

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL132
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	St. Gabriel's Pre-school
-------------------------	--------------------------

Address of Service:	Convent Rd, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal,
----------------------------	---------------------------------------

Eircode:	F92 EP20
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan McLaughlin
-------------------------------------	--------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	13/03/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	-
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

St. Gabriel's Pre-School is a not for profit service located within a residential area in the large town of Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. The service provides a sessional pre-school service to children aged two to six years. The morning session operates from 9.00am to 12.00pm and the afternoon session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. The service operates from a single pre-school room with an adjacent kitchen and sanitary accommodation. A spacious outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises which had been sub-divided into different areas, including areas used for gardening, gross-motor play, and general pre-school learning and play activities.

Staffing

There are six adults employed in the service, five of whom were present in the service on the day of inspection and working directly with the children. One of the staff members is employed on an employment support programme. The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis. There is a named person in charge and a named deputy in the event of their absence.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes 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) There was a named person in charge of the daily operation of the service who was present on the day of inspection. There was a named person to deputy in the event of their absence.
- (b) The person in charge or the named deputy was rostered to be on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.
- (c) The service was governed by a board of management with a clear line of authority. Staff working in the service showed awareness through discussion with the inspector of the management structure in the service and their role.
- (2) The inspector was informed by the person in charge that that there were six staff members employed to work in the service. A review of records demonstrated that the vetting documentation for four of the staff had been reviewed during previous inspection and were found to be compliant under this regulation. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the two staff members new to the service since the last focused inspection of the 2 June 2021.
- (a) (b) There were two references on file from a past employer for two staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) Relevant documentation evidencing a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications framework was furnished for the one new staff member who required it.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The minimum adult/child ratio was maintained at all times throughout the period of the inspection. During the morning session there were four staff members caring for 15 children all of whom were aged over 3 years.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (2) A registered provider-*
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or*
- (b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,*

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) There was one large playroom available in the service for use by children attending. This room presented as a bright and visually appealing space and was resourced with a range of play materials and equipment laid out in defined interest areas to facilitate meaningful play activities. Interest areas included a reading/cosy corner, dress up area, construction materials, kitchen/home area and a space for painting and art. Child height shelving and storage units contained a range of resources to support children's cognitive development and fine motor skills such as jigsaws, puzzles, connectors, blocks and peg boards. There was also a range of musical instruments, small world items and animals readily available on low level open shelving units. Low level tables and chairs were available to both support children's play and provide appropriate seating for mealtimes. The artwork in each of the areas evidenced children's interaction with the play materials and resources and children were observed actively engaging with the range of equipment available.
- (b) There were adequate rest facilities available. A soft couch, armchairs and floor cushions were available in the cosy corner for children to rest or relax during the session.
- (2) (a) (b) The outdoor play area adjacent to the building was framed with wooden fencing and was subdivided into three distinct areas. The first area featured a winding paved pathway leading to a variety of smaller sections including gravel, mud, woodchip/mulch, grassed areas that encouraged a variety of types of play. Some of the outdoor resources included a sandpit, a mud-kitchen, a construction area, a climbing area with a tunnel underneath, a sensory wall, a large wooden play boat and a brightly-painted wooden wagon which could be accessed by the children for imaginative role play. There was a sheltered area which had been roofed with light permeable sheeting and contained picnic benches and low-level tables and chairs to facilitate mealtimes, tabletop activities and other tasks. Cut logs provided seating in an elevated section with a number of 'friendship benches' providing a space for small group or circle time. A second area to the rear of the premises consisted of a large, sloped grass area for ball play and team games. A third area was overgrown and known as the 'wilderness garden'. The inspector was informed that this area was used for planting vegetables and flowers in the spring.

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 main entrance into the premises was safely secured preventing children exiting unsupervised or persons gaining unauthorised entry. The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with wooden fencing which incorporated gates with closing mechanisms.
- Window blind cords were secured.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children and stored hazardous items that presented a safety risk to children including cleaning materials and products.
- All toys and play resources available on the day of inspection were noted to be clean, in good repair and appropriate for the age range of children proposed to attend the service.

Infection Control:

- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the pre-school room and sanitary facilities. The service's central waste storage facilities were out of reach of children.
- A refrigerator was available to facilitate the safe storage of perishable food items brought from home and a sink was available in the room to support staff to engage in effective hygiene practices.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the service's sanitary accommodation.
- Templates for recording daily cleaning activities were available and displayed in the premises to help ensure that regular cleaning was carried out and documented. Records were noted to be maintained up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a policy on the safe administration of medication which required parental consent prior to medication being administered to children. This was evidenced by the consent form on the enrolment form provided to the inspector.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency evacuation route from the pre-school room was identified by illuminated emergency exit signage. All designated emergency exits were observed to be clear and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for six staff members. However, one of the 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'.

Infection Control:

2. There was no cover on the large sand pit in the outdoor area. Sandpits should be covered to prevent contamination and as a means of providing an effective infection control measure.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Renewed vetting has been applied for. Garda vetting for all staff members will be renewed before the three year expiry date going forward.

Infection Control:

2. The cover has been replaced. The cover was damaged and we were awaiting a replacement. We will ensure there is no waiting time on replacement in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) There was documentary evidence to demonstrate that three staff members had completed appropriate training in first aid for children, at least one of which was rostered to be on the premises at all times.
- (2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position in the room. This was easily accessible to the staff should a child who they were caring for in the service require first aid treatment.

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.
- (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) There was a mechanism in place for the regular recording of fire drills. The last recorded fire drill was dated 28 February 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system was maintained. The most recent maintenance record for firefighting equipment was dated May 2023 and for smoke alarms was dated November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation was displayed the exit point of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available detailing adequate cover for 22 children attending the service on a sessional basis with an expiry date in March 2025.