

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015WW085

Name of Service Stepping Stones Pre-school

Address of Service: Milltown South, Ashford, Co. Wicklow, A67 RY22

Email Address: steppingstones.ashford@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Amanda Hatton

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change: To increase child numbers from 22 to 30

Proposed Number of Children: 30 children

Recommended Change Following Inspection: To allow for an increase up to 27 children

Registered change: Change in number of children that can be accommodated from 22 to 27

Date of Inspection: 2 6 0 1 2 0 2 4

Inspection undertaken by: H. Bourke

Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:
 Tusla Child and Family Agency
 First Floor Trinity Building
 IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road
 Bray, Co. Wicklow

Rationale for Inspection:
 Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status: Registered Sessional Service for 27 Children
Date of Registration 7th February 2024

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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	Stepping Stones Pre-school is a sessional service that was established in 2009 and is privately operated. The pre-school is located in the rural setting of Ashford in Co. Wicklow. The service is registered to provide care and education to children aged between 2 years and 6 years of age. The preschool operates between the hours of 09.00am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.
Premises	The service operates from a purpose-built premises located on the grounds of the registered provider's home. There are two care rooms, a sanitary area and an entrance hallway. The outdoor area is located at the side of the premises.
Staffing	There are four staff members employed in the service, one of whom is the registered provider.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>

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Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider who was present on the day of the inspection.
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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.

Requirement met:	The requirement has been met. (1)(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named deputy.
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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.

Requirement met:	The requirement has been met. (1) The service proposes to accommodate 30 children on a sessional basis in two care rooms with an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times. There are four staff members employed in the service, this includes the registered provider.
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

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(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1)(a)</p> <p>The service comprises of one large care room, Room 1 and a second much smaller care room, Room 2. The rooms are bright and laid out to cater for the age range of children who will be attending in each room.</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>A large suitable rest area, consisting of two sofas and cushions, has been provided in Room 1, children in the Room 2 will have easy access to this rest area.</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>The outdoor space consists of a large, grassed surface area. There were no ponds, pits or other hazards observed in the outdoor area. There was an assortment of suitable toys available for the age group attending the pre-school. The outdoor area was found to be suitable, safe and secure.</p>
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>Parents will be requested to provide all snacks for their child attending the service. All snacks must be in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. Refrigerated storage facilities are available for perishable lunches.</p> <p>Portable water is available for children.</p>
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If a child requires additional food the registered provider will provide a healthy snack as needed.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- The registered provider demonstrated that the main entrance is locked at all times, ensuring children cannot leave the service unsupervised and unauthorised access to the service cannot occur.
- The emergency exit door was unobstructed.
- Storage was available for children’s belongings.
- Cleaning materials and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- A fridge was available in Room 1 for the storage of food.
- A cleaning schedule for toys and equipment was available, as well as a cleaning schedule of the pre-school rooms and sanitary area.
- The sanitary accommodation was stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and paper hand towels. The water temperature was recorded at 42°C. A large foot pedal bin was present in the sanitary area, for the safe disposal of used paper towels.
- The pre-school rooms and sanitary accommodation was ventilated by openable windows.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)

The registered provider has a current certification in FAR first aid training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the Room 1 room. It was clearly identifiable and readily accessible.

(b)

The first aid box will always be available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of—
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a)

The registered provider has indicated that fire drills will continue to be carried out in both pre-school rooms.

(b)

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	<p>There was a record available relating to the number and type of firefighting equipment and for the servicing of the fire detection and alarm system dated September 2023 and November 2023 respectively.</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in both pre-school rooms. The fire assembly point was identified.</p>
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>An insurance quotation was submitted to the Registration Team prior to this inspection.</p> <p>The registered provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the change. The change approval is contingent on the registered providers compliance with Regulation 28.</p> <p>There was certified evidence of insurance for 30 pre-school children in place which expires in March 2024.</p>
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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,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(a)

The pre-school is located in a standalone, single storey dwelling that is adjacent to the registered provider's home. The building has been adapted to accommodate the service.

(b)

There are two points of entry to the service, the first is through the main door that leads to the Room 1 and the second is at the rear of the building and leads into Room 2. These doors are monitored by both the registered provider and staff members and can be locked with a turnkey locking system from the inside.

The outdoor area is secured with high wooden fence and there is a locked gate at the point of entry to prevent a child leaving unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access to the area.

(c)

The premises benefits from natural light via windows in both pre-school rooms. There is supplemental artificial lighting also provided from covered fluorescent ceiling lights in the room. There is an electric storage heating system in place within the service. Windows in the pre-school rooms can be opened but have restrictors in place and there is natural ventilation in the sanitary area.

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	<p>(d)</p> <p>A cleaning schedule was in place in both pre-school rooms. The premises and surrounding environment were clean and maintained.</p> <p>(e)</p> <p>The sanitary accommodation is located within Room 2. The sanitary area consists of three separate toilets and three wash hand basins. A separate toilet and wash hand basin is located in the registered providers home for adults working in the service. Thermostatically controlled hot water was available in the children’s sanitary area and the temperature of the water was 42°C.</p>
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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) *Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1)</p> <p>Adequate clear floor space has been provided for the work, play and movement of the number of children proposing to attend the service as demonstrated below:</p> <p>(2)</p> <p>Room 1 The clear floor space in this room measured 36.00 square metres.</p> <p>Room 2 The clear floor space in this room measured 13.72 square metres.</p> <p>There is sufficient space in the service to cater for 27 children on a sessional basis.</p>
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