

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY063
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Name of Service:	Sallywags Pre School
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Address of Service:	Two Mile Borris, Thurles, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 XY52
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Name of Registered Provider:	Tracey Darmody
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Scallywags Pre School is a sessional service that was established to provide care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years old. The service operates Monday to Friday, 09:20 to 12:20 for 38 weeks of the year. An afternoon session is also available from 12:30 to 15:30 but is not currently running. Places are funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children. The service is operated from a purpose-built premises on the grounds of the registered providers residence in the village of Two Mile Borris, near Thurles in Co Tipperary. The children have access to two activity rooms and sanitary accommodation areas in the premises and to an outdoor activity room and two outdoor play facilities on the grounds.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service each day supported by up to three members of staff. All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 11(1)(3) Staffing levels,
Regulation 16 (1) (h, i) (3) Record in relation to pre-school service,
Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of the child,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First aid

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) The registered provider is the person in charge and oversees the operation of the childcare facility. A second named person in charge can deputise, as required.

(b) A person in charge was present on the day of inspection. From review of the staff roster a person in charge was present daily.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that two new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. A total of two files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for one staff member whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for the two new staff working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members. In the case of one staff member, 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 documentation was available for three staff working in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working with pre-school children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at level 5 and above 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) During the morning session there were 22 children being directly cared for by 3 staff.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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)

(h) Detailed daily attendance of each child was available.

(i) Detailed daily attendance of each staff member was available.

(3) The written records were available on the premises for 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-

(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

Basic needs:

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within their room and in the outdoor area. Outdoor play was promoted as part of the daily activities. Children were observed to play outside for an extended period on the morning of inspection. Healthy eating was promoting within the service. Snacks were provided by parents for the children and stored in a fridge. The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Each child had their own drinking bottle that was refilled with water as required. The children's toilets were easily accessible within the preschool. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own level of personal care appropriate to their level of development. The privacy and dignity of each child was respected. A designated rest area was evident in the room. Children could use this area to relax. Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a competent and positive manner by the staff.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Physical environment:

The environment in the service was comfortable and inviting. The walls were painted with bright colours and decorated with the seasons, alphabet, safe cross code and an emotions wall. There were two rooms available to the children to move between. In each of the rooms the children had opportunities to move around freely exploring various areas of interest. A variety of defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play with in both rooms. These included a home corner and role play area, dress up area, small world toys, train tracks, art and craft materials, floor puzzles and magnetic blocks. Clear floor space was provided in the larger classroom which gave the children the opportunity for floor play. The child's daily schedule was represented pictorially so each child was aware of what activity was happening next. Low level shelving was provided affording all the children with opportunities to choose activities, toys or play resources that they wanted to play with. Staff had helped the children create areas of familiarity in the classrooms to promote each child's identity and belonging such as a community wall, family wall and birthday wall. The children's artwork was displayed on the walls of the service.

The outdoor space consisted of two areas; a secure enclosed astroturf area and an enclosed concrete yard. Children's gross motor development was supported through access to games such as swings, a slide and rockers. Additional resources were available in the storage shed. There was also an outdoor activity room available to the children with further resources for them to choose from. Waterplay was available in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

Supporting Relationships:

Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and a positive regard. They sat with children in small groups or individually, engaged in conversation and listened attentively to the children as they spoke. Staff engaged in conversation with the children about how their weekend was and what activities they had done. One child had been to a hurling match over the weekend and was telling staff and his friends all about it. Children were facilitated to take the lead in their own learning, and with the support of a staff member extend the learning. One child was observed to make a 'hopscotch' style game in the outdoor area and was supported by staff. Additional children joined to play the game, and the staff member supported turn taking.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 main door to the service was locked and had to be opened by a staff member. This prevented unauthorised access to the service. Once all children arrived at the service an outer gate was closed. The outdoor play area was secure to prevent children leaving the area. Cleaning agents and hazardous materials were stored inaccessible to children.

Infection control:

There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. There were designated children's toilets available to the children. Designated staff toilets were also provided. Handwashing reminders and steps were present in the sanitary accommodation. Natural ventilation was present in the children's toilets. There was an adult sink also present in the preschool area. Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after using the toilet and after messy play. A tissue station was available to the children in the classroom. Pedal bins were in operation to avoid cross contamination. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge.

Administration of medication:

The service had a medication policy. The service had obtained written consent from parents for the administration of medication.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.
There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within the service.
Firefighting equipment was present in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

A Garda vetting disclosure for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

A copy of the confirmation of the submission of renewal was sent to the Early Years Inspector.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of the renewed Garda vetting for one staff member was sent to the Early Years Inspector.

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 Response (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.