

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH065
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naíonra Dhún Dealgan
-------------------------	----------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan, Muirtheimhne Mór, Dún Dealgan, Co. Louth
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	A91 D797
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Annette Mhic Ardáil
-------------------------------------	---------------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	15/01/2024
-------------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	--

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M.Flood
<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Naionra Dhún Dealgan was established in 1994 and operates as a sessional pre-school service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 44 children and operates from 08:45 to 12:45 each weekday.

The service operates from a purpose-built building on the grounds of the primary school Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan. There are 2 playrooms in operation namely Seomra 1 and Seomra 2 that are situated on the ground floor. Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary areas, staff room, a kitchen and storage areas. The preschool children have access to outdoor play areas; a Clós Beag which is located directly of the two playrooms and Clós Mór which is located on the grounds of the primary school.

### Staffing

The service manager and 5 childcare staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children. One additional adult is employed to carry out cleaning duties in the service.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11,20,21 and 25; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

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 inspector would like 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
- (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)&(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(2) There were 7 staff files and one student file presented for inspection and the following were reviewed:

- (a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for each of the 7 members of staff and 1 student who attends the service on a regular basis.
- (c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for each member of staff employed in the service and for the student who also attends.

(d) Documentary evidence of the required international police vetting was available for 1 staff member in the service who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period greater than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that each member of staff, who works directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 on the National Framework of Childcare 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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) On the day of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there were 2 rooms in operation which included:

- **Seomra 1:** There were 2 adults working directly with the 14 pre-school children present, aged between 3 to 4 years.
- **Seomra 2:** There were two adults was working directly with the 18 pre-school children present, aged between 4 to 5 years.

The service manager was also present and provided assistance in the care rooms as required. One additional staff member was also present and was engaged in cleaning duties.

One student is reported to attend the service on a regular basis but was not present during the inspection.

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

### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(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.*

*(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(b) A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft seating, mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.

(4) The children had access to an enclosed outdoor play area (Clós Beag) which is located directly off each playroom and were observed to access this area a number of times during the inspection. The areas are fenced and gated and have a safety matted surface, with a partially covered area for use in 'all types of weather'. A variety of toys and equipment were available to support all areas of development including ride on equipment, a plastic caterpillar tunnel for climbing through, balance steps, a rocker, a small slide, activity trays which included chalk and manipulative toys, a 'mud kitchen', with real world supporting equipment and tables and chairs. The children also have access to a large play area (Clós Mór) which is located on the grounds of the primary school. A risk assessment was carried out of the area during the inspection and due to the freezing weather conditions, this area was deemed a safety risk, so the children did not access it.

## 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

- In both care rooms there was a variety of toys and equipment that supported many aspects of the children’s development. Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in both rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. In Seomra 1, it was observed that the doors between the playroom and outdoor area were left open so that the children could access both areas as they wished. This promotes independence and supports child led play.
- In the playrooms the toys and equipment available were divided into specific areas of interest including a home area, a reading and book area, a dress up area that supported imaginary and role play, sensory play equipment which included sand and water trays and activity trays for playdough. Each of these areas were supported with equipment and materials that enhanced the play experience for the children and promoted areas of development. There were also a variety of low-level toy boxes that included blocks, manipulative toys and animals. All toy boxes were labelled with photographs of the toys contained within so that the children could select and replace their chosen toy of interest and promote independence.
- There was evidence that the children had completed thematic art pictures, which included the children’s own free painted pictures, examples of “eadaí” which supported the curriculum theme of the week. The children also designed pictures of “Is mise” where they developed pictures of themselves, and these were on display in the classrooms.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

##### General Safety:

1. Some of the low-level shelving units in the care rooms and the 'mud kitchens' located in the Clós Beag had sharp unprotected corners. These are a potential injury a risk.

##### Infection Control:

2. In Seomra 1 the children's hands were not observed being washed after play in the outdoor area. The children returned to the classroom and commenced playing together with playdough and tidying toys back into boxes before hands were washed in preparation for snack time.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. Soft Corner Cushions were put on all the exposed sharp corners of the units in both rooms. A soft polyethene foam was put around the mud kitchen to cover sharp corners. A daily risk assessment will be carried out to ensure that all of these measures remain in place, ensuring no sharp corners are exposed.
2. Children's hands will be washed before they're enter the classroom after playing in the outdoor area. Staff will ensure that all children wash their hands with warm water and soap at the outdoor sink before they return to play in their classrooms.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence

#### Summary Comment

The service manager submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances, together with photographic evidence. Based on this information the non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been 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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for four adults in the service.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes available in each of the care rooms and were stored in a conspicuous location where they were easily accessible in the event of an emergency.