

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS050		
Name of Service:	Suaimhneas Community Childcare		
Address of Service:	Harpurs Lane, Harpurs Lane, Portlaoise, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R32 C7DD		
Name of Registered Provider:	Joan Bolger		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12/07/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM 16
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C. O'Connor Hughes		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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).			
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable		

Description of service

This community service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to operate between the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. During the summer months the service is operating between the hours of 08:45 - 17:45.

The Early Years' Service is located on the ground floor of a purpose-built community centre. Four pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen and an office are provided. Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear of the premises. The service is located in an urban setting in a residential area in the town of Portlaoise, County Laois.

Staffing

The designated person in charge, the administrator, eight childcare practitioners and the chef were present during the inspection. Two support staff came on duty in the afternoon. The registered provider does not work directly with children and was not present during the inspection.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,15,16,17,18,19,20,22,23,25,26,28 and in addition a review of non-compliance under 29 (e) since the last inspection on 13 December 2021. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

The designated person in charge stated that the Board of Management do not attend the community service and have no access to children. Twenty-one staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of six staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of staff in the service.

(4)

All staff members held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(d) were not carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of staff in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The outstanding police vetting was sought and received in respect of one staff member.

(Police vetting included)

All staff files checked including the CV to ensure that all staff members have police vetting if they have spent more than 6 months in another country.

(3)

The registered provider has reviewed all staff files to check that the correct procedures have been carried out prior to the employment of staff in the service in respect of police vetting. A double check using a checklist will be carried out by both the registered provider and the childcare manager.

Summary Comment

(2)(d)

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

(3)

The corrective actions if implemented should meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were twenty-two children attending the service supervised directly by eight adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (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;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)
In a review of thirteen child records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Information for parents was available and shared with parents via a parent handbook prior to commencement in the service in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g). The parent handbook had been printed into seven languages accommodating all parents and their children attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge ensured that a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Children went to the toilet independently and were assisted where necessary. Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting. Regular nappy changes were carried out and as required.

The pre-school rooms were laid out with low level tables and chairs. Materials were accessible to children on low level wooden shelving and included books, jigsaws, bricks, blocks, dolls, prams, arts and crafts and fine motor skill toys. Children enjoyed arts and crafts, tabletop activities, story time and outdoor play during the inspection.

Children made choices as to what they played with and what activity to participate in.

Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Positive interactions were observed between staff and children. Eye contact was maintained, soft language tones were used and positive praise given to children on the completion of activities. Staff were familiar with children and their personalities. Access and Inclusion care plans and additional staff were employed for children requiring extra support and assistance. Health care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition.

Staff worked in partnership with parents. Information recorded in "a record of my day" book was used as the basis to provide a verbal handover to parents at collection time. A journal is maintained on each child that includes the children's play and work activities and is shared with the parents at the end of each pre-school term.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Two separate sleep rooms equipped with standard cots were available in the service. Low level beds were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep.

(3) (a)

Outdoor play areas were available to the rear of the service. The outdoor play has been further developed since the last inspection on 13 December 2021 with additional artificial grass and absorbent surface areas in place. The areas were equipped with a variety of bikes, trikes, swings and climb/slide units. A new playhouse and a tepee to support physical and imaginative play had been added to the outdoor area. A high-level wall and gates secured the perimeter of the outdoor area.

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.

Compliance Information

All meals and snacks are prepared fresh by the cook. The daily menu plan reflected the provision of the food for breakfast, morning snack, dinner and evening snack. Children’s dietary needs are catered for. A cottage pie was provided as a hot meal to children attending the morning service. Water and milk were offered to children. Children enjoyed the selection of food provided during the inspection. Fresh fruit was available in each of the pre-school rooms for children to self-serve.

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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspectors completed the visitor log on arrival.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. All toys and materials were easily cleanable.

Warm running water, liquid soap and hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Openable windows and mechanical ventilation were provided in the sanitary accommodation.

A fridge was available for the storage of non-perishable goods in the pre-school rooms. The fridge temperatures were recorded daily. Soothers were individually labelled and stored in a fridge.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Sleeping children were physically checked every ten minutes by a staff member.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school rooms. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service.

Outing:

A Checklist and risk assessment documentation were in place to support the annual outing conducted from the service in 2022.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A child was observed wearing hooped earrings which presented as a potential injury risk to the child if the earrings got caught or were pulled.
2. In the sleep room adjacent to the wobbler room the cord from the electronic monitor was located next to one of the cots and accessible by any child using the cot. The designated person in charge took an immediate corrective action to eliminate the risk in the short term.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Immediate action was taken regarding the child wearing hooped earrings. Parent was informed upon collection of the service dress code and jewellery policy and given a copy of the policy. All parents and guardian received a letter reminding them of our policy on dress code and jewellery and a copy of the policy. All incoming parents and guardians will also receive this letter and a copy of the policy on dress code and jewellery. A copy was given to staff also to remind them to be vigilant about our dress code and jewellery policy. (Copy of parent letter and policy) included.
2. Immediate action was taken regarding the cord from the electric monitor which was located next to one of the cots in the sleep room adjacent to the wobbler room and accessible by any child using the cot. The cot was moved away from the area. Thereafter a new socket was installed in the sleep room adjacent to the wobbler room. The socket was installed on the opposite wall, away from the cots therefore inaccessible for the children as the cots are on the opposite side of the sleep room. (Photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken photographic and documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
Eight staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were rostered to be available on the premises.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 22 June 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 2 August 2022. The smoke alarms were serviced on the 28 March 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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 for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

(e)

Suitable nappy changing facilities were not provided to meet the age, stage and developmental needs of children attending pre-school rooms 1 and 2. This non-compliance was noted on the last inspection 13 December 2021. It is acknowledged that the service has completed the following actions indicated in the CAPA response post inspection on the 13 December 2021:

- Consultation with the Early Year's Specialist.
- An occupational therapist assessment of the nappy changing facilities where the occupational therapist identified the need for an alternative accessible nappy changing facility.
- A funding application was submitted to AIM seeking level 5 support which was subsequently refused.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e)

Consulting with Early Years Specialist and parents/guardians. The designated person in charge has consulted with the Early Years Specialist and parents/guardians and will be consulting with a HSE Occupational Therapist to assess the nappy changing facilities and to make a report to enable the service to apply for AIM level 5 funding. Quotations for the possible adaptations needed including sinks, units, dispensers, bins, building work and electronic bed have been obtained. (Quotations included). It is envisaged that all works will be completed by the end of October 2023.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions if implemented should meet the regulatory requirement.

The designated person in charge will submit the evidence to the Early Years Inspector of the completed works required under (29)(e) within the timeframe outlined.

The regulatory requirement will be met when the designated person in charge submits the evidence.