

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE130
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stepping Stones Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Stonehall National School, Newmarket on Fergus, Co. Clare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 EY06
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rachel Mulcahy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/09/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla, Ennis Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Ní Nialláin
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This is a privately operated sessional service catering for pre-school children. The service is open from 09:00hrs-12:00hrs Monday to Fridays.

This service operates in a prefabricated structure on the grounds of Stonehall Primary School in Newmarket on Fergus, Co Clare. One room is available to the children and it can accommodate up to 22 children on a sessional basis at any one time. The children have the use of three outdoor play areas which are located within close proximity to the premises; an enclosed astro turf play area, the school field, and an enclosed sheltered play area.

### Staffing

The registered provider operates the sessional service assisted by one adult who were both present on the day when the inspection was carried out

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15, 19, 25,26, and 28.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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) On the day of the inspection, the registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present on the premises. The staff roster indicated that the designated person and her deputy were always available in the service.
- (2)(a) Three references from past employers were available for two staff members and one emergency relief person.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, three references from a source other than past employers were available.
- (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for three adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult had lived outside the state for a period greater than six months.
- (4) The two adults working directly with children in the service held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of Inspection there were two adults working with fifteen pre-school children. The adult/child ratio in the service was correct.
- (3) The staff roster showed that the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.
- (8)(c) Not applicable as the service was not operated single-handedly, two adults were available in the service

### 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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) Seventeen children's records out of seventeen were inspected. The service maintained an adequate record for each child attending the service, in accordance with Regulation 15(1) (a) to (i).
- (3)(a) Parents/guardians had access to all information and written records relating to their own child.
- (b) Records were available to the authorised person in the service.
- (c) Records were open and available for inspection to the Tusla Early Years Inspector.

### 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

- The parents provided the snack food and drink for their child. The service encouraged parents to choose healthy options . On the day, children's snacks observed consisted of filled sandwiches and rolls with yogurts, cheese, raw vegetables and fresh fruits. Drinking water was available to the children at all times. The adults sat with the children during snack time and it was observed to be an enjoyable social event.
- Children could access the toilet at any time during the session. Staff supervised children's hand washing and provided assistance when needed.
- Good personal hygiene practices were observed. Children washed their hands before snack break and after toileting.
- Children had opportunities to move about freely in the playroom during their free playtime. Outdoor play was not an option due to storm conditions and the presence of a weather alert.
- The adults were positive and consistent in their approach to managing children's behaviour.

##### PHYSICAL & MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

- There was one playroom in use at the time of inspection. The indoor environment was comfortable, bright, welcoming and safe and provided a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences for the children. Materials included a home corner with kitchen units and accessories, a shop area, a library and reading area, a construction area, dolls with accessories, arts and crafts materials, jigsaws, various blocks, and sand play.
- An easel for painting activities was available and floor play with animals, a toy garage and small world items was observed. Train sets with accessories, matching, sorting and threading items and musical instruments were also available.

- Children’s artwork was displayed in the service. Paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open ended art materials were available.
- Three play areas with a variety of ground surfaces was provided outdoors. An enclosed play area with an astro turf surface, an enclosed sheltered messy play area and the school field. The equipment available outdoors included a mud kitchen, tyres, a digging and planted area, stones, sand play, slides, a climbing frame, chimes, rockers, a sea saw and an opportunity for free running space in the field.

### 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) One adult held a valid First Aid Responder certificate which were valid to the February 2024.

(2)(a) There was a fully equipped first aid box stored in a designated first aid storage area which was easily accessible.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children always attending the pre-school service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

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

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records are available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed in September 2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The insurance certificate for the service was available and was valid to 27<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The required cover was available for a maximum of 22 pre-school children who could attend at any one time.