

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH027
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Cazzy Cuddles Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 57 Killelland Walk, Ashbourne, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A84 P744
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Caroline McHugh Willoughby
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	11/09/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	27	PM	26
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords, Co Dublin
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. McDonnell
<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

Cazzy Cuddles is a privately owned service operating from the ground floor of a converted retail unit in Co. Meath. The service is registered to provide sessional care to children aged 2-6 years old. The children have access to three care rooms, Blue, Red and Green. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). There is also a kitchen and there are sanitary facilities located in each care room. There is an access to an outdoor area in the vicinity of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children. The registered provider employs seven staff members, six who work with the children and one who works as a receptionist.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of a child, Regulation 25 First Aid,

Regulation 26 Fire safety measures, Regulation 28 Insurance and Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations in 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 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
- (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.

(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 the designated person in charge of the service, and there was a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) On discussion with staff members and the registered provider, there was a clearly defined person and deputy person in charge to ensure lines of accountability.

(2) On the day of inspection, the recruitment files of the registered provider and seven staff members were reviewed.

(a)(b) Two written reference available for the registered provider, and fourteen written and validated references were available for the seven staff members.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members and the registered provider. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years following a review of staff members previous employment in the service.

(d) International police vetting was not required for five staff members following a review of documentation available. The police vetting required for three staff members was available alongside the certified translation where relevant.

(4) The registered provider and five staff members employed to work directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) For one staff member working directly with the children there was insufficient information on inspection that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. Another member of staff observed working directly with the children did not hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(4) The registered provider stated that the ancillary staff member will not work directly with the children. The registered provider submitted information that the other staff member's qualification did not meet the requirements of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The registered provider stated that the staff member was no longer employed in the service and going forward they would ensure qualifications met the minimum standard.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of letter confirming qualification did not meet requirements.

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider on their corrective and preventive action plan had addressed the non-compliance as identified on 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- In the Red Room there were 3 staff members and 9 children attending the morning session. In the afternoon session there were 2 staff members and 10 children. The children were aged between 2 years 8 months old to 4 years 5 months old
- In the Green Room there was 1 staff member and 9 children attending the morning session. In the afternoon session there was 2 staff members and 10 children. The children were aged between 2 years 9 months old to 4 years 1 month old
- In the Blue Room there were 2 staff members and 9 children attending the morning session. In the afternoon session there was 1 staff member and 6 children. The children were aged between 2 years 7 months old to 4 years 3 months old

## 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*

*(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

#### Supporting relationships around children

The inspector observed children settling in at the start of a new school year. The staff members were knowledgeable about the children and spoke of documentation and conversations with parents which supported this knowledge. The inspector observed that children were encouraged to make choices and were offered opportunities to be independent. For example, in the Green room a child wanted to make play dough. Children who showed an interest in playing with the play dough were encouraged to help make it and all children were given a role in making the dough together. A key worker system was in place throughout the service, and this was supported by various long and short-term planning which was available for review. The planning available was reflective of the artwork on display and the activities the children were taking part in.

#### Basic Needs

Water was accessible to the children within their rooms. Children were provided with food from home. Staff members sat with children whilst they ate and chatted with them about their interests and families. Children were observed to use the toilet independently with staff remaining close by for support if required.

### 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

The children had toys and equipment that was readily accessible on low level shelving in labelled boxes. There were clearly defined areas such as a home corner and construction area. These separate areas contained dolls houses, kitchens, tool benches, play bricks and the supportive equipment was readily available. Arts and crafts were available in rooms and children had access to these as they required.

There was a cosy area in each room with soft seating and cushions for the children to relax as required. There were low level tables and chairs and there was a sufficient amount to allow each child to play and eat at the table as required.

### 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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system and keypad locks in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The preventive actions following the last inspection were in place in relation to maintenance issues as all pedal bins were in good working order and there were no trailing cables posing a trip hazard.
- Blind cords were secured and were not accessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medications were stored out of the reach of children.
- Following the previous inspection the preventive actions were maintained as items were securely placed to avoid a risk of injury from large items falling.

##### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands before they ate and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Pedal bins were in operation throughout the service.

## Administration of Medication:

- Anti febrile medication was available should it be required, which demonstrated the preventive action from the last inspection was in place. Staff members spoken to were aware of the location of the medication and the procedure should administration be required.

## 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

- (2) The first aid equipment available in the service provided adequate resources in the event of a first aid emergency. First Aid boxes were available in the kitchen and office which was conspicuous and easily accessible to staff members.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in a First Aid Responder (FAR) course was available. The FAR certification for one staff member was expired. It is acknowledged that six staff members had in-date paediatric first aid certification.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider submitted documentation that a current FAR certificate had been obtained and that it would be renewed prior to expiration in the future.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Confirmation of attendance and completion at FAR course.

### Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) A record of the previous fire drill on 6 June 2025 was available for review. The service was closed in July and August. The service had maintained a record of previous monthly fire drills.
- (b) The registered provider had evidence of the annual maintenance of the fire alarm system on 8 September 2025 and the fire extinguishers on 10 October 2024.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the rooms and hallways.

### 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

The inspector observed staff supervising children primarily by sight throughout the period of inspection. The layout of the rooms supported staff in being able to maintain sight of the children. During a discussion with the inspector in the Green room, the staff member re positioned themselves to ensure they had a view of all the children in the room. The staff member also encouraged children to retrieve items from another room but ensured that they were supervised by sound and was aware when they returned to the room.

There were sanitary facilities in each room and staff were aware of which children went into the facilities during the session. Staff were heard checking on children and asking if they needed any help.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service was appropriately insured for 33 children from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.