

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>waterTUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR169		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naionra Thaobh Na Coille		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Gaelscoil Thaobh Na Coille, Belarmine, An Chéim (Stepaside), Dublin 18, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	D18 TK40		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Denise Ní Mhurchú		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/01/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R Duff		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

This private childcare service was established in 1999 by the registered provider and has operated from the current location since 2006. Early education and care is provided on a sessional basis to children aged from two to six years of age through the medium of the Irish language. The service provides two sessions from 8.45am to 11.45am and one session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm and is registered to accommodate a maximum number of 44 children. The service operates from a prefabricated building in the grounds of a national school in a residential area of south county Dublin. The children have access to an all-weather pitch for outdoor play.

### Staffing

The service currently employs six staff members. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. On the day of inspection six staff members were present and 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 25 First aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28 Insurance

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.

### Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 08 January 2026 during the inspection in respect of Regulation 23, general safety. A response was received from the service on the 09 January 2026 which sufficiently mitigated the risk identified.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both were on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- The inspection included a review of the required documentation for three staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 03 March 2023. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the six members employed in the service. The following documentation was available;

(a)(b) Of the six written and validated references that were required, three were available from a past employer and two were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for six staff members employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures from all staff members were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 03 March 2023 as no staff members had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4)  
Records were available evidencing that three staff members employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 03 March 2023 who were employed to work directly with the children held at least the required award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)  
(a)(b) A second reference was not available for a one adult.  
(3)  
The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out in prior to one adult commencing employment in the service as follows:  
One references for one adult had not been sought or verified prior to them commencing employment in the service.

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

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

The registered provider stated that a second reference was sought and verified for one adult, a checklist has been developed to ensure that all documents are in place before a member of staff commences employment in the service.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

## Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

## 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 children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 31 children attending the service being supervised by 6 staff members.

## 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 members were attentive and responsive to the needs of the children throughout the morning and were observed to respond to children in a calm and relaxed manner throughout the inspection. The staff provided children with comfort when needed. Staff were observed to support children during conflict resolution or in completion of tasks. Children had the opportunity to sit with staff to plan activities, staff supported children's use of the Irish language and were observed to engage in children's play by sitting on the floor or at the children's tables. Children were given advance warnings to support transitions and to alert them of mealtimes. Children brought lunch from home. Meals times were social occasions with children and adults sitting together having the opportunity to chat about the morning session, staff provided children with help when needed. Children were encouraged to clean up after themselves and assisted to clean their faces and hands at appropriate times. Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. There was evidence that equipment and materials provided were based on the children's individual needs and emergent interests. The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving units and accessible to children. The two care rooms had an area to facilitate rest or provide a place for children to take a break from activities. Children spent time outdoors throughout the morning and were dressed appropriate to the weather. The large outdoor area was equipped with materials to support play experiences. Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child's day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. On the day of inspection transitions from preschool to home were observed to be friendly, informative and engaging to parents or guardians collecting children.

### 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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting

the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was enclosed, restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.

- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Medication and cleaning agents to include disinfectant sprays and liquids were stored on a high shelf out of reach of children.
- Toys and equipment in the indoors environment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable, safe and secure with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.

### Infection Control:

- The indoor and outdoor environments were maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, paper towel, liquid soap.
- The children were supported by staff members to wash their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire and evacuation procedures were on display in the 3 care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. In Seomra Cois Tra, a child's lunch boxes containing popcorn was handed out to the child at lunch time. Children had started to eat lunch, and the inspector requested the popcorn be removed. The healthy eating policy shared with parents identifies popcorn as a choking hazard for children and states popcorn will not be included as a snack. Allowing popcorn is at variance with healthy eating policy and is a potential choking risk to children.

#### Infection Control:

2. In the sanitary areas and main care areas in both classrooms, swing lidded bins were in use. Children and staff were observed to use their hands to open the bins to dispose of waste. This poses a potential risk of cross contamination to children.

### Administration of Medication:

- Procedures to safeguard children when administering emergency medicine were not available for review. Care plans were not available for children who required emergency medication. This is at variance with the medicine policy in the service which states individual medical plans will be available for children who require them. In addition, emergency medication required for one child was observed to be out of date. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on the 08 January 2026 during the inspection in respect of Regulation 23. A response was received from the service on the 09 January 2026 which mitigated the risks identified.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated:

#### General Safety:

- That parents have been reminded of the healthy eating policy in the service. All lunch boxes will be checked each day and any food not permitted in the service will be removed.

#### Infection Control:

- Foot operated bins have replaced all swing lidded bins in the sanitary areas and classrooms.

#### Administration of Medication:

- Care plans have been developed with parents for children who require emergency medication, staff members will ensure that care plans are in place in future.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

- No supporting documentation submitted.

#### Infection Control:

- No supporting documentation submitted.

#### Administration of Medication:

- Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

## 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) The service provided evidence that an adult trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced regularly. The last fire drill was carried out on 16 November 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced on 07/01/2026.
- (2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- 4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed in the care rooms.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

## Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the sessional service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 33 children and an expiry date of 27 March 2026.