

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC401
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Name of Service:	Teach na nÓige
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Address of Service:	Castle Heights, Liscarroll, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 TC59
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brian Downes
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second Floor, Estuary House, henry Street, Limerick.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins & S O'Brien
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Teach na nÓige is a full day care service based in Liscarroll in North County Cork. The service also offers part time and sessional services with sessional services only offered during term time.

The service facilitates the early childhood care and education scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

This community service operates between the hours of 7:00am and 6:00 pm Monday to Friday. The service is registered to cater for children aged between six months and six years. The service is also registered for school aged childcare.

The premises consist of five childcare rooms three rooms in the original building and two rooms in the new building. In addition to the five care rooms there are sleep facilities, nappy changing facilities and toilets, kitchen facilities, a staff room, an office and adult toilet facilities.

There are three outdoor play areas on the premises, one for the older preschool children and two for the younger children cared for in the original building.

Staffing

There is a total of 30 staff employed in the service 20 of whom were on site on the day of inspection. Nineteen of these staff were working directly with the children, and one staff member was working in the kitchen. The staff working directly with the children held qualifications from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. The service was facilitating student placements, and four students were currently fulfilling their college placement requirements in the service.

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. 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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued on 22.01.2026 to the person in charge for the concerns regarding two adults working directly with children and did not have a Garda Vetting disclosure. An adequate response was received on the 23.01.2026 providing an adequate response to mitigate the risk identified.

A second immediate action notice was issued to the person in charge on 22.01.2026 for safety regarding the availability of emergency medication in the service. An adequate response was received on the 23.01.2026 providing an adequate response to mitigate the risk identified.

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)

Service had two designated persons in charge. In addition to this there was a named deputy person in charge on the premises and also, one staff member acted as person in charge before the named persons in charge started on the day of inspection. The staff working as person in charge knew their role in the absence of the person in charge.

A person in charge was on the premises at all times during the operation of the service as confirmed by the roster and in discussion with the staff who were on the premises.

There was a clear management structure within the service, each care room had a room leader and childcare staff, each staff member knew their role and their responsibilities within the service.

(2)

Thirty adults work in the service and of these eight adults has commenced in the service since the last inspection. All eight staff files were assessed along with three additional staff files for the staff that were required to have updated Garda vetting disclosures.

Of the 16 references required 10 validated references were available from past employers.

Of the 16 references required 2 validated references were available from sources other than a past employer.

Eight Garda vetting disclosures were required and of these six were available on file. Three renewed Garda vetting disclosures were required and of these two were available on file.

Police vetting was on file for one adult that required same.

(4) Three of the eight new adults working in the service held qualifications at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) One employer reference on file for an adult working in the service had not been validated by the registered provider prior to the adult commencing in the service.

(b) Three references from sources other than a past employer had not been validated prior to the adults commencing in the service.

Not validating references prior to adults commencing work in the service may allow for adults that may not be suitable have access to children.

(c) Eight Garda vetting disclosures were required and of these two were not available on file. An immediate action notice was issued to the person in charge requiring immediate action to be taken to mitigate the risk to the children of staff not being Garda vetted.

This non-compliance was also found on the last inspection of 11/04/2025 and the actions taken to prevent recurrence were not sufficient to prevent recurrence.

Three Garda vetting disclosures required renewal, however, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. This will be reported in Regulation 23.

(d) The requirement for police vetting could not be assessed for two adults as a curriculum vitae were not available or were incomplete.

Not adequately vetting staff prior to them commencing in the service may allow for staff not suitable to work with children have access to them.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) The one employer reference not previously validated has been validated.

(b) The three references from sources other than a past employer have been validated.

(c) Two Garda Vetting disclosures have been obtained.

(d) Two CV's have been obtained and neither adult required international police vetting.

A staff member has been assigned sole responsibility for ensuring all staff files are complete prior to a new staff member commencing in the service. This will ensure all staff inclusive of students are appropriately vetted prior to commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a) One validated reference has been received.

(b) Three references from sources other than a past employer have been received.

(c) Two Garda vetting disclosures have been received.

(d) Two CV's were received and indicate that police vetting was not required for either staff member.

Summary Comment

The immediate action notice in relation to the lack of Garda vetting was issued to the service on inspection and was responded to within 24 hours. The actions taken by the registered provide were suitable to mitigate the risk identified.

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the service have ensured the requirements for this regulation have been met.

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 assessed on the day of inspection:

- The safe sleep policy.
- The administration of medication policy
- the healthy eating policy
- The hand-washing procedures and nappy changing procedures as part of the infection control policy.
- The behaviour management policy
- The complaints policy

All of the above contacted the required information.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate adults working directly with the children to meet their needs.
- (2) All five care rooms were in operation on the day of inspection. The adult child ratios were correct in each of the care rooms as observed throughout the day
 - The Daisy room (baby) accommodated children aged 0 to 1 year. On the day of inspection there was one adult caring for one child attending on full day care basis.
 - The Daffodil room catered for children aged one year and less than two years of age. On the day of inspection there were two adults caring for seven children who were attending on a full day care basis.
 - The Buttercups room catered for children between one and three years. On the day of inspection there were ten children in attendance being cared for by two to three staff. The staff in this care room covered for each other's breaks.
 - The Sunflower room catered for children aged three to four years of age. On the day of inspection during the morning session, fourteen children were in attendance and were cared for by three staff members. An additional member of staff covered break times.
 - The Bluebells room catered for children aged three to four years of age. On the day of inspection during the morning session, seventeen children were in attendance and were cared for by four staff members. An additional member of staff covered break times.
 - In the afternoon, the Sunflower room catered for children from the Bluebell room aged three to four years of age. There were sixteen children being cared for by four staff members.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 12 children records were reviewed across all five care rooms. The records were observed to be complete and contained the relevant information required.

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;*

Compliance Information

(j) Seven medication administration records across two care rooms were reviewed, of these four were completed correctly with all of the required information and signatures available to indicate safe practice in the administration of medication

Non-Compliance Information

- (j) Three of the seven medication administration records reviewed were not completed correctly,
- One record did not have parent signatures requesting the medication to be administered, parents/guardians did not sign for the medication post administration, and the record did not indicate a second staff member had checked the medication.
 - A second record did not have a second staff signature on the record indicating they checked the medication,
 - The third record did not have the date, time of administration or the dose of the medication administered recorded.

This was at variance with the services policy on the administration of medication which indicated safe practices to follow in the administration of medication.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j) Staff have been reminded to ensure all forms are completed correctly to include parent and staff signatures, dates of birth and the full details of the medication being administered. Staff have been informed in writing, and a review will be carried out weekly by a named staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

(j) A copy of the email sent to all staff has been received and the assurances received on the corrective and preventive action form are accepted.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met following the corrective and preventive action process.

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:

- Meals and snacks on the day of inspection were served at appropriate times. Snacks were provided by the parents/guardians and meals were provided by the service. Children had access to their drinks throughout the

day. A staff member sat with the children during meal and snack times as observed in the Daffodil and Buttercups rooms. Snacks served on the day of inspection included fruit, yoghurt, crackers, and drinks of water. Dinner provided by the service was mashed potatoes with beef casserole. The texture of dinner was prepared to suit each child and the younger children having mashed or pureed meals with the older children able to eat the meal as prepared. Adequate food was available should a child indicated they wanted more.

- The children in the Sunflower and Bluebells care room were observed to have a water station available to them with individual cups and bottles. The staff were observed encouraging the children to keep hydrated throughout the day.
- The temperatures of the care rooms were suitable for the comfort of the children. The temperature in the Daisy room was 21.3°C at 11.15am, the temperature in the Daffodils room was 19.7°C recorded at 09.35 and the temperature in the Buttercups room was recorded at 21.5°C at 10.15.
- Children's nappies were changed on a routine basis every three hours and more frequently if required. It was observed that children were spoken to and interacted with during this process. The children who had been toilet trained and required assistance were also supported.
- Sleep was facilitated throughout the day in the Daisy room for the children under one year. Children were put to sleep when they indicated the need for same. Sleep was scheduled after dinner for the children attending the Daffodil and Buttercups rooms, however, should a child require sleep before this time cots and beds were available.
- All children were allowed move about freely and no restriction was placed on them.
- The children in the Buttercups room were appropriately dressed when going outside with waterproof clothing and hats. The children in the Sunflower and Bluebells care rooms were observed having several opportunities to play in the outdoor area. The children were observed putting on wet gear, coats and boots.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed to support each other with the person in charge assisting with busy times such as putting the children aged one to two year to sleep at the same time.
- The staff interacted well with the children, and the children appeared to be comfortable with their carers seeking out their help and their comfort if needed. Staff sat on the floor in the Daisy and Daffodils rooms holding the children as they read books and played.

- Parents/guardians were spoken to at drop off and collection and the service used a care application system where parents/guardians could see the daily updates, received communication and could communicate back with the staff caring for their children.
- It was observed in the Bluebells and Sunflower rooms that children were settling into the care rooms. The staff supported the children with their emotions, and the other children welcomed the new children into the room. The staff were observed communicating with the parents on collection. The service had implemented shorter days for the children also if required to support the children transitioning into the service.

Physical and material environment:

- The room layout in the Baby and Daffodils rooms was well developed.
- The Daffodils room had been set up with new furniture; the space was divided to create areas of interest and to ensure children aged 1-2 years had independent access to the resources.
- The Daisy room was resourced for children who were not as yet able to walk freely, there was soft matting, pull to stand bars and a ball pit. The resources such as sit in activity centres and activity units on the wall were easily accessible and at an appropriate height.

Programme of activities:

- The staff followed a daily routine which supported the development of the children.
- There was a language rich environment noted in the Daffodil room where children sang songs and did actions to the songs being sang, encouraging them to sing along. In the Daisy room stories were being read to the baby and sensory books were used to encourage the participation of the child. In the Buttercups room the staff worked with the children at their height and interacted with them.
- Each of the care rooms encouraged various play activities with sensory books used in the Daisy room, shredded paper used in the Daffodil room and paint and water used in the Buttercups room.
- The children in the Sunflower room were observed reading a story about the Circus and pretended to be in the circus. The children used their knowledge of the circus and recalled information they had learned and from the wall display in the care room.
- The children in the Bluebells care room were observed singing songs and learning about transport during circle time which supported the children with their communication skills and taking turns voicing their opinions.

- The children had access daily to the outdoor play area and the children in the Buttercups room were outside in the morning.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The child attending the Daisy room was placed in a seating bench for their meals. This unit was at a height similar to the height of a highchair and had the child secured with a harness. However, there was no table to the front of the child which would give the child a sense of security. This lack of a table also prevented the child from developing independence when eating and drinking as the food and drinks could not be placed in front of them.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- The bench has been removed and replaced with low chairs that have tables attached where the children's food or activities can be placed.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the new low chairs with tables attached has been received.

Summary Comment

Following replacement of the bench with the low chairs suitable for use by the age range of children attending the requirement for this regulation has been met.

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 internal doors were secured as required with children not having access to areas such as the kitchen the staff room or the laundry areas.
- The external gates were secured. The gate entering the playground at the Buttercups side of the premises was secured with a high running bolt this ensured the children were safe and could not access road. The staff were

outside at all times when the children were in this playground. The electromagnetic lock was not functioning but at no time could a child leave the premises or an unauthorised adult gain access to the children as the care room door was electro-magnetically locked or the outdoor area was supervised at all times.

- The emergency fire exits were clearly identified and were not obstructed.
- The windows were secured appropriately, and no child could gain access to the outdoors.
- The toys and play equipment in the Daisy, Daffodil and Buttercup rooms were free from pinch and crush points that might injure a child.
- There were no electrical cables easily accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The hot water available throughout the service was thermostatically controlled varying from 20.1°C to 33.8°C.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing was observed after nappy changing after messy play and before meals.
- Adequate supplies of liquid hand soap running water and paper towels were available throughout the service.
- The service appeared clean and tables were cleaned down prior to snacks and meals being eaten.
- The cots were placed greater than 50 centimetres apart and each cot was for the sole use of the individual child. Laundry was cleaned weekly or more frequently if required.
- Ventilation was through openable windows, and each care room had windows open.
- Nappy changing practices were within the procedures outlines in the infection control policy with staff wearing gloves and aprons, cleaning changing units after use and washing hands.
- Coats and bags were off the ground and stored on hooks for each care room, thus preventing contamination and cross infection.
- Snacks provided by parents/guardians were refrigerated until snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were checked every 10 minutes while asleep and this check was recorded on the care application where parents had access to the record.
- A staff member remained in the sleep room when the children in the Buttercups room were sleeping as the children were asleep on beds and could move about if they woke.

Fire Safety:

- The fire extinguishers were safely tethered to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An adrenaline auto injector was found to be out of date in the Bluebells care room that was required for a child who was in attendance on the day of inspection. This posed a safety risk to the child in the event of the auto injector being required to be administered in a medical emergency. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the person in charge. On 23 January 2026, the person in charge submitted a response to the inspectorate. The service outlined that the child would not attend the service until an in-date adrenaline autoinjector was available.
2. A staff member was present in the service, and the Garda Vetting had not been renewed within the last three years in accordance with Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. Not ensuring staff have up to date Garda vetting may allow for inappropriate adults have access to children.
3. Two high shelving units in the butter cups room were not secured to the wall and if pulled by a child could potentially fall over and injure a child.
4. In the outdoor area for the Sunflower and Bluebells care rooms, a chalk board on the fence was observed to have sharp edges. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Infection Control:

5. The adult height chair used in the Daffodils room was covered in material and was dirty with food staining evident. This may potentially cause a risk of contamination and cross infection.
6. In the Bluebells care room sanitary area, it was observed that the toilet paper was stored on top of the cistern of the toilet and windowsill. It was observed that one toilet roll dispenser was broken and the other dispenser was empty as the toilet roll did not fit correctly. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children.

Safe Sleep:

7. The sleep room temperature where a child under the age of 1 year was sleeping at 10.55am was recorded as 20.9°C. This is at variance with the safe sleep policy which indicated that children under the age of one year should be sleeping in a sleep room with a temperature of between 16-20°C. The child at the time was covered in a loose cellular blanket and did not appear to be overheated. This non-compliance was also found on the last inspection of 11/04/2025 and the actions taken to prevent recurrence were not sufficient to maintain the safety of the children under one year while sleeping. The sleep room temperature at 2.33pm when a child under one year was sleeping was recorded at 20.1°C indicating the actions taken to reduce the sleep room temperature had worked.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The response from the immediate action notice ensured the safety of the child within the service. The auto injector has been replaced, and a staff member has been named to be responsible for checking of all medication within the service and ensure the medication is in date and ready for use.
2. A process has been developed within the service to ensure all Garda vetting disclosures are renewed every three years. A named staff member has been given responsibility for all staff paperwork.
3. Both shelving units' have been secured, and a maintenance person has been hired to ensure the safety of the premises.
4. The chalk boards have been removed, and a named person has been put in charge of the equipment safety in the service.

Infection Control:

5. The adult chair in the Daffodils room has been removed and replaced with a chair that is easily cleanable.
6. The toilet roll dispenser has been replaced and a named staff member has been given responsibility to ensure all equipment is in working order.

Safe Sleep:

7. Staff have received a memo in writing to ensure the sleep rooms are ventilated at the start of each day and care taken to record the sleep room temperature.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A photograph of the auto-injector and of the expiry date of the auto-injector has been received.
2. A copy of a staff file checklist has been received.
3. Photographs of the brackets ensuring the high shelving is secured to the walls has been received.
4. Photographs of the chalk boards removed has been received.

Infection Control:

5. The commitment received on the corrective and preventive action form to replace the material chairs in the care rooms used to care for the younger children to chairs that area easily cleanable is accepted.
6. A photograph of the new toilet roll dispenser has been received.

Safe Sleep:

- The memo sent to staff regarding ventilation of rooms in the morning has been received. Photographic evidence of the receipt for the thermometers purchased to record sleep room temperatures has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met following the actions as identified in the corrective and preventive action submission.

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.

Compliance Information

- Ten staff had up to date training in First Aid Responder (FAR). In addition to this, three staff had up to date paediatric first aid training. This ensured that staff with first aid training were available to the children in the event assistance was required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 01 September 2025 and expires on 31 August 2026.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The services complaints policy outlined the procedure that would be followed in the event of a person making a complaint.
 - (b) It outlined the manner in which it would be dealt with.
 - (c) It outlined the procedures that are in place in keeping the complainant informed in how the complaint is being dealt with.
- (4) The services policy outlined that the record in writing would be retained for a period of two years from the date the complaint was dealt with.