

Introduction and Context to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSI)

In recent years there have been a number of important changes in requirements regarding child protection and safeguarding. These requirements are not limited to the education world, but impact on all sections of society that deal with children, including health services, sports facilities and voluntary organisations.

The main impetus for these changes is the Children First Act (2015), which places certain statutory obligations on all organisations who work with children and young people. All sections of the Children First Act (2015) came into effect in December 2017. Another important development in child protection and safeguarding was the publication of Children First, National Guidance, (2017). This outlines the new statutory obligations that apply to both to individuals and to organisations such as schools under the Children First Act 2015. It also sets out the best practice, non-statutory obligations which are in place for all individuals, including teachers, and for all sectors of society.

In order to provide direction and guidance to school authorities and to school personnel in relation to meeting these new obligations, the Department of Education and Skills developed the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, (2017) in consultation with all the education partners and with a range of other stakeholders, including the Ombudsman for Children. These procedures were published in December 2017.

As well as outlining the responsibilities of a mandated person, these procedures introduced a number of new requirements on schools. They also strengthened the oversight arrangements to ensure that the Education sector can be satisfied and can demonstrate that our schools and their staff are operating in full compliance with the Children First Act, 2015.

The oversight processes contained in the Procedures contain a range of complementary measures at school level and at system level. The measures at school level include a role for the principal and for the board of management and the measures at system level include the establishment of a Child Protection Oversight Group within the Department of Education and Skills.

The Inspectorate has also been given an oversight role in relation to these procedures. This role includes a requirement to monitor and report on compliance with aspects of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017 on all inspection models and to report on compliance with these procedures in all inspection reports.

In response to these new requirements, the Inspectorate developed three levels of monitoring compliance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017. Level one monitoring involves three checks and is conducted on shorter less intensive models such as the Incidental Inspection, Follow-Through, Curriculum Evaluation (Primary) or Subject Inspection (Post-Primary). Level two monitoring involves eight checks and is conducted on whole-school type evaluations such as WSE-MLL and Evaluation of Action Planning for Improvement in DEIS schools. Full details of the level one and level two checks are published on the Department's website [here](#)

What is the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections (CPSI) model?

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection Model or CPSI is the level three monitoring by the Inspectorate. It is a new model of inspection which focuses on the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017*.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model will examine the implementation of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools 2017* in schools through conducting ten checks based on the requirements of the procedures.

How has the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model being developed?

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model is being developed by the Inspectorate through an extended consultation process with the education partners and other interested stakeholders including the Office of the Ombudsman for Children. As part of the development process the Inspectorate also conducted research visits in twelve settings, including one Youthreach centre and one school at a Special Care Unit. During these research visits we discussed how best to conduct the inspections with principals and with teachers. Following the research the model was developed and is currently being trialled in nineteen settings, which again includes a Youthreach centre and special care unit. All of the engagements with schools and partners have been extremely useful in developing the model

What will happen during a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection?

During a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection inspectors will:

- Engage with learners about their learning in Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Stay Safe (Primary Schools) and SPHE and Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) in post-primary schools.
- Administer an on-line parent questionnaire 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, monthly progress records (primary) and timetable data (post-primary)
- Review child protection records, where these have been created

What checks will be conducted during a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection?

The inspection framework is currently being developed and will be published in January. All of the aspects of the framework will be based on the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*. These 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 child protection concerns, oversight by the board of management; and fulfilling certain 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), Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and the *Stay Safe* programme

The ten checks that will be conducted during a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection will be based exclusively on the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017*.

How will the Inspector arrive at a judgement in a Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection?

The inspectors will make a judgement as to the extent to which the school is compliant with each of the checks using the following scale:

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

For the check on the provision for Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum (SPHE) and Stay Safe in Primary Schools and SPHE and Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme (RSE) in post-primary schools the inspector will use the following scale to arrive at a judgement:

- Very good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Fair
- Weak

This is the scale that is used on all other inspection models

What are the next stages in the development of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model?

The trial of the evaluation will conclude shortly and the Inspectorate will seek feedback from those schools that participated in the trial. This feedback will further inform the development of the model.

A final consultation session with the education partners is scheduled for December 18th

It is intended to mainstream the model in a sample of schools in 2019. This means that the Inspectorate will conduct a number of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections in primary and post-primary schools nationally as part of its annual inspection programme.

A series of information sessions on the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model is being organised for school principals at the following Education Centres:

Centre	Date
Athlone Education Centre	Monday 21 st January
Blackrock Education Centre	Tuesday 22 nd January
Cork Education Centre	Tuesday 22 nd January
Galway Education Centre	Wednesday 23 rd January
Navan Education Centre	Monday 28 th January
Limerick Education Centre	Tuesday 29 th January
Donegal Education Centre	Wednesday 30 th January
Waterford Education Centre	Monday 4 th February

Seminars for **Post-Primary Principals** will take place from **10.30 – 12.30** (tea/coffee at 12.30)

Seminars for **Primary Principals** will take place from **13.30 – 15.30** (tea/coffee on arrival)

The experience of the research visits and of the trial of the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model has shown that schools are very much engaged in implementing the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017. These seminars are designed as a further support to principals in their implementation of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017.

They will provide an overview of key aspects of Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection including its aims and its features, the checks conducted during the inspection and Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection reports. Participants at the seminar will have an opportunity to discuss and ask questions about the Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection model.