

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX049
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Name of Service:	First Friends Michael Street Community Pre-school
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Address of Service:	C/O Catherine McAuley Primary School, Castlemoyle, New Ross, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y34 XT89
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Gannon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely Hospital Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

This preschool service is located in Catherine McCauley primary school on the outskirts of New Ross, Co Wexford. It is a sessional service for children aged from 2 to 6 years old. The service operates Monday to Friday, 08:45 to 11:45 for 38 weeks a year. An afternoon sessional service is also provided from 12:15 to 3:15. The service is operated from a large room of the primary school building. There are toilets attached to the service for the sole use of children. There is a designated outdoor play area for use by the service in the main outdoor area.

Staffing

There are five staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level five and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

The inspection focused on the following regulations:

- Regulation 9 management and recruitment,
- Regulation 10 policies and procedures,

Regulation 11 staffing levels,
Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child,
Regulation 17 Information for parents,
Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 first aid,
Regulation 26 fire Safety,
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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(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)(b)

The assistant manager of the service was the designated person in charge on the arrival of the inspector. The registered provider arrived later to assist in the inspection process.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and review of documentation, it was established that there were five staff employed in the service. All staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

All required written and validated references were available on file for five staff.

- (c)
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for four staff employed in the service.
- (d)
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on healthy eating and the policy on managing accidents and incidents in the service. These policies and procedures were specific to the setting.

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

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children during the period of inspection.

(2)

At 11:00

There were 15 children aged between 2 and 6 in the care of 5 staff.

At 12:30

There were 10 children aged between 2 and 6 in the care of 5 staff. These children arrived for the afternoon session.

The registered provider was present during the inspection and was available to assist in the care of the children if required.

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 children's enrolment forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service provided parents with information on enrolment. This information was sent by e-mail and information regarding the curriculum and policies, the curriculum, the hours of operation, the funding schemes available, contact details and the facilities available within the service. It provided parents with information on the day-to-day requirements and running of the service: healthy eating, behaviour management, exclusion policy and ethos of the service.

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 preschool room and outdoor play areas were resourced with a supply of equipment and play materials for the play and learning needs of the children attending the service. The preschool room was spacious and bright with large windows on one side of the classroom.

There was a variety of areas of interest which were well developed and resourced. These included a home corner with a washing machine, dishwasher and a supply of miniature utensils for children to play with. There was a dress up area which had a supply of costumes for children to play with. There was a large quantity of story books, a large dolls house and activity trays filled with rice and pasta shapes for children to develop their fine motor skills. Shelving which was easily accessible to the children provided a selection of well-maintained activities and resources such as jigsaws and magnetic building shapes. A large well stocked storage press on the side wall of the room contained additional materials which the children could also access as needed. Original artwork was displayed in the room which had an easter theme composed of paintings of various coloured eggs.

The outdoor area was well resourced with play equipment also. This area was a long narrow area just beside the national school's main playground. There was a soft ground covering on the ground of the play area, a jungle gym, a tray with sand for digging, and benches for children to sit on.

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.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. The service provided all food for the children attending. At snack time children were observed to enjoy a variety of healthy food options such as cereal, milk and diced fruit. The staff took the opportunity to chat with the children during snack time making it a sociable time for them.

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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door. There was a call bell which sounded in the room to allow visitors access to the service. The fire exits were not obstructed. The playground at the rear of the service was safe, suitable and secure. There was a code on the outdoor play area to ensure the safety of the children while they were playing.

Infection control:

The service was clean with no maintenance required on the day of inspection. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the toilet area was recorded at 34°C on the day of inspection. All bins in the preschool room and toilet facilities were foot pedal operated. Staff were observed to be vigilant in supporting the children while washing their hands before snack after using the toilet and after messy play.

Outings

There was a policy on managing outings in the service. The policy outlined the measures in place prior to facilitating outings in the service to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the children in the service. These measures included a risk assessment of the venue prior to the date of the outing, parental consent, procedures for supervising children, first aid measures to manage a critical incident and insurance required prior to facilitating the outing.

Non-Compliance Information

Garda vetting was available for all staff. However, there was a vetting disclosure for one staff member which was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence with the recent regulation notice which require all staff working directly with preschool children to have their Garda vetting renewed every 3 years. It is acknowledged

the inspector received confirmation that the registered provider applied to have the Garda vetting renewed for the staff member shortly after the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The Garda vetting was sent to the inspector shortly after the inspection and is now in place on file in the service. The registered provider will ensure all Garda vetting is renewed every 3 years in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

The required renewed Garda vetting was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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)
There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service. The staff rota demonstrated there was an adequate number of staff qualified to comply with this regulation at all times.

(2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place in March 2025.

(b)

The annual record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment was carried out in the service in September 2024. The annual record of the maintenance of the smoke alarm in the premises was carried out in February 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the entrance door to the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.