

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY115
Name of Service:	Respond Early Years Service, Hilltop
Address of Service:	Highfield Estate, Cashel Road, Killenaule, Thurles, Co Tipperary
Eircode:	E41 WC84
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa O'Rourke
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
Date of Inspection:	25/02/2025
No of pre-school children:	AM 22 PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary, E91RF38
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McNamara & J. Dennehy
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Respond Early Years, Hilltop is a community operated early years service. It is located in the village of Killenaule Co Tipperary. The service currently offers a sessional and part time service to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates Monday to Friday and can accommodate up to 22 children. The service consists of one large room, a smaller quiet room, office, kitchen and sanitary accommodation. Outside there is fully enclosed play area and a storage shed. The service also offers a school age service.

Staffing

There were four staff working directly in the service on the day of inspection. There was a designated person in charge who was working with the children. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Staff held qualifications at level 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,

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) Records in relation to a pre-school child,

Regulation 21 Equipment and materials

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,

Regulation 25 First aid,

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 inspectors wish 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*
- (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 person in charge confirmed that they or their deputy are present at all times while the service is open.
- (b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the inspection process. Review of the staff roster indicated that the person in charge or the deputy was present throughout the operational hours of the service.
- (c) The service had a management structure displayed on the notice board, which clearly outlined a named manager and deputy persons in charge.
- (2)(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member.
- (c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.
- (4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Qualification Framework.

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) A sufficient number of adults were observed to be available to the children throughout the inspection. Review of previous rosters indicated that the person in charge had sufficient adults in the service during operational hours.

(2) The service exceeded the minimum ratios required and there were 4 staff members present with 22 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) It was observed in practice and demonstrated through review of the staff roster that the service was operated with at least two adults present at all times.

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

A sample of 12 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.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The equipment and materials reviewed on inspection were well maintained. All materials were accessible to the children on low level shelving. The service had appropriately sized tables and chairs for the children. The service had personalised coat hooks for each child attending the service. There were additional resources for the rotation of materials in the main care room.

The service had play resources available in the care room suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. There were clear interest areas developed within the room such as the kitchen area, construction area, book area and messy play area. All areas were well-resourced with equipment and materials such as a water table, dress up clothes, blocks, painting and other art and craft materials.

The outdoor area had a climbing frame with a slide. There was access to ride on toys and bikes. Helmets were worn by the children when using this equipment.

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 door that provided access to the service remained secure when not in use, including when the inspectors arrived to undertake the unannounced inspection. This safety measure reduced the risk of unauthorised access and the risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was enclosed by suitable walls and fencing. The two gates in the outdoor area were secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored at a height that was inaccessible to children.
- Cables and flexes from electronic equipment were not within the reach of the children.
- Firefighting equipment was secured.

Infection control:

- Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available in the children's and adult's sanitary facilities. This included warm running water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels. Foot pedal operated bins were also in use. The children were observed to wash their hands when returning from outdoor play and before snack time.
- Cleaning records were displayed in the care rooms and sanitary areas and were completed to date.

Administration of medication:

- Administration of medicine records were reviewed. These were correctly completed, dated, witnessed by staff and signed by the parents.

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.

Outings:

- The service undertook outings occasionally to the local library and playground. The service had a policy on the safe conduct of 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) The roster demonstrated that the manager planned for FAR trained staff to be present throughout the hours of opening.

(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

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.