

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC347
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ringlee House Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Rushbrooke, Cobh, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P24 DX62
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jennifer Hannigan, Nicole Victory
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	58	PM	30
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast & C Stokes
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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
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### Description of service

Ringlee House Pre-School is a privately operated, full day care service, that is registered to accommodate children from the age of nine months. Sessional and part time care are also provided, along with a registered school age service. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 9.00am and 12.00pm, each Monday through to Friday, over a 38-week annual period. Daily opening hours are from 7.45am to 6.00pm and the service is in operation 51 weeks of the year.

Located in a residential area of Cobh in east Cork, the premises consists of a two-storey, purpose-built extension onto a private residence. There are two care rooms, with adjoining sanitary facilities on the ground floor, along with a kitchen and there are two additional care rooms and children's sanitary facilities provided on the first floor. At the rear of the main premises, there is a separate building available for staff use and storage. A designated outdoor play area is provided in front of the service.

### Staffing

There are currently 12 adults employed at Ringlee House Pre-School, 11 of whom work with the children. Both registered providers are involved in the direct care of the children and there is one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. One adult is based in the kitchen and does not work directly with the children. There were 10 adults working at the setting on the day of the 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 the 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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 two designated persons in charge and a named person, who could deputise as required.
- (b) At all times during the inspection period, either the designated persons in charge or the deputy person in charge were on the premises.
- (2) All staff recruitment files were examined as part of this inspection. In respect of the 12 adults:
- (a) Eighteen written and appropriately validated past employer references were available.
- (b) Four written and validated references were on file from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Completed, in date records of Garda vetting from the National Vetting Bureau, were available for 11 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was not required, as no adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period that exceeded six consecutive months.
- (4) A major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, at a minimum of QQI level 5, on the National Framework of Qualifications, was on file for the 11 adults who worked directly with the children.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b)
- Two written references in respect of one adult were not validated, as required.
- (c)
- A Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau, dated within the past three years, was unavailable for one of the adults, as required. The vetting was dated 21 May 2019.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The response received stated that the two written references have been validated and that the service will continue to improve on maintaining and updating staff files.

(c)

Renewed Garda vetting for the adult has been applied for.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Two reference validations and a copy of the updated Garda vetting were submitted.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been resolved.

### 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) A sufficient number of adults were observed to work with the children who attended the service.

(2) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

During the morning, the rooms were in operation as follows:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Room 1 (9 months – 23 months )	8 attending part time or full day care	3
Room 2 (2 - 3 years)	11 attending part time or full day care	2
Room 3 (3 – 4 ½ years)	20 attending ECCE session	2
Room 4 (3 – 4 ½ years)	19 attending ECCE session	2

In the afternoon, the overall adult child ratio was compliant as follows:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Room 1 (1 year – 2 years and 9 months)	6 attending part time or full day care	1
Room 2 (9 months – 2 ½ years)	8 attending part time or full day care	2
Room 3 (3 – 4 ½ years)	16 attending part time or full day care	2

Room 4 was not in operation at the time of the ratio count in the afternoon.

- (8)
- (a) There were at least two adults available on the premises throughout the duration of the inspection, and at all times, in accordance with the staff roster.

### 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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(i) A staff roster was in place and maintained up to date.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A curriculum vitae was unavailable for one of the adults.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The written response submitted outlined that the CV is now on file and that the service will continue to improve on maintaining and updating staff files.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the CV was forwarded.

#### Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 16.

### 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:

- On the day of inspection, mealtime routines were facilitated regularly, with no gaps longer than three hours in between. For example, the mid-morning snack was facilitated shortly after 10.00am and a hot meal was served from midday.
- Staff members readily assisted the older children to peel fruit and to open food packaging and containers, during the mid-morning snack.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children within the care rooms, should they require additional fluids outside of allocated meal breaks.
- In each of the four care rooms, cosy areas were accessible to children, to rest and relaxed as needed.
- Staff members continued with the established practice of ensuring that the children's nappies were changed at designated intervals throughout the day and as the need arose. The older children could easily access the sanitary facilities that adjoined their care rooms, as needed.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- Children who became upset due to minor conflicts, were promptly comforted by staff members, who spoke kindly and offered reassurance.
- Parents and guardians were welcomed into the care rooms at arrival and collection times and were greeted warmly by the adults.

#### Non-Compliance Information

One of the children in Room 2 was observed to be dressed in a vest, as their wet top was drying on the radiator. No alternative top was provided for the child by any of the adults in this room, between 10.45am and 1.50pm. This may lead to a child being uncomfortably cold for an extended period.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The response received outlined that this was a miscommunication between staff, due to increased staff change over during this time. The registered providers have spoken with staff to ensure that they are more aware of such situations and also to ensure that the building is warm enough, so that children are comfortable at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

Based on the statement from the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

## 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

- The food for the meals and snacks offered at the childcare facility, was supplied in part by the service and partly by the children’s parents and guardians. Hot meals were generally provided by the service and prepared by the chef, while snacks for children attending the ECCE sessional service were mostly supplied by their parents or guardians.
- In the ECCE care rooms, buttered toast and raisins were available as a morning snack, for any child who had not brought their own lunch. Examples of the foods supplied by parents included sandwiches, bread rolls, crackers, rice cakes, yogurts, lunch meats, carrot sticks, peppers, and a variety of fruit, with water to drink.
- A hot meal of fish fingers and mashed potato was served to the children early in the afternoon, with water provided as a drink. Children who attended the downstairs room were also offered spaghetti hoops with the fish fingers and potato meal. Some parents provided meals for the children in Room 1, and these were reheated in the service.
- The weekly menu plan, which outlined the range of hot meals provided, was displayed in the service’s entrance area.

### 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:

- Upon the inspectors' arrival at the service, the main entrance door was noted to be secure and was maintained secure when not in use. Access was through the use of an electronic keypad and on the interior, the door release button was positioned at adult height, which reduced the risk of a child exiting while unsupervised.
- High-level door handles also minimised the risk of children exiting care rooms while unsupervised.
- Fire extinguishers were safely wall mounted.
- Safe storage of cleaning agents was ensured in all care rooms.
- There were no cables or flexes accessible to the children within Room 3 or Room 4.

##### Infection Control:

- Adequate handwashing facilities were available at the service. Wash hand basins were supplied with warm running water, liquid soap and either electric hand dryers or disposable paper towels.
- Staff in Room 3 were observed to wash their hands before assisting the children at snack time.
- In Room 3, the tables were sanitised before and after snack time and the floor was swept. Cleaning records were maintained up to date in respect of the cleaning undertaken in this care room and in the adjacent Room 4.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed on the day of inspection. It was stated that none of the children were in receipt of medication.

##### Safe Sleep:

- While in operation as a sleep room, Room 1 was noted to have an air temperature of 17.6°C. This was within the required range for children to support safe sleep practice.
- A sleep record, with 10-minute interval sleep checks, was available in writing.

##### Outings:

- Not applicable. The registered provider advised that outings were not conducted as part of the programme of activities.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A cable from a phone, which was stored on a high shelf, was accessible to the children in the entrance area of the service. This posed a risk of injury to a child. This safety issue was also found at the previous inspection on 2 March 2023, and while part of the cable had since been secured, a significant length of the cable remained loose and accessible.
2. Adequate storage and decluttering of windowsills was not ensured, as required. In Room 1, the windowsills were used for the storage of staff handbags and plastic bags with hanging straps, which could potentially be reached by children and pulled down, causing injury. In addition, staff coats and bags were stored on the side of some of the cots within Room 1, which could also be pulled down by children. This posed a risk of a child gaining access to unsafe items, within staff belongings.

#### Infection Control:

The following practices increased the risk of cross infection:

3. Some of the sanitary facilities were inappropriately used for storage, as follows:
  - A nappy changing mat was stored on the floor of the sanitary facility adjoining Room 2.
  - Stackable beds were stored in the toilet area off Room 1.
  - A training toilet seat was stored on the floor, in one of the toilet cubicles adjoining Room 1.

The use of this area for storage was also found at previous inspections on 28 June 2022 and on 25 August 2021. Subsequent CAPA responses from the registered providers advised that the area had been cleared of the items. However, inappropriate storage in this sanitary facility remained an issue.
4. The nappy mat in the changing area adjoining Room 1 was observed to be torn, which may impede effective cleaning.
5. Reusable cloths in Room 1 and in the nappy area adjoining Room 1 were not observed to be stored appropriately. One cloth was stored on the windowsill adjacent to the children's drink bottles and another cloth in the nappy changing area was stored on an internal sill.
6. A potty in the sanitary area adjoining Room 1 was not observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
7. During the morning snack time in Room 2, the children were observed to eat food directly from the table, as crockery was not provided. This practice was also found in another care room, at the previous inspection on 2 March 2023. The CAPA response following said inspection outlined that all children would be provided with crockery for their snacks. However, this was not found to be the case.

- In Room 3 and Room 4, the children's perishable snacks, which included yogurts and lunch meats, were not refrigerated at the service prior to being eaten, as required.

### Safe Sleep:

- During discussion with staff, it emerged that suitable sleep equipment had not provided for one of the children on the day prior to the inspection. A staff member advised that the child in question, who was aged under two years, had been accommodated to sleep on a stackable bed. The use of stackable beds is unsuitable for children under the age of two years, as they are not sufficiently conducive to sleep for children in this age range.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

- The cable has been secured.
- Windowsills in all rooms have been cleared.

##### Infection Control:

- The sanitary areas have been cleared.
- The nappy mat has been replaced.
- Small boxes have been provided for the cloths in each care room.
- The potty in Room 1 has been removed, as it is not required for use for this age range of children.
- Crockery was available on the snack tray. However, food is normally placed in the children's lunch box, as the children in this room usually have their own snack and have a slice of toast in addition.
- A small fridge has been purchased, to store the children's snacks. As a preventive measure in relation to all infection control issues found, the registered provider has stated that a checklist has been displayed in each room, to ensure that infection control is maintained to a high standard.

##### Safe Sleep:

- The response received stated that children under the age of two will be placed to sleep in a cot.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

- A photograph to evidence that the cable has been secured.
- Photographic evidence to demonstrate that the windowsills have been cleared.

### Infection Control:

3. Photographs to demonstrate that the items have been removed from the sanitary areas.
4. A photograph of the new nappy changing mat.
5. Photographic evidence.
6. A photograph to demonstrate that the potty has been removed from the area.
7. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
8. A screen shot in relation to the purchase of the fridge.

### Safe Sleep:

9. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been resolved.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-  
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Compliance Information

(e)  
Adequate children's sanitary facilities were provided adjoining Room 3 and Room 4, on the first floor. Each facility consisted of two toilets and two wash hand basins. A nappy changing facility and a wash hand basin were accessible adjoining Room 1, along with a separate sanitary facility, with two toilets and two wash hand basins, which were not required for use. Room 2 also had adjoining children's sanitary facilities, which consisted of two toilets and two wash hand basins. The available staff sanitary facility was equipped with one toilet and one wash hand basin.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (e)
1. The available, suitable nappy changing facility adjoining Room 1 was not sufficient to cater for the number of children in nappies across Room 1 and Room 2, who attended the service. One nappy changing unit and one wash hand basin are required for every 11 children in nappies and there were 17 children in nappies present on the day of inspection.

At the previous inspection on 2 March 2023, the requirement for a second suitable nappy changing facility was also found. The CAPA response which followed stated that a nappy changing unit had been ordered and evidence was submitted to this effect. However, one of the registered providers advised that only part of said changing unit was delivered and that she had been communicating with the company in relation to the matter.

2. In the sanitary facility adjoining Room 2, one of the toilet stalls was partially obstructed by a free standing, collapsible nappy changing table and the door of the toilet stall could not be closed as a result. The changing table, which was folded inwards, was deemed unsuitable for use at the previous inspection and the registered provider advised that it was currently used for the storage of nappy changing supplies.
3. The second staff sanitary facility, located in the adjoining premises, was unavailable for use. One of the registered providers advised that this sanitary facility had been unavailable for approximately one month, due to a leak in the adjoining building and that repair work was ongoing. However, ten staff members were present on the day of inspection and as one toilet and one wash hand basin are required for every eight adults, there were insufficient sanitary facilities available to cater for the number of adults who worked at the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

1. Another changing unit has been purchased. The new changing unit will cater for the number of children attending in nappies.
2. The nappy changing unit has been removed.
3. The written response submitted stated that the completion of the repair work near the second staff toilet facility, was awaited. During a subsequent phone call with the registered provider, it was confirmed that the repair work had been completed and photographic evidence was forwarded.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

1. A screen shot of the order confirmation for the nappy changing unit.
2. A photograph to demonstrate that the changing table has been removed from the sanitary facility.
3. Photographic evidence to demonstrate that the second staff sanitary facility is now available for use.

### Summary Comment

Based on the statements and evidence submitted by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.