

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LS050
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Suaimhneas Community Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Harpurs Lane, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R32 C7DD
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Joan Bolger
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	15
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Unit, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. O'Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### 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. The Early Years' Service is located on the ground floor of a purpose-built community centre. Four pre-school rooms, the wobbler room, toddler room, pre-school room 1 and pre-school room 2, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, a sensory room and an office are provided. Pre-school room 2 was closed for the summer period. 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

There are nineteen adults employed in the service. The designated person in charge, deputy person in charge and eleven childcare practitioners were present on the 3 July 2025. A chef was present to cook meals for the children attending the service. The registered provider does not work directly with children.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (3) (8)(a)

Regulation 16 Record of a pre-school service – (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j)(k)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(b)

Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play -- (1)(a)(b) (3)(a)

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 27- Supervision

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 33- Furnishing of Information to Agency

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 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

(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 person in charge and deputy person in charge were available in the service.

(b)

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

Twenty files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available for nineteen adults from past employers and from a source other than a past employer. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

- (c)  
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the twenty files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)  
Police vetting was available in respect of seven adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)  
Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of 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.*
- (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 exceeded during the inspection.
- (2)  
There were sixteen children attending the service supervised directly by nine adults in the morning. Fifteen children were present in the afternoon supervised by six adults.

(8)(a)

The roster and staff attendance records reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

### 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 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-*

*(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

The focus of the inspection was the wobbler room, toddler room and pre-school room one. Pre-school room two was not in operation during the summer months.

(1)(b)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. The care practices and routines were child led with the staff following the individual verbal and non-verbal cues of the child. Children were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play and gross motor activities as well as imaginative and sensory play outdoors.

Children who went to the toilet independently were supervised by a staff member. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Children who required nappy changing were provided with notice from the staff member. Staff were observed to communicate and interact positively with the child during nappy changing. Children from the wobbler room were observed to choose a picture from a selection of animals. This picture was placed on the underside of an overhead cupboard so that it could be viewed by the child during nappy changing. The content of the picture was used as a basis for engagement and interactions between the staff member and the child during the nappy changing procedure. The nappy changing practice observed was carried out in line with the displayed service procedure. Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snacks and meals.

Staff supported children at mealtimes as they encouraged conversations and interactions with the children. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required. All meals and snacks are prepared on site by the cook. Dietary requirements are catered for and additional supplies of fruit and milk were available in the refrigerator in each pre-school room. Water stations were available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms. Younger children wore clothing protectors during mealtimes. Staff were observed to clean each child's face and hands with an individual cloth after mealtimes to ensure that each child was clean and comfortable.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Seamless transitions were noted as the children were given a lead in time to change from one activity to another. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest areas established in the pre-school rooms. Positive behaviour strategies were observed during the inspection. Staff used a calm approach using soft language tones, giving positive praise and encouragement to children. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. A daily logbook was completed by staff detailing an account of each child's day which supported the communication between the service and the parents of the children.

### 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 play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play 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. Soft furnishings were provided in the rest areas in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the premises. The perimeter was secured by a high-level concrete wall and gates. An artificial grass surface area was noted. Small sections outside the pre-school rooms were canopied to provide shade and shelter. Separate play areas were available for older and younger children. The areas were equipped with a variety of age and stage appropriate bikes, trikes, swings and climb/slide units. A playhouse, shop and a tepee were also available.

### 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 entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. Visitor access was controlled. The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

##### Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. A cleaning schedule was available for the service. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.

A refrigerator was available in the pre-school rooms for the storage of perishable food stuffs.

The pre-school rooms were ventilated by natural ventilation with windows open. The sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas were ventilated by natural or mechanical ventilation. Supplies of paper hand towel and liquid soap were available in all sanitary accommodation.

##### Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the service. A medication logbook was available for staff to record the administration of medicine if required.

### Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs were in place to record the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children. Regular physical checks of the sleeping children were carried out by the staff member to observe the sleeping children. A mobile air conditioning unit was in operation in the sleep room. The occupied room temperature was maintained at 19 degrees Celsius.

### Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed and fire assembly points were located to the front and rear of the premises.

### Outing:

The outing policy, checklists and risk assessment documentation was available for review in respect of outings from the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

## 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)

Nine adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the hours of operation on a rostered basis.

(2)(a)

A fully equipped first aid box was readily available in each pre-school room.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the 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

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 20 June 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in August 2024 and July 2025 respectively.

(4)

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

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

Children were supervised by staff members during play activities both indoors and outdoors during the inspection. Staff members supervised the children's use of the toilet and handwashing.

## 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. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

## Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

### Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

*A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.*

#### Compliance Information

The person in charge furnished all information as required for the inspection.