



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Child Protection and Safeguarding Initial Inspection Report

INITIAL REPORT

Ainm na scoile/School name	Davitt College
Seoladh na scoile/School address	Springfield Castlebar Co. Mayo
Uimhir rolla/Roll number	76060U
Dáta na cigireachta/ Date of evaluation	22/01/2025
Dáta eisiúna na tuairisce/Date of issue of report	03/06/2025

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 conducting 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 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- 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

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.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

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 Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) 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 <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> checked	Fully Compliant Substantially Compliant Partially Compliant Not compliant Not applicable
1. The school had communicated the required aspects of the <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> to relevant stakeholders.	Substantially Compliant
• Additional Information: The name of the DLP and the child safeguarding statement, including risk assessment, were displayed in a prominent position near the main entrance to the school and a copy of the statement was provided to all school personnel. Copies of the child safeguarding statement were not provided to the school patron or the parents' association. A written notification that the annual review of the child safeguarding statement had taken place was not provided to the parents' association and this notification of the review was not placed on the school's website. • Action Advised: The patron and parents' association should be provided with a copy of the child safeguarding statement, and the parents' association should receive written notification of when this statement is reviewed, and the notification of the review should be published on the school's website.	
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> .	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 <i>Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (revised 2023)</i> .	Fully Compliant

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> .	Partially Compliant
• Additional Information: The child protection oversight report (CPOR) was completed correctly, and the board was provided with documents for cases that were not reported to Tusla so that they could provide oversight on these decisions. The CPORs were not contained with the minutes of the relevant board of management meetings. Unique identifiers were not used in minutes to reference the child protection cases that were reported to the board. • Action Advised: The DLP should ensure that all CPORs are contained with the relevant board of management meetings. All minutes should use unique case file identifiers to refer to cases. The use of the Department of Education's guidance notes, available on gov.ie, would be useful in this regard.	
7. Correct record keeping procedures were found in the child protection cases examined.	Substantially Compliant
• Additional Information: Child protection files were maintained in a secure location and the deputy DLP could access these files when required. A complete hardcopy file was not available for all child protection concerns. • Action Advised: All case files should contain all required documents, including redacted versions of concerns where applicable.	
8. The procedures to report child protection concerns were fully implemented in the records examined.	Partially Compliant
• Additional Information: In most of the case files examined, the procedures to report child protection concerns were not fully implemented. In such cases, all the required records were not available in the file and/or some of the records were incomplete. • Action Advised: The DLP should review all the case files to ensure they contain all required records and should ensure that all existing records are completed fully. The use of the Department of Education's optional templates would greatly assist in this review.	
9. The procedures to report allegations or suspicions of abuse against school personnel were fully implemented in the records examined. <i>(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.)</i>	Not Applicable

10. Curriculum Check	
There was a Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme for all students in Junior Cycle.	Yes
There was a Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme for all students in the school.	No
The overall quality of planning for and implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme required improvement. All junior cycle students received one hour of SPHE per week. Sixth-year students undertook six to eight weeks of RSE throughout the year on a modular basis. Inspectors' interactions with students indicated	

that students had a very good understanding of the key topics of SPHE and RSE. However, the Transition Year (TY) students and fifth-year students did not receive any RSE, and the school needs to address this issue urgently.

Planning documentation for SPHE and RSE included schemes of work. These schemes of work would benefit from the inclusion of further details, and where not the case already, should include timeframes, and clearer links between the intended learning and specific methodologies and assessment modes. This would further support the teachers in reflecting on future practices and provide greater consistency in delivering a programme that allows for greater student discussion of topics.

The school had a core team of SPHE and RSE teachers and they reported that they engaged in continuing professional development (CPD) on a regular basis.

The school should seek structured feedback from students and parents in relation to the delivery of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE programme to see what improvements they might suggest and what teaching and learning methodologies are favoured by the students.

Parent survey results indicated that they were very positive about the school's atmosphere and climate. They felt welcome in the school and that their child was safe and well looked after in the school. They had been informed of the school's child safeguarding statement and the anti-bullying policy.

The school should share an outline of the TY and fifth-year RSE programmes as soon as they have been completed and these students should receive these lessons before the school year ends.

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The management and staff of Davitt College welcome the feedback of the inspectors from their recent inspection. It has been most beneficial to receive clarification regarding particular elements of practice for recording child protection concerns. The information relating to the use of optional templates will be taken onboard going forward.

It is noted the positive observations regarding students' and parent feedback in the areas of SPHE and RSE. Davitt College strives to create a positive, inclusive, welcoming learning environment for our school community. It is reassuring to note that this is affirmed in the feedback from the parent survey.

The school team respect the recommendations of the inspectors and will endeavour to address the areas identified for improvement.

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

Davitt College School Management has reviewed the content of the inspection report and implemented the following:

Check 1: A copy of the Child Safeguarding Statement and notification of review has been provided to the Parents' Association, Chief Executive of MSLETB and published on school website.

Check 6: The system of applying unique identifiers has been reviewed and revised retrospectively for cases opened between 2017 - present. It is planned to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Board of Management and bring the revised CPORs to be reviewed and included in the minutes of that meeting. All CPORs will be included in BOM minutes of future meetings.

Check 7: The filing system has been amended to allow for the inclusion of all documents pertaining to a child protection concern - full and redacted copies to be stored in one file, along with notes, optional templates, etc.

Check 8: A full review of all case files [2017 onwards] has been completed. The Department of Education Optional Templates, where applicable, have been included in all files. The optional templates will be used in future practice for the recording of all appropriate information once a child protection concern is raised with the DLP.

Check 10: The SPHE team have met and revised the schemes of work with particular attention to links between intended learning intentions, teaching methodologies and assessment modes. A Relationships and Sexuality Education programme has been devised for Transition Year and Fifth Year. The timetable will be reviewed to accommodate the designated provision of this programme in the 2025/2026 school year. In the interim, the programme will begin in this school year in fourth and fifth year classes, by rotating the teachers who have accessed CPD training in RSE into those classes to begin facilitating the RSE modules.