

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LD001		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tir na Nog		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Harmony House Community Centre, St Michaels Road, Longford, Co. Longford		
<b>Eircode:</b>	N39 PQV3		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Margaret McCoppin		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	16/11/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM n/a
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. Kennedy		
<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).

### Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

### Description of service

This community operated preschool is located within close proximity of the town of Longford. The service offers a sessional service for children from 09:00 to 12:00hrs for children aged between 2 to 6 years of age. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care and sessional programme, is provided from Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year.

Additionally, the service operates an afterschool programme between 14.00hrs to 17.45hrs, for the school aged children. There are two playrooms namely the ECCE room 1 and ECC room 2 with sanitary accommodation on the ground floor. The school age room is on the first floor. There is a kitchen, sanitary accommodation and an office on the first floor. There is a designated outdoor play area, with direct access from ECCE room 2 and via the hallway for the children from ECCE room 1.

A child centred play-based care, based on emerging themes is offered.

### Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are a total of six staff (including the person in charge) working in the premises with one person employed for administration duties. The five staff working directly with the children hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education.

### 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/ 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.

## Additional Information

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of November the Early Years Inspector sent a referral to the fire officer to advise further on the suitability of the wooden covers surrounding the electric storage heaters in terms of fire safety.

## 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The deputy person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and the person in charge was on the premises from 10:10hrs and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school service was operating.

The six staff files and the person in attendance doing the music session with the children were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Fourteen of the fourteen validated written references on file in respect of the six staff and the additional person in attendance were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the seven adults.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that two of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.

(4) Five staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 18 children present. All children were aged between 2 years 6 month to 5 years of age. There were four staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration elements of the inspection.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### 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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff. The staff sat and had their snack with the children.
- The drinking utensils used were suitable for the children's ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to toileting and toilet training. Children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices. On the day of inspection, it was advised that all children are toilet trained.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Children were encouraged and supported to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practise and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child.
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust.
- being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children).
- behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection).
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.

- encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking, nurturing and comforting children.
- using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed in each of the playrooms and used with the children to support their learning.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times, and notice boards with upcoming events / schedules.
- Learning journals were also kept with photographic images on “settling in”, “all about me”, emotions and feelings, “our kindness tree”, road safety, Autumn time, Halloween and making vegetable soup.
- The staff also completed short, medium, and long-term curriculum planning goals.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging each day while in the service.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child’s abilities, allowing for children’s partial participation and participation with support.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed at free play, painting, stacking, playing house, playing with transport vehicles, and dressing dolls and playing in the home area.
- For the music session, the children were singing action songs, playing with musical instruments and participating in a silence game.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children’s feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children’s actions and other’s responses.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child’s learning and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.

- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. The inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used open ended questions such as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told ‘no’.
- Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The service had a healthy eating policy.
- At 10.30hrs, the children had their snack of fruit pieces, yogurt, crackers, sandwiches, and bread sticks, provided by parents and guardians.
- A drinks table was available in each playroom to allow the children the opportunity to ‘self-serve’ their drinks.
- Perishable items from children’s lunch boxes were stored in a designated fridge in the kitchen.

### 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:

- There was a buzzer access system, at the main entrance front door.
- The kitchen, and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children, attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The temperatures in each playroom were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows were fitted with safety access devices and there were visibility posters on the glass doors as a safety precaution.
- There were records of a regular pest control system.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The person in charge clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of risk to the pre-school child.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, and after using a tissue.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchen for the storage of perishable foods.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The person in charge had a cleaning schedule template and cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

### Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to a child on the day of the inspection. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

### Fire Safety:

- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

### Outing:

- The person in charge advised that no outings take place from the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General safety

1. The wooden covers surrounding the storage heaters- four in total between ECCE room 1 and ECCE room 2 were not secured to the wall posing a potential safety concern.
2. A wooden post on the climbing frame in the outdoor play area was worn and could pose risk of splintering.

#### Infection Control:

3. In the designated quiet area in the ECCE room 1, two child sized chairs had evidence of being frayed and torn, thereby preventing effective cleaning.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

The person in charge submitted a written response on 4<sup>th</sup> of December to the office of the early year's inspectorate to advise

#### **General safety**

1. They are awaiting confirmation from the fire officer on the suitability of the wooden storage heater covers.
2. We have sandpapered down and painted the wooden post, so they do not pose any more danger and the staff will check regularly to ensure that there are no safety hazards on the wooden climbing frame.

#### **Infection control**

3. A new couch has been purchased in place of the two child-sized chairs in ECCE room 1 and the service will replace worn-out chairs on a regular basis.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the early year's inspectorate of the repaired climbing frame and the replaced seating in ECCE room 1.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted.

The non-compliance under point 1 has not been addressed as the person in charge advised that they are awaiting confirmation from the fire officer on the suitability of the wooden storage heater covers.

The non-compliances relating to points 2 and 3 identified under Regulation 23, has been adequately addressed.

## 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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Evidence was provided that the six adults had recently completed their Far Training and were awaiting receipt of their certificates.
- (2)(a) In the ECCE room 1 and ECCE room 2 there were first aid boxes with content items within date, safely, stored, easily accessible by the adults and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b)The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the preschool service.

### 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 firefighting 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) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was carried out, on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- (b)A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 7<sup>th</sup> of June 2023. Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the smoke and fire detection system was dated 1st of September 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom.

### Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2024, which was sessional service for 33 pre-school children and 40 school aged children included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

(a) From a visual inspection the premises were of sound and stable structure.

The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appeared to be structurally sound, weather/water-tight, to ensure protection from the weather elements.

The interior floors, walls and ceilings appeared to be well finished, with no evidence of mould.

(b) Exits were clearly identified and visible during service hours.

Electrical sockets were safe.

Floor coverings were secure and non-slip.

(c) There was natural lighting from the windows in the outer walls, in each playroom. The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.

(d)The service had a cleaning schedule.

(e) There were three toilets and three wash hand basins between the ECCE room 1 and ECCE room 2 on the ground floor. A staff toilet and wash hand basin was also on the ground floor.

Two toilets and two wash hand basins were provided for the school aged service on the first floor.