

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Not ApplicableTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC047
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Name of Service:	Banteer Community Childcare Services CLG
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Address of Service:	Clonmeen, Banteer, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 R884
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	127	PM	75
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Banteer Community Childcare Services is a community-based service in operation since in 2007. It offers a choice of full day care, part-time and sessional services facilitating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme in the morning. The service operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 7.00 am until 6.30 pm, for 49 weeks of the year and is registered for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age, currently child attend aged from 3 months to 6 years of age.

The service is located in a residential area in the rural village of Banteer in North Cork. It operates from a single storey building purposefully built as a childcare facility. There are four care rooms located within the service Snowdrop Nursery, Daisy, Daffodil and Sunflower and four outdoor structures: two of which are wooden cabins Bluebell Pre-school and Naionra Poipin, and two are modular units Naionra Fiuse and Cactus. There is a large reception area, offices and a kitchen located indoors. The large outdoor area has dedicated secure outdoor play areas for each age group and each care room is timetabled for play in an additional large outdoor space. There are adult and child sanitary facilities in both the outdoor and indoor areas. A staff room is located adjacent to the Bluebell Pre-school care room and in addition, a quiet room for staff is available next to the sensory room, also in the outdoor area. There is a large car park area located at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are currently forty adults working in the service including the manager, two AIMS Support Workers, two administration staff, two kitchen staff, two cleaning staff and one Community Employment person on placement. The registered provider is not service based.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re-occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued on 14 June 2023 in respect of the temperature of the Daffodil sleep room which was recorded at 23.2 °C. A response from the manager was received on the 14 June 2023, along with documentary evidence, indicating that two air conditioning units would be delivered to the service at 7.30 am on 15 June 2023 and that within two weeks air conditioning would be installed in the Daffodil sleep room.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the manager, deputy, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise. In addition, there were four further named persons also available on the day of inspection.
- (b) The person in charge and deputy were both on the premises when the inspectors arrived and remained onsite for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

- (2) The registered provider stated that eleven adults had begun working in the service since the last inspection on 22 March 2023 therefore recruitment records for these adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were nine validated references from past employers and thirteen validated references from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available in respect of the eleven adults.
- (4) Three staff members working directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. Two additional staff members held Letters of Eligibility to Practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Four staff members did not require qualifications as three were working in school age care and one was on placement from a Community Employment Scheme and was not in ratio.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) An international police vetting disclosure was missing in respect of one adult who had lived outside the State as an adult for more than six months.
- (4) Two staff members did not hold major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications or have letters of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. In conversation with the manager, it was stated that Letters of Eligibility to Practice had been applied for however, they have not yet received a reply.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (d) The staff member was informed that they would apply for international police vetting. However, they are not currently working in the service. Prior to commencement of employment vetting disclosures for staff will be in place in the future.

(4)

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)
- (d) The statement from the manager that the staff member would apply for international police disclosure and that all staff will have vetting in place prior to commencing employment has been deemed to meet regulatory compliance.

(4) Copies of a major award at Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education dated 14 April 2023 was received for one staff member, and a Letter of Eligibility to Practice dated 20 June 2023 was received in the office of the inspectorate for the second staff member.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) The ratio of adults to children was met. On the day of inspection, all eight care rooms were in operation. There were 127 children in attendance in the morning with 25 adults and 75 children in attendance in the afternoon with 18 adults.

(3) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

Room/ age range	Adults	Children (am)	Children (pm)
Snowdrop Nursery (3 months – 15 months)	3	9	8
Daisy (12 months – 24 months)	4	12	11
Daffodil (2 years – 3 years)	3	15	14
Sunflower (2 years – 3 years)	3	17	12
Bluebell Pre-school (2 years 8 months years – 4 years)	3 (am) 1 (pm)	19	6
Naionra Poipin (4 years – 5 years)	3 (am) 2 (pm)	24	12
Naionra Fiuise (4 years – 5 years)	4 (pm) 1 (pm)	21	8
Cactus (3 years – 4 years)	2 (am) 1 (pm)	10	4
Total		127	75

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of the following information:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the designated person in charge, deputy and staff.
 - (b) The details of the class of service and the age profile of children were available on the Tusla registration certificate which was located on the notice board in the reception area.
 - (c) The details of the adult/child ratio in the service were available in the Child and Parent Information Forms within the Registration pack given to all parents/guardians.
 - (d) (e) (f) The type of care programme, facilities, opening hours and fees were available in the Child and Parent Information Forms within the Registration pack given to all parents/guardians.
 - (h) Daily attendance of the children was recorded by staff on an electronic application on a tablet in each of the care rooms, these were noted to be current and up to date.
 - (i) Details of the staff rosters were available on the day of inspection, these had been completed up until the morning of the inspection.
 - (j) Fourteen records of the administration of medication were sampled. These were observed to be complete and included the parent's, staff and witness's signatures. Sickness monitoring forms were also available which kept a record of the child's physical symptoms while feeling unwell, these were also signed by parents. An individual medical plan was available for a child in the Daffodil room and permission was signed for staff to administer medication in the event of an emergency. Staff stated they had been trained by the parent on how to administer the medication.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- The healthy eating policy and the four-week menu were available for parents to view in the service. Food observed being consumed on the day was healthy and nutritious. All snacks were provided by the parents/guardians, the breakfast, hot meal and evening tea were supplied by the service. From 7.00 am until 9.00 am staff stated that a selection of cereals, toast, water and milk were available. At mid-morning snack the children were observed eating a variety of fruits including cut grapes, yogurt, croissant, filled sandwiches, crackers and pancakes. A hot meal of cottage pie was serviced with turnip and mashed potatoes at 12.25 pm. A further snack was due in the afternoon at 3.00 pm and evening tea was toasted bagels and bananas.
- Children in each age group had access to appropriate cutlery and crockery. Children in the Bluebell Pre-school room were observed pouring from water jugs into cups on the table, while children in the Daisy room were observed drinking from bottles and doubled handled beakers prepared by the staff members.
- Children were seated at the table during snack and mealtimes when their food was ready. Children in the Daisy care room were observed sitting on floor chairs with trays. While older children in the Bluebell Pre-school room were observed to sit on chairs and at tables which were suitable for their age and stage of development.
- Children playing outdoors in the tuft tray of the Bluebell Pre-school care area were observed wearing aprons to protect their clothes.
- Spare clothing for each child was noted to be stored in labelled bags in each care room if the children required a change of clothing during the day.
- The weather on the day of inspection was warm and the children in the Cactus outdoor play area were observed wearing sun hats. Each child had sun cream which was labelled and stored in each care room.
- Staff in the care rooms were noted to be kind, caring and interested in the children. Staff in the outdoor area of the Cactus area were observed sitting on the artificial grass engaged in conversations with the children. They were heard promoting positive behaviours and observed supporting the children to find positive solutions when they experienced difficulty with sharing toys and equipment.

Supporting Children's Relationships:

- A key person approach was in place in the Daffodil care room and staff stated that they were responsible for supporting the children while building and maintaining relationships with their parents/guardians.
- During mealtimes and activities in the care rooms the inspector observed that staff members engaged in social conversation with the children. Staff asked open ended questions, made comments and reminded children to say thank you when receiving something.
- Staff promoted various opportunities for the children to express themselves with resources placed around the room. These included a friendships station and feelings chart where children could attach their name or feeling onto the chart informing the staff member or children about their emotional well-being.
- Each room had access to an electronic application which staff stated was used to inform parents of their child's activities during the day including their eating, sleeping and toileting. Staff stated that emails and quarterly newsletters are also used to inform parents of information.
- Staff stated that room meetings take place once a month and that team meetings happen quarterly with staff exchanging information on topics such as strategies from Healthy Ireland Smart Start, planning and visits from the community such as the ambulance and any other issues that arise.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The service was clean and well maintained.
- Each room was laid out in clearly defined areas with age and stage appropriate resources for the children in each care room. The different areas, resources and equipment provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all areas.
- Each care room had access to a dedicated outdoor play area. A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in each of the fully enclosed outdoor play areas which promoted gross and fine motor skills and opportunities for sensory play. Younger children in the Daisy outdoor play area had access to a bucket swing which was attached to a small slide, ride-ons, cars, tricycles and mark making with flower blackboards and chalk. Older children in Naionra Fiuse had access to tricycles, climbing frame, slide, taxi, tractors and a netball ring. Sand and water troughs were available for sensory play and the Cactus care room children were observed exploring the properties of ice melting in the tuft tray with dinosaurs encased in ice.
- The equipment and resources in the rooms were located in baskets mainly on low-level shelving which facilitated easy access, choice and encouraged independence by the children.
- Children had the option to play outdoors in all weathers as parts of the service were covered providing shelter.

- A sensory room was available providing a range of individualised equipment needed by children helping them to improve their visual, auditory and tactile processing. Examples of the equipment included projectors, a sensory pod, colour changing water bubble lamp, large vinyl seating, soft tactile furnishings, toys and piped music. In conversation staff stated the children really enjoy their time in this area.

Programme of Activities:

- My Journal books were scrapbooks in which observations, artwork and photographs of the children involved in activities in the service were documented by staff members in each care room. The observations were linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, and staff stated that the observations helped to inform the planning which was available on the walls of each care room.
- Children’s language development was supported in the care rooms. Cactus care room staff and children were heard singing songs including 1,2,3 in Irish. Posters around the room promoted language with matching words and pictures on seasonal themes including Summer and camping visible on the walls. Children in the Bluebell Pre-school care room were observed listening to a staff member reading a story titled “The Pets You Get”.
- Activities were partly child led and staff provided opportunities for the children to express themselves throughout the morning. Children in the Cactus care room were given the opportunity of displaying and discussing the toys they had brought in with the other children and staff.
- Children were given opportunities to promote self-esteem and self-confidence. Strategies were used which included helpers being chosen each day to carry out responsible tasks such as handing out cups, giving each child a placemat and helping with snack.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- All entry doors and gates were secured on arrival. There was an adult present at reception who monitored the main entrance ensuring unauthorised adults could not gain entry and unsupervised children could not exit the building.

- The electronic gate, which allowed entry to the outdoor care rooms and play areas, was secured with a keypad.
- Windows in the care rooms and sleep rooms were fitted with window restrictors to prevent children exiting or falling from them.
- Blind cords on the windows of the care rooms were secured with plastic hooks which were out of reach of the children.
- Handrails were located on the ramps and stairs of the outdoor care rooms helping the children to safely navigate each area.
- All toys and equipment, indoors and outdoors, appeared in good condition, clean and well maintained.
- Heavy equipment and furniture were anchored to ensure they did not fall or tip on a child.
- Indoor waste was stored in pedal operated bins in each of the care rooms and sanitary areas.
- Cleaning agents were located on high shelves out of reach of the children in the care rooms and the sanitary areas.
- Floor brushes were stored out of reach of the children.
- Posters were available on the outdoor wall of the Cactus care room detailing the requirements visually for safe sun including appropriate clothing, hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and a first aid box.
- The outdoor play areas of the service were secured with metal fencing, an electronic gate and bolted gates between each outdoor play area.
- The kitchen door was closed and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- A cleaner was employed by the service and was observed sweeping and mopping central areas throughout the building.
- Nappy changing was observed in the Daisy sanitary area where the staff member had on disposable gloves and an apron. A foot operated, lined, lidded bin was available for the disposal of the nappy. The children's labelled personal belongings were located nearby.
- Perishable foods, for the children's snacks, were stored in the fridges of each care room preventing spoilage.
- Children from the Cactus and Bluebell Pre-school care rooms were observed washing their hands with thermostatically controlled hot water (24°C - 34°C), dispensing soap and drying their hands with paper towel from an automatic dispensing unit. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of waste.

- Staff stated that soothers, observed in use in the Daffodil sleep room, were sterilised in an enclosed soother tree container with some water which is then put into the microwave for sixty seconds.
- Children’s coats and bags were stored on hooks on the walls of the care rooms, off the floor area.
- The windows and doors of the care rooms were open providing natural ventilation.
- Children’s outdoor boots in the Cactus room were stored in a box outdoors.
- Staff in the Daisy care room were observed disinfecting the tables and chairs after mid-morning snack.
- Cleaning rotas in all rooms were observed to be completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medications were available in the office and in the Daffodil and Bluebell care rooms. The medications were noted to be stored in their original containers and were stored separately from the first aid boxes.

Safe Sleep:

- There were four sleep rooms in operation on the day of inspection. Two dedicated sleep rooms were in operation off the Daisy care room with eleven cots between both sleep rooms. Three children were observed asleep between the two rooms at 1.00 pm. The Snowdrop care room had one child asleep in one of the eight cots available. There was air conditioning in the dedicated sleep rooms of the Daisy and Snowdrop care rooms and the temperatures in the sleep rooms were recorded between 18°C and 20°C. All cots in these sleep rooms were fitted with safety mattresses and were spaced more than 50 cm apart, black out blinds were present on the windows.
- Digital evidence recorded on an electronic application indicated that sleep records were kept for each child’s sleep, recording the time a staff member physically checked each child. Details included the recording of the child’s breathing, colour and position. These checks were observed to be carried out and recorded every ten minutes.
- Cellular blankets were available for children under two years, as the weather was very warm these were not in use.
- Cosy, comfortable rest areas were available in all of the care rooms to facilitate children who required a rest or to sit quietly.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire exits were unobstructed, and the fire assembly point was easily identifiable with a visual sign in the outdoor play area at the rear of the building.
- Firefighting equipment was observed to be securely fitted to the walls.

- Fire doors were fitted with either push bars or thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of staff and children in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

- (1) An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued on 14 June 2023 in respect of the temperature of the Daffodil sleep room which was recorded at 23.2 °C, posing a safety risk to the eleven sleeping children.

General Safety:

- (2) The hot water in both wash hand basins in the Daisy sanitary area were recorded above 43°C, posing a safety risk.
- (3) The flexes from the kettle and radio in the Bluebell care room were accessible to the children, posing a safety risk to the children from being pulled down on top of them. When this was mentioned to the staff member, they were removed immediately.

Infection Control:

- (4) In the Daffodil outdoor area there were two vinyl chairs and three vinyl sofas which had exposed corners. These posed a risk of infection as the exposed corners would make effective cleaning difficult.
- (5) The mechanical vent in the Daisy sanitary area did not appear to be working. In conversation with a staff member, it was stated that this had been reported by staff and recorded in the maintenance book of the service but had not yet been addressed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the manager:

Safe Sleep:

- (1) In response to the Immediate Action Notice sent on 14 June two air conditioning units were hired and due to be delivered on the morning of 15 June. The board have agreed to install air conditioning in the Daffodil and Sunflower rooms and the Nursery sleep room.

General Safety:

- (2) The maintenance officer adjusted the hot water controls to ensure the water does not exceed 43°C. This will be checked on a weekly basis.
- (3) The flexes from the kettle and radio in the Bluebell care rooms were secured on the wall. Daily risk assessments now include flexes and wires.

Infection Control:

- (4) The two exposed chairs and three vinyl sofas have been removed.
- (5) The electrician repaired the vent in the Daisy sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic and documentary evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Safe Sleep:

- (1) A copy of a letter received from the air conditioning company stating that two air conditioning units would be put in place in the Daffodil sleep room on the morning of the 15 June 2023. The air conditioning will be reviewed on the next inspection.

General Safety:

- (2) Photographs of the temperatures of the hot water in both wash hand basins in the Daisy sanitary area.
- (3) Photographs showing the flexes of the radio and kettle secured to the wall in the Bluebell care room.

Infection Control:

- (4) A photograph showing the Daffodil outdoor play area with the damaged soft furnishings removed.
- (5) A video of the working vent in the Daisy sanitary area.

Summary Comment

The requirements of the Regulation have been met.