

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LD019
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stars Academy
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Newtownforbes, Newtownforbes, Co. Longford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N39 D9W7
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maureen Dunne
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	11/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Duignan
<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

Stars Academy participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is 2 years to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:30am to 12:30hrs Monday to Friday and operates for 38 weeks of the year.

The premises is a converted semi-detached building with two care rooms, sanitary accommodation, an office and a kitchen located on the ground floor.

### Staffing

There were five adults present working directly with the children including the registered provider.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

- Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1)(3) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 – Checking in and checking out and record of attendance.

- Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b)(4) – Fire Safety measures.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 15(1)(f) - Record of a Pre-School Child.
- Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials.

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 referral was sent to the Chief Fire Officer in Longford County Council on 12 June 2025.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes 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

*(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

Five staff files were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of five adults whose records were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months whose record was reviewed.
- (4) Five adults working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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) There were twenty-two children attending the service being supervised directly by five adults during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day 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:*
- (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;*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (f) A health care plan for a child attending the service did not contain sufficient information to ensure the safe management of the child in the event they became unwell or required emergency administration of medication.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(f) A health care plan was developed, and all members of staff were briefed on it.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)(f) Document.

## Summary Comment

The written response and documents submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 15(1)(f).

## 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.*

## Non-Compliance Information

- Two tables in Room 1 were too high for the chairs provided and were unsuitable for the children to use. It was observed that the height of the tables was at the level of the children's chest rather than their waist to ensure comfort for eating and table top activities.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- The staff members check the table and chairs daily before children arrive. The correct chairs are placed with correct height tables.

### Supporting documentation submitted

- Two photographs.

## Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 21.

### 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 entrance to the service was secured and managed by the staff members to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. Necklaces and chains are removed if a child is observed to be wearing them.

There was documentary evidence available that indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

##### Infection Control:

The staff members supervised the children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Staff members were observed washing their hands during the morning.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Cleaning schedules were recorded for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

##### Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practices when administering medication in the service. Medication was safely stored in the office.

##### Safe Sleep.

A comfortable rest area was available in the two pre-school rooms for any child who wished to have a rest or take a break from activities for a while.

##### Outing:

The service conducts outings and operational procedures are in place.

##### Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. An unsecured hanging canopy was observed in Room 1 which created a potential risk of strangulation if a child became entangled.
2. Wipes and nappy change sacks were observed in a cupboard under sink in the sanitary area which was not secured and created a potential risk of injury to a child if they accessed the contents.
3. The doors to the kitchen and the office located off Room 2, were observed to be open and unsecured during the inspection. The doors must be secured to prevent a child from accessing both areas.

#### Fire Safety:

4. There was not a clearly identified means of escape in the event of a fire as there was no fire signage in the premises. A written referral was sent to the Chief Fire Officer in Longford County Council.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The canopy was secured at a height to remove the risk.
2. The cupboard is now secured. All staff have been advised about the importance of keeping the cupboard secured. This will be checked on a daily basis.
3. The doors are locked when not in use. All staff have been advised about the importance of keeping the doors closed at all times. Signage is now displayed on the doors stating that they must remain closed and the doors are locked now when not in use

#### Fire Safety:

4. Fire exit signs have been installed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. No evidence submitted.
2. Photograph of secured cupboard
3. Photographs of the secured doors and signage.

#### Fire Safety:

4. Two photographs of fire signage.

### Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted have been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance for regulation 23 has been met.

### 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.*
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*
- (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 child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' visit to the service was documented in the visitor's log
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

### 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) There was a person who was trained in in first aid response (FAR) present and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the office.
  - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the staff members caring for the children attending the 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) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 7 May 2025.
  - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on 14 November 2024, and the smoke alarm were last serviced on 21 May 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas and in the outdoor play area.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 30 children.