

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC434
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Name of Service:	Tir na nOg Ballydesmond
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Address of Service:	Ballydesmond, Mallow, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 K228
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Kelly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Tir na nOg Ballydesmond is an early years care and education service which offers a choice of full day care, part-time and sessional services. A school age service is offered also. It is a community-based service in operation since 2003 and children attending are aged from 0-6 years of age. Opening hours are from 7:30 to 18:30, Monday to Friday, 50 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme is facilitated between the hours of 9:00 until 12:00, 38 weeks of the year. A breakfast club is open from 7:30 until 9:30 and an afternoon club is available from 14:00 to 18:30. The service is a purpose built two storey building located in the rural area of Ballydesmond in north Cork. There are four care rooms namely, Baby room with two dedicated sleep rooms, Toddler, Junior and Senior pre-school rooms and are all located on the ground floor, along with a kitchen and children and adult sanitary facilities.

Staffing

There are 16 staff currently employed in the service including a staff member on the community employment scheme and a cook. The registered provider is not service based.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, person in charge and staff 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 a named person who is able to deputise in the service.

(b) The designated person in charge and the named deputy were on the premises for the duration of the inspection and were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. This was outlined clearly on the staff roster that was available and reviewed.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Of the 16 staff members, all files were available for review.

(a) Of the 32 required references, 17 were from previous employers with the required record of validation on file.

(b) Of the 32 required references, 15 were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and on file for each of the 16 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulator Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required for 6 of the 16 staff as they had lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months and this was available on file.

(4) Records demonstrated that 14 staff that work directly with the children had achieved a major award Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 8 as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.

(2) The adult to child ratio was observed to meet the minimum requirements, and above in some care rooms over the duration of the inspection. The ratio was as follows:

- The Baby room had one child being cared for by one staff member in the morning and two children being cared for by one staff member in the afternoon.
- The Toddler room had 11 children being cared for by 2 staff members in the morning and 10 children being cared for by two staff members in the afternoon.
- The Junior pre-school room had 16 children being cared for by two staff members in the morning and 7 children being cared for by one staff member in the afternoon.
- The Senior pre-school room had 14 children being cared for by 2 staff members in the morning and 5 children being cared for by 2 staff members in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the roster.

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- The layout of the care rooms supported the children to move freely within their environments and to engage in their chosen tasks. Children in the baby room were observed to move freely in a safe space.
- Breakfast and dinner were prepared on the premises by the cook and snacks were provided by the parents. A menu was displayed on the wall. The food observed was healthy and nutritious. Examples of food served for dinner was spaghetti bolognese and carrots and snacks were yogurts, cheese, rice cakes, fruit and sandwiches.
- Drinking water was readily available throughout the care rooms.
- Spare clothes were available for the children if needed.
- Appropriate seating was available in the form of low-level tables and chairs.
- Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and were seen accessing the sanitary facilities independently with the supervision of the staff.
- The individual sleep needs of the younger child were met, and this was observed on the day of inspection when a child's need to sleep was facilitated in the designated sleep room in the Baby room. Older children in the Toddler room had a rest in the middle of the day on floor beds or stackable beds.
- Children who woke early were given quiet activities to do in the care room. A quiet space with a rest area was incorporated into all the care rooms.
- Outdoor play was promoted and observed at the time of inspection with staff observing and assisting children during play. The inspector observed children playing on climbing frames, slides, with sand and water tables and on bikes.
- Children dressed appropriately wearing sun hats outdoors.
- Regular nappy changes were observed in both the baby and toddler changing area, adults were noted to interact sensitively with the children at this time.

- In conversation, staff stated that the service communicated with parents and guardians by a digital application or at face to face at drop off or collection.

Supporting relationships:

- During mealtimes, the staff remained with the children to assist as required. The children were given adequate time to enjoy their food, and the staff were observed chatting with the children during mealtimes.
- Younger children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and children's independence was encouraged.
- Staff members were observed to be warm and caring in their interactions with the children. For example, staff were observed comforting a child in the Baby room who was upset by speaking to them in a gentle tone while offering reassurance.
- Staff were observed encouraging positive behaviour. This was observed when staff encouraged children to take turns when children were spraying the pretend fire and cycling bikes outdoors.
- Staff in the Baby room and Toddler room were seen to sit at floor level with the children and interact in play which supported positive relationships with the children and language development.
- Staff encouraged communication and language development through discussing topics of interest with children and staff welcomed children to expand on their discussions. This was observed in all care rooms.
- On the day of inspection, siblings from different care rooms were seen to be able to interact with each other indoors and outdoors and family photos were displayed on the walls indoors. This promoted a sense of belonging.
- Staff sat with children outdoors, interacting in play through reading to them, playing with the water table and play kitchen and blowing bubbles.

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 entrance door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with railings. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The equipment used in the outdoor area was in good condition and was able to be stored inside when not in use.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.
- There was no cables or trailing flexes accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- The temperature of the hot water was within the appropriate range throughout the care rooms and sanitary accommodations. It was recorded between 36.5°C and 40.8°C.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the sanitary area and the care rooms.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in each room for the storage of perishable foods.
- The children's nappies, wipes and barrier creams were maintained in clearly labelled storage areas.

Administration of medication:

- The inspector did not observe the administration of medication on the day of inspection. Staff informed the inspector that consent for administration of temperature reducing medication had been obtained on the

enrolment form and two staff signed for this after parental consent was gained on the digital application. This was observed on the digital application for one child from the previous day.

- Temperature reducing medicine was stored out of reach and in its original box. All medication bottles checked were in date.
- Two children were on emergency medicine and an emergency plan for each child was in each care room. Staff informed the inspector that they were trained in the administration of this medicine.

Safe sleep:

- The air temperature of the two designated sleep rooms were recorded between 20.7°C and 21°C. One child was sleeping in sleep room 2 at the time. The air temperature of the toddler room was recorded at 21.8°C while the children were sleeping. The room temperatures were maintained at the required temperature of between 18°C and 22°C for children above 12 months.
- Staff remained with the children who were sleeping on floor beds and stackable beds.
- Staff were noted to maintain sleep records in relation to children's, colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals. The inspector reviewed 16 sleep records, and these were recorded to be carried out correctly.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The inspector observed that all children had been checked in and out on a digital application in each care room on the day of inspection. Previous days recorded also displayed this.

(3)
(b) Visitors records were kept in writing of any person entering the premises and the inspector was asked to sign in and out of the premises.

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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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) The inspector was provided with a list of monthly fire drills which were recorded in writing. The most recent fire drill was dated 14 April 2025.
- (b) The certificate of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated that it was carried out on the 17 September 2024 and the certificate of testing the smoke alarms was dated the 3 April 2025.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm certificates were available to review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the wall of the care rooms and the office.