



## **Submission on Child Protection & Safeguarding**

### **- Considerations on Recommendations 1 & 2**

**Prepared for:**

The Department of Education

**Prepared By:**

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## 1 Introduction

IPPN is the officially-recognised professional body for the leaders of Irish primary schools. It is an independent, not-for-profit voluntary association with a local, regional and national presence. Recognised by the Minister for Education as an official Education Partner, IPPN works with the Department of Education, the National Parents' Council, management bodies, unions, education agencies, academic institutions and children's charities towards the advancement of primary education. IPPN articulates the collective knowledge and professional experience of over 6,000 Principals and Deputy Principals.

This submission captures the feedback and suggestions of the IPPN Leadership Support Team in relation to the review of Child Protection procedures, specifically the considerations on Recommendations 1 and 2. Please note that the timescale did not allow for IPPN to engage directly with members on this matter.

## 2 Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1 states:

*'The Department should consult with Management Bodies, teaching unions and other relevant partners on the merits of implementing the role of a designated member of the Board of Management for child protection and safeguarding in larger schools. This is not intended to diminish the full Board of Management's responsibilities or those of the Designated Liaison Person.'*

### 2.1 Feedback & Suggestions

The primary function of the Board of Management is governance, which is largely about oversight and compliance. Accordingly, the Board has a key role in ensuring adherence to procedures, through its engagement with the Child Protection Oversight Report at Board meetings.

IPPN acknowledges that the assignation of specific roles / areas of responsibility is a practice that is in keeping with the principles of good governance. However, Boards are operating in a complex regulatory environment where the levels of oversight and compliance demanded of them are significant. When one considers that these Board members are volunteers with no specific, relevant expertise guaranteed and limited opportunities, if any, for induction and training, the inadequate and haphazard nature of the school governance structure becomes apparent.

It is IPPN's view that, until such time as we have a governance structure in place that is sufficiently robust, underpinned by mandatory induction for Board members and informed by professional expertise, the assignation of specific responsibility for Child Protection to a designated Board member is not appropriate.

### 3 Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2 (a) and (b) state:

*(a) 'That the Department encourages larger schools to widen the role of the Designated Liaison Person to a member of the senior leadership team, rather than the principal.'*

*(b) 'That for all schools (except one teacher schools) the Department gives consideration to widening the role of the Deputy Designated Liaison Person to supporting the Designated Liaison Person's work, including sharing information and data, as well as deputising in their absence.'*

#### 3.1 Feedback & Suggestions

IPPN supports these proposals, provided that adequate and mandatory training is put in place before the relevant staff take up their role as DLP or DDLP. The Principal would need to be kept informed of child protection and safeguarding issues in order to carry out her/his role on the Board, and as school leader.