

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS GUIDE

### RE: THE 2017 CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES FOR PRIMARY AND POST PRIMARY SCHOOLS – ([DES CIRCULAR – 81/2017](#))

NB: This Q&A should be read in conjunction with the full procedures as it is a general and summary guide only of some of the key points.

#### 1. Why are there new Child Protection Procedures for primary and post -primary schools?

The new [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#) have been developed by the DES in consultation with the partners in education to take account of [The Children First Act, 2015](#) and the revised Children First Guidelines – titled [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children - 2017](#) which have been published by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs for use by the Child and Family Agency (CFA)/Tusla.

#### 2. Where do I find these new Procedures and are they now commenced?

In December 2017, the DES issued [Circular 81/2017](#) which contained a link to the new procedures. Circular 81/2017 announced that the new procedures became effective from the 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 – apart from the Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) – see Qs 4 & 9. The 2017 procedures supersede the previous procedures which were published in DES Circular 65/2011. Schools are required to fully comply with the 2017 procedures and in this regard, paragraph 1.1.14 of the procedures stipulate that “All boards of management are required to formally adopt and implement these revised procedures as part of the school’s Child Safeguarding Statement”.

#### 3. What supports are available to schools for the implementation of the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

In 2016, the DES convened a working group of the stakeholders in education at primary and post-primary level – which included representatives of all the management bodies, parents and teacher representatives. IPPN, NAPD and the three teacher unions, ASTI, TUI and INTO also participated. There was consensus among all the partners that teachers are demonstrably and wholeheartedly committed to child protection and compliance with up to-date policies and best practice in this area. However, there was also a strongly articulated view that teachers and schools must be fully resourced and supported in the implementation of these new procedures – including whole staff face to face training and that on-line training of itself, is not sufficient.

The position at the time of writing this Q&A is that the DES has agreed that schools may avail of two separate half day closures during the 2017/18 school year. The PDST (Professional Development Service for Teachers) is currently developing on-line support for all mandated teachers and DLPs to be available from early February, 2018. The PDST will also be commencing the roll out of one day seminars in Education Centres for DLPs and deputy DLPs. The CFA/Tusla has also produced an on-line e-learning programme based on “Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017”. It is intended that schools avail of these resources during the half day closures.

#### 4. What are the main provisions in the 2017 Child Protection Procedures?

A considerable amount of the 2017 procedures replicate the 2011 procedures – particularly as regards the recognition and reporting of alleged abuse. Accordingly, the 2017 procedures build on and/or continue the existing 2011 procedures. That being said there are some significant differences and additions.

The key provisions of the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools include the following:

- The obligation on every school – prior to 11 March, 2018 - to prepare and publish its own Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS) to replace its existing Child Protection Policy – a template for this is published alongside the new procedures (Template 2) – see [Q9](#);
- The continued requirement to report any reasonable concern of abuse or neglect - see [Q5](#);
- The additional requirement to consider the threshold of “harm” - which is taken from the Children First Act, 2015 - see [Q5](#);
- Prescribing that every registered teacher is now a “mandated person” for the purpose of reporting instances of “harm” to the CFA/Tusla - see [Q6](#);
- The retention of the role of DLP and deputy DLP with some variations in the case of mandated reports - see [Q7](#);
- Retention of the right to seek advice from the CFA/Tusla about whether or not to make a report to the CFA/Tusla and about the type of report which should be made - see [Q8](#);
- A new CFA/Tusla “Child Protection and Welfare Report Form” - see [Q12](#);
- New oversight arrangements – including in relation to record keeping and reports to parents and Boards of Management - see [Qs 10 & 11](#);
- Continued emphasis on confidentiality in dealing with child protection matters and the legal prohibition on disclosure of information to third parties - see [Q13](#);
- A statutory requirement to assist the CFA/Tusla in its assessment and investigation of reports - see [Q14](#).

#### 5. What is “harm” and is this the same/different from “abuse”?

In relation to “abuse”, the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools continue to rely on the existing four areas of abuse as being the basis for reporting a concern to the CFA/Tusla – ie the four areas of neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. In this regard, there is no change in the 2017 procedures from the previous 2011 procedures – in that the same four categories of abuse, how these may be recognised and the grounds/indicators for concern in respect of each category, continue to apply. Consequently, there continues to be a clear and definitive obligation on teachers to report a reasonable concern or allegation to the DLP and thereafter as may be necessary to the CFA/Tusla, that a child may have been abused or neglected, is being abused or neglected, or is at risk of being abused or neglected.

However, in addition to the requirement to report a reasonable concern or allegation of “abuse”, the Children First Act, 2015 establishes a new threshold of “harm” which must be considered alongside any abuse concerns. This new threshold of “harm” features in the 2017 Child Protection Procedures. “Harm” in relation to a child means “assault, ill-treatment or neglect of the child in a manner that seriously affects or is likely to seriously affect the child’s health, development or welfare, or sexual abuse of the child”. Further clarification is available in the 2017 Procedures.

Whilst it could be said that there might/will be overlap between abuse and harm, nonetheless, the Children First Act, 2015 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017), require

these two categories to be given separate consideration by school personnel at the initial stage. All concerns about "harm" are deemed to have met the abuse threshold but the corollary might not be the case – ie all abuse concerns may not be deemed to reach the threshold of "harm". The distinction between a reasonable concern of abuse or a reasonable concern of harm is important for teachers as it determines whether the report to the CFA/Tusla will be made as a mandatory joint report by a teacher and DLP – see [Q6](#). When in doubt, teachers are recommended to seek advice from the CFA/Tusla. However, crucially, the distinction has no bearing whatsoever on the obligation to report, since in both instances – ie where there is a reasonable concern of abuse or a reasonable concern of harm, there is an obligation to report – see [Q6](#).

## 6. What does it mean to be a "mandated" person?

The Children First Act, 2015 prescribes that mandatory reporting applies where a teacher "knows, believes or has reasonable grounds to suspect, on the basis of information that he or she has received, acquired or becomes aware of in the course of his or her employment or profession...that a child – has been harmed, is being harmed, or is at risk of being harmed".

Every registered teacher is a "mandated" person as prescribed by the Children First Act, 2015. That means that in a case where the concern about a child is at or above the threshold of "harm", the obligation on a teacher to report to the CFA/Tusla is mandatory. All sexual abuse falls in the category of "harm" and therefore must be reported as a mandated report. Prior to the 2015 Act, the obligation to report was not legally mandatory. However, as already stated at [Q5](#), the existing and continuing obligation to report a reasonable concern of abuse or neglect runs parallel with the mandatory obligation to report a concern of "harm" – in both instances a report to the CFA/Tusla must be made – but the report is deemed to be "mandatory" where the concern is at or above the "harm" threshold.

For the purposes of the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, the DES and the partners in education have agreed that in instances of "harm", the teacher must liaise with the DLP and jointly consider whether the concern is at or above the defined threshold of "harm" (sexual abuse is automatically deemed to constitute "harm" and it is included in the statutory definition of harm). Where it is decided that there is a concern of harm, a joint report – ie teacher and DLP - shall be made to the CFA/Tusla – see [Q7](#).

Whilst the statutory obligation to make a mandatory report rests with the individual teacher, this obligation is deemed to be fulfilled where the teacher and DLP make a joint mandatory report. The facility to make a joint report also ensures that the DLP is aware of all reports to the CFA/Tusla.

It remains the legal prerogative of any teacher under the Children First Act, 2015 and the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, to make either an individual report about a concern of "harm" as a mandated person, or to report a concern of abuse in circumstances where the DLP has decided not to do so. In such cases the teacher must provide a copy of the report to the DLP.

## 7. What do the 2017 Child Protection Procedures say about the role of the DLP?

The consensus view of the DES and the partners in education was to retain the roles of DLP and deputy DLP – irrespective of the fact that every registered teacher is now a mandated person. This view is reflected throughout the 2017 procedures – for example at par 9.2.3 which states that "Notwithstanding the new mandatory reporting requirements for individual teachers, these (2017) procedures continue to

recognise the importance of the DLP role and continue to require that all child protection concerns are channelled through the DLP as heretofore”.

As regards the role of the DLP, the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools stipulate:

- That Boards of Management must designate a senior full-time member of the registered teaching staff of the school as the DLP and that it is expected, the DLP will normally be the Principal. Similarly, Boards must designate a deputy DLP. These names must be included in the CSS – see [Q9](#);
- That the DLP shall act as the point of contact for the CSS – termed “relevant person” in the 2017 procedures.
- The DLP is the designated liaison person for the school in dealing with the CFA/Tusla, the Gardai and other parties in connection with allegations or concerns about child abuse and neglect and/or harm;
- The DLP must ensure that the reporting arrangements outlined in Chapter 5 of the 2017 procedures are followed correctly;
- School personnel are required to report concerns of abuse or neglect to the DLP;
- The DLP will jointly consider with the relevant teacher whether a reasonable concern of abuse exists and if so whether the concern is at or above the defined threshold of “harm”;
- The DLP is entitled to seek advice from the CFA/Tusla about whether a report should be submitted as a concern of abuse, or as a mandated report about “harm”, or at all;
- When advised by the CFA/Tusla to report a concern of abuse or report a concern of harm as a mandated report, the DLP shall act in accordance with that advice;
- Where the DLP has any remaining doubt about whether a concern is at or above the defined threshold of “harm” – he/she shall submit the report to the CFA/Tusla as a mandated report – ie the DLP shall take the “harm” threshold as the default position where he/she is unsure;
- In instances of “harm”, the DLP shall make a joint report with the teacher to the CFA/Tusla;
- The DLP is required to provide the teacher with a written statement of the reason why he/she has decided not to make a report to the CFA/Tusla;
- The DLP does not have any role in assessing or proving any concerns of abuse or harm – he/she is solely required (in conjunction with the teacher as applicable, and on the advice of the CFA/Tusla if necessary) to decide if a reasonable concern of abuse or harm exists and if so, to report accordingly;
- The DLP should record all concerns or allegations of abuse or harm and the follow up actions. All records and reports to the CFA/Tusla should be retained. The DLP should observe confidentiality in this regard and the relevant files/records should be assigned a unique code or serial number to facilitate this. A summary of record keeping requirements is contained in Appendix 4 of the 2017 procedures.

8. Is it stated in the 2017 Child Protection Procedures that the CFA/Tusla is obliged to provide advice to DLPs and teachers?

*Yes – repeatedly. The existing facility to obtain advice from the CFA/Tusla continues in the 2017 procedures. Advice may be necessary when making a judgement about whether a reasonable concern of abuse or neglect exists and if so, whether the concern is at or above the defined threshold of “harm” thereby necessitating a joint mandatory report. In some instances, the concerns are obvious but this is not always the case. Therefore, it is crucial to obtain the advice of the CFA/Tusla when making these judgements. The 2017 Children First National Guidelines state that the CFA/Tusla can provide such advice*

*The responsibilities of the CFA/Tusla in assessing and investigating allegations of abuse or harm are stated in a number of paragraphs in the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools – and we have selected the following extracts for the purpose of this Q&A:*

- *Par 1.3 – which states that “It is not the responsibility of school personnel to assess or investigate...It is a matter for Tusla to assess and investigate suspected abuse and neglect and determine what action it shall take”*
- *Par 3.5.5 – which states “However, in cases where there are concerns about a child and the DLP is not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla or whether a report should be submitted as a mandated report (ie whether the “harm” threshold applies), the DLP shall seek advice from Tusla....”*
- *Pars 5.2.6 and 5.3.3 – which state “Where the DLP is unsure whether to report a concern to Tusla or whether a report should be submitted as a mandated report, the DLP shall seek advice from Tusla”;*
- *Pars 5.2.9 and 5.3.5 – which state the default position – ie “In any case (including where the DLP has sought and considered the advice of Tusla) where either the DLP or the registered teacher, has any remaining doubt as to whether the concern is at or above the defined threshold of “harm” for a mandated report, the DLP or the registered teacher (or both where applicable) shall submit the report to Tusla as a mandated report....”*
- *Par 5.3.3 – Retains the existing provision whereby at the informal stage of consulting the CFA/Tusla and obtaining advice, the DLP need not give any identifying details;*
- *Pars 5.2.7 and 5.4 – the DLP and relevant teacher where applicable, shall act on the advice of the CFA/Tusla and a report or joint report shall be made depending on whether Tusla advises to report a concern of abuse or submit a mandatory report of harm;*
- *Par 5.3.3 – which stipulates that “...the DLP shall retain a record of the consultation (advice obtained from the CFA/Tusla) which will note the date, the name of the Tusla official and the advice given...[and]...if the concern was brought to the attention of the DLP by a registered teacher, the DLP shall inform the registered teacher that Tusla’s advice is being sought and shall inform the registered teacher of the advice when received”.*

## 9. What is a Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS)?

*The Children First Act, 2015 requires all providers of relevant services – including schools – to prepare and display a written Child Safeguarding Statement (CSS). This must be done prior to 11 March, 2018 as from that date, the requirement to have a CSS replaces the previous requirement (as per DES Circular 65/2011) to have a Child Protection Policy.*

*The CSS is the vehicle by which the school demonstrates its compliance with the Children First Act, 2015 and with the 2017 Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The objective of the CSS is to ensure – in so far as practicable – that children are safe from harm whilst attending the school and/or participating in school activities. Accordingly, as part of the CSS, the school is required to complete a risk assessment of harm/potential harm as per the definition of harm in the Children First Act, 2015 – see [O5](#). This is not about general health and safety risks. The purpose of the risk assessment is to identify risks of harm and set out the procedures/measures the school has in place to manage those risks, to consider the adequacy of those procedures/measures and whether additional procedures/measures are required. It is important to note that the 2017 procedures acknowledge that schools already have a range of policies, procedures and practices in place to mitigate instances of risk to pupils.*

*While the risk assessment process should - in so far as possible – be completed in advance of publication of the CSS, the CSS **can and should** be updated thereafter as the need arises and when additional procedures are put in place or changes have been made to existing procedures. In addition, the Child Safeguarding Statement (including the risk assessment) must be reviewed annually or sooner where there is any material change in any matter to which the statement refers. Therefore, the Child Safeguarding Statement will be evolving over time.*

*In order to assist in the development of the CSS, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017) contains three templates which must be used by schools – ie:*

- 1 - A Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment Template together with examples of activities, risks and procedures to address risks of harm;
- 2 - A Template Child Safeguarding Statement (ie the basis of the CSS); and
- 3 - A template checklist for review of the CSS together with a sample letter for the Chairperson and Principal to sign confirming completion of the review.

*The risk assessment/Template 1, is an exercise whereby the school examines all aspects of its activities to establish whether there are any practices or activities that have the potential to put a child at risk. The list of activities suggested in the Template is not exhaustive. This exercise will involve each school reviewing its own range of school practices and activities and making a judgement – in good faith and as best as possible - about any potential risks. The school may consider past experience, current practice and whether appropriate policies and procedures are in place to minimise the risk of harm and/or identify what measures are necessary to respond to potential risk situations.*

*The CSS/Template 2, requires the school to insert its name, the names of the DLP and deputy DLP and to adopt certain statements and undertakings as part of the CSS. The CSS template is pre-populated with these statements and undertakings and it must be co-signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Principal.*

*Schools are also obliged to review the CSS annually and Template 3 of the 2017 Child Protection Procedures sets out a review checklist for this purpose.*

*Copies of the CSS must be provided to school personnel and on request to parents and the CFA/Tusla. The CSS should also be displayed in a prominent place in the school – ie near the main entrance.*

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## 10. What is the new Child Protection Oversight Report about?

*The emphasis on additional oversight arrangements is a feature of the 2017 procedures. The objective is to ensure compliance with reporting and child safeguarding obligations. For his/her part the Principal is already involved in the oversight of child protection measures in school on a day to day basis – particularly if acting as DLP. Under the 2017 procedures, the Principal is required to provide a “Child Protection Oversight Report” as part of his/her usual report at every Board of Management meeting. The details of the matters which should be included in the “Child Protection Oversight Report” are set out at paragraphs 9.4 – 9.8 of the 2017 procedures. INTO advises that the minutes of Board of Management meetings should record the fact that the Principal has complied with this obligation and should note that a “Child Protection Oversight Report” was given by the Principal at the meeting.*

*In summary, the “Child Protection Oversight Report” should outline:*

- a) Whether allegations of abuse have been made against members of school personnel since the last Board meeting;*
- b) Whether there have been any child protection concerns in respect of pupils in the school since the last Board meeting;*
- c) Whether there have been any child protection concerns arising from alleged bullying behaviour amongst pupils since the last Board meeting;*
- d) Summary of the relevant data/numbers – if any.*

*In respect of (a), (b) and (c), the Principal shall inform the Board of Management at every meeting of:*

- The number of reports made to the CFA/Tusla since the last Board meeting - in each of the categories (a), (b) and (c);*
- The number of cases where advice was sought from the CFA/Tusla since the last Board meeting - in each of the categories (a), (b) and (c);*
- The number of cases since the last Board meeting where advice was sought from the CFA/Tusla and the matter was not reported to the CFA/Tusla based on the advice given - in each of the categories (a), (b) and (c);*
- The number of cases since the last Board meeting where the DLP has not reported the matter to the CFA/Tusla notwithstanding the advice received from the CFA/Tusla to make a report - in each of the categories (a), (b) and (c).*
- The number of cases since the last Board meeting where the DLP has not sought advice from the CFA/Tusla and has not reported the matter - in each of the categories (a), (b) and (c).*

*Copies of relevant documentation as set out in the 2017 procedures shall also be provided to the Board of Management for the purpose of the Board's oversight of the reporting procedures - anonymised and redacted in accordance with the provisions of the 2017 procedures. Boards of Management are obliged to observe strict confidentiality with regard to these matters and accordingly, all documents shall be collected afterwards and not retained by any Board members. Whilst the minutes of the Board meetings shall specify the documents provided to the Board, the minutes shall not name the employee or any children referred to in the documentation or any party whose identity if disclosed, might lead to the identification of a child or a person*



against whom an allegation has been made. Instead a code or serial number should be utilised to record the matter/case in the minutes.

**11. What other oversight arrangements are contained in the 2017 Child Protection Procedures?**

*Chapters 8 and 9 in particular, of the 2017 procedures set out in detail the oversight responsibilities of the Board of Management including with regard to its obligation to ensure that the 2017 procedures “are implemented in full” and that children are safe from “harm” (as per the definition in the 2015 Act) while attending the school or participating in school activities. The Board of Management also has an oversight responsibility with regard to the preparation and publication of the CSS, the Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment, appointment of DLP and deputy DLP, its duty of care to pupils, and with regard to curricular provision including Stay Safe and SPHE, Garda Vetting and the application of correct recruitment procedures.*

*Further, the Patron of the school must be provided with copy of the CSS and notified that the annual review has been conducted. The Board of Management is also obliged to keep the Patron informed of relevant matters.*

*In addition, all schools are required to comply with any request from the DES for relevant information regarding their compliance with the 2017 procedures. In this regard, the 2017 procedures state that “The Inspectorate will monitor compliance of schools with the requirements of the child protection procedures...” including with regard to the CSS and the school’s oversight arrangements. The 2017 procedures also advise that the Inspectorate propose to conduct focussed inspections in a sample of schools annually regarding the implementation of the 2017 procedures – ie a dedicated model of inspection titled “Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspection (CPSI).*

*Under the Children First Act, 2015, each Board of Management is obliged to provide a copy of the school’s CSS to the CFA/Tusla when requested to do so. Tusla may establish a register of providers of services – including schools – who have not complied with this request.*

**12. What form will I use to make a report to the CFA/Tusla?**

*DLPs and/or teachers are required to use the CFA/Tusla form titled “Child Protection and Welfare Report Form” available on Tusla’s website and this can be accessed via electronic link from the 2017 procedures. The form requires similar information to the previous Standard Referral Form - including details of the child at the centre of the report, details of the concerns, category of alleged abuse, details of the alleged harm, details of reporter and clarification on whether parents are aware. The form asks whether the report is a mandated report (ie if at or above the “harm” threshold) and where it is, there is provision on the form for the DLP and the relevant teacher to make a joint report.*

**13. Is there any change in the 2017 procedures as regards whether parents should/should not be told of a concern in relation to their child?**

*No – the same provisions as applied in the 2011 procedures continue to apply. All information regarding concerns of possible child abuse or neglect should be shared on a “need to know” basis only – the test being whether the person has any legitimate involvement or role in the matter. In the case of parents, the 2017 procedures reiterate that it is good practice to inform the parent/carer that a report is being made to the CFA/Tusla and the reasons for this – provided however, that by doing so, the child will not be placed*



at further risk, or the CFA/Tusla's ability to assess will not be impaired, or the reporter is not placed at risk. If there is any doubt about informing the parent/guardian advice should be sought from the CFA/Tusla on the matter.

The Children First Act, 2015 also makes it an offence for a person to disclose information to a third party which has been shared with the CFA/Tusla during the course of an assessment arising from a mandated report – unless Tusla has expressly authorised this in writing or otherwise in accordance with law.

**14. Is there any change in the obligations on teachers in relation to assisting the CFA/Tusla?**

*Not in practice. It is the case that teachers and DLPs have always fully co-operated with the CFA/Tusla in the interests of child protection including attending at meetings and case conferences. The requirement for co-operation has now been placed on a statutory footing as a result of the Children First Act, 2015 which stipulates that mandated persons/ie all registered teachers, are required to assist the CFA/Tusla when requested to do so.*

**15. What happens in the case of an allegation of abuse against a school employee?**

*The procedures dealing with school employees are outlined in chapter 7 of the 2017 procedures. In all cases where an allegation of abuse is made against a school employee the employer/Board of Management or ETB must be informed. The procedures outlined in chapter 7 are more or less the same as those outlined in the 2011 procedures. Essentially there are two procedures to be followed – ie the reporting procedure in respect of the allegation and the procedure for dealing with the employee. Legal advice should always be obtained. The 2017 procedures also includes a protocol for employers where immediate action is required. The Board of Management may also liaise with the CFA/Tusla and/or the Gardaí as provided for in the 2017 procedures. Fair procedures and strict confidentiality must always be observed. Any disciplinary action contemplated must be in accordance with the statutory disciplinary procedures (eg DES Circular 60/2009). Failure by a member of school personnel to comply with the advices of the CFA/Tusla or comply with the 2017 procedures may also result in disciplinary action.*

*Where an allegation of abuse is made against the DLP, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will assume the role of DLP.*

*In addition to chapter 7, paragraph 5.6 sets out a protocol for the DLP and Board of Management when dealing with the parent/guardian of a pupil who has made an allegation of abuse against a school employee. In this regard, the DLP is required within 10 school days of the allegation being made, to issue a written notification to the parent advising:*

- *That the matter is being dealt with in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017);*
- *That the matter has been reported by the DLP to the CFA/Tusla; or*
- *That the advice of the CFA/Tusla has been sought and that on foot of that advice, the matter was not reported to Tusla; or*
- *That the matter did not constitute a reasonable ground for concern within the definitions and parameters set out in the procedures and therefore did not require reporting to the CFA/Tusla;*
- *That it is open to the parent to contact the CFA/Tusla directly.*

*The parent may notify the Board of Management if he/she does not receive this written notification from the DLP and the Board will then direct it to be issued.*

16. Can I be sued for making a report to the CFA/Tusla or the Gardaí?

*No – provided the report is made in good faith and is not malicious. The Protections for Persons Reporting Child Abuse Act, 1998 provides full legal protection for persons acting in good faith when making a report of suspected child abuse to the CFA/Tusla/HSE and/or the Gardaí. This applies even if the report proves to be unfounded – once the person reporting has acted reasonably and in good faith. The reporter may also be protected under the common law defence of qualified privilege. Conversely, it is a criminal offence to make a false report of child abuse “knowing that statement to be false”.*

17. Can I contact the INTO if I have a further query about any of these matters?

*Of course, members are most welcome to raise any further queries with INTO by telephone or email.*

**Phone**

Telephone: +353 1 804 7700

LoCall: 1850 708 708

**Email**

Please email [info@into.ie](mailto:info@into.ie) and ensure you include your INTO membership number or teacher number in any correspondence