

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR137
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Name of Service:	The Apres School Club Ltd
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Address of Service:	Cluny Grounds, Ballinclea Road, Killiney, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A96 VFW0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Sweeney
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Early O'Brien & H. Bourke.
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).

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Description of service

The Apres School Club is located in a coastal suburb on the south side of Dublin. The service is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service operates from three rooms in a former school. There are two rooms on the ground floor and one room on the first floor. An outdoor area is located at the rear of the building. The service opens from 8:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme is provided from 9am to 12pm.

Staffing

There are 14 staff employed to work in the service. This includes the registered provider, one chef, a kitchen assistant and receptionist. On the day of inspection, there were 9 adults working directly with 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, health, welfare and development of child, safety and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8) - Staffing levels,

Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service,

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Regulation 19(1)(a)(b) - Health, welfare and development of child,
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 24 – Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance,
Regulation 25 – First Aid,
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(1)– Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service.

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, 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,*

(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

(1)

(a) The centre manager is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The centre manager was present and in charge of the service and present in the service throughout the inspection.

(2)

Upon review of the staff roster and staff files, it was identified that there were five new staff members employed to work in the service since the last inspection on 16 June 2026.

All staff files were reviewed in relation to regulation 9(2)(c).

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Documentation was reviewed in respect of five adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) Of the 10 validated, written references that were required, six were available from a past employer.
- (b) Of the 10 validated, written references that were required, three were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for 14 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available for two staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

There was documentary evidence available to demonstrate that all staff members employed to work directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b) On the day of inspection, a second reference for one adult was unavailable. Two references for one adult had not been suitably validated.

(d) Police vetting was unavailable for one member of staff who had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3)

The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees were suitable to work in an early years' service prior to their commencement date as outlined below:

- The registered provider did not ensure that Garda vetting disclosures were received for two staff members prior to their start date of employment. One staff member commenced employment on 01 September 2025 with the Garda vetting disclosure dated 11 September 2025. The second staff member commenced employment on the 02 September 2025 with the Garda vetting disclosure dated 10 September 2025. This was non-compliant on the last inspection on 16 June 2025 and the corrective and preventive action submitted by the registered provider failed to prevent the non-compliance from re-occurring
- It is acknowledged that four past employer references were available in respect of two adults, however, these references had been validated by the registered provider after both adults commenced employment in the service. One staff member commenced employment in the service on 01 September

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2025 and the references were validated on 04 September 2025. The second adult commenced employment on the 02 September 2025 and the references were validated on 04 September 2025. This was non-compliant on the last inspection on 16 June 2025 and the corrective and preventive action submitted by the registered provider failed to prevent the non-compliance from re-occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

A second reference has been received and validated and placed on the staff member's file. Confirmation of validation of two references for one staff member has been documented on file.

(d) Police vetting for one staff member is being actively sought and will be forwarded to the inspector once the service receives this from the adults previous employer

To prevent a recurrence of non-compliance in the future, all new team members files will be completed before their commencement date. A new onboarding system is in place to ensure all documentation is obtained before a start date is issued and said team member is permitted on the premises.

(3)

Garda vetting and references will be obtained before new team members begin working for the service as part of the new onboarding system. To ensure this non-compliance does not reoccur, all documentation related to new team members will be obtained before their contracted start date. A new onboarding system is in place to ensure that person(s) involved in the recruitment process follow each step to ensure any new team member has been onboarded correctly and all documentation is in order before commencement of work

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of required and validated second reference.

Evidence of validation of two references for one staff member.

A copy of the services new staff files checklist to be used as part of onboarding process.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full-time, part-time and sessional care was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the morning of inspection there were nine adults working directly with 43 children attending the service and three adults working directly with 15 children on the afternoon of inspection.

8(a)

There was a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection evidenced in the staff roster available on the day of inspection.

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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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Children's attendance was recorded in a hardcopy book with the arrival and departure times of each child recorded daily.
- (i) A staff roster was available with details of daily sign in and sign out times for each adult and represented the names of all staff working in the service on the day of inspection.
- (j) A sample of nine records of administration of medication to a child were reviewed and met the requirements of this regulation.
- (k) A sample of 12 records of accidents and incidents were reviewed and met the requirements of this regulation.

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*
- (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.*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all children bring in their morning snack from home. For children who attend on a full day-care basis, all remaining meals are provided by the service. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating a dinner of vegetable risotto. Staff advised that alternatives were available, and food preferences catered for with additional food available upon request of children. Drinking water and milk was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their dinner. Children appeared happy and content within each of the care rooms.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals.

Supporting Relationships

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play, encouraging and praising children. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Physical and Material Environment

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The care rooms offered areas of interest for free play which included small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, rest areas with books, home corners, art & crafts, painting and dress up areas. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos, birthday displays, visual routines and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms which nurtured a sense of identity and belonging for children attending the service.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms. A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises. This area had a grass surface and contained a tarmacadam court area. In this space children had access to picnic benches, a slide, climbing frames, a gardening area, scooters, tricycles and a tractor. The outdoor space is directly accessible from the Orange room and Green room with children in the Baking room accessing the garden via the stairs. Staff informed the

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inspectors that children spend at least thirty minutes outdoors, twice daily. All children accessed the outdoor play area on the day of inspection.

Programme of Activities

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment. Storytime was observed to be very interactive between the staff and children in all three care rooms.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in discussions observed both in play and at snack time and dinner time where the adults were observed to speak with, ask questions of and encourage the children to use their own words. Children appeared to handle transitions well and it is evident that they are familiar with the daily routine of the service based on observations on inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the day of inspection during snack time in the Orange room at 12:55, the adults were observed to offer the children cheese and crackers. For children who did not eat cheese, there was no alternative available at this time. For children who did seek extra portions, only crackers were available. One food group does not constitute a snack as this must be two or more. At this time, the snack was served directly on the table in front of each child, they were not offered a plate or napkin.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The team have been informed that food must be provided on a plate or napkin to serve food in order to prevent/reduce chances of cross contamination.

A new menu has been designed to incorporate a more varied menu of food for children's snack time ensuring that there are suitable elements offered each time and to children who choose not to eat certain items of snack.

Apres School Club have purchased new plastic plates for the children to eat snack from. The service has also designed a new menu and altered the shopping order to match the new menu ensuring that varied snacks are available to the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of sample of the revised menu plan.

A copy of the services policy on infection control.

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Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions if carried out, adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection

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:

- Visitors to the premises were required to sign in on arrival to the premises.
- 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 play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing in adjoining sanitary accommodation for all three care rooms.
- Cleaning schedules were available in all care rooms and the service appeared clean.
- Foot pedal bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste products.
- Tables were observed by the inspectors to be cleaned before and after snack time and dinner.

Administration of Medication:

- There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of anti-febrile medication and prescribed medication and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required.

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- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering anti-febrile medication and antibiotics if required during discussions with the inspectors in line with the services policy on administering medication.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On their return indoors from playing in the outdoor play space, children were not supervised in handwashing, and the adults were not observed to wash their hands. The children were observed to access resources from the shelves to play with them. This poses a risk to staff and children in cross contamination and cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The team have been informed of the importance of hand washing as per policies around infection control and will ensure that hand washing occurs at all appropriate times of the day. It was communicated that hand washing is necessary to prevent cross contamination of areas.

The infection control policy was discussed at a weekly meeting highlighting the importance of following said policy for the safety of the children and to ensure the service are carrying out all possible measures to prevent cross contamination and spread of any possible infection

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

A copy of the services policy on infection control.

A copy of services hand-washing policy.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.

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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 manager ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register as evidenced in the hard copy registers located in each care room.

(3)
(a)(i-iv) The manager ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.
(b) The manager had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school service.

(4)
The manager was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it related.

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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)

A person trained in first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff members hold current FAR certification.

(2)

(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were safely stored and easily accessible on the premises.

(b) First aid boxes were immediately available to children staff brought these to the garden with children's emergency medication during outdoor playtime.

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 evidence of regular fire drills having taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on 04 March 2026.

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(b) There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system in the premises dated January 2026 and March 2026 respectively.

(4)
There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the Montessori room and the main hallway of the building.