

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY107
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Fethard Community Playgroup
-------------------------	-----------------------------

Address of Service:	Rocklow Road, Fethard, Co Tipperary
----------------------------	-------------------------------------

Eircode:	E91 V382
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela O'Donnell
-------------------------------------	------------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date of Inspection:	01/12/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	13
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	Bridgette Fraher
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	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

The sessional service is located behind Fethard primary and secondary school. The service operated two sessional services from 9:00 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 3:30 and a part time service from 9:00 to 14:00, 38 weeks of the year. The service catered for children from 2 to 6 years and is located in a single storey building with one care room divided into two pod areas, an office / kitchen area, sanitary facilities and an outdoor play area.

Staffing

There were five staff attached to the service and a total of four staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider is not service based.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9 management and recruitment, Regulation 10 policies, procedures of pre-school service, Regulation 11 staffing levels, Regulation 15 record of a pre-school child, Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, Regulation 24 checking in and out and records of attendance and Regulation 25 first

aid however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 children, person in charge and staff 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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 on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
 - (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member. This was on display on the notice board at the entrance.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to five adults, four of whom were employed in the service and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.
- (a) Of the 10 required references, 5 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the 10 required references, 5 were from a source other than a past employer with required records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the five staff. 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 required for one of the five adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) The four adults who worked directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 6 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies met the regulatory requirements:

- Policy on infection control.
- Policy on administration of medication.
- Policy on accident and incidences.

The above policies and procedures adequately guided the staff in their care practices.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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) At the time of inspection, there were the adequate number of adults required, responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.

(4) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 18 children attending the service in the morning were supervised directly by 4 adults and the 13 children attending the service in the afternoon were supervised directly by 3 adults.

(8)

(a) The service operated with at least two adults present at all times. This was observed on the day of inspection and was evident through examination of the roster.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)
(a-i) Thirty two children are registered to attend the service. A sample of 11 records of the early year's children attending the service were reviewed. The records were found to contain all the required information.

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:

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)
(j) The person in charge informed the inspector that no regular medication was being administered to a child currently in the service. The service had a medication administration book but no medication had been administered since the last inspection on 28 March 2023.
(k) A sample of 10 accident/incident forms were reviewed, these were found to contain all of the particulars required.

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:

- All snacks had been prepared by the parents for sessional children and prepared by the service for part time children and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed to eat meat, fruit, crackers, yogurt, sandwiches and waffles for snack time. The food was stored in the refrigerator. The service has alternative food available if required.
- Drinking water was available to the children throughout the morning.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet area under the supervision of the staff who were available to assist if needed.
- Children that wished to rest while they attended the service could avail of soft seated areas in the two pods in the care room.
- Outdoor play was promoted and there was an outdoor play area at the rear and side of the service which the service used on the day of inspection.
- The children had ample space to move freely within their care room environment and actively engage in their chosen tasks.
- A staff member was observed assisting a child using a tissue, dispose of the tissue and washing their hands afterwards.

Supporting relationships:

- During mealtimes, the adults remained with the children and assisted as required. The children were afforded sufficient time to enjoy the food in a relaxed atmosphere and adults conversed with children at the tables.
- 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. The staff also engaged in building blocks, completing artwork and in imaginative play with the children.
- The person in charge stated that they communicated with the parents verbally at drop off or collection, via text message and a learning journal was completed and sent home at the end of term.

- Birthday calendars were displayed on the walls which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.

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 door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was enclosed by a timber and metal wire fencing and metal gates and was observed to be a safe and secure space for the children. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- Blind cords were on restrictors.
- During the inspection, toys and play equipment assessed were observed to be in good condition

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in the kitchen area for the storage of perishable foods.
- Children's individual bed sheets were available if needed and plans were in place for these to be laundered after use.
- Tissues were available and placed at the children's height helping to prevent the spread of infection.
- Staff were observed sanitising the tables in the morning and afternoon, before and after the serving of food, and sweeping the floor ensuring the areas were kept clean and hygienic.
- Gloves, aprons and a changing unit were available for nappy changing.

Administration of medication:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that no regular medication was being administered to a child currently in the service. The service had a medication administration book but no medication had been administered since the last inspection.

Safe sleep:

- The service planned to use an area of the care room for sleep if required and four stackable beds were available for use. The air temperature of the care room was recorded at 18°C. The registered provider informed the inspector that no child availed of sleep since becoming a part time service and that in the event of sleep, records were maintained in relation to the children's colour, breathing and position at 10-minute intervals.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection. The person in charge informed the inspector that occasionally walks are taken to a near wooded area with a risk assessment completed prior to this occurring. The risk assessments for an outing on the 28 March 2025 were reviewed and had a number of strategies in place to mitigate identified risks to the children.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection control:

- The inspector noted that bins in the care room were not pedal operated. One child was observed to touch the top of the bin when disposing of waste. This increased the risk of cross infection and contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection control:

The non pedal operated bins have been removed and replaced with foot pedal operated bins.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection control:

Photographic evidence of a foot pedal operated bin was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The attendance book was available and the inspector observed that all the children present on the day had their check in and out times completed.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was maintained. The inspector was signed in and out on a record sheet.

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)

Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for three of the adults working in the service.

- (2)
- (a) There were two sufficiently stocked first aid boxes available in the service, which were safely stored out of reach of children.
- (b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of inspection one of the toilets in the service was shared between children and adults. On discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that this toilet cubicle was a designated children's toilet and that no staff toilet was available in the service. One toilet is required for every 11 children and 1 toilet is required for every 8 adults.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The toilet is now only used by the children in the service. Staff now have access to use a toilet in the school located in the same grounds.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider was accepted.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet regulatory compliance requirements under Regulation 29 (e).