

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS067
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Name of Service:	Laois International School
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Address of Service:	Towerhill, Church Street, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 V027
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ewa Cala
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Unit, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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.
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Description of service

The Early Years' Service is registered to provide a sessional, part- time and full day care service for 22 children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. A school age childcare service is also provided.

The Early Years' Service is located in an adapted two storey residential premises. Three pre-school rooms are in operation. The "Hopping Bunnies" room and an office are located on the first floor. The "Marching Ants" room and the "Busy Bees" room are located on the ground floor. There is a small dining area for children's use, an arts and crafts room and a kitchen on the ground floor. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is located in the town of Portlaoise, County Laois.

Staffing

Five adults are employed in the service. Two adults were working with children upon the inspectors' arrival to the service on the 14 July 2025. The registered provider and the deputy designated person in charge arrived at the service at 10:50 and remained on site and attended the closing meeting. The registered provider works with the 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 15 – Record of a pre-school child

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

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

Regulation 21- Equipment and Materials

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 28 – Insurance

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 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*

(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

Six 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 six adults from past employers and from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the six 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 six 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 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications or the equivalent deemed by the Minister.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were not available in the service upon the inspectors' arrival to the service at 10:20. The staff member indicated to the inspectors that she was unable to facilitate the inspection. The person in charge who is the registered provider and deputy person in charge were contacted by the staff member who later arrived at the service at 10:50. The staff roster indicated that the person in charge and deputy person in charge were to commence work at 08:00 on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Provider will ensure to roster at least one deputy person in charge at any operating times. Any deputy person will be trained to facilitate the inspections. Please, see the attached updated roster, the top part with the deputy names provided.

Provider will ensure the roster includes at least one person in charge at any time during operating hours.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on 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 four pre-school children and three school age children attending the service supervised directly by two adults in the morning. Three pre-school and three school age children were present in the afternoon supervised by two adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster detailed that two adults are on the premises at 08:00 and during the day until 17:30.

Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that only one adult is on the premises from 17:30 to 18:00 during the hours of operation when two adults are required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Roster has been updated on the same day based on the summary of inspection.

Roster will be updated in accordance to staff rotation and based on circumstances like out of term working hours.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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)
A sample of eleven child records were reviewed. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(i) of the above regulation for the records reviewed.

(1)(h)
Immunisation records were available in respect of six children enrolled in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h)
Child records reviewed did not have details of immunisations in respect of five children enrolled in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The checklist has been created to keep the record of remaining records not provided by parents.
Please, see the attachment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Checklist.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

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

(1)(b)

There was a calm atmosphere in the service. Children were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play, gross motor activities as well as imaginative and creative play.

The care practices observed were appropriate to the age and developmental needs of the children in attendance. Children who went to the toilet independently were supervised by a staff member. At mealtimes the children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required. All meals and snacks are provided by the parents. A water station was available to children to self-serve. Clothing protectors were available for children to wear during painting and arts and craft sessions. The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff were observed giving positive praise and encouragement to the children. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

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 19 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)

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 fencing and gates. The outdoor play area was extended since the last inspection on the 2 October 2023. An artificial grass surface area was noted. The area was equipped with a large climbing frame, climbing wall and slide, a wooden boat and car. A table and bench were noted.

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

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment was available in the pre-school rooms in the service.

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 door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. A camera operated doorbell was in place. 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 signed the visitor book on arrival.

Infection Control:

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. Refrigerated storage facilities were available for the storage of perishable food. A daily log of the refrigerator temperatures was maintained. Sneeze stations were available in the pre-school rooms to support hygiene practices.

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. Care plans were available in respect of children with defined medical conditions.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Two children were observed to have whole grapes for their snack which posed a potential risk of choking. Upon request of the inspector a corrective action was taken, the staff member cut the grapes in half and returned them to the children.
2. Carbon monoxide alarms were not in place in the premises to give notice of any escaping gas in the environment. A gas boiler was located in the kitchen on the ground floor adjacent to the dining area and pre-school rooms.
3. A child was observed to wear hooped earrings which posed a potential risk of injury if the ear was pulled accidentally by another child.

Fire Safety:

1. The outdoor play area has been extended since the last inspection on the 2 October 2023. A new lock system was put in place on the perimeter gate at the fire assembly point. This consists of a sliding bolt on the inner part of the gate and a coded system is in place on the external part of the gate. Only the designated person in charge and deputy have knowledge of the code to unlock the external part of the gate. As both persons were not present in the service between the hours of 08:00 and 10:50 on the 14 July 2025 the gate could not be used during this time as an evacuation route from the building in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Parents and staff have been reminded to cut grapes in half. A letter to parents has been sent to remind them of such precautions. As a preventive action a letter will be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year and periodically resent as a reminder. Staff will be reminded to check lunchboxes and cut up fruit if it is not.
2. The Carbon Monoxide alarm is going to be installed on the premises to 31/08/2025 before the reopening after summer break.
3. A letter to parents has been sent to remind them of such precautions. Parents have also been reminded about the risk of hooped earrings which were removed and returned to parents in an envelope. The letter to parents reminding them of safety will be sent to them at the beginning of the school year and periodically resent as a reminder. Staff will also check and ask parents to remove unsuitable jewellery upon child's arrival to the preschool.

Fire Safety:

The code to the gate has been shared with the staff verbally.

The update on code will be provided verbally for the safety reasons to all the staff on the meeting before the reopening on 01/09/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Written documentation.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection. The registered provider shall submit evidence to TUSLA of the installation of the carbon monoxide alarm upon completion on the 31 August 2025.

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.

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.

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)
Four 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)
Two first aid boxes were available in service.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
The first aid boxes were not stocked in line with the Tusla, Quality Regulatory Framework (QRF) as there were no burns dressing available in the first aid boxes.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The burn dressing has been located in the first aid box in the office.
Monthly checklist of contents has been created to keep first aid box complaint with Tusla regulations.

Supporting documentation submitted

Burns dressing.
First aid box checklist.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed. However, on review of the checklist submitted the anti-febrile medication, cream and disinfectant is not part of the requirements of the TUSLA Quality Regulatory Framework (QRF) and shall be removed from the first aid box.

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 the 4 July 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 in the premises were serviced in September 2024. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in May 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the entrance hall.

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.