

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DL138

Name of Service: Glen Outdoor

Address of Service: Barrack, Newmills, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Eircode: F92 YR68

Name of Registered Provider: Orla McDaid

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 03/02/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	24
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello N Toner
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	Not Applicable.
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Description of service

Glen outdoor school is a privately owned and operated full day care service. It is located in the rural townland of Glenswilly on the outskirts of Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. The service operates an outdoor based curriculum model for children aged 0-6 years. The service operates from 7.50am to 5.30pm. The service is also registered to provide school age care.

The premises consists of a purpose adapted dormer building. There is one indoor playroom, a kitchen, dining room and two sleep rooms. There is also a sanitary room and laundry facilities. The service also has a smaller building with two indoor rooms. The service operates predominantly from a spacious outdoor area which surrounds the building on three sides. The building contains a range of sheltered areas including two polytunnels, a large wooden Tepee and wooden playhouse.

Staffing

There were 10 staff members employed to work in the service which includes the registered provider. One adult worked in the kitchen. Three adults employed were on leave on the day of inspection. One student was in the service on an educational placement. There were five staff on the day of inspection along with registered provider providing direct care to the children.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16 (i), 17, 18, 21, 23, 24 and 27. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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. 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 registered provider, 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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as required.

(b)

On the day of inspection, the person in charge was on site for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was 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)

On the day of the inspection, the person in charge confirmed that there were 10 staff members who worked in the service and one student. Two of these staff members had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection. A review of vetting documentation for eight of the staff had been reviewed during previous inspection and were found to be compliant under this regulation. Recruitment files in respect of the two newly recruited staff members and one student were reviewed, and the following information was available:

(a)

Three references from past employers, in particular the most recent past employer was on file for the two staff members.

(b)

One reference from another source in the absence of a past employer was on file for one staff member.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all ten staff members and one student. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required for the two new staff members and student as they had not resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4)

Documentary evidence was presented to demonstrate that two new staff members had obtained a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

Four references in respect of one staff member and one student had not been validated by the registered provider prior to the adults working directly with the preschool children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

References were immediately obtained and validated all outstanding references for the adults identified in the report. Reference checks were reviewed to ensure they were satisfactory and appropriately documented.

Confirmation has been placed on each personnel file to verify that references have now been checked and validated in line with regulatory requirements.

The manager will review and sign off on personnel files prior to start dates.

Personnel files will be audited quarterly to ensure ongoing compliance with regulatory requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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)

On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2)

The minimum adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed in the service on this day:

- Wobbler room: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Toddler room: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Preschool room: 2 Adults cared for 21 children from ages 3 to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon the adult child ratios were as follows:

- Wobblers and Toddlers 4 adults cared for 13 children aged from 1 to 3 years of age.
- Preschool: 2 adults cared for 14 children aged 3 years to 5 years of age.

(8) (a)

A review of the staff ratio demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that two adults were always present on the premises.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(i)

The registered provider maintained a staff roster for the service and evidenced same to the inspector on the day

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated that parents had been provided with the required information set out in Regulation 16 (1) (a-g). This included the type of service available, staffing details and qualifications. Also, the policy and procedures of the service. There was evidence of this information in information packs and updated information was displayed on the service notice boards.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(c)
A copy of the act was made available to the authorised person.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a variety of equipment and materials which were adequate and suitable for the children attending. This included push bikes, sit on toy tractors and plastic toys which promoted balance and coordination. There was also a slide, swings, and a gazebo. Preschool children were seen to be enjoying the range of equipment supplied to them and took part in different activities throughout the morning in the service.

The service had a variety of sheltered areas including two polytunnels. One of the polytunnels could be used for arts and crafts and contained materials such as paints, paintbrushes and art. The second polytunnel contained a large sand play area with toys including toy trucks and sit on play diggers. The service had a large wooden Teepee and inside was a circular seated area for the preschool children. There is a wooden shed with a stage area for the children to use for performances. A second small wooden shed was decorated for sensory play which included twinkling lights and toys to develop sensory development.

In the wobbler room there was a variety of equipment to encourage play through learning. This included a library for language development skills. There was a play kitchen area, and a dress up area with different costumes and

uniforms to promote role play and imagination. The room included an area for art to promote mark making and creativity. There was also a variety of toys such as dolls, teddys and small playhouses.

Child sized tables and chairs suitable for the age of the children was available for the numbers attending the service.

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 to the premises including the play area was secured to prevent preschool children from exiting the service.
- All internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- Cleaning products were securely stored to be inaccessible to the preschool children
- The kitchen which contained cooking facilities and hazardous items was not accessible to the children.
- Gates leading to unsecured, hazardous areas were secured.

Infection Control:

- In the sleep rooms all ten cot mattresses had the waterproof protection coverings.
- Children demonstrated good hand hygiene practices after using the toilet.
- Staff cleaned tables before and during the meals in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The service had a two designated sleep room with a total of ten standard cots and three foldable beds.
- The ten cots were equipped with the appropriate safety mattresses and waterproof covers
- Cellular blankets were provided the younger preschool children, while older children were provided with fleece blankets.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation plans were displayed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area, a tyre swing was identified to be a hazard as a safety rope had become loose, forming a loop which could pose a risk to a child. This was brought to the attention of the registered provider who rectified the issue immediately.
2. The windows on the ground floor of the service had no restrictors in place posing a risk of safety to the preschool children.
3. In the toddler sleep room, a nail had become loose from a fixture and was protruding from the wall. A cot was placed beside this wall which could potentially be accessed by the toddler. This was brought to the attention of the registered provider who ensured this cot was not in use until the matter was rectified.
4. A child was placed in a highchair which had no safety harness in place, posing a risk of safety to the preschool child.
5. Shaving foam was stored in the care room. Shaving foam is not permitted in early years services as it could be ingested by children. It is acknowledged that the registered provider stated it was in use for arts and crafts.

Infection Control:

6. The nappy bin did not have the required working foot pedal, which resulted in the adults using their hands to dispose of nappies resulting in a risk of cross infection.
7. Water temperatures were recorded at 12.9°C which is below the recommended temperature for effective hand hygiene, posing a risk of infection. This non-compliance was identified on the previous inspection on the 20 April 2025 where measures taken by the registered provider failed to prevent a reoccurrence.
8. Soft furnishings in the outdoor shelters were worn and visibly dirty, posing an infection control risk.

Safe Sleep:

- Four cots in a sleep room where not the recommended 50cms apart. This could lead to infection and control risks for the preschool children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In a written response the registered provider stated:

- The registered provider immediately secured and adjusted the safety rope on the tyre swing to remove the loop and eliminate the potential hazard. Visual safety checks will be completed daily.
- Window restrictors have been installed on the ground floor windows.
- Nail has been removed and the wire secured.
- The highchair without a harness was immediately removed from use. New highchairs, each fitted with fully functional safety harnesses, were purchased and put into use for all children. Safety checks have been introduced. Staff have been reminded that all children must be secured in highchairs using the provided harness at all times. Daily equipment checks have been introduced to verify that all highchairs remain in safe working order. Any damaged or incomplete highchair will be removed immediately and reported to management for replacement.
- Shaving foam removed. A policy review has been completed to ensure all art and craft materials are safe, non-toxic, and suitable for young children. Staff have been reminded not to use any materials that could pose a risk of ingestion or harm

Infection Control:

- Bins have been replaced with pedal foot operated bins.
- The boiler has been fixed.
- Soft furnishings have been removed.

Safe Sleep:

- One cot has been removed from the room and remaining cots have been placed 50cm apart. This will be monitored.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence submitted.

2. Photographic evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted
4. Photographic evidence submitted, check list submitted.
5. Photographic evidence submitted, policy submitted.

Infection Control:

6. Photographic evidence submitted.
7. Documentary evidence submitted.
8. Photographic evidence submitted.

Safe Sleep:

9. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted on CAPA one and CAPA two have been accepted. This regulation is now complaint and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

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

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The registered provider has a system in place for checking children in and out of the service via a tablet device. The registered provider was able to inform the inspector on the day the numbers of children present. The service had a system of printing the records of children attending the service on monthly basis.
- (3)
(a) No unauthorised person can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee as demonstrated on the inspector's arrival at the service. The person in charge approved access to the inspectors at the entrance to the service and requested inspectors to sign into the visitors' book on their arrival.

(b) The registered provider demonstrated that a record is kept of all visitors to the service.
- (4) The registered provider is aware that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Staff in the service supervised children both by sight and sound. Staff were continually moving around to different areas of the service to position themselves to monitor the preschool children.
Staff stayed within hearing range of children, while children used the toilet independently and could offer help if required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The service was not adequately heated as follows:

- The temperature in the dining room was recorded to be 13.4°C at approximately 12 midday. This is below the recommended room temperature of 18°C to 22°C. Some staff and preschool children were wearing hats and coats in the dining room during morning snack and again at lunch time.
- The room temperature the sleep room was below the recommended guidance of 18°C to 22°C. The temperature in the sleep room at 11:23am was recorded as 12.8°C.

(d) The wooden teepee in the outdoor area was not maintained or cleaned appropriately. The internal wall linings showed signs of wear and tear and some parts were ripped. The teepee was visibly dirty and had a build-up of green algae both inside and outside. There was a build-up of dust and cobwebs on the ceiling on the teepee.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(c)

Temporary heating measures were put in place immediately, including portable heaters where safe and appropriate, to ensure staff and children remained warm.

The central heating system and boiler are being fully inspected and repaired to ensure consistent heating throughout the service. Heck lists have been out in place to ensure the morning staff checks the system.

The central heating system and all radiators will continue to be regularly serviced and maintained to prevent recurrence of heating issues.

(d)

The entire teepee was power-washed to remove algae, dirt, dust, and cobwebs.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Documentary evidence from maintenance person.
- Check list submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider in the CAPA one and CAPA two process adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.