

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC060
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Blackwater Childcare Company Limited by Guarantee
-------------------------	---

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Rathcarrig Estate, Pike Road, Fermoy, Co Cork
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	P61 WR65
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Joanie McCarthy
-------------------------------------	-----------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
----------------------	----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/03/2026
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	60	PM	61
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork. T23X440.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Cotter
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

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).	

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

### Description of service

Blackwater Childcare is a registered community based early years service in operation since 2007. This service provides education and care to children aged from 1 to 6 years offering full day care service and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 7:30am to 6pm each day Monday to Friday.

The premises is located in a suburban estate in the outskirts of Fermoy town in Co Cork. The premise is a purpose built detached single storey building registered to operate three playrooms. Each of the spacious playrooms have their own designated outdoor play area to the rear and sides of the premise. The service also hosts a sensory room, offices, kitchen and necessary sanitary accommodations.

### Staffing

There are currently 27 adults associated with this service, 22 of whom were present on day of inspection. Four of this number were on leave and there were 16 adults working directly with the children, 5 catering and hygiene staff, the person in charge and the registered provider who is not serviced 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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*

*(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 service had a named person in charge and two deputies that could deputise as required.

(b) One of the named deputies was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises. The person in charge arrived at the service shortly after the commencement of the inspection and remained available to the inspector for the remainder of the inspection.

(2) A total of 27 recruitment files were reviewed.

(a) Thirty three of the fifty-four required written and validated references on file were from past employers.

(b) Twenty one of the fifty-four references had been provided by sources other than previous employers and had been validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 27 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting had been acquired in respect of two of the adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) All staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

## 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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation in each care room

Room	Am	Pm	Age range	Staff
Toddler	16	16	1.5-2.5years	4
Preschool 1	19	18	2.10-3.5years	4
Preschool 2	25	27	3.10-5years	6

(8) On the day of inspection, it was evidenced through discussion with staff and by the staff roster that there are always at least two people on the premises.

## 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:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was maintained of the following information:

(j) Details of medication given to any child. All records had been signed by staff and parents in line with the services policy.

(k) Details of any incident of accident. There were a total of 13 accidents recorded in the preschool 2 room for the current year. Each record had been signed by and shared with parents.

(3) The registered provider has ensured that these records were available in the service and were open to the inspector on the day of inspection.

## 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

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs:

- Children had water available to them at all times throughout the day. There were jugs of water and disposable cups in the care rooms.
- Feeding and sleeping practices were child led. It was observed that children who showed signs of tiredness were promptly taken to a sleep room.
- It was further noted that children who had needed to sleep longer were facilitated to have their meals at a later time.
- Children's toileting needs were attended to promptly and staff assisted children when necessary.
- Personal care routines such as nappy changing was attended to in a respectful cooperative manner. For example, staff in the Toddler room were observed during nappy changing time. During this time the staff chatted and laughed with the children.
- Staff responded to children in low tones and communicated with them respectfully throughout the inspection.
- Children were observed to eat healthy and nutritious food throughout the day.

#### Physical and Material Environment

- The care rooms were warm, comfortable and furnished with child sized tables, chairs, low shelving and a variety of play materials and play equipment that met the needs of the children.
- All play materials and play equipment were easily visible and accessible to the children.
- Varied interest areas were set up in the care rooms such as construction areas, rest areas, home areas, arts and crafts areas, tabletop activities and dress up clothes.
- The walls of the care rooms were decorated with art work that had been created by the children.
- A family wall was also on display in each of the care rooms.

- There was a soft matted rest area provided in a quiet corner of each care room.
- Each of the secured outdoor play environments that surrounded the premises was provided with play equipment that supported the children's free play, imagination, individual and large group activities.

### 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:

- The main entrance door leading into the premises was kept secured to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The outdoor play areas were secured by high walls and secured gates to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The doors leading into the staff toilets and offices were kept secured and were not accessible to the children.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelves out of children's reach.
- The cords attached to window blinds were safely secured high out of children's reach.
- Heavy furniture in the care rooms was anchored securely.
- Low lying glass panels on windows and doors were fitted with visibility strips.
- There were no electrical cables or flexes in reach of children.
- Play equipment and resources, both indoors and outdoors, appeared to be clean and well maintained.
- Low-lying glass panels on windows and doors were fitted with visibility strips.

##### Infection Control:

- Children had access to suitable handwashing facilities, with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers. Water temperatures were recorded throughout the service between 34.5°C and 42.9°C.
- Handwashing was observed before mealtimes and after using the toilet facilities.
- Lidded foot operated pedal bins were in use for the hygienic disposal of waste.
- Children's bags and outdoor clothing were stored off the ground, on shelves and hooks.
- Sand trays in the outdoors play areas had been covered.

- Children had their own clearly labelled basket containing their nappies, wipes and barrier creams.
- Staff were observed to wear disposable aprons and gloves during nappy change times.
- Staff were observed to disinfect nappy changing mats between uses and also to wash their own hands, along with the children's hands.
- Windows were open in each care room and nappy changing area to aid natural ventilation.
- Sweeping brushes and dust pans were stored off the floor, out of reach of children.
- All cots and stackable beds within the sleep rooms were maintained an adequate distance apart, which helped to reduce the risk of infection.
- The cot mattresses available to the children were either waterproof, or were fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, which minimised the risk of cross infection.

### Administration of Medication:

- A refrigerator with the specific purpose of holding liquid antibiotics was in use in an area not accessible to children.
- The bottle of antibiotic stored inside was labelled with the child's name and the dosage.
- Staff detailed that one member of staff would administer the medication while another staff would counter sign the administration of medicine form after witnessing the administration.
- Forms were signed in line with policy and were available upon request.

### Safe Sleep:

- Recommended air temperatures were maintained within the designated sleep rooms, while said rooms were occupied by sleeping children. In the cot sleep room, an air temperature of 18.1°C was recorded and in the second sleep room, which was furnished with stackable beds, an air temperature reading 19.2°C was taken.
- A review of sleep logs demonstrated that physical checks were carried out every ten minutes to assess children's breathing, colour and position.
- In the second sleep room, it was noted that a staff member remained in the room with children sleeping on stackable beds.

### Fire Safety:

- Wall mounted firefighting equipment was available in each room.
- Fire exits were kept free from obstruction.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The person in charge ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by an employee on the day of inspection. This was evidenced through the inspection of children's sign in and out records.
- (3)
- (b) It was noted that the inspector was directed to sign the visitors book upon arrival, this entry was then co-signed by a member of staff.
- (4) Upon inspection of the visitor's log, there were entries dating back to 2019. This evidence satisfies the requirement to keep such records for a period of one year.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.

#### Compliance Information

- (d) The registered provider has ensured that the premises is clean and in a state of good repair throughout. Each room had a cleaning schedule in place which was filled in regularly throughout the day. There were no obvious areas in need of repair.