

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC108
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Name of Service:	Coiste Naíonra an Teaghlaigh Naofa Teo
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Address of Service:	Tory Top Road, Ballyphehane, Cork, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 K039
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Name of Registered Provider:	Emer O' Sullivan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
Title:	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).

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Description of service

Coiste Naíonra an Teaghlaigh Naofa Teo is registered to provide care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years. Play based pedagogy is implemented, with a focus on the Irish language. Two daily sessional services are facilitated, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme; from 8.20am to 11.20am and from 11.30am to 2.30pm.

The early years service is located on the grounds of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa and consists of two care rooms, each with adjacent sanitary facilities. The children have the use of a designated outdoor play space, beside the building.

Staffing

In total, there are nine adults employed at the setting, all of whom are involved in the direct care of the children. This includes the registered provider, who, while mainly office based, is available to provide cover in the care rooms as required. A student was also undertaking a work placement at the time of inspection.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN1883	29/04/2026	On review of the staff files, it was noted that international police vetting was not available for one staff member, who was present on the day of inspection and had access to the children.
Status	The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions, which were accepted by the Inspectorate.	

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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 registered provider was the person in charge of overseeing the operation of the service. The requirement for a deputy person in charge was also met, with written information available to this effect.
- (b) The registered provider was working at the setting when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the duration of the inspection. Examination of the staff roster confirmed that the registered provider was available on site during the hours of operation.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider, it was determined that two adults had commenced working at the setting, since the previous inspection on 16 November 2023. These two staff files were reviewed, along with those of a student, who was present on an educational work placement programme.

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- (a) Six written and validated references were required in total. Four of these had been obtained from past employers.
- (b) Two of the references on file were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for the three adults. Garda vetting in respect of an additional seven staff had also been renewed, in line with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) Following review of the adults' curricula vitae, police vetting was not deemed to be required for two of the three adults.
- (4) Evidence to demonstrate the successful completion of a relevant award in early childhood care and education, was available in respect of the two staff members.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) See statutory notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN1883 served.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The staffing levels were adequate in meeting the needs of the children.
- (3) At the time of inspection, the adult child ratios met the requirements of the regulation, as follows:
- During the morning, there were 25 children, aged 3 to 5 years, in attendance between the 2 care rooms. Five adults were working directly with these children.

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- In the afternoon, 5 adults were responsible for the direct care of 23 children, within the same age range. The registered provider was also onsite for the duration of the inspection. The student was not included in the adult child ratios.

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:
- (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;

Compliance Information

- (1) Details in relation to the following were clearly outlined within the parents information booklet:
- (b) The type of service provided and the age range of children accommodated.
- (c) The adult child ratios.
- (d) The service's programme of care.
- (e) The facilities available at the setting.
- (f) The hours of operation. The service catered for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

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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:

- A snack break was accommodated shortly after 10.30am. A calm and pleasant atmosphere was evident during this mealtime routine, as the children chatted to one another and were appropriately assisted by the adults.
- The children's reusable water bottles were stored in refrigerators, which were accessible to them.
- Clearly defined rest areas were incorporated into the care rooms, should the children wish to opt out of scheduled activities at any stage.
- The children could freely access the adjacent sanitary facilities as needed and staff members were observed to offer helpful reminders in relation to handwashing. The inspector was advised that all of the children were toilet trained.
- Tissue boxes were available at child level, which encouraged children to develop personal hygiene and self-care skills.
- The care room layouts allowed the children to move freely, as they played and participated in various aspects of the daily routine. Opportunities for more active play and exploration were facilitated in the outdoor play area, where children were observed to engage in a range of activities, such as mark making, water play, digging in the sandbox and using ride on toys.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Throughout the morning, a warm, engaging environment was apparent. The children appeared focused on their chosen activities and the adults were actively involved in the children's experiences, through acknowledging their interests, ideas and perspectives.

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- The children were encouraged to be kind to one another and were allocated helper tasks, such as giving out the lunchboxes at snack time. This promoted cooperation and helped to foster increased social interaction.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- A healthy eating policy was in place at the early years service.
- Parents and caregivers supplied the children's snacks for the sessional period. During the meal break, the children were observed to eat a variety of foods, which included sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes and a selection of fruit, with water to drink.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children who attended the service had any specific dietary requirements or food allergies.
- During discussion, the registered provider stated that if a child expressed that they were hungry outside of routine mealtimes, they could choose something to eat from their lunchbox. It was also confirmed that if the snacks brought from home were unsuitable, alternatives would be provided by the service.

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 was adequately secured against the risk of unauthorised access; a keypad entry system was in use, with a doorbell available for parents and visitors. A high-level latch was fitted to the interior of this door, which reduced the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- In the outdoor play environment, a safe enclosure was created through a combination of high-level fencing and a secured gate.
- A shock absorbing surface was available underneath the seesaws.
- Staff belongings were safely stored and inaccessible to children.

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- Cleaning agents were maintained out of the children's reach.
- A staff member ensured that the grapes which had been provided by children's parents, were halved, which reduced the risk of a choking hazard.

Infection control:

- Effective handwashing was facilitated through the provision of warm running water, liquid soap and single use paper towel dispensers, at each of the wash hand basins. The children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play and before snack time.
- Foot pedal operated bins were in use.
- Perishables snacks were refrigerated, prior to the mid-morning break.
- It was noted that the tables used for mealtimes were sanitised before the snack break.
- Photograph labelled wall hooks were in place, for the children's bags and personal belongings.
- Open windows in the care rooms allowed fresh air to circulate.

Administration of medication:

- Prescribed medication was found to be safely stored out of the children's reach.

Fire safety:

- The service's fire exits were maintained free from any obstruction that may delay a timely exit in the event of a fire.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of medication:

The expiration date had passed on three of the medications that were held in respect of two of the children. This posed a risk that expired medication, which may be unsafe to use, could be administered to a child. It was acknowledged that, following the inspection, the registered provider obtained written confirmation from one of the children's parents which advised that two of said medications were no longer required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the parents of the children were contacted immediately to replace the expired medication. The expired medication was returned and the replacement medications are now stored in the locked medicine cabinet. As a preventive measure, a staff member has been assigned the task of checking all medications and expiry dates at the beginning of each month.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) Review of the First Aid Response (FAR) certificates on file, in conjunction with the staff roster, demonstrated that an adult with current FAR training was available to the children at all times, during the service's hours of operation. Two adults had completed this training.

(2)

(a) High-level storage was provided for the first aid boxes in both care rooms.

(b) The first aid supplies were available to the children at all times, should treatment be required.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Monthly fire drill records were presented for review and indicated that a recent fire drill had been undertaken on 27 April 2026.
 - (b) Documentation provided by a fire safety company demonstrated that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm had both been serviced on 4 June 2025.
- (4) The steps to be taken in the event of a fire were set out in a written notice, which was displayed in each of the care rooms.