

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D:	TU2015LK163							
Name of Service	Step by Step Montessori and Afterschool							
Address of Service:	Newboro, Ballyloughnan, Patrickswell, Co. Limerick, V94 C92V							
Email Address:	stepbysteppwell@gmail.com							
Name of Registered Provider:	Cathriona Fitzgerald							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Proposed change:	Sessional Service to Full Day Care Service & Sessional							
Proposed Number of Children:	22							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	Approve change to full day care, for a maximum of 11(Max 8 children on full day care basis), due to planning restrictions							
Registered change:	Change in service type from Sessional to Full Day Care Service for 11 Children (Max 8 Full Day Care)							
Date of Inspection:	0	3	0	5	2	0	2	4
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Riordan							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Tusla Offices, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick							

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

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

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day Care / Sessional Service for 11 (Max 8 Full Day Care) Children
Date of Registration	29 th August 2025

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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	Step by Step Montessori school is located in a rural setting close to the villages of Patrickswell and Adare. It provides a sessional preschool service for children aged 2.5 – 5 years for 3 hours a day between the hours of 09.15 to 12.15 pm, Monday to Friday A school aged service is provided in the afternoon from the premises.
Premises	The service operates from 3 pre-school rooms which are carefully planned and well-resourced for providing a pre-school programme. A large enclosed outdoor play area 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 2 additional staff employed to work at the service. All staff have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.
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 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

Requirement met:

The following requirements have been met.

(1)(a) The registered provider is the designated person in charge of the service and a named person to deputise has been appointed as required.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency, and

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Requirement met:

The following requirement has been met.

(1) The registered provider has identified a minimum of 3 staff members who will be on the premises at all times and evidenced this with a proposed staffing roster for the service.

(8)(b) Not applicable as the proposed service is not a childminding service.

(c) Not applicable as this is not a service that operates single handedly.

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—

(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

(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.

(2) A registered provider—

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

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Requirement met:	<p>The following requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1)(a) Adequate and suitable facilities were provided for children to play indoors and outdoors. Each preschool room was bright and spacious and well laid out with various equipment and play materials displayed on open, low level shelving units.</p> <p>(b) Low level beds with appropriate mattresses and bed linen were available in the service. These will be laid out in the sensory, quiet room to accommodate rest or sleep for the children staying in the service for the full day.</p> <p>(2)(a) The service has its own outdoor play area to the rear and side of the premises. The area is fully enclosed and is equipped with a wide range of play materials. The area has an impact absorbent surface. A sheltered area outside is also accessible.</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 following requirement has been met.</p> <p>A healthy eating policy is in place. Parents provide a healthy morning snack for the children each day. A kitchen area is available in the service in the afterschool room with facilities for storing perishable foods and for the preparation of hot snacks.</p>
Requirement not met:	<p>The following requirement has not been met.</p> <p>A plan to provide a main meal to the children attending for the full day is not available. The registered provider is considering various options to meet this requirement.</p>
Response from Provider:	<p>A detailed menu plan has been developed and forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.</p>
Summary Comment:	<p>The response from the provider is adequate to meet the outstanding requirements of the regulation.</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 following requirements have been met.

Electric gates at the entrance to the premises and a securely locked front door to the school were in place to prevent unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting the service unsupervised.

Outdoors a fully enclosed outdoor area with a high fence prevented unauthorised access to or exit from the outdoor play area.

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The policy and the associated procedures detailed all measures to reduce the likelihood of infection spreading in the facility. Pedal operated lidded bins were available in each room to facilitate the safe disposal of all waste. Hot water and liquid soap were accessible at all sinks.

Cleaning programmes were in place to ensure a good standard of operational hygiene was in place. All cleaning equipment was safely stored in a locked press.

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 following requirement has been met.

(1) Certification was available to evidence that a person trained in first aid was available at all times in the service.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service and stored in a conspicuous location in the premises.

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.*

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Requirement met:	The following requirement has been met. (1)(a) Fire drills take place once a month. Written documentation was available to support this practice. The most recent fire drill took place on the 30 th of April 2024. (b) There was a record available to indicate the maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the service. The extinguishers were serviced last in September 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced in April 2024.
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:	An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to this inspection. The Registered Provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered providers compliance with Regulation 28.
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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 following requirements has been met. (a) The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure. (b) There was one entrance door to the service which was appropriately safe and secure with a lock in situ. The outdoor area was secure to prevent a child exiting the area unsupervised. (c) The service was adequately lit with lots of natural light available in all areas. Blinds were available on all windows to reduce lighting if children were having a rest. Oil and electric heating systems were available, and checks were kept of the surface temperature of all radiators. Adequate ventilation was in place through openable windows in all rooms within the building. (d) Cleaning schedules were in place in the service. (e) There was a sufficient number of toilets and wash hand basins in the service for the proposed number of children to attend the service.
Requirement not met:	The following requirements has not been met. (e) There was no nappy changing facility in the premises.

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Response from Provider:	(e)The registered provider stated in her reply to the report that children will not be registered to attend until they are toilet trained.
Summary Comment:	The provision to provide a nappy changing facility will be required if a child is in attendance who is not 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.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*
- (4) *Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*
 - (a) *a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) *a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*
- (5) *A registered provider of a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a minimum of 2 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

Requirement met:	<p>The following requirement was met.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) An area of 40.07 square metres in the preschool room 1 was available. An area of 13.16 square meters were available in preschool room 2. (2) The preschool rooms had adequate clear floor space for the service type that was proposed. (3) Not applicable. (4) There was adequate floor space to accommodate children to attend both a sessional and a full day care basis at any one time. (5) Not applicable.
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