Statement to a range of stakeholders including parents and the patron and its publication on the school's website, if relevant. Schools are also required to inform these stakeholders when a review of the Child Safeguarding Statement has taken place, and the sub-checks also examine this.

Check 1	Sub-checks
<p>The school has <b>communicated</b> the required aspects of the Child Protection Procedures to relevant stakeholders</p>	The name of the DLP is prominently displayed near the main door of the school / in the reception area
	The child safeguarding statement is displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance
	The risk assessment is on display with the Child Safeguarding statement
	A copy of the child safeguarding statement was provided to all school personnel
	The school has arrangements in place to make a copy of the child safeguarding statement available to parents on request
	A copy of the child safeguarding statement was provided to the patron
	A copy of the child safeguarding statement was provided to the parents' association
	The child safeguarding statement is published on the school's website
	School personnel are informed when a review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement has taken place
	The parents' association receive written notification that the review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement has taken place (where no parents' association exists, this notification is provided to the parents)
	A copy of the written notification that the review of the school's Child Safeguarding Statement has taken place is placed on the school's website

**Check two** deals with the requirement to appoint a Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and a deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL). The sub-checks here examine whether the DLP and DDL are named in the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and if the appointees are current full-time members of the teaching staff. The sub-checks also inquire into arrangements that the school has in place to keep the principal informed of child protection matters if he/she is not the DLP.

Check 2	Sub-checks
<p>A <b>Designated Liaison Person</b> and a <b>deputy Designated Liaison Person</b> have been <b>appointed</b> in line with the requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i></p>	<p>The DLP and Deputy DLP are named in the school's Child Safeguarding Statement</p>
	<p>The DLP and Deputy DLP are current senior members of the full-time teaching staff</p>
	<p>If the DLP is not the principal the school authority has put arrangements in place to ensure that the DLP will keep the principal appropriately informed of child protection matters</p>

**Check three** is concerned with the board’s responsibility to provide information and relevant training to school personnel on child protection matters. In relation to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), the board has a responsibility to ensure that he/she is sufficiently familiar with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools (revised 2023)* to enable him/her to fulfil his/her role. The board should also put arrangements in place to provide training to the DLP, as required. The board also has a responsibility to ensure that the Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDL) is able to fulfil the role of DLP if required. The first three sub-checks examine if the board is fulfilling these responsibilities. The board is also required to ensure that all school personnel and all members of the board of management are familiar with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*. The sub-checks inquire therefore into the arrangements the board has in place to provide information about child protection to school personnel and to board members. The sub-checks also examine the awareness of school personnel of the responsibilities of a mandated person and of the actions that they should take if they have a child protection concern.

Check 3	Sub-checks
<p>The board of management reports that it is aware of and discharges its responsibilities to <b>provide information</b> to all school personnel relevant to child protection and to ensure that available <b>training</b> is undertaken by all and/or some members of staff as required</p>	<p>The board of management has arrangements in place to ensure that the DLP has the necessary familiarity with the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> to enable him/her to fulfil his/her responsibilities</p>
	<p>The board of management has put arrangements in place to enable the deputy DLP to effectively assume his or her responsibilities in the absence of the DLP and to ensure that the deputy DLP can access relevant records when required</p>
	<p>The board of management have arrangements in place to ensure that all school personnel have the necessary familiarity with the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities</p>
	<p>All registered teachers who were interviewed as part of the interview with school personnel during the inspection were aware of the responsibilities of a mandated person</p>
	<p>All members of school personnel who were interviewed as part of the interview with school personnel during the inspection were aware of the actions to take if they receive an allegation or have a suspicion that a child may have been abused or neglected, is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of abuse or neglect</p>
	<p>The board of management has arrangements in place to ensure that all members of the board of management have the necessary familiarity with the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities</p>

**Check four** is concerned with the board’s responsibility in relation to vetting of all school employees. The sub-checks seek to confirm if both the principal and chairperson are aware of their responsibilities in relation to vetting through securing both oral and written confirmation of this. The final sub-check also seeks conformation that all employees of the board of management are vetted.

Check 4	Sub-checks
<p>The board of management<sup>8</sup> reports that it is aware of its <b>responsibilities</b> in relation to <b>vetting</b> of all school personnel and report that they discharge these responsibilities</p>	<p>The chairperson of the board of management and the principal orally report that the board is aware of its responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school personnel and that they discharge these responsibilities.</p>
	<p>The chairperson of the board of management and the principal sign the declaration that the board is aware of its responsibilities in relation to vetting of all school personnel and that they discharge these responsibilities.</p>
	<p>The chairperson of the board of management and the principal confirm that all employees of the board of management are vetted.</p>

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<sup>8</sup> In schools under the ETB the CE of the ETB should replace the chairperson of the board of management in all sub-checks.

**Check five** deals with the Child Safeguarding Statement and risk assessment. The sub-checks establish if the Child Safeguarding Statement and risk assessment have been prepared in line with the templates provided by the Department. The sub-checks also establish if the Child Safeguarding Statement is reviewed annually, if a record of the review is maintained, and if actions advised in the review are implemented. In relation to the risk assessment, the sub-checks also investigate if the school has policies, procedures and precautions in place to minimise the risk of harm to children.

Check 5	Sub-checks
<p><b>A Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment</b> have been prepared in line with the template and requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i></p>	The child safeguarding statement is in the format of the template published by the Department
	The child safeguarding statement is reviewed annually
	A record of the review and its outcome has been retained by the board
	If areas of improvement are identified in the review of the child safeguarding statement the school has put an action plan in place to deal with the issues
	A risk assessment, having regard to the particular school's context, has been completed based on the template provided with the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i>
	The school has specified, in its written risk assessment, the policies and procedures in place to minimise the risk of harm by responding to potential risks



**Check six** deals with the provision of a Child Protection Oversight Report to the board of management. The first two sub-checks establish if a Child Protection Oversight report is provided to the board and if it contains all the required headings. The third and fourth sub-checks inquire into the documents provided to the board when it is considering specific cases relevant to child protection. The final check examines the minutes of board meetings to establish if unique identifiers are used to refer to individuals involved. Appendix one provides clarification in relation to the provision of child protection oversight reports in Centres for Education (Youthreach centres)

Check 6	Sub-checks
<p>The <b>minutes of board meetings</b> that were checked contained a record of a <b>child protection oversight report</b> being provided in line with the requirements of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i></p>	The minutes of each board of management meeting that were checked contain a child protection oversight report
	The child protection oversight report is fully completed on the template provided by the Department or contains all of information required under each of the headings on the template
	Where there are cases under section 9.5 of the procedures (involving school personnel) the board was provided with all of the documents specified in section 9.5.2 of the procedures in respect of each such case
	Where there were cases under section 9.6 of the procedures (not involving school personnel) the board was provided with all of the documents specified in sections 9.6.2 of the procedures in respect of each such case.
	Where there were cases under section 9.7 of the procedures (arising from alleged bullying behaviour) the board was provided with all of the documents specified in section 9.7.2 of the procedures in respect of each such case
	The minutes of the board meeting use unique identifiers to refer to the individuals, including children, involved and do not record the names of the individuals involved

**Check seven** is concerned with the school's record keeping procedures and specifically if the school has an original file for all concerns that is stored in a secure location and that can be accessed by the Deputy DLP if required. It also enquires into the use of unique identifier numbers to reference relevant parties.

Check 7	Sub-checks
<b>Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined</b>	A hardcopy file is available for all child protection concerns which contains original, unredacted records of the concern and all correspondence relevant to the concern.
	All parties <sup>9</sup> referenced in all files are assigned a unique identifier number
	All files relevant to child protection are maintained in a secure location
	The DDLP is aware of the location of the child protection files and can access them if required

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<sup>9</sup> In this context "parties" means any party whose identity, if disclosed, might lead to the identification of a child or a person against whom an allegation has been made.

**Check eight** enquires into the school’s procedures to report allegations of child abuse. The first sub-check examine the procedures adopted for all concerns. The next three sub-checks inquire into the procedures adopted for concerns that were reported to Tusla. Sub-checks five, six and seven specifically look at procedures for concerns where the advice of Tusla was sought and the final sub-check is concerned with concerns which were not reported to Tusla.

Check 8	Sub-checks
<p><b>The procedures to report allegations of abuse were fully implemented in the records examined</b></p>	<p>A written record from the DLP of how the concern came to his/her attention is retained on the relevant file for all concerns in respect of learners in the school</p>
	<p>A copy of the report submitted to Tusla is available for all concerns that were reported to Tusla</p>
	<p>A record of further action taken by the DLP and of any further communication with Tusla, <i>An Garda Síochána</i> or other parties in relation to that report is available for all concerns that were reported to Tusla</p>
	<p>A record of the information communicated by the DLP to the parent/carer of the child about whom the report is being made to Tusla or a record of the decision made by the DLP not to inform the parent/carer and the reasons for not doing so is available for all concerns that were reported to Tusla</p>
	<p>A record of any consultation with Tusla, which includes the date, the name of the Tusla official and the advice given is available for all concerns where the advice of Tusla was sought and evidence that a report was submitted to Tusla where Tusla advised to do so</p>
	<p>A record that the registered teacher<sup>10</sup> was informed that advice was being sought is available for all concerns where the advice of Tusla was sought</p>
	<p>A record that the registered teacher was provided with the advice received is available for all concerns where the advice of Tusla was sought</p>
	<p>A record of a clear statement in writing provided to the relevant staff member as to the reasons why his or her concern is not being reported and that the staff member was advised that he/she may still report that concern to Tusla is available for all concerns that were not reported to Tusla</p>

<sup>10</sup> In relation to this check and the following sub-check: this requirement applies only where the concern was brought to the DLP’s attention by a registered teacher.

**Check nine** enquires into the school’s procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against school personnel. In the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)*, the term ‘school personnel’ is used as a generic term to encompass 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. The first four sub-checks relate to all allegations made against school personnel. The fifth sub-check refers to procedures to be adopted if the allegation was made by a parent. Sub-checks six, seven and eight inquire into the school’s procedures for dealing with allegations made against a DLP. The final sub-checks examine the procedures adopted by the school in relation to allegations made against a school employer or a member of the board.

Check 9	Sub-checks
<p>The procedures to <b>report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel</b><sup>11</sup> were fully implemented in records examined</p>	A written record from the DLP of how the concern came to his/her attention is available in all cases of allegations made against a member of school personnel
	A record that the school employer was informed is available in all cases of allegations made against a member of school personnel
	A record that the DLP sought advice from or made a report to Tusla is available in all cases of allegations made against a member of school personnel
	A record that the DLP reported to Tusla where Tusla advised to do so
	A record of the DLP’s notification under section 5.6 of the procedures to the parent informing him/her of whether or not the concern has been reported to Tusla, and if not the reasons for not referring it is available if the allegation is made against school personnel by a parent
	A record that the chair of the board of management /Chief Executive Officer of the ETB has assumed the role of the DLP for reporting the matter is available if the allegation is made against the DLP
	A record that the school employer sought advice from or made a report to Tusla is available if the allegation is made against the DLP
	A record that Tusla has been informed that the school’s protocol authorising immediate action has been operated and/or that the employee has been formally placed on administrative leave is available
	A record that the DLP sought advice from or made a report to Tusla is available if the allegation is made against a member of the board
	A record that the DLP reported the allegation against a member of the school board to Tusla where Tusla advised the DLP to do so
	A record that the board informed the patron is available if the allegation is made against a member of the board

<sup>11</sup> These personnel include, for example, teachers, special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaners, voluntary workers in the school, paid or voluntary tutors, parent association members helping with aspects of the work of the school.

**Check ten** looks at the quality of the school’s provision for the mandatory aspects of the curriculum. At primary level, these are Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum and the *Stay Safe* programme and at post-primary these are SPHE curriculum and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE). The first two checks at primary and at post-primary seek to establish if the school is providing the required programmes. The subsequent sub-checks then inquire into whether the school and its teachers are planning appropriately for the implementation of these programmes and look at learners’ understanding of a number of key topics of the programmes.

Check 10	Sub-checks
<p>The quality of planning for and implementation of the <b>SPHE curriculum</b> and the <b>Stay Safe</b> programme in primary schools and of the <b>SPHE curriculum</b> and the <b>Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE)</b> programme in post-primary schools, as evident during the inspection.</p>	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in the school (Primary)
	The Stay Safe Programme is implemented within the school (Primary)
	There is a Social Personal and Health Education Programme for all children in Junior Cycle (Post-primary check)
	There is a Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme for all children in the school (Post-primary check)
	Whole-school planning documents indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe programme (Primary). SPHE subject planning documents, RSE programme planning documents and school timetable information indicate that the school has planned appropriately for the implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme (post-primary check)
	The individual teacher planning documents reviewed indicate that the teachers are implementing the SPHE curriculum and <i>Stay Safe</i> programme appropriately (Primary)
	The interactions with pupils indicate that pupils have a good or better understanding of a number of the key topics of SPHE and Stay Safe (Primary) and of SPHE and RSE (Post-primary)

## **Appendix 1: Clarification in relation to the provision of the Child Protection Oversight Report in Centres for Education (Youthreach Centres)**

- In some cases Youthreach centres will have a board of management. In these cases the minutes of each meeting of this board should contain a Child Protection Oversight Report.
- In other cases there may be one board with responsibility for a number of Youthreach centres. In these cases the minutes of each meeting of that board should contain a Child Protection Oversight Report in respect of each Youthreach Centre under its responsibility.
- If there is no overall coordinator for the Youthreach centres, which may be the case in some smaller ETBs, the Adult Education Officer (AEO) has line management responsibility and provides the Child Protection oversight report to the Further Education and Training (FET) Director. These reports should be provided every three months and records of their provision should be maintained by the FET director and be made available to the Inspector by the FET Director on request.