

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015DY170 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Portobello Montessori |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | 43 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1 |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | D01 XD86 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Denise Flood |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 18/09/2025 |
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| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 13 | PM | 14 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate<br>2nd Floor, Unit 4/5<br>The Nexus Building<br>Blanchardstown Corporate Park<br>Ballycoolin<br>Dublin 15   D15 CF9K |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | L Jameson   |
| <b>Title:</b>                                   | Early Years Inspector   |

### 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

Portobello Montessori is located on the ground floor of the Portobello Institute complex in Dublin City Centre. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and offers a morning session from 08:30am – 11:30am and an afternoon session from 12:00pm to 03:00pm, Monday to Friday, to a maximum of 19 children per session. There is one care room in the service with sanitary accommodation and an enclosed outdoor area.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs three adults to work directly with the children, including the person in charge, the deputy person in charge and one early year's practitioner who works under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). On the day of inspection, the person in charge, the deputy person in charge and one early year's practitioner was present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service.

### 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 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 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was rostered to be present all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on and when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
  - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) The full staff files of the registered provider and three adults employed to work in the service were reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (a) Four written and verified references were available from past employers.
  - (b) Four written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for four adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
  - (d) Not applicable as there was no evidence to suggest that any staff had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer, after the age of eighteen.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the three adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (3) On review of documentation available for one adult working in the service, it demonstrated that they had not been fully considered prior to commencement within the service.
- A Garda vetting disclosure for one adult was dated seven days after their commencement in the service.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) Management will ensure that all relevant checks, including Garda vetting, are on file prior to any new staff member commencing the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (3) No evidence submitted. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection. In the morning session, there were three adults caring for thirteen children and during the afternoon session, there were three adults caring for fourteen children.
- (3) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff members were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

## 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

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| <p>(1)</p> <p>(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:</p> <p><b>Basic needs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snack time was observed to be a pleasant experience for the children, with staff members seated alongside them, taking part in meaningful conversations.</li> <li>Staff members were observed to tend to children's individual personal needs promptly, providing discreet supervision for toileting and assisting with hand washing. On the day on inspection, a child was observed to have spilled a drink on their t-shirt. Staff members reacted quickly, bringing the child to the sanitary area to change, offering reassurance and comfort.</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting relationships around children:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff members engaged in positive interactions with each other and the children on the day of the inspection. Staff members were observed to use soft tones when interacting with the children, minor conflicts were resolved in a calm and prompt manner.</li> <li>Staff members were knowledgeable about the children's individual needs, likes and dislikes and confidently discussed the settling in period with the inspector, demonstrating familiarity with the process and an emphasis on building strong relationships with children and families.</li> <li>Staff members were observed to communicate with parents and guardians through discussion and informal chats at drop off and collection times.</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical and material environment:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equipment and resources in the care room were in good working order. Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, construction toys, animals, a selection of books, a home corner with a tea-set, dolls and other supporting equipment, a cosy area with comfortable chairs, cushions and soft plush toys as well as a</li> </ul> |
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variety of Montessori materials, were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.

- Materials and toys were stored on low level shelving units and were accessible to the children, promoting decision making and independence.
- Low level tables and chairs were available to the children in the care room, facilitating a comfortable area to eat meals and take part in tabletop activities.
- An enclosed outdoor area provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor, sensory and imaginative play.

### Programme of Activities and implementation to support development:

- Documentary evidence which included strategies and important information for children who required additional support within the service were available for review
- Staff members discussed the use of visual aids and choice boards within the service which supported the children in their environment.
- Staff members were observed to give the children reminders and ample time between transitions to other activities and mealtimes. A daily routine was evident in the service, promoting a sense of familiarity and predictability for the 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:

- The entrance leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Radiator covers were installed in the service.

#### Infection Control:

- The service was equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, after toileting and before mealtimes.

- Lunches were stored in the fridge to ensure perishable items were kept cool.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available in the care room and sanitary area to ensure the hygienic disposal of waste.

### Administration of Medication:

- Emergency and antifebrile medication was observed to be in date and stored in the correct packaging. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- The emergency fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Emergency medication was observed to be stored in a child's bag on a low-level shelf and accessible to children, posing a potential risk to children's safety.

#### Infection Control:

2. The covering on low-level press doors was observed to be peeling, exposing internal porous wood, reducing the likelihood of effective cleaning and increasing the risk of cross contamination.

#### Fire Safety:

3. The children's attendance records were not maintained in a prompt and timely manner. Through conversation with staff members, it was confirmed that thirteen children were in attendance when the inspector entered the care room at 09:40am, however, upon review of attendance records at approximately 10:00am, there were twelve children recorded as being present. This may prevent the safe evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The child's bag which holds emergency medication is now stored on a high shelf which only staff members have access to. A staff member has been assigned to ensure the bag is placed on the shelf every day.

#### Infection Control:

2. The press doors on the low-level shelving unit have been sanded and painted. All laminate on the wood has been removed to prevent a reoccurrence.

**Fire Safety:**

3. The register has been placed closer to the door of the service to allow staff members to sign each child in as they enter the care room.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

1. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

**Infection Control:**

2. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

**Fire Safety:**

3. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

**Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

**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 who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for one staff member and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster. In addition, one staff member held in-date Paediatric First Aid training.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
  - (b) First aid boxes were available for the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

### 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 firefighting 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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 16 June 2025 for the morning session and 19 June 2025 for the afternoon session.
  - (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment in December 2024 and the smoke alarms on 1 September 2025.
- (2) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service.

### 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 that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 November 2025.