

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW129
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Name of Service:	The Schoolhouse Preschool
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Address of Service:	Rock Springs, Liscolman, Coolkenno, Co Wicklow
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Eircode:	R93 AD60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Donoghue
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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
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Description of service

The Schoolhouse Pre-school is a privately owned service which first opened in 2001. It is registered to provide care and education for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 9.00am and 12.30pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

The pre-school is located in the rural townland of Liscolman in Co Wicklow and operates out of a large single converted room within a private house.

There is a large secure garden area behind the house, which the children have access to daily.

Staffing

The registered provider and a second staff member work in the service and both were present on the day of inspection.

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/ 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, second staff member 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

Following a conversation with the registered provider it was confirmed that they and one other adult work in the pre-school service and both staff files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider 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 service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated written references were available in respect of two adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of two adults.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

Two adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

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

(3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were 2 adults present with 18 children.

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), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h)&(i),

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

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

The registered provider was able to demonstrate that a copy of the Act of the Regulations was kept on the premises and was available for inspection to.

(c)

An authorised person.

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 main door to the pre-school was locked on arrival of the inspector to the service.
- All cleaning products were locked away out of reach of the children in the service.
- All drawers and cupboards containing hazardous objects and sharp implements were secure.
- There were no cables or pull cords in the pre-school room.
- The emergency exit route from the pre-school room was free from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary area in the service had warm water, liquid soap and paper towels available for child and staff to use for effective hand-washing purposes.
- Foot pedal bins were available in both the care room and the sanitary area for the safe disposal of used hand towels and other waste.
- A cleaning schedule was available and completed on a daily basis.
- Cleaning of tables and of the care room was observed during the inspection.

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

(3)(a), (i-iv)

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

(b)

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

(4)

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

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 registered provider was trained in FAR (first aid response) and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within the pre-school room.

(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 a record of fire drills having taken place in the pre-school service. The last recorded fire drill was 15 December 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for smoke detectors on the premises dated February 2025.

(2)(c)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of what procedures should be followed in the event of an emergency, displayed in the pre-school room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was no current in date maintenance record of the firefighting equipment located in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

A fire company was contacted and serviced the fire extinguishers and the company have assured us that all future services are carried out well before the due expiry date.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)

Photographic evidence of service receipts following servicing of the pre-school fire extinguishers was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above action has addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 26 (1)(b) and will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The registered provider was able to demonstrate that the children attending the pre-school were adequately supervised throughout their time in the service.