

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015DR151 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Ardtona House School |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Ardtona House, Lower Churchtown Road, Churchtown, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | D14 DR40 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Valerie Heavey |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Part Time, Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 08/05/2024 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 25 | PM | 25 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | 1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow |
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| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b> | Sarah Quigley |
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| <b>Title:</b> | Early Years Inspector |
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### 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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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not applicable |
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### Description of service

Ardtona House School is a part-time service located in Churchtown, South Co. Dublin. Education and care are provided to children aged between two and six years and the service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 13:00 hours, a sessional service also runs concurrently from 9:30 to 13:00. The service operates from the basement floor of a large period domestic dwelling which also houses a commercial office on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and a private home on the ground floor. The premises have been purposely adapted for use of an early years service. Two preschool classrooms are provided and 3 further classrooms for school aged children. A large enclosed outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises for the preschool children with a blend of natural grass, bark and concrete surfacing.

### Staffing

The preschool service currently employs 6 staff members who all work directly with the children, including the registered provider and an adult who is based in the school aged classrooms but provides relief cover as required. On the day of inspection all 6 staff members were present.

### 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. 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 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

*(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 in relation to the requirements of regulation 9 for each of the 6 adults employed to work in the service. The following records were available for the adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for 5 of the adults, and from 1 source for 1 of the adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 6 staff and the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years had been adhered to.

(d) International police vetting was available for 2 of the adults who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4) There was evidence that each of the 6 staff members 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)

(a) (b)

A second reference had not been obtained and verified for 1 adult employed to work in the service. The service will ensure to double check the references on file moving forward.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A second reference was obtained.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the reference obtained was provided to the inspector.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has 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 25 children present in the service being supervised by 5 adults during the inspection.

### 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

A sample of 11 records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspectors to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1) (a) to (i).

## 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) A record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
  - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection.
  - (j) There were no written records of medication having been administered to children in the service were available on the day of inspection. The person in charge and registered provider stated there has been no requirement to date to administer medication to a child. Appropriate documentation was in place in the service to record the administration of medication if required.
  - (k) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed on the day of inspection documented necessary details.

## 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 inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff reported that a morning snack and lunch is provided daily by the service. Drinking water was accessible to the children in the care rooms at all times. Children were encouraged to assist in the preparation for meal times, handing out drinks to their peers. Staff members sat with the children engaged in conversation during mealtimes and provided the children with choice in which foods they would like to eat.

The children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection, staff offered support to younger children where required. Staff demonstrated warmth and kindness during interactions observed by the inspector. Staff displayed an awareness of the individual needs of each child in their care and availed of opportunities for one-on-one personal conversations. Comfort was offered to children promptly if they became upset. The children appeared happy and content at their play and Montessori based activities throughout the inspection.

Staff supported the children to wash their hands and clean their noses at appropriate times during the inspection. Children were encouraged to take turns assisting with tasks in the care rooms to promote independence. Rest areas were available so the children could take time away from the group or rest if required. Staff were observed engaging with and supporting the children, offering reassurance and praise during play and Montessori activities and using prompts to extend and enhance play and learning.

The children all accessed the outdoor area during the inspection and were dressed appropriately for the weather.

### 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 inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### General Safety:

The entrance doors and gates into the building was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access 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:

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. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, after outdoor play, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

#### 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. The registered provider detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

#### 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

#### General Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, a child was observed to be wearing beaded amber teething necklace which posed a potential choking and strangulation risk.

#### Infection Control:

2. Perishable food items contained in some children's lunch boxes who chose to take food in from home were not appropriately refrigerated prior to consumption. The lunch boxes remained at room temperature within the care rooms until meal time, posing a risk of gastrointestinal illness.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Parents were informed that amber beads are not permitted to be worn in the service. The person in charge will ensure all new parents are made aware of this.

#### Infection Control:

2. All perishable lunch items are now stored in the fridge. The person in charge will ensure all staff are aware of this requirement.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

## 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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.

## 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 A conspicuous location within the service.