

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WW110
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stratford Scallywags
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Chapel Lane, Stratford on Slaney, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow
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<b>Eircode:</b>	W91 FPF3
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Elizabeth McDonald
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Bourke and H. Sutherland
<b>Title:</b>	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

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### Description of service

Stratford Scallywags pre-school was first opened in 2006 and is a community childcare service. The pre-school is located in the rural setting of Stratford on Slaney in west Wicklow. It is registered to provide care and education to children aged between 2 years and 6 years of age. The pre-school operates between the hours of 09.15am and 12.15pm Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service also runs a breakfast club and afterschool care.

### Staffing

The pre-school is a community-based service and a board of management are responsible for the running of the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. There are three full-time members of staff employed in the pre-school, this includes the manager and the deputy manager, who were both present on the day of inspection. Two community care workers are employed but not counted in ratios for the service.

### 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.

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.*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

### Compliance Information

Following a discussion with the manager and a review of the staff roster, it was confirmed that there were five adults employed in the pre-school service, this includes two community care employees. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The manager was present in the pre-school and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The manager was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the pre-school service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)(a)(b)

Written references were available in respect of five adults.

- (c)  
The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of five adults.
- (4)  
Three adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6A)  
One adult was employed under the scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d)  
Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (2)(d)  
All the relevant paperwork has been submitted to the relevant authorities. The relevant documentation will be forwarded when received.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (2)(d)  
Photographic evidence of an application for international police vetting was submitted with the CAPA response.

### Summary Comment

The above actions will address the non-compliance that was found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation (9)(2)(b) but to date the non-compliance remains outstanding.

## 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)  
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school.

(3)  
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were three adults employed and present with twenty-two children.

(8)(c)  
Not applicable as the pre-school is not operated single-handedly.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

## 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:*

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (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.*

*(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)(a), (h)-(k).

The manager made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection to 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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

The manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Children were given the opportunity for free play during the morning, and children's participation was encouraged in all activities throughout the day.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service.

One to one attention was given to a child when required, in addition, support was given to children so that they remained included in activities they maybe have been unsure or unfamiliar with.

A strong ethos of teamwork was evident from observing how staff members worked together. The relationships between the adults and children reflected a sense of belonging, inclusion, connectedness and diversity.

The snack time was relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children, all children sat on low level chairs at a table, and conversation was encouraged. The adults sat with the children and had their own snacks during this time.

Children were addressed by their name and were given plenty of time to eat their food. All food was provided by the parents of the children in the service.

The service had a cosy area in the pre-school room, with rugs and soft furnishings for children to use should they require it during their day.

The children had access to the large outdoor area and on the day of inspection were observed making use of all the facilities outside. These included climbing frames, swings, outdoor kitchen, trikes, a variety of push and pull toys, sand and water play, rocking horses, playhouses and football nets. The outdoor area was suitable, safe and secure.

Children's parents are spoken to on an individual basis at collection time. Parents are encouraged to make direct contact with the service, should they have any concerns or wish to speak with staff in person.

### 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-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

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

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

#### Compliance Information

(1)

The manager ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

The manager ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.

(b)

The manager had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school.

(4)

The manager was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it related.

### 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 manager was trained in FAR first aid and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within the premises.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times.

### 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was evidence of regular fire drills haven taken place within the service. The last fire drill took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record of the firefighting equipment in the premises dated June 2024.

(2)(c)

These records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, displayed within the pre-school room.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was no current in date maintenance record for the smoke detection system in the pre-school service.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The smoke detection system has been serviced and we will keep a record of when the next service is due.

### Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

Photographic evidence of a receipt of payment for smoke detection servicing was submitted with the CAPA response.

## Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation the regulation 26 (1)(b) and this will be reviewed on next inspection.