

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

Tusla I.D.:	TU2015LH007							
Name of Service	Mary's House Ballapousta							
Address of Service:	Ballapousta, Smarmore, Ardee, Co Louth A92 C437							
Email Address:	ballapousta@maryshouse.ie							
Name of Registered Provider:	Anthony McLeod							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time	✓	Sessional	✓		
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary			
Proposed change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change in age profile: from 3 – 6 years to 2 – 6 years. Adding an additional service type: from sessional to full day, part time and sessional. Change in hours of operation: from 08:45-11:45 (AM) and 12:00-17:00 (PM) (as stated on National Register) to 07:30-17:30 Change in number of staff employed: from 4 to 8 staff members. 							
Proposed Number of Children:	40							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	The application can be approved in relation to changing the age profile to 2 – 6 years; changing the service type from sessional to full day, part time and sessional; changing the hours of operation to 07:30 - 17:30; and changing the number of staff employed from 4 to 8							
Registered change:	Change in Service Type from Sessional to Full Day, Part-Time & Sessional, 07:30 – 17:30 Change in Age Profile – from 3-6 years to 2-6 years Change in Number of Staff from 4 to 8 staff							
Date of Inspection:	2	8	0	1	2	0	2	5
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Taaffe							
Title:	Early years inspector							
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan,							

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Co. Meath C15 CP23

Rationale for Inspection:

Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day, Part-Time, Sessional service for 40 children
Date of Registration	10 th February 2025

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Mary's House Ballapousta is a privately owned early years service which commenced operation in 2012, and which was newly acquired by the registered provider in July 2024. To date the service has accommodated a maximum of 40 pre-school children aged 3-6 years on a sessional basis. A school aged service is also provided.
Premises	The service is conducted from the ground floor of a purpose-built premises located in a rural setting outside Ardee in Co Louth. There are three care rooms provided on the premises, namely the Junior Room, the Senior Room and the Afterschool Room. A further smaller room currently used for small group activities and storage of additional play materials and equipment is due to be re-purposed into a more spacious staff room than is currently available. Ancillary accommodation includes a spacious reception area, an office, a kitchen, a staff room and a sluice room. Parking facilities are available to the front of the building and a fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the building.
Staffing	The service manager and 3 staff members currently work in the service. It is proposed that a total of 8 staff members would be employed in the service, subject to approval of the change in circumstances application. The registered provider is not present in the service on a daily basis.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit</p>

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	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.
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and service manager who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment	
<i>(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—</i> <i>(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.</i>	
Requirement met:	(1)(a) The requirement has been met. The service manager is the designated person in charge and the deputy manager deputises in her absence when required.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels	
<i>(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.</i>	
Requirement met:	The requirement has been met. (1) The registered provider is aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6 ensuring that an adequate number of adults are at all times working directly with the children in the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service	
Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play	
<i>(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—</i> <i>(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and</i> <i>(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.</i>	

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(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1)(a) The three care rooms are resourced with a broad range of play materials and equipment laid out in defined interest areas to facilitate children to engage in play throughout the day. Play materials are suitable for the ages and stages of the children to be accommodated in each room and these are stored in open-fronted low-level shelving units to facilitate the children to choose and access the items independently. The interest areas include home corners, shop areas, construction areas, arts and crafts area and libraries. The outdoor play area contains a range of play equipment including a wooden playhouse, ride-on toys, slides, a low-level plastic climbing frame, dolls and prams and seesaws.</p> <p>(b) All children attending the service are aged 2 years and older and 18 stackable beds are provided to be set up in the care rooms when required for children who show signs of tiredness or still avail of a daytime nap. A rest area is available in the care rooms with soft floor mats and cushions provided to enable a child to rest and take a break from activities throughout the day if required.</p> <p>(3)(a) The outdoor play area is fully enclosed by walls and fencing. The outdoor play area which is surfaced with impact-absorbent material is observed to be suitable and secure, and no safety hazards are noted. A suitable range of play materials and equipment are available in the outdoor area to facilitate play.</p>
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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.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>A three-week menu is on display with the service providing breakfast, dinner and tea for the children, cooked and prepared on site. Parents provide the children's morning snacks from home. Drinking water is available and accessible to the children in the individual care rooms.</p>
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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

The inspector did not identify any hazards that would impact the health, safety or welfare of the children attending the service. It appears that appropriate measures have been undertaken in the service to ensure the safety of the children. Examples of these measures include the premises and outdoor play areas being appropriately secured, the wheeled bins and the heat pump being made inaccessible to the children by being secured in a separate enclosed area to the rear of the premises, and medication and cleaning agents being stored safely out of the reach of children. The warm water supply at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation and at the sinks in the care rooms did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. The registered provider gave assurances to the inspector that the warm water supply was thermostatically controlled to reduce the risk of scalding for children in attendance.

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.*

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The registered provider is aware of the requirement to ensure that a person with in-date first aid response (FAR) training is at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. Training certificates are available to show that the service manager and a staff member holds in-date first aid response (FAR) training and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster confirms that a suitably trained first

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aider is at all times immediately available to the children when the service is in operation.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes available in the service are suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and are available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a) A record is maintained of the fire drills conducted in the service on a monthly basis, with the most recent fire drill documented as having taken place on 15/01/2025.

(b) Records are available showing that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 26/08/2024 and the smoke detection system is certified as having been serviced on 28/11/2024.

(4) Maps and notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire are displayed in the premises.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

The registered provider currently has insurance cover in place until 27/03/2025 for 50 children attending the service on a full day care basis.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(a) The premises appears to be in satisfactory condition and well maintained.

(b) The service is appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access. The outdoor play area is secured with latched gates and fencing.

(c)

Lighting

- The premises is adequately lit by means of natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting.

Heating

- The service is heated by means of a heat pump and underfloor heating.

Ventilation

- Ventilation is predominantly provided by means of openable windows and trickle vents, including in the 3 care rooms and their adjoining sanitary accommodation designated for children’s use. Mechanical ventilation is provided in the sluice room, staff toilet and changing room.

(d) The premises is in a clean condition and appears to be in a good state of repair.

(e) The service is equipped with adequate sanitary facilities for the 40 children the service is registered to accommodate.

- There are 2 toilets, 1 nappy changing station and 2 wash hand basins provided for use by children in the sanitary accommodation adjoining the Junior Room.
- There are 2 toilets, and 2 wash hand basins provided for use by children in the sanitary accommodation adjoining the Senior Room.

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- There are 2 toilets, and 2 wash hand basins provided for use by children in the sanitary accommodation adjoining the Afterschool Room.
- One toilet and accompanying wash hand basin is provided for use by staff members.

The registered provider is aware that 1 nappy changing station with accompanying wash hand basin meets the needs of up to 11 children in nappies, and 1 toilet with accompanying wash hand basin meets the needs of up to 11 children who are toilet trained.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) There is adequate clear floor space available for the safety, play and movement of the 40 children attending the service.

(2) The minimum space regulatory requirement can be met for the 40 pre-school children accommodated in the service. The registered provider is aware of the minimum clear floor space requirements as specified in Schedule 7.

- The clear floor space in the Junior Room measures 42.3 square metres. This meets the space requirements for a maximum of 18 pre-school children aged 2 - 6 years being accommodated in this room on a part-time or on a full day care basis or 23 children aged 2½ - 6 years attending on a sessional basis, of whom one or more is remaining on the premises to avail of part-time or full day care.
- The clear floor space in the Senior Room measures 43.3 square metres. This meets the space requirements for a maximum of 18 pre-school children aged 2 - 6 years being accommodated in this room on a part-time or on a full day care basis or 23 children aged 2½ - 6 years attending on a sessional basis, of whom one or more is remaining on the premises to avail of part-time or full day care.
- The clear floor space in the Afterschool Room measures 48.2 square metres.

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