

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK151
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Scoil Na Nog
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Croagh, Croagh, Co Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94 KW90
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Clare Mullane
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	8
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Estuary House, Henry Street Limerick.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Riordan
<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

Scoil Na Nóg is a private full day care pre-school service operating from a purposely designed premises in the village of Croagh in County Limerick. The service is open from 8.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service has a capacity to cater for 26 preschool children each morning and 8 pre-school children each evening. A service for school aged children operates each afternoon. The service operates from one large pre-school room. A large outdoor play space is located at the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge of running the pre-school. There are three additional staff employed to work at the service. All staff have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care 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 and 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 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

*(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) The registered provider was present on the day of the inspection. There was a person available to deputise if needed.

(b) The staff roster indicated that the registered provider or their deputy was rostered to be present each day at the facility.

(2)(a) Two written references were available for two of the four staff working at the service. One reference was on file for one of the four staff employed by the service.

(b) All references were from previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the registered provider and all staff working at the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in another State, for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) The registered provider and each staff at the service held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) There was one staff working at the service who had no references on file. There was one staff member working at the service who did not have a second reference on file.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

All outstanding references were furnished to the registered provider and placed on the required files. The registered provider stated that references will be sought and validated prior to staff taking up employment at the service

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs of the required references were forwarded to the Office of the Early year's inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

### 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) The registered provider ensured that at all times there was a sufficient number of adults working at the service.

(2) On the day of the inspection, there were 24 pre-school children under the supervision of the registered provider and 2 additional staff for the duration of the morning sessional service. There were 8 pre-school children present with 2 staff in the afternoon. The adult/child ratio was correct in the facility.

### 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

#### **BASIC NEEDS:**

A healthy eating policy was available at the service. Breakfast of cereals and a drink were offered each morning to those who arrived early. Parents provided fruit options and a light snack for children's break at 11.00am. For the children who stayed at the service for the afternoon, a hot meal was served 1.15pm. On the day of the inspection, chips and chicken goujons were served for dinner. Drinking water was accessible to the children at all times.

All children were toilet trained and were independently using the bathroom facilities next to the pre-school room. Individual towels were used by the children for hand drying. Tissues and wipes were easily accessible to the children, and all waste was disposed of properly in lidded bins. Separate adult sanitary accommodation was also available. Nappy changing facilities were available if required.

Large soft couches with cushions and soft mats were available indoors for children to rest if required. Low level sleep mats were available for children who may have required a rest period in the afternoons.

Children had access to an outdoor play area at the rear of the premises. Doors to the outdoor spaces remained open at all times, allowing children free movement between both indoors and outside.

#### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

The pre-school operated from a large spacious playroom indoors and from a well-resourced outdoor play space at the rear of the building. Indoors all play equipment and materials were grouped to provide specific interest areas for children to choose from. There was an art and craft space with lots of paints, brushes and paper accessible, a library area, a home corner and lots of imaginative play equipment and construction spaces with a varied selection of materials to choose from. Topics of interest were located at the children's eye level throughout the room. Posters with "All about me" were displayed on the walls with family photographs attached. Play materials were stored in clear plastic containers and were clearly labelled and stored on low level shelving to promote children's independence. Toys and equipment were rotated from higher shelves when needed. Low level tables and chairs were accessible for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes.

Children spent long periods of time outdoors. Lots of covered spaces and sheltered areas were available outside facilitating outdoor play in all weather conditions. Ride on tractors, bubble cars and bikes were available outside. Large picnic tables and chairs facilitated children being able to dine outside when the weather was favourable. A large play gym with slides, ladders, climbing wall and play areas was located in the centre of the playground. Impact absorbent rubber matting covered the outdoor area, reducing the likelihood of injuries while children played outside. Lots of sandboxes and mud kitchens outdoors provided children with opportunities for sensorial

play. A large wooden shed was available for sheltered play outside. A grassed field at the rear of the playground provided a space for sports activities.

### 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 registered provider carried out daily risk assessments of indoor and outdoor play areas to ensure the safety of all children attending. The front door to the pre-school was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the premises unsupervised and to restrict any unauthorised access to the facility.

##### Fire Safety:

All emergency fire exits in the premises were clear and unobstructed. A safe fire assembly point was identified in the outdoor play area.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area, it was noted that one of the bikes used by the children had the rubber protectors on the handlebars missing. All play equipment must be in good condition and free from any exposed sharp edges to ensure no safety risk for children.
2. The timber fence surrounding the outdoor playground was unstable and broken. This posed a safety hazard to the children.
3. The door to an outside storage shed storing a lawn mower was unlocked. This posed a safety risk to children should they access this area of the service. This was highlighted in a previous report.
4. It was observed that waste plastic pipes were discarded in the field at the rear of the premises, which was used as a sports play area.
5. The gate leading directly from the front of the premises to the field at the rear of the premises was locked with a metal clip placed in the handle. A secure gate with a lock is required to ensure children cannot open this gate and exit the premises unsupervised.

## Infection Control:

6. The adult toilet at the service was used as a storage space for play materials and for cleaning equipment for the premises. It is recommended that all sanitary facilities are not used as storage rooms. This was highlighted on previous inspection reports.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. All broken toys have been removed and replaced at the service.
2. The timber fencing has been removed and work on replacing the fence has commenced.
3. A new lock has been placed on the outdoor storage shed.
4. The field at the rear of the premises has been cleaned and all waste in the area has been removed.
5. A new secure lock has been fitted to the gate at the side of the building.

## Infection Control:

6. All cleaning equipment has been removed from the adult toilet facility.  
Regular safety checks of both the indoor areas and outside will take place to ensure the areas are free of any hazards that could create a potential safety risk to children at the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the changes were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

#### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of the changes were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified 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 registered provider and two additional staff working at the service had completed first aid responder (FAR) training, and all certificates were in date.
- (2) (a) There was a well-stocked first aid box available in the preschool room.
- (b) The first aid equipment was easily accessible to the registered provider at all times if required.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(b) The number, the type and the maintenance record of all firefighting equipment was maintained. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2024.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(a) There was no documented evidence of monthly fire drills at the service. The most recent record of fire drills was dated in January 2024.
- (1)(b) Smoke alarms must be checked on a regular basis. The date of the last annual service of the alarm system was the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2024.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)(a) Fire drills have recommenced, and a written record of each monthly fire drill is maintained.  
 (1)(b) Smoke alarms are now checked on a regular basis and a record is maintained of each check.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the aforementioned records were forwarded to the Office of the early years Inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate, which outlined that adequate insurance was available for up to 26 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on 28 March 2025 and is due to expire on 27 March 2026.