



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Updated requirements in relation to the provision of a Child Protection Oversight Report to the board of management

Department of Education

December 2020

The purpose of this information note is to outline the updated requirements in relation to the provision by the Principal of a Child Protection Oversight Report to the board of management following the reopening of schools and having regard to the ongoing public health emergency.

Board of Management meetings and Child Protection Oversight Report

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the procedures) set out specific oversight requirements that apply to all school boards of management, including in relation to the provision by the school Principal of a Child Protection Oversight Report at every board of management meeting.

Following the closure of schools in March 2020, the Department advised schools that the requirement to provide a Child Protection Oversight Report (CPOR) would not apply to board meetings held remotely. This was because it was not thought possible in the context of such meetings to meet the requirement to provide the board with the specified documentation in the secure and confidential manner required by the procedures. The Department advised at that time that Principals should continue to maintain the relevant data and records so that the CPOR could be provided at the next face to face meeting of the board and that the data in that next report must reflect cases arising since the previous CPOR was provided to the board.

In the context of schools having reopened and having regard to the ongoing public health emergency, the following are the updated requirements in relation to the provision by the Principal of a Child Protection Oversight Report to the board of management -

A face to face meeting of the board must be held at least once in every school term in order for the CPOR report along with required supporting documentation to be provided to the board and for the board to resume and continue to carry out its important oversight role in respect of the reporting of child protection concerns in accordance with the procedures. A Board meeting for these purposes is considered essential work. The following shall apply to such a meeting –

- The face to face meeting may be convened to deal solely with the CPOR report
- A quorum must be physically present at the face to face meeting.
- No members are permitted to join remotely.
- The relevant requirements of the procedures must be adhered to in full in respect of the CPOR, including those in relation to the provision and recovery of documents at the meeting.
- The CPOR report submitted shall set out under each of the required headings the number of cases arising since the last CPOR report was provided to the board.
- Appropriate social distancing and other relevant public health measures and guidance must be followed.

The CPOR report shall not be provided at any board meeting that is held remotely **except in circumstances where**, since the last CPOR was provided to the board, there have been no cases arising under **each** of the headings set out in sections 9.5 to 9.7 inclusive of the procedures. This is the only exception to the general rule prohibiting the provision of the CPOR at remote meetings. This exception has been made because the procedures do not require any supporting documentation to be provided in circumstances where the CPOR does not contain any cases under sections 9.5 to 9.7 inclusive.

Contact

General queries in relation to the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 should be emailed to the Department at: childprotection@education.gov.ie