

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY007
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Gaelach An Tulach Mhór Ltd
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Address of Service:	Ionad Óige Naomh Mhuire, Sráid an Chuain, An Tulach Mhór, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 D861
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Name of Registered Provider:	Miriam Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly R35 K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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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).

Description of service

Naíonra Gaelach An Tulach Mhór is a sessional service located in the town of Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Naíonra Gaelach operates from a converted prefabricated classroom located on the grounds of the Tullamore Youth Centre. The service provides sessional care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years, Monday to Friday between 09:30-12:30pm. The premises consists of one large preschool room. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side and back of the preschool. Car parking and set down is available on the public road outside the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs four adults to work in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. The inspection was facilitated by the person in charge. Four childcare staff were present on the day of 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

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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(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) – Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11 (1)(3)– Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child
- Regulation 24(1),(3)(b)– Checking in and out and record of attendance
- Regulation 25(1), (2)(a)(b) – First Aid
- Regulation 26(1)(a)(b), (4) – Fire Safety Measures
- 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 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, and*

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Four staff files were reviewed and the following was noted:

(a)

Seven written validated references were available from a previous employer and

(b)

One written validated reference was available from a reputable source.

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- (c)
- Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. In regard to the four staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
- Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)
- Four employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 6 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- An adequate number of adults were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection.
- (3)
- The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection.
- There were nineteen children aged between 3-5 years being supervised directly by four adults.

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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) Basic needs

All snacks were provided by the service as part of the Bia Blasta scheme. Children were observed eating lunch which consisted of yoghurts, wholemeal crackers, cheese and a variety of fresh fruit including watermelon and bananas. Drinks of water and milk were offered to each child. The children sat together at low level tables while eating, engaging in conversations with each other and the staff. Extra portions were available from a tray with food laid out if children wanted more.

Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands before meals, after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary.

Supporting relationships

Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Staff were observed to use children's first names, get down to the child's level when providing instructions and use appropriate eye contact during their interactions.

Children's birthdays were displayed on a 'Laethanta Breithe sa Naíora' birthday chart. 'Mo Chlann' (our family) were displayed in each room. Photographs of the children and their families were displayed on the 'Mo Chlann' wall, helping the children feel connected to home. Artwork was displayed throughout the room such as a painted tree titled 'Crann Cinealtais', meaning kindness tree. When children did something kind they write what they did on a cut out paper hand, colour it in and hang it on the tree.

The person in charge advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the service are provided to parents at drop off and collection times, and via an electronic messaging application.

Physical environment

Drinks were laid out on the table as it was a very hot day. The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the session. On arrival at the service, the children were observed playing a game of football in the community centre hall. Toys and play equipment were positioned on accessible open shelving which

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nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity and spontaneous play. Areas which promoted role play were available, such as dress up areas with a variety of costumes and a play shop area with a till, trolley and play food.

A range of books and a couch and bench were available if children wished to take a break from activities.

The secure outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children.

Children had access to the partially roofed, outdoor play area which was accessed directly from both doors of the classroom. Sand and water tables, a slide, tuff tray with potted plants, mud kitchen and water play table with funnels provided an opportunity for energetic and messy play.

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 pre-school was controlled by staff to prevent children exiting the pre-school unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access. Parents and visitors are greeted at the external gate during drop off and collection, which is locked during the session to prevent children gaining access to the main road. An internal fence surrounds the outdoor play area within the grounds.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Cleaning products were stored on shelves out of reach of the children.

The preschool room was well-ventilated with openable windows.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper towels were available from dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands before snack time and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

The person in charge informed the inspector that no child in the service was on specific medication requiring a care plan. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely out of reach of children. Medication was not required to be administered to any child on the day of inspection.

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Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction. The fire assembly point was located in the outdoor area.

Outing:

A policy was in place to support outings conducted by the service. the person in charge advised that the children participate in outings to an indoor play centre. A risk assessment, check list and parental consent forms were completed prior to outings.

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)

Three staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR). All three FAR qualified staff members were available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the preschool room in the kitchen area of the service and was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

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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 monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was recorded on 21 May 2026.

(b)

Records were kept of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system which were last serviced on 05 December 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

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 22 children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 31 August 2026.