

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KY027				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Cahereen Heights Childcare				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	26 The Meadows, Cahereen Heights, Castleisland, Co. Kerry				
<b>Eircode:</b>	V92 KF72				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Marguerite O'Sullivan				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/02/2026				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>44</td> <td>PM</td> <td>58</td> </tr> </table>	AM	44	PM	58
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F.				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S O'Brien & B Fraher				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Cahereen Heights Childcare is a privately operated early years service located in Castleisland, Kerry. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service offers full day care, part time and sessional service along with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, 52 weeks of the year. The service is located in a purpose-built building that has 5 care rooms downstairs, offices and a kitchen. A larger kitchen and office space is located upstairs. The service has designated sanitary facilities for the children and staff along with an outdoor area located to the rear of the building. The service is also registered to provide school age childcare. The school age children are catered for in a room that is shared with the early years service.

### Staffing

There is a total of 26 staff associated with the service which includes the registered provider. The registered provider is service based. On the day of inspection, 16 staff members were present in the service, which included 12 staff working directly with the children, with relief cover provided by the person in charge and the deputy manager, 1 kitchen staff, and the registered provider. One student was on work placement in the service but was not present on the day of inspection.

### 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/ 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

*(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 on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
  - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The registered provider also arrived at 11.40am. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
  - (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member. This was on display on the wall.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that eight new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection.
- Eight of these new staff members work directly with the children. One student was on an educational work placement programme and was not present on the day on inspection.
- A total of nine files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
- (a) Of the 18 required references, 12 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
  - (b) Of the 18 required references, 6 were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the 12 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for one of the nine adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Records demonstrate that the six adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to level 8 as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. One staff member had obtained a Letter of Eligibility to Practice. A qualification was not required in respect of one student and one school age care employee.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed:

- Complaints policy
- Administration of medication policy
- Infection control policy
- Healthy eating policy

The policies were observed to contain the required information and supported the adults in their care practices.

## 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)-*

*(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) The registered provider ensured there was an adequate number of adults cared for the children during the inspection.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in the care rooms and adhered to the minimum adult to children ratios.

In the morning:

- In Creche Room 1, there were 8 children aged between 1 and 2 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In Creche Room 2, there were 10 children aged between 2 and 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In Junior Preschool, there were 12 children aged between 2 and 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In Senior Preschool, there were 11 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 2 adults
- In the Den Preschool, there were 3 children aged between 4 and 5 years being cared for by 1 adult.

In the afternoon:

- In Creche Room 1, there were 10 children aged between 1 and 2 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In Creche Room 2, there were 13 children aged between 2 and 3 years being cared for by 3 adults.
- In Junior Preschool, there were 14 children aged between 2 and 3 years being cared for by 2 adults.
- In Senior Preschool, there were 15 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 3 adults.

- In the Den Preschool, there were 6 children aged between 4 and 5 years being cared for by 1 adult. Eight school age children and one adult were also present in the care room.

(8) There was a minimum of two adults on the premises while the service was in operation. This was observed on review of the staff roster.

## 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:

(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

(1) The following records were reviewed:

(i) A staff roster was available with the start and finish times for each staff member in the service.

(j) There were 10 records of medication administration reviewed and were observed to be fully complete and contained the relevant information required.

(k) A sample of 10 accidents and incidents were reviewed, completed and contained all relevant information required.

### 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) Basic needs

- The children were observed freely moving around the care rooms partaking in activities of choice.
- The children were observed spending time in the outdoor areas during the inspection.
- The children were provided with snacks and meals at regular intervals throughout the day. Morning and afternoon snacks were provided by the parents and guardians. Dinner and evening snack were provided by the service. The children were observed having tomato and chicken pasta bake for dinner. The morning and evening snacks contained crackers, sandwiches and fruit, yoghurts and rice cakes.
- The children were offered drinks throughout the day in Creche Room 1, and individual water bottles were stored on child height shelving in Creche Room 2, Junior, Senior and the Den Preschool rooms.
- Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and as required. The adults were observed chatting to the children during nappy changing. Older children were observed to access the sanitary area independently with the adults available to assist if required.
- The children had designated sleep times and staff were observed supporting the children to rest and relax. Children that did not have designated sleep times were observed to be encouraged to sit and relax in the quiet areas of the care rooms.
- Children in Creche Room 2 did not require sleep and were facilitated in the same care room as the sleeping children. The children were observed playing with toys and sitting in the reading corner. The area was adequately lit for the children to partake in activities of choice.
- Self-help skills were encouraged by the adults who praised each child's efforts. Examples seen in the preschool rooms included children tidying up toys, bringing their plates from the table when they finished lunch and zipping up their coats for outdoor play.

### Supporting relationships

- The adults were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and chatted to the children while also providing support with feeding as needed. Mealtimes were observed to be a relaxed time of the day and allowed the children time to enjoy their food.
- The service communicated with the children’s parents and guardians on an electronic application. Adults were also observed chatting to the parents and guardians on drop off to the service.
- Family and birthday walls were on display in the care room which supported the children’s sense of identity and belonging. One child in the Junior Preschool was observed to celebrate their birthday on the day of inspection, wearing a party hat.
- The adults engaged with the children in both group and individual activities in the preschool rooms by getting down to their level while discussing, questioning and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example with the adults assisting the children with making puzzles, playing with moulding dough, reading books with children and also playing with children in the outdoor area.
- The adults in the preschool rooms promoted positive behaviour among the children encouraging them to share.
- Individual plans of care were available for children who required them.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) From 9.10am to 11.20am in Creche Room 1, staff were observed to not adequately meet the care needs of all the children in the room. Staff were observed to clean and make up cots for sleep, and not to fully interact with all children who required their support during this period. Examples included:
- A child was seen to begin to cry, a staff member gave verbal assurance from a distance but did not approach the child.
  - A child who required their nose cleaned was left for 12 minutes without staff noticing.
  - Another child was observed to cry and no staff responded to them for approximately five minutes.
  - Two children began to have a conflict, and staff did not intervene other than to state “no fighting, I want no fighting” from a distance.
  - Another visibly upset child approached staff and stood next to them, whilst the staff was observed to speak to the child they offered no other reassurance.

The staff were observed to not listen to the voice of the child when the children were communicating their needs. This posed a risk to the children's wellbeing.

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

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

A meeting was held with the educators in the room, and a performance improvement plan was put in place. The service has linked with Better Start for support. One staff member has attended training, and others are enrolled in further training. A new routine has been put in place in the room and management will continue to review through observation, supervision and mentoring.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of a supervision form with a staff member.

A copy of a Performance improvement plan form.

Proof of an email and application to Better Start.

Copy of a certificate of Effective room leadership studies completed.

Evidence of enrolment in Active supervision course.

A copy of a new room routine completed.

### Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 (b). This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

## 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

There were adequate equipment and materials within each of the care rooms which supported the development of the children. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as artwork, reading books, completing puzzles and eating at snack time. The preschool rooms had a number of interest areas which were appropriately resourced, including the home corner, art and craft materials, a dolls house, small world materials, books, plastic bricks, small playhouses, dolls, cars, kitchens with utensils and jigsaws. There were low level open shelves around the rooms where all the play toys were easily accessible to the children. The children in Creche

Room 2 were observed playing with rice and rice krispies which supported sensory development. The outdoor area had a climbing frame and a slide, ride on cars, bikes, a seesaw, and trays for sand play.

### 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 secured to prevent any child from exiting the service unsupervised and unauthorised access to the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with walls and a gate allowing the space to be a safe area for the children to play.
- Blind cords in the care rooms were observed to be secured and out of reach to children during the inspection.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach to the children on inspection.
- Unsafe areas for storage within the care rooms were secured to prevent children from accessing them.
- Medicines were kept in their original containers and were clearly labelled.
- One low level highchair was observed to be in good condition and fitted with the appropriate safety harness in the Creche Room 1.
- Flexes and cables were observed to be in good condition and out of reach to the children on inspection.
- Heavy equipment and storage were observed to be anchored to prevent it from tipping over.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands before mealtimes. Warm water, soap and paper towels were available to the children. Water temperatures were recorded between 30.2°C and 42.7°C which allowed for adequate handwashing.
- Foot pedal operated bins were observed throughout the service for the disposal of waste.
- The care rooms were naturally ventilated through openable windows.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The inspectors did not observe the administration of medication on the day of inspection. The adults informed the inspector that consent for administration of temperature reducing medication had been obtained on the enrolment form and two adults signed for this after parental consent was gained.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children in Creche Room 1 had a designated sleep room and were also observed sleeping in cots in the care room. Children in Creche Room 2 were observed sleeping in cots and on stackable floor beds in 2 designated sleep rooms and in the care room. Staff were observed carrying out sleep checks in relation to children's, colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals which was recorded on an electronic application. The air temperature of the designated sleep rooms and care rooms were recorded between 19.2°C and 20.1°C while children were sleeping at the time. The room temperatures were maintained at the required temperature of between 18°C and 22°C for children above 12 months. The inspector reviewed 10 sleep records, and these were recorded to be carried out correctly.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clear and unobstructed during the inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. In Creche Room 1, two bottles of medication were stored in the fridge, and the fridge was observed to be not secured and easily accessible to the children. This posed a safety risk to the children. It is acknowledged when brought to the attention of the adults, the fridge was secured.

#### Infection Control:

2. While observing nappy changing in Creche Room 1 the following was observed:

- The children's hands were not washed after nappy changing.
- The changing mat was not cleaned after nappy changing.

This posed a risk of cross infection to the children. This practice was at variance with the services infection control policy.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

#### **General Safety:**

The medication was removed from the fridge and staff are aware that no medication is stored in the room fridge. A safety latch has been placed on the fridge. Staff reviewed the medication management policy. Management plan to conduct safety checks in the service.

#### **Infection Control:**

Staff have been reminded of the nappy changing procedure in line with the services infection control policy and instructed to wash children's hands after a nappy change. Visual signs have been put in place. Management plan to conduct a review of this.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

Proof of purchasing of a safety lock.  
A photo of a newly installed lock on the fridge.

#### **Infection Control:**

Proof of visual images on the wall.

### **Summary Comment**

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

## Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-

- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
- (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

## Compliance Information

(1) The complaints policy was reviewed on day of inspection.

- (a) The service's complaints policy included the procedure for reporting a complaint.
- (b) The policy also included the procedure in which complaints are dealt with.
- (c) The complaints policy detailed how the person making the complaint is kept up to date with the procedure.

(2)

- (a) The service ensured that historical complaints were stored on site.
- (b) The service ensured that the complaints policy and procedure were adhered to.

(3)

- (a) Information and investigations on the complaint outcome was securely stored on site.
- (b) Records in relation to previous complaints were furnished to the inspectors.

(4) Records of historical complaints were stored and the person in charge informed the inspector that they will be retained for two years.