

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY053
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Laochra Beaga
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St Marys Education Campus, Church Road, Newport, Co Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V94VW77
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rory McGrath
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	9	PM	9
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney and A McNamara
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

This service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school age service is also provided. The service operates Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. This includes a daily 3-hour sessional service during the 38-week school year that is funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children and operates between late August and June.

The service is operated from a complex of buildings on a site known as St Mary’s education campus in the town of Newport in north Tipperary. The main spaces available to the pre-school service are the free-standing, single storey pre-school building and a building that was formerly the school hall. In the hall building the children use the main space for physical play and movement and the stage area for activities. The other buildings on the site are primarily used by the school age care service. The children also have access to several outdoor play areas including an enclosed playground, covered walkway play area and the nature walk.

### Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis. There is also a service manager. On the day of inspection there were three staff working with a blended group of pre-school and school age children aged between 3 and 6 years old. There are three other members of staff who work with the pre-school children during the school year who were not present in the service 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

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), 11(1)(2)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23, 25 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, Record of a Pre-School 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

#### Compliance Information

The staff files of three staff who had commenced working in the pre-school service since the last inspection on 28 February 2023 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. Garda vetting records for all staff who work with the preschool children, including the registered provider were also reviewed.

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

(b) Not applicable as all of the available references were from previous employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for seven members of staff. In the case of three members of staff, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the staff for a period exceeding six consecutive months. Relevant documents were kept on file.

(4) The staff who worked directly with the pre-school children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister, at level 5, 6 or 8 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.*

*(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 9 pre-school children present in the service on the day of inspection taking part in a summer camp in a mixed group with 25 school age children being supervised by 3 staff. The children were aged between 3 and 6 years old.

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

(8) There were at least two 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-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

A sample of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

### 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) The information required under parts (a) to (k) of this regulation were available on the premises in a variety of formats including paper based and electronic records.

(3) The required records were available on the premises and open to inspection by an authorised person.

### 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 was carried out during the summer holidays when the usual pre-school provision had been replaced by summer camps. The camp groups were divided by age so that the pre-school children were blended with the younger school age children, who had been in the infants classes before the holidays. This gave an age grouping on the day of 3 to 6 years old. The activities and facilities available to the children were suitable to their ages and stages of development. The children were based in the hall building and had the choice of physical games and activities in the main part of the hall or imaginative play, art, and table-top activities in the stage part of the hall. The children also had access to the outdoor spaces.

The children brought packed lunches which they ate together at the tables in the stage area or picnic style in the main hall. There was a relaxed, chatty atmosphere during the morning snack break. Children had their own drink bottles which they could access when they wanted a drink. These were refilled with water when required.

The children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day, such as before eating and after using the toilet.

### 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 strengthened the security of the boundaries of the site since the last inspection. An electronic locking system had been installed on the metal gate at the side of the campus, which was the main entrance to the site for the pre-school children. The parents were given the code so that they could enter with their children. Visitors to the site had to be let in by a member of staff.

A large metal gate had been installed at the front of the service. When the gate was closed this prevented unauthorised access to the site from the front of the premises.

The outdoor areas were enclosed and could be secured to prevent unauthorised access or to prevent a child from leaving the area unsupervised. The covered walkway, that has been developed into sheltered play space, was accessed from the yard of the service through a lockable door. The playground, directly across the yard from the hall, was enclosed by green mesh fencing and gates. The playground had an artificial grass surface. There was a soft fall surface under any climbing equipment.

The site also included wilderness areas where the children were taken on nature walks, under the supervision of the staff.

##### Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy which included handwashing. There were cleaning policies and procedures for the service.

The summer months were used as a time to do deep cleaning, remove worn or torn furniture and toys and to refresh the premises. On the day of inspection the pre-school building was not in use as a deep clean had been started there in preparation for repainting of the walls.

##### Administration of medication:

The service had a policy for the administration of medication and sought signed parental consent before any medication was administered to a child attending the service.

Individual care plans were available in respect of each child with additional medical or support needs. These were developed in consultation with parents and updated regularly.

##### Fire safety:

The fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General safety:

Garda vetting for three members of staff was last re-done in 2019, which is outside the required interval of three years. It is acknowledged that following the inspection the service applied for and received updated garda vetting in respect of the three members of staff.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General safety:

The Garda vetting was applied for and received. The service have created a master list of when all staff members vetting is due for renewal so it can be reapplied for in a timely manner

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General safety:

Evidence of updated garda vetting in respect of three members of staff was received by the early years inspectorate on 18 August 2025.

## Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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) There were staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for a full day care service valid until 27 March 2026.