

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH165		
Name of Service:	Sallywags Playgroup & Afterschool Care		
Address of Service:	Unit 9, Blackcastle Shopping Centre, Navan, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 XP99		
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Keenan		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray		
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Scallywags Playgroup & Afterschool Care is privately owned and is 1 of 2 services operated by the registered provider. The service provides part-time and sessional care and education to children from 2 to 6 years from 9am to 13:30pm. A school aged service is also provided. Eligible children can participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service consists of a small reception area inside the main door, 1 care room, hallway, sanitary facilities and a kitchen.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a person in charge and 6 childcare staff. On the day of inspection there was the person in charge and 2 childcare staff present.

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.

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 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)&(b) The registered providers file along with 7 staff files were reviewed.

Sixteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 8 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 3 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for one new staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) Police vetting has been obtained for this staff member and is now available on file.

The registered provider will ensure that Police vetting if required is sought before any staff member commences employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) On the morning of the inspection the adult to child ratios were maintained at all times.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

There was the designated person in charge and 2 staff members with 12 children ranging in age from 2 year 9 months to 5 years. Seven children were attending the part time service, and 5 children were attending the sessional service.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff in the service were observed to provide kind, caring and nurturing interactions to the children in their care by using age-appropriate language, gentle tones and talking to younger children at the child's level. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision and reminders regarding handwashing.
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. Children's individual needs were well supported by the staff members who engaged in play activities with the children which included sensory play, art and crafts, singing and dancing. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement and reassurance.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- Within the care room there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.
- The curriculum was child led with the theme of the week "recycling materials".

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social skills such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- At snack time the children and staff sat around the tables. Lots of jovial conversation was heard between the staff and children which created a positive atmosphere for developing relationships.
- The staff members communicated with parents through a messaging service and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Parents were greeted at collection time with friendly conversation overheard.

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 play resources in the care room were accessible, organised and stored on shelving which allowed the children to select and replace materials. The care room had areas of interest which included a home/shop area, construction area, animal box, book rack beside cosy area, plastic/wooden building blocks, puzzles, dolls area, art and crafts materials, sensory table with materials and musical play equipment.

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

The children attending the service brought their own healthy packed lunches from home which included sandwiches, fruit, yogurt and water to drink. Additional snacks were available if needed for children staying until 13:30pm.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured which ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.

- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand-washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was generally clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following safety measure was not in place on the day of inspection:

1. At 10:20 am the surface temperature of the radiator in the children's sanitary facilities was 60⁰ C.

At 10:45am the surface temperature of the radiator in the nappy changing area was 55.5⁰ C.

Although it is acknowledged that immediate action was taken by the designated person in charge, and the thermostat was adjusted on the boiler, the surface area of radiators was not maintained below 50⁰ C to reduce the risk of burns.

At 10:40am the temperature of the radiator in the children's sanitary facilities had reduced to 40.3⁰ C.

At 11am the temperature of the radiator in the nappy changing area had reduced to 40.5⁰ C.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The temperature of the boiler has been reduced. The designated person in charge will monitor the temperatures of the radiators on a regular basis throughout the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Servicing record for the boiler from a reputable source.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 16/01/2026.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 01/03/2025. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 07/01/2026.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 30 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2025 to the 27/03/2026.