

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016CC029
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	First Friends Rathpeacon Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Sweeney's Hill, Old Mallow Road, Rathpeacon, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	T23 Y472
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Trasa McCarthy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	16	PM	9
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N O'Donoghue
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

First Friends Rathpeacon Preschool is a privately owned sessional service, that is registered to cater for children who attend the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and aged 2 to 6 years. This is accommodated over 38 weeks of the year. Two daily sessions are facilitated; the first from 8.40am to 11.40am and the second from 12.00pm to 3.00pm.

The service is located on the outskirts of Cork city and operates from a room within a two-storey community centre. Child and staff sanitary facilities are available adjacent to the care room. A large hall is accessible for indoor active play and there is a designated outdoor play area at the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There were seven adults attached to the service. This includes the registered provider who is service based, four childcare assistants, one student completing their placement and one maintenance worker.

### 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. 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, deputy 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises, a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) worker and childcare practitioner.

(2) Seven adults were attached to the service; five childcare practitioner staff files, one maintenance worker and one student file were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 14 references required, 10 references were from past employers of which only 8 were validated.

(b) Of the 14 references required, 2 references were from a source other than a past employer with no validations.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six adults carried out by the registered provider. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) All five adults working directly with the children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a) & (b) Two references were not available in respect of one adult working in the service. A further four references available had no validation conducted by the service available on day of inspection. This was also found non-compliant on previous inspection on 04 October 2023.
- (2) (c) A Garda vetting disclosure conducted by the service was not available on day of inspection for one staff member. A Garda vetting disclosure was available from the staff member's University only. Vetting is required to be carried out by the service.
- (d) Through discussion with the registered provider and review of the adult file, it was not possible to determine if international police vetting was required for one adult attached to the service.
- (3) The registered provider did not carry out the procedures specified above prior to the adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with the children in the service in respect of one of the staff.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (a) & (b) The registered provider submitted the validated references to the Early Years Inspectorate. The registered provider will ensure that all details are in staff files going forward.
- (2) (c) The registered provider conducted the Garda vetting, and a disclosure is now kept onsite. The registered provider will ensure to store files correctly going forward.
- (2)(d) Following review of documentation submitted by the registered provider, a police vetting was not required for the adult member.
- (3) The registered provider will ensure that all documentation will be kept on file.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) (a) & (b) The registered provider submitted the references to the Early Years Inspectorate.
- (2) (c) A copy of the Garda vetting disclosure was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.
- (2) (d) A copy of the Curriculum Vitae in relation to the adult was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.
- (3) The registered provider's statement was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

### 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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Preschool room in the morning, there was 3 staff working with 16 children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 6 months, all were attending sessional care. In the afternoon session, there was four staff working with nine children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 4 years and 6 months, all were attending sessional care.

### 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-*

*(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

#### Compliance Information

##### Basic needs:

- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at snack time. Children were supported by staff with the opening of their snacks.

- Children’s toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it. Staff were observed cleaning children’s faces after mealtimes.
- Good handwashing routines were evident on the day of inspection. Staff supervised children to wash their hands before snack and after playing outside.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills for example, putting their own coats on and staff supported children when required.
- Children were encouraged to engage in a wide range of gross motor skills including jumping, running, and crawling.
- Fine motor skills were encouraged through mark-making materials, colouring and gluing activities.

### Supporting relationships:

- The staff in the playroom were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking with the children and spoke to them at child level.
- Staff were observed sitting with children during free-play and during mealtimes. Staff and children spoke about their families and activities they had completed over the weekend.

## 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 entrance to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access or unsupervised exit of a child.
- All low laying cables were safely secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was secured to ensure no unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of sight and reach of children.

#### Infection control:

- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children’s hands were washed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play.
- Windows were opened for natural air ventilation.

- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.

### Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

### Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and were clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the event they were required.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection control:

1. The children's lunches which contained perishable food was not stored in a refrigerator for the duration of the session. On discussion with the registered provider, it was identified that usual practice is for lunches to be stored in the refrigerator however this was not completed on day of inspection. This posed a risk of food spoilage to the children.
2. A pedal operated bin was not available in the adult sanitary facility. This posed a risk of infection to the staff.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection control:

1. The registered provider stated that food will be stored in the refrigerator at all times.
2. The registered provider purchased a new pedal bin and replaced the bin in the adult sanitary facility.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection control:

1. The registered providers statement was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the new bin was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

### 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 ensured that a member of staff with First Aid Response (FAR) training was available to the children at all times.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored out of reach of children and easily accessible by adults in the care room.
  - (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times; in the event they required it.

### 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 fire fighting 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) The service had maintained a record on the following:

- (a) Each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 13 February 2026.
  - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm.
- The records on file demonstrated the last check on the fire extinguishers was 02 September 2025 and the smoke alarm was 02 September 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

## 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

It was evident throughout the day of inspection that children are supervised at all times, this was observed by staff engaging in supervision by sight and sound. Staff supported children when required. This was observed both indoors and outdoors.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certificate for the service was furnished to the inspector. The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- The contact details for the insurance provider.
- The name and address of the service insured.
- The number of children covered by the insurance was 22 children.
- The categories of insurance cover for the service.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27 March 2026.