

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY267		
Name of Service:	St. Raphael's Preschool & Afterschool Project		
Address of Service:	St. Raphael's, Primary school, Kylemore Road, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10.		
Eircode:	D10 XW56		
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Larkin		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	10/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate		
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill		
Title:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Co. Dublin. A96 P3Y6		
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

St. Raphael's Preschool & Afterschool Project offers the Early Childhood Care and Education on a sessional basis from 08:50 to 11:50 each weekday and is community based. A school service is available. The early years service is located in a prefabricated premises on the grounds of St Raphael's Primary School in Ballyfermot. Care of the children is facilitated across two pre-school rooms namely the Junior and Senior Pre-School room. Two separate outdoor play areas are available for children on the premises.

Staffing

In total eight staff are employed in the service including the designated person in charge. On the 10th of February 2025 five staff worked 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, records, health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations

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

Regulation 11 (1), (2)– Staffing Levels

Regulation 15(1) Record of a Pre-School Child

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

Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a) &(b) – First Aid

Regulation 26(1), (2)(a), (b) & (4) – Fire Safety

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child. 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

(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.

(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 who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that five adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 26 March 2021. The inspection process included a review of files for new staff and a review of Garda vetting for all staff employed in the service. Documentation reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) Nine validated, written references were available from a past employer.
 - (b) A second validated, written reference was available for one adult from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the adults. Seven of these were dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) None of the new staff employed had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Records were available evidencing the staff member who was employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education.

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 a sessional service was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were thirty-four children attending the service being supervised by five adults on the day of 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

(1) A sample of eleven records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
- (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) The record available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
- (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
- (h) A record that immunisations were received was recorded.
- (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children attending bring in their own lunch from home. Drinking water was accessible to children and children were given water with their meal. Staff supervised children washing their hands prior to eating their lunch. A calm atmosphere was observed at mealtime. Staff sat and had their snack with children and were observed assisting children to open items in their lunch box as required. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent, including using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their play. Staff were observed responding to children's needs throughout the inspection. The staff spoke to the children using encouraging language. Staff reported they use an online application to share information with parents relating to the child's wellbeing and daily activities. Staff also communicate with parents at arrival and collection times.

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest which allowed children freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included messy play with sand, construction toys, jigsaws, an art area, home corners and dress up materials. The preschool rooms were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. These materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving provided.

Staff reported outdoor play is included in the daily timetable for children. A fully enclosed outdoor play area was available to the front and rear of the premises. One area had a paved surface and the other an artificial grass surface. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was available 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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure available for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.
2. There was no care plan available for a child who had a medical condition posing a potential safety risk in the event of a medical emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The manager of the service submitted the reapplication of the Garda Vetting the same day. The vetting was processed and received two days later. The vetting certification is filed appropriately and is easily accessible. Preventative actions have been put in place to clearly display dates of Garda Vetting renewals. This chart is on the office notice board available for management to see. There have also been reminders set on our google calendar to alert management of the dates in which re applications should be submitted.
2. Corrective actions were carried out immediately once the child returned to preschool after being absent due to illness. Care plan was completed and signed by both parents and service manager. The manager has introduced new procedures for our Health and Safety Officer to complete regular monthly checks to ensure all care plans are available and displayed clearly. Management will oversee this new procedure and provide a signature upon completion to ensure adequate checks were carried out each month. The manager has also updated our health and safety policy. The service will not facilitate children until a clear care plan is completed and signed by parents (where applicable).

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copies of updated Garda vetting submitted.
2. Details re care plan provided.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the actions submitted. 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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times. Evidence was provided to demonstrate two staff members had current FAR training certification valid until January and February 2026.

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous place in both preschool rooms and was available to the children attending the service at all times.

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 any fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being undertaken on the 16 January 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm was available. The maintenance record for the fire fighting equipment was dated 10 February 2025 and the maintenance for the smoke alarm was dated the 18 December 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed clearly in each room of the preschool service.