

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY334
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Sophia Nurturing Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Sophia Housing, 25 Cork Street, Dublin 8
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D08 EPN5
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary Gilton
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	4	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Finnegan Hayes
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

Sophia Nurturing Centre is a community operated service located in a residential complex in Dublin 8. The service offers sessional care to children aged 0-6 years from 9am-12pm Monday to Friday. School aged care is offered in the afternoons. The service is comprised of a reception area, kitchen, staff room and office, a care room and a sensory room. A second classroom is used by another service. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is located at the front of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs five staff to work in the service including the manager, three early years practitioners and a hygiene technician. The registered provider does not work in the service but provides cover as needed.

### 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, safety and premises and facilities. 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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge showed that there are currently 6 adults employed in the service including the registered provider, service manager, three early years practitioners and a hygiene technician. The files of all six staff were reviewed.

(a)(b) Twelve written and validated references were available in relation to six staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all six staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3) The paperwork available showed that the checks specified in (2) were completed before the start date of all staff.

(4) Documentation was available to show that five adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

### 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)(3) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection and that the ratios were maintained at all times; three staff were caring for four children.

### 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) There are seven children currently enrolled in the service. The files of all seven children were assessed and the necessary details were available in all files.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- The furniture and equipment in the care rooms were observed to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean, and suitable for the age and stage of the children attending.
- A range of toys and equipment which supported a variety of play experiences were readily available and accessible to the children to support independent play. For example, in the care room toys and equipment were grouped in defined interest areas each of which contained a large selection of toys and supporting equipment while the sensory room was well equipped with a range of light up and noisy toys and soft furnishings.
- The outdoor area was secure and provided a large play environment for the children. The toys and equipment available supported a range of play experiences and skills. For example, slides and ride on toys provided opportunities for gross motor activities. A covered area in the corner of the garden provided a seating area and allowed for outdoor play in inclement 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

##### General Safety:

- The service entrance was securely locked on arrival to the building and remained locked throughout the day which prevented unknown persons entering the premises and prevented children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Internal doors were fitted with twist locks which prevented them leaving the care rooms unsupervised or accessing unsafe spaces such as the kitchen.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- Electrical cables and flexes were adequately secured out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning supplies were secured on a high shelf out of reach of the children.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water, dispensed soap and paper handtowels were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- The care rooms and sanitary areas were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Cleaning rotas were displayed and completed to date.

##### Administration of Medication:

- A care plan was available for a child who has a diagnosed medical condition. The care plan provided details of the condition, signs and symptoms and a plan of action for possible issues that could arise in the service. Staff were knowledgeable of the child's condition and were observed taking steps to prevent issues from arising.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed during the inspection.
- Staff evacuated the children in a calm and safe manner during a fire alarm test which was advised to the service moments before. The children were supported to leave the building and proceed to the assembly point where staff took the roll and awaited confirmation that they could re-enter the building.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
    - (iii) an employee, or*
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each preschool child was checked into and out of the service. Staff greeted parents and children at the door of the service to allow entry and exit and a written record of attendance was maintained.
- (3) (a)(b) Staff attended the door to allow access to visitors which prevented people from entering the service without staff knowledge. A visitor record book was readily available in the entrance area and the inspector was asked to sign in on entering the premises.
- (4) Visitor attendance logs were observed to be held for a period of one year.