

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC381
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Name of Service:	St. Patrick's Pre-School and Afterschool Care Service
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Address of Service:	St. Patrick's Preschool and Afterschool Care Service, Gardiner's Hill, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 VAD9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Shane Foley
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O Donoghue & D Cotter
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

St. Patrick's Pre-School and Afterschool Care Service is a registered early years sessional service in operation since 2007. The service caters for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years and this includes the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 9am and 12pm. The service operates from a spacious care room with adjoining sanitary accommodations, office and kitchenette on the grounds of a national school.

Staffing

There were four adults attached to the service including the registered provider who is not service based and a student on work placement.

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.

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 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*
- (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 service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.
 - (b) A person in charge and the named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service.
- (2) There were four adults attached to the service; all four staff files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the eight references required, six validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Of the eight references required, two validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required for any of the four adults attached to the service.
- (4) The two 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 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed on the day of inspection:

- Staff training policy
- Supervision of staff policy
- Recruitment policy
- Policy on accidents and incidents
- Policy on managing behaviour
- Policy on administration of medication
- Complaints policy

These policies were noted to hold all the necessary details required to meet regulatory compliance. Through discussion with staff, it was also observed that staff were familiar with and could explain the steps to be followed as outlined in these policies.

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 registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- There were 2 staff working directly with 12 children aged between 3 years 2 months and 3 years and 11 months, all attending sessional care. In addition to this, one student was present on day of inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) The details of administration of medication records were inspected. No medication records were required since the beginning of September. It was discussed with the person in charge, who confirmed no child has needed medication this term.
- (k) The accident and injury records were reviewed from the start of September. Two records were available to review and included all required information.

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:

- Children were provided snacks in the service. This was prepared onsite by staff and children received fruit, cheese, yoghurts and bread. Children were also offered a choice of milk or water at snack time.
- Children had access to their own individual water bottles from home throughout the day.
- Children were supported with toileting by staff when required.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff in the playroom were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking with the children and spoke to them at child level.
- Staff were observed sitting with children during free-play and during mealtimes.
- The children's voice was respected throughout the entirety of the inspection. Staff were observed asking the children what they wanted to play with in the morning, what they wanted to eat for their snack and if they wanted to take pictures of their creations to send home to their parents/guardians.
- The person in charge stated they communicate with parents through a messaging group chat. Daily updates of the children's activities and any notices are sent through this application. Parents were observed communicating with staff on collection and had the opportunity to discuss the child's day with staff.

Physical environment:

- The care room was laid out in distinctive areas including kitchen area, cosy corner and construction area. This allowed the children to freely move about the room.
- There was a wide range of equipment and materials available to the children. Children were observed to choose whichever activity they wanted to play with.
- Sensory play was facilitated through materials including rice and play dough. Children were observed to freely choose to engage with sensory play or opt out and play elsewhere. The children were engaged in the sensory play and staff were observed sitting with the children discussing their creations.

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:

Radiators were covered throughout the service.

There were no flexes within reaching distance of any child.

The main entrance door was alarmed to prevent children leaving unsupervised.

The main entrance was accessed using a buzzer system preventing unauthorised access.

There was an internal door within the care room leading to the school premises. This door was secured throughout the inspection.

Heavy equipment was anchored to prevent it tipping over onto children.

Infection control:

The windows were open during the inspection to allow for natural ventilation.

The bathrooms were fitted with mechanical ventilation systems.

A supply of paper towels, soap and warm running water was available in the wash hand basins. The water was measured at 38.9°C.

Pedal bins were in operation in the bathroom.

Regular handwashing was observed throughout the inspection. This included before meals and after messy play.

Tables were washed down before meals were served.

The kitchenette area of the service was inaccessible to children at all times on the day of inspection.

Administration of medication:

The inspectors did not observe any children receiving medication and staff reported on the day of inspection that they have no children who require emergency medication. Staff were familiar with the procedure to be followed in the case of a child needing medication.

Fire safety:

Fire doors were clear from obstruction and clearly marked.

Push bars at adult height were fitted on fire doors.

Emergency evacuation procedure was displayed prominently.

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) The registered provider ensured that a member of staff with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children at all times.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored out of reach of children and accessible to adults within the care rooms.
 - (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times; in the event they required it.