

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D.: TU2015WW103

Name of Service Balloons Pre-school

Address of Service: De la Salle Pastoral Centre, St. Patricks Road, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow, A67FX65

Email Address: balloonspreschoolwicklow@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Sharon Gregory

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

Proposed change: Additional Service Type from Sessional to Part-Time & Sessional for 22 children
Change of operating hours from 09:30 to 12:30 to 09:30 to 14:30.

Proposed Number of Children: 22

Recommended Change Following Inspection: Part-time & Sessional service for 22 children from 09:30 to 14:30.

Registered change: Additional Service Type from Sessional to Part-Time & Sessional for 22(Max 16 Part-time) children
Change of operating hours from 09:30 to 12:30 to 09:30 to 14:30.

Date of Inspection:	0	6	1	1	2	0	2	4
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Inspection undertaken by: Mona Condon

Title: Early Years Inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive,
Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin.

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

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

Registration Status:	Registered Part-Time & Sessional Service for 22 (Max 16 Part-Time) children
Date of Registration	21 st November 2024

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	Balloons Pre-school is located in Community centre in Wicklow Town. One room and adjoining sanitary area have been adapted for use as a pre-school. An outdoor area is located at the rear of the premises. This service presently operates from 9.30am to 12.30pm daily for 38 weeks of the year and provides care and education for pre-school children from two to six years of age. It is currently registered to take a maximum of 22 children.
Premises	The premises is part of a community centre in the centre of Wicklow town. The Pre-school room has its own entrance door, a large pre-school room and a separate sanitary area for the sole use of the pre-school children. Within the pre-school room there is a kitchen/office area which is separated by means of a gate. Outdoors a pedestrian walkway has been constructed leading to the outdoor area located at the rear of the centre.
Staffing	There are two staff members 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>
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were 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 registered provider has ensured that there is a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise if required.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—

(b) a childminder shall ensure that a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the childminder in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the childminder in the event of an emergency, and

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The service is currently registered to cater for a maximum of 22 pre-school children. The registered provider is aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6 and will ensure that an adequate number of adults will work directly with the pre-school children in the service.

(8) (b) Not applicable as this is not a childminding service

(c) Not applicable as this is not a sessional service that operates single-handedly.

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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
 - (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.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises or

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable facilities for play indoors was provided. A selection of age-appropriate toys and equipment, games and materials were available in the room of the service. There were several interest areas for example, a home corner, construction area, library, kitchen area, and art area.

A suitable secure outdoor play area, which was partly covered so that it could be used in inclement weather, was located at the rear of the premises. This area was accessed through a secure pathway from the pre-school room. A gate at the entrance to the outdoor area with a padlock prevented an unauthorised adult from entering this area.

(b)

Soft seating or floor mats were provided in the room for the children to take a break from activities and rest if required.

(3)(a)

Children attending the service have access to an outdoor play area located at the rear of the premises. A range of equipment including bikes, sit-in cars, sand play, a playhouse, slides, basketball and hoop, and a picnic table. In the covered area a range of table-top activities could be accommodated on low level tables.

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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:

There was a healthy eating policy in place. Lunch and snack foods are provided by the parents of each child and stored in a fridge. Children have access to drinking water at all times. It is proposed that the children availing of part-time care will have a second snack at 1pm. A healthy and varied menu was available. The registered provider has additional food available for any child who may not wish to eat their own lunch or forgets their lunch.

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 entrance door leading directly into the service was appropriately secured to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service. The service had a separate entrance from the main community centre. A notice board located adjacent to the door gave updates regarding the service. The outdoor area was secure.
- Play materials and equipment were stored on low level stable based shelving units which reduced the risk of the furniture from toppling and injuring a child.
- Two hand wash basins in the sanitary area adjacent to the room facilitated all children to wash their hands following periods of outdoor play, before lunch time and after using the toilet. Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to the children.
- Pedal bins were available in the pre-school room and in the sanitary area.

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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 ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff members had Pre-hospital emergency care council (PHECC) training which expires in October 2024.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and stored in readily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service, available at all times for the children if needed.

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) A written record is available of the fire drills completed on a monthly basis in the service.

(b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection system of the service. The fire-fighting equipment and the fire detection system were last serviced in June 2024 and July 2024 respectively.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the care room of the service. The fire assembly point is located at the front of the building.

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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:

The requirement has been met.

The registered provider had ensured that the Early Years' service will be adequately insured to cover up to 22 pre-school children attending on a part-time care basis. An insurance quotation was available and covered the period from 18/10/ 24 – 27/03/2025. The registered provider will activate this policy once approval is received. 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.

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:

This requirement was met.

(a) The premises appeared to be adequately maintained.

(b) The entrance door leading into the service and a second door leading into the community centre were kept secured at all times during the operational hours of the service.

(c)

Lighting

The premises were adequately lit by means of natural lighting which was supplemented by artificial lighting. Shatterproof covers were in place on all light fittings which were flush with the ceiling

Heating

The premises were heated by means of an oil-fired central heating system. The ambient temperatures of the care rooms and the sanitary accommodation were within the optimum care room temperature range of 18-22°C on the day of inspection.

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	<p>Ventilation</p> <p>Ventilation was predominantly provided by means of openable windows and trickle vents. The care room benefitted from openable windows. In the sanitary area trickle vents and mechanical ventilation supplied adequate ventilation.</p> <p>(d) The service was in a clean condition. Up to date documented cleaning schedules were available in the service.</p> <p>(e) An adequate number of sanitary areas were available. There were two toilets and two wash hand basins available for children’s use. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were used to facilitate hand drying. Suitable lidded bins were provided. A staff toilet was available in the sanitary area. Separately a sink was available in the kitchen area of the pre-school room for staff use.</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.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.*

Requirement met:

- (1) The service has adequate clear floor space for 22 pre-school children attending on a sessional basis or a maximum of 16 pre-school children if attending on a part-time basis.
 - (2) The clear floor space in the room measures 74 square metres. This room has sufficient space to cater for the care needs of a proposed maximum of 16 pre-school children aged two to five years attending for part-time care from 09.30 to 14:30.
- In summary there is sufficient space in the service for a maximum of 22 children when attending on a sessional basis or the proposed change to 16 pre-school children attending on a part-time basis.