

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY080
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Name of Service:	DRA Preschool and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Doughiska Road, Doughiska, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 AE76
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Name of Registered Provider:	Dan Hurley
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel and S. Meehan.
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

DRA Preschool and Afterschool is a community-based sessional service in operation since 2011, providing early years care and education. The service is open Monday to Friday and while the service offers both a morning and afternoon session, only the morning session from 09:00 to 12 noon is currently in operation, 38 weeks of the year. DRA Preschool and Afterschool is in Doughiska, an urban area of Galway city. There are 5 modular units only 4 of which are in use namely- Green, Orange, Blue and Red. There is a central secure outdoor play area along with a polytunnel and a grass area accessible by the children. An office is located off the Orange care room and there is a separate room which operates as a kitchen/staff room. Sanitary areas are fitted in each modular unit and the adult toilet is located off the staff room.

A school age care service is available in the afternoon from 13:20 until 18:00 and car park facilities are located at the side of the service.

Staffing

There are 14 adults working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work 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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Records of a Preschool Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included a total of 20 records, five from the Green, Orange, Blue and Red care rooms.

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 person in charge, designated 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.*

(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) There was a person in charge and a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that both the designated person in charge and deputy was available on the premises when the pre-school children were present.

On review of the staff files, it was established that 2 adults were employed and 1 student had commenced placement since the last inspection on 2nd December 2024. In addition, renewal of garda vetting was reviewed for 1 existing staff member.

(2)(a) Four of the 6 validated references on file in respect of the 2 adults and the student were from a past employer.

(b) Two of the 6 validated references were from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 4 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that 1 adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years required police vetting. The police vetting was available for inspection.

(4) There was evidence that the 2 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent.

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 the adult/child ratio was maintained during the session.
- (3) There were 14 adults working directly with 52 children while the children were present in the service.

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.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 20 pre-school records, 5 from each of the Green, Orange, Blue and Red care rooms were reviewed; particulars (a) to (h) of the pre-school records were available for each child.
- (3) The records of the pre-school children were furnished to the inspector on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(i) Written records of consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency were missing in respect of the 20 pre-school records sampled posing a potential risk to the children's well-being in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

- (i) All 20 written records of consent for appropriate medical treatment of the children in the event of an emergency are now on file. The pre-school record has been amended to include the missing information going forward. All forms will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following documentation and photographs were received in the office of the inspectorate.

- (i) Photographs of the written record of consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency and amended records.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 15 (1) (i).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

16(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k).

The registered provider ensured that all details pertaining to records in relation to a preschool service under 16 (1) were available for inspection by a parent, guardian or an authorised person.

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

Basic needs:

- The service promoted healthy eating. Food provided by the parents/guardians, served at mid-morning snack from 10:00, were noted to consist of filled sandwiches, waffles, crackers and bite sized pieces of various fruits and vegetables.
- Each child in the Orange care room had an individually labelled bottle of water, which was easily accessible from the shelf on top of the fridge. In addition, staff stated the service provided bottled water for children who may have forgotten to bring it.
- Older children were observed accessing the toilets independently off the care rooms with adults nearby to assist and remind children about hand hygiene. Nappy changing, with younger children, was observed to be handled in a sensitive and caring manner by the staff member in the Orange nappy changing area.
- Hygienic hand washing was observed before snack time and after toileting.
- Rest/quiet areas were visible in the care rooms, away from noisy activities, where children could relax on soft seating and vinyl pouffes.
- Children's independence skills were encouraged and supported by the adults in the care room. Examples included children observed zipping up their jackets by themselves being praised by staff for their efforts and step ups available at the sinks and toilet bowls facilitating children's growing self-help skills. Staff were nearby assisting and supporting younger children who required help.
- The weather on the day of inspection was cold and breezy. Children were noted to be dressed appropriately with warm coats, hats, scarves and gloves when outside.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in attending to children's verbal and non-verbal cues. Two staff members in the outdoor play area were observed providing additional support to children who were anxious.

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 main double entrance gates to the service were secured when the inspector arrived. These could only be accessed by code or a buzzer system, preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service and unsupervised children leaving the service grounds.
- All internal doors including adult bathrooms, care rooms and kitchen were secured to prevent children accessing unsupervised areas.
- Window handles in the care rooms were placed at adult height to prevent children from exiting or falling from them.
- Handrails were visible on entry to each care room providing a secure reachable grip on entering and exiting the care rooms.
- The indoor and outdoor equipment and toys appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Flexes and cables in the care rooms on electrical equipment were stored out of reach of the children.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children in the care rooms and in the sanitary areas.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play areas, accessible from the care rooms, were secured with metal fencing and a buzzer operated gate.

Infection Control:

- Children's coats and bags were stored on individual hooks on entry to each care room, away from the floor areas.
- Outdoor boots were stored on racks in each care room preventing the spread of infection into the care rooms.
- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the individual fridges in the care rooms, to prevent the food from spoiling.
- Children observed handwashing in the sanitary areas of the care rooms had access to thermostatically controlled hot water which was recorded from 29.4°C to 33.9°C, dispensing foam soap and dispensing paper towels to dry their hands. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.

- Disposal aprons and gloves, along with a sealed, pedal operated nappy bin were available to prevent the spread of infection and cross contamination in the Orange nappy changing area.
- Children’s personal belongings including nappies and wipes were stored in individually lidded and sealed boxes under the changing area.
- Daily cleaning records were noted to be up to date and completed indicating that the areas and equipment in use were kept hygienic and clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered on the day.
- Temperature reducing medication, stored in their original containers, was available and stored securely in the kitchen which was inaccessible by the children.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed resting during the sessional service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were noted to be unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers were fitted securely by brackets to the walls of the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In the Red playroom the pedal bin in the children’s sanitary area was broken and the lid removed this may pose as a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.
2. Soft furnishings with foam exposed in both the Orange and Blue care rooms posed a risk of infection as they could not be cleaned effectively due to the exposed materials on the corners- a vinyl sofa in use in the Orange room and the two sofas and a sellotaped pouffe in use in the Blue care room.
3. Two toilet brushes visible on the floors of the toilet cubicles were accessible to the children in the Orange care room sanitary area posing a risk of cross infection.
4. A plastic children’s toilet seat was left on the floor of the toilet cubicle in the Orange sanitary area, posing a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

1. The bin in the Red playroom sanitary area has been replaced.
2. The pouffe in the Blue Room has been removed and replacement sofas for both rooms have been ordered.
3. Toilet brushes have been removed.
4. Plastic toilet seat has been hung on the wall in the cubicle.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1, 2, 3 and 4 documentary and photographic evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate. Staff have been reminded to report any infection control issues which will be addressed by management.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified 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) Certificates were on file to evidence that 13 staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR). The staff roster indicated that there were 13 staff available with FAR training, while the early years children were present in the service.
- (2)(a) (b) The well stocked first aid bags were stored within easy reach of the adults in the care rooms in cupboards secured with safety catches.