

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY025
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Gort na nÓg Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Holycross Village, Holycross, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 C2C8
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michéal Lowry
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/07/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	16
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
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<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This community operated full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old. A registered school aged service is also provided during the school year. The service operates Monday to Friday, 8am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service that operates Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm, for 38 weeks of the year, in line with the school year. The sessional service is funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The premises is a detached, single-storey, purpose-built building located at the back of St Michael’s national school in the village of Holycross in north Tipperary. The service consists of four activity rooms: one used exclusively by the school aged service and the other three used by the early years service, two sleep rooms, sanitary accommodation areas, kitchen, dining room, office, staff room and outdoor play areas at the front and back of the premises.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. The number of staff employed in the service reduces during the summertime. There were eight staff working in the service on the day of inspection which included six staff working directly with the children, the service manager and catering staff.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4)(7), 11(1)(3)(8), 15, 16, 19(1)(b), 23 and 29.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child.

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

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

*(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

*(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*

*(c) these Regulations.*

#### Compliance Information

The staff files of 15 members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

*(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of 13 members of staff.*

*(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of 8 members of staff.*

*(c) Garda vetting was carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were kept on file.*

The service had a process for re-vetting staff on a three-yearly basis.

*(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state as an adult for a period of six consecutive months or longer. Relevant documents were kept on file.*

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the national qualifications framework.

(7) There was an induction programme for all new staff with required tasks signed off on when completed, including reading and understanding the policies, procedures and statements of the service. Staff were facilitated to undertake training courses such as food hygiene, first aid and fire safety. Staff received training, from the supplier, in the use of the hygiene products used in the service in December 2023.

### 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) There were 6 staff working directly with 20 children aged between 1 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. The children were divided between two rooms with 4 staff and 15 children aged 2 – 5 years in Ladybirds room and 2 staff with 5 children aged between 1 and 2 years old in Buttercup Babies room. The service manager was available to provide relief cover in the rooms for staff breaks if required. There was a member of staff involved in catering duties in the kitchen who was not included in the adult to child ratios. On the afternoon of the inspection there were 16 children aged 1 – 5 years old being supervised by 6 staff across 3 rooms.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the requirements for the duration of the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present in the service while it was in operation.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) Twelve registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registration forms contained the required elements as detailed under parts (a) to (j) of this regulation.

(3) The registration forms were available for inspection on the premises by authorised persons.

### 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;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) A record in writing was maintained of the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (k) of this regulation.

(3) The records referred to in paragraph 1 of this regulation were available for inspection on the premises.

## 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) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The inspection took place during the first week of summer holidays when the numbers of staff and children were lower than they would normally be during term time. The staff said that their approach to daily activities was still structured around the children's needs for food, drinks, sleep/rest and personal care and their desires to explore and play but was more relaxed during the summer months. For example, the lower numbers enabled the children from Ladybirds and Caterpillars rooms to join together in the dining room for their meals and in the outdoor play area as observed on the day of inspection.

Staff said that the month of June had been busy with end of year celebrations such as graduation from pre-school for those children moving on to primary school in September and the school tour so the change of pace in July suited both children and staff. This time of year also allowed for a gentle transitioning of children from one room to another, for example, older toddlers moving from Buttercup Babies room to Caterpillars room. Children had the opportunity to spend increasing amounts of time in the new environment according to their levels of comfort. Staff who were receiving new children were observed to be very supportive, giving encouragement or hugs as needed.

The children washed their hands before eating and after messy activities, outdoor play and using the toilet. Staff supervised the children and assisted them as required, for example, the younger children in Buttercup Babies room needed the staff to help them with this task.

Children's rest and sleep times were in accordance with their individual needs. Children from Buttercup babies had access to a sleep room furnished with six standard cots which meant that on the day of inspection there was more than one cot per child aged under 2 years old. Some of the children were transitioning from two daily sleeps to one so their normal sleep times were altering and staff were managing this according to each child's needs.

Staff provided the children with a range of sensory and messy play opportunities during the day such as a group painting activity on a large circular sheet of paper that covered the toddler table and water play at the tray table in Buttercup Babies room and the pink 'jelly bath' activity on the tray table in Ladybirds room. Staff said that the children loved sensory activities and that they regularly looked up ideas and resources for these activities.

### 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 was located away from any roadway, as the back of a primary school. Access to the premises was through the school grounds to the enclosed site of the service.

The wooden gate at the front of the site was secured when the play area at the front of the premises was in use. Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.

##### Infection Control:

The children and staff washed their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after outdoor play, messy play, using the toilet or nappy changing and before eating.

There was a cleaning schedule for the premises, fixtures, fittings and equipment. Cleaning tasks were signed off on when completed.

##### Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to the administration of any medication to children attending the service.

##### Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Children were checked every ten minutes while they slept and a record was maintained of these observations.

##### Fire Safety:

Fire escape routes were kept free of obstruction.

##### Outings:

The service had a policy on outings to ensure that children were safe while on an outing from the service.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(a) of sound and stable structure,*

#### Compliance Information

(a) The premises was newly built in 2011.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(a) There were areas on the ceilings in the dining room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation area of Caterpillars room and the former sleep room that was being used for storage which were coated with a substance with the appearance and colour of black mould. This issue was observed in the sleep room at the time of the last inspection on 8 June 2023. The sleep room had been closed off for use as a sleep room as soon as the manager and staff noticed the discolouration. The service manager said that there was a problem with the roof which leaked when the weather was very wet.

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

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

The service has had builders look at this and give quotes, however financially are unable to afford to repair this. The management team would like to have the mould tested to see if it is hazardous.

#### Summary Comment

This non-compliance remains outstanding until such time as the roof can be repaired.