

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS163
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Sarah's Little Sunflowers Pre-school
-------------------------	--------------------------------------

Address of Service:	14 Johnsbridge Close, Lucan, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	K78 WY43
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah O'Callaghan
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	23/05/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8, D08X01F.
Inspection undertaken by:	G. Kavanagh and S. Quigley.
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

Sarah's Little Sunflowers is a privately operated sessional service located in Lucan, Dublin. The service is open Monday-Friday 09.15-12.15 and operates from a single storey extension to a domestic dwelling with one care room.

Staffing

There were three adults present on the day of the inspection all the adults were 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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1) (2) (a -d) (4), Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(3)8(c) Staffing

Regulation 19 1(a), Health Welfare and Development of a Child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Welfare and Development of a Child

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

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, 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 employee*
- (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)(b) The registered provider ensured there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) Regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for each of the four adults employed to work in the service. A review of documentation and conversation with the registered provider evidenced that one staff had been employed since the last inspection of the service. Documentation available for this staff member met compliance as follows;
- (a)(b) One validated reference was available for the adult.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the four staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Not applicable, the adult had not resided outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) There was documentary evidence available to show that the adult held a qualification deemed eligible by the Department.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) The registered provider did not demonstrate that they had appropriately sourced and validated references for one employee as follows:
The second reference available for the staff member had not been appropriately validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider provided the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider obtained an appropriate reference 26th May 25 and it was verified for new employee on 29th May 25. The manager has employed a new staff member to allow her flexibility from the room which will give her more time and resources to keep up to date of all administration duties from the business, including reviewing the staff records and having a more efficient system in place for staff files.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working with the pre -school children on day of inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always adhered to. There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised by three adults on the day of inspection.
- (8) (a) Not applicable, the service is not operated single handedly.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Basic Needs:

- The children's lunches were brought in from home and kept refrigerated until lunchtime. The registered provider stated a healthy eating policy is shared with the parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.
- Children were offered water with their meal and drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the morning.
- Children were encouraged and observed to use the toilet independently.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play.
- Children's choices were respected with children being given the opportunity to choose their own activities during free play.
- Transitions within the service were managed appropriately and staff gave children ample notice to tidy up before the next activity and used timers to support this.
- Staff described how they communicate information to parents daily at drop off and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The preschool room was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the opportunity to play and explore.
- Children were engaged in play-based activities moving freely around the care room.
- Play materials were easily accessible on low level shelving units. There was one rest area available to allow children to take a break from activities as required.

- Photographs of the children were displayed around the room there was also a family and birthday wall. Children's artwork was displayed.
- There was a large outdoor area to the rear which was well resourced. There were slides, swings and ride along toys.

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 exit points were secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the preschool.
- All toys and equipment observed were in good working condition; all heavy furniture was secured.
- The outdoor play area was securely fenced and gated reducing the risk of children exiting unsupervised. Children who were brought out to the outdoor play areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Medication was stored safely out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- Children washed hands before mealtimes and after using the toilet.
- Warm water was available to the children to handwash along with liquid soap and paper towels.
- Pedal bins were available throughout the service.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff.
- Staff were aware of the procedures for fire drills and stated they are completed monthly.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure was available for one staff member; however, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Administration of Medication:

2. There was no written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of medication, and no documentation to record the administration of medication if required on the day of inspection. This was at variance with the medication administration policy in place which stated that administration of medication must be recorded and pre consent must be obtained prior to administration. An individual care plan was not in place for a child who required emergency medication which had been provided to the service to administer. This posed a potential risk of harm to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider provided the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service immediately renewed this garda vetting. The manager has employed a new staff member to allow more time out of room to keep up to date with the administration duties of the business. The provider has spent time reviewing staff files and incorporated a new system to record when garda vetting is due for renewal.

Administration of Medication:

2. After the inspection the service asked parents to fill in a full care plan which included parental consent for the administration of an antihistamine medication. After the inspection the provider found the record book for administration of medication in the room and emailed a copy to the inspector. The care plan and written consent are filed in children's information folder and the care plan on the wall has been updated to include care plan and medication authorisation received.

Supporting documentation submitted

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

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined by the provider will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

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 registered provider ensured a person trained in first aid for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. One staff member caring for the children had an up to date certificate for First aid responder (Far) training which will expire on 21 August 2026.
- (2)
- (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on a shelf in the care room.
 - (b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending 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) Documentary evidence showed that a record of fire drills was maintained.
 - (b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 21/08/24 and that the maintenance of smoke alarms occurred on 26/08/24.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in conspicuous positions in the service.