

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR089			
Name of Service:	Willow House Childcare Newtownpark			
Address of Service:	Shaldon, Newtown Park Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	A94 WY28			
Name of Registered Provider:	Yvonne Tierney			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date of Inspection:	29/09/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	23
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.			
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley and Fiona Carty			
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			

Description of service

Willow House Childcare Newtownpark is a privately owned service located in a residential area of Blackrock, South County Dublin. The service provides full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 1-6 years and offers an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme and operates from 07:30 to 18:00 each weekday. The service operates from a two storey purposely adapted residential property. Care is provided across three rooms on the ground floor and a designated sleep room is available. On the day of inspection, two care rooms were open. The third care room was undergoing renovations. A large outdoor play area is located to the rear of the property with artificial grass and natural bark surfacing. The first floor of the premises is utilised as an office space.

Staffing

The service currently employs 7 staff members, not including the registered provider who does not work directly in the service. On the day of inspection 7 staff members were present, including one adult providing relief cover who stated they are based in another service operated by the registered provider.

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/ Information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 18, 19, 24, and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child.

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 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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

(2) Documentation was assessed under Regulation 9 for all 7 adults currently employed to work in the service and 1 adult providing relief cover. The following records were available for the 8 adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for the 8 adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau for the 8 adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for 5 of the 8 adults who required it and had all lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures outlined above under Regulation 9(2) had been carried out prior to the adults commencing employment in the service.

(4) There was evidence that 7 of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

International police vetting was not available for 3 of the adults who required it.

(4)

The was no evidence available to show that 1 of the adults, who worked directly with the children during the inspection, had attained at least a full major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

International Police vetting has been secured for 2 of the staff that lived abroad on the 23/10/23. Regards to the other staff that has lived in the UK for 7 months he has applied for the police vetting so it should be secured by the 17/11/23. Management will endeavour to work in conjunction with all employees who commence employment within the service, regarding international police vetting and all required documentation.

(4)

The support staff who is currently studying Early Childhood Care and Education and who was present at the day of the inspection will no longer work directly with children until they have fully completed Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education. The service will ensure that all support staff/ cover staff will be fully qualified.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

Although it is acknowledged that the service has commenced the process of obtaining the necessary documents, international police vetting has not yet been obtained for one adult working in the service. The regulatory requirement has not been met.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 23 children present in the service being supervised by 6 adults during the inspection. The designated person in charge provided relief cover as required.

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 10 records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspectors to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the 10 records detailed the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1).

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(a)(b)(c)

A copy of 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 were available on the premises and accessible in a conspicuous location in the reception area of the service.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

The routine and play experiences in the service were observed to be mostly child-led, and children were visibly content and engaged in their play activities with peers and staff members throughout the inspection. The children were all afforded the opportunity to play outdoors, and staff dressed children appropriate to the weather. Praise and encouragement were offered consistently towards the children. Staff were observed using positive reinforcement when resolving minor conflicts and encouraging children to use their words, take turns, and problem solve. Children were comforted promptly when upset and staff demonstrated kindness during all interactions observed by the inspector and provided warm individual engagement when assisting children with personal care. Older children used the toilet independently as needed and younger children's nappies were changed regularly and when required.

Staff reported that morning snacks and a hot meal are provided by the service daily and afternoon snacks are provided by the parents or guardians of the children in attendance. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and sociable. Staff sat with the children and engaged in conversation. Children were all encouraged to eat independently, and younger children were provided with bibs to protect their clothing. Drinking water was accessible to the children in each care room throughout the inspection and drinks were offered regularly to the children. Staff assisted children in cleaning their hands and faces after meals. Children in the Little Giggles room were provided with the opportunity to sleep. The room was calm during sleep time, and staff provided reassurance to children as needed sitting next to them and speaking in gentle tones. Areas were provided in each care room where children could rest if required.

Staff encouraged the children to be independent in their environment by allocating tasks including cleaning up following meals and play and dressing for outdoor play.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance gate to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Staff stated an infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. A system was in place for the effective sterilisation of soothers which were appropriately stored between use in a sterilising container.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors. Documentation was available to record such administration if required, a sample of this documentation was reviewed by the inspectors and was appropriate.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance. Sleep logs were maintained in the Little Giggles room and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour and position every ten minutes. Standard low-level beds were provided for children over two years to rest as required.

A designated cot room was available in the service but was not in use on the day of inspection. The temperature of the Little Giggles room was maintained within the required temperature range of 18 - 22°Celsius.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Some practices were observed in the service were at variance with the infection control policies in place and posed a potential risk of cross contamination as follows:

1. Staff members and children's hands were not consistently washed following nappy changing.
2. In the Little Giggles room, sheets and blankets used daily by the children at sleep time were stored together in a large box and not individually to avoid cross contamination. Staff reported that sheets and blankets are laundered weekly and stored together in the box daily after use.
3. There was no warm water available in the Little Giggles nappy changing room which was in use by staff and children during the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All staff members were retrained on the nappy changing procedure & handwashing policy and procedure. The management team will do regular checks to ensure that staff are following the correct nappy changing and handwashing procedure at all times.
2. Individual bags for the bed sheets for each child were ordered, delivery should arrive by November 2023. All bed sheets and blankets will be stored separately in labelled bags. Labelled Bags for bedsheets and blankets will be in use all the time.
3. Water heaters will be replaced in both changing rooms. Water temperature in changing rooms will be checked regular to make sure it is at an appropriate temperature.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. That practices outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
A record in writing was available in the service to evidence that each preschool child in attendance had been checked in and out of the service by a staff member.
- (3)(a)
A system was in place in the service on the day of inspection to ensure that no persons other than those detailed above under Regulation 24 (3)(a)(i) to (iv) above could enter without prior approval. The entrance gate to the service was secured with a camera operated lock mechanism whereby any persons entering had to be buzzed in by a staff member.
- (b)
A record was maintained in writing in the service of any person other than those detailed above under Regulation 24 (3)(a)(i) to (iv) who entered the 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 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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service.
 - (b) There was record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system had taken place as required.
- (4)
- The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.