

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015KE065

Name of Service: Kildare Steiner School

Address of Service: Rathargid, Gormanstown, Dunlavin, Co. Kildare

Eircode: W91 CR24

Name of Registered Provider: Michelle McFarland

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 31/03/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency Suite 7 Vista Primary Care Centre Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, LA. Webster
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.
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Description of service

Kildare Steiner school offers a part time pre-school service through the Steiner philosophy of education to children aged 2-6 years old. The pre-school is located in a rural setting between the towns of Kilcullen, Co Kildare and Dunlavin, Co Wicklow. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 09:00-13:00 for 38 weeks of the year and operates from a detached single storey premises on the grounds of the Kildare Steiner independent primary and secondary schools. One pre-school room is provided along with a separate dining area and kitchenette. A large naturally landscaped outdoor area is available at the rear/side of the premises.

Staffing

There were two adults employed, including the registered provider, working directly with eight children on the day of inspection; a third adult was present working with school aged 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 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.

Additional Information

1. A written immediate action notice under Regulation 25 – First Aid was issued to the registered provider on 2 April 2025.
2. A written response with supporting evidence was submitted by the registered provider on 2 April 2025 outlining the measures taken to address the immediate concern, see body of report for details.

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*

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

The records of three staff members employed and present in the service including the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

Four written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of two adults employed whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for three employed staff members. 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 the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Two members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

There were no verified references on file for one staff member employed and present in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Both written references are now on file.

Preventive Action

We will establish a clear process for collecting and verifying references before any staff member begins their role.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents X 2

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) 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.*
- (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.*
- (8) *Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (1) *(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

Compliance Information

- (1)
There were eight children attending the pre-school service being supervised directly by two adults.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the 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.*

(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)-(i)

Eight child records were assessed and contained the relevant written details outlined in (a)-(i) of the regulation.

(3)(c)

All child records were available for inspection.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child 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

(1)(h)

The attendance record for the service was reviewed and children’s attendance in the morning and on leaving the service at the end of the session, were recorded in real time; any child who was absent was recorded as such in the attendance record.

(j)

No medication had been administered to any child attending the service in the previous two years, however, an administration of medicine book recording the details of the child and any medicine administered with staff and parental signatures to be recorded was available if required in the service.

(k)

The accident and incident record book was reviewed.

A sample of three recorded incidents, over the course of the previous year to date, were inspected and contained the relevant information and details.

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 entrance door to the service was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

In conversation with one of the staff members, they advised the inspector they would ensure any food items with a potential choking risk would be immediately cut/halved prior to serving to children.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the play and learning materials and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Children's hand washing routines were well established and children were observed washing their hands before snack time.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towel, dispensed from a wall mounted unit, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, paper towel and any waste. The room and sanitary environments were observed maintained in a clean condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

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

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The staff member whose Garda vetting disclosure has expired is no longer employed at the school.
A tracking system has been implemented to monitor Garda vetting expiry dates for all staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

N/A

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 23 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

(2)(a)

The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the pre-school.

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no documentary evidence available to demonstrate that a person or persons trained in first aid responder (FAR) or first aid for children were immediately available to the children attending the service.

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to this matter on 2 April 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

One staff member completed an online paediatric first aid course, 2 April 2025.

A full First Aid Responder (FAR) course has been scheduled and will be completed 26/27 May 2025 to ensure compliance.

Preventive Action

The expiry dates will be clearly recorded and visible on the staff folder and automated reminders will be set to alert the administrator three months before any certificate expires.

Supporting documentation submitted

Document x 2

Summary Comment

Following review of the written response and submitted evidence in relation to the immediate action notice issued 2 April 2025, this was accepted by the inspectorate. It is acknowledged first aid response training is scheduled for 26/27 May 2025 however, as the training has not yet been completed the requirement for regulation 25 has not been met at this time, this area of non-compliance will be reviewed at the time of the next inspection.

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 record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last recorded fire drill was dated 4 March 2025.

(b)

There were records available detailing the maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service dated September 2024.

(4)

A notice was displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

Non-Compliance Information

(b)
There was no documentary evidence available for the maintenance of the smoke/fire detection system in the pre-school.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

A written statement confirming that the fire/smoke detection system is in proper working order has now been provided.

Preventive Action

To prevent this issue from recurring, we are in the process of finalising a maintenance contract with a fire protection company for regular inspections and maintenance of the smoke/fire detection system in the preschool.

Supporting documentation submitted

Document X 1

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 26 has been met.