

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017TY500				
Name of Service:	Scoláirí Óga Pre-School				
Address of Service:	7 Carrig Derg, Ballycommon, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E45 HF74				
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle McGrath				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	11/07/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>7</td> <td>PM</td> <td>9</td> </tr> </table>	AM	7	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney				
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

TÚSLA An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach Child and Family Agency	Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 QMS Ref: EYI-RRT12.1 V2.0 03/03/2023 Service ID: TU2017TY500	1 of 11
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This service was established to provide care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years old. A registered school aged care service is also provided to children aged 5 to 12 years old. The service operates Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. A three-hour sessional preschool service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children operates for 38 weeks of the year, in line with the national school year.

The service is operated from a two-storey, semi-detached premises in a residential area in the village of Ballycommon in north Tipperary. The service is operated from the ground floor of the premises and consists of three interconnected activity rooms, a sensory/relaxation room, kitchen, office, sanitary accommodation areas and an enclosed outdoor play area.

This is a sister service to Scoláirí Óga Preschool and Afterschool, Kilbarron.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service every day but is available to call on when required. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There were three staff, including the manager, working directly with the children 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(3)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23, 25 and 26(1)(4).

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child.

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 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

(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

The staff files of six members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of the six members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of three members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were held on file. The service had a process in place for re-vetting all staff on a three-yearly basis.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(4) All staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) There were 3 staff working directly with 7 early years children aged between 2 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There were also 7 school aged children present. The children and staff were blended with at least one member of staff outside and one member of staff inside so that the children could move between these spaces freely and be adequately supervised. The third member of staff was responsible for preparing and cooking the meals when not engaged in working with the children. By 11.30am the number of children present in the service had increased to 9 early years and 8 school aged children.

(3) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the requirements for the duration of the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A sample of six registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the details as specified under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) The registration forms were available for inspection by authorised persons.

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;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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 record in writing was maintained of the details as specified under parts (a) to (k) of this regulation.

(3) The records were available onsite for inspection by authorised persons.

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

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending the service:

The tables in the front room were configured into a large dining table for mealtimes, around which all of the children and staff could sit and eat together in family dining style. Staff ate with the children, encouraged their conversations and helped to create a relaxed atmosphere. Mealtimes were not rushed and each child was given as much time as they needed to eat their meal. When children were finished and ready to resume play, they tidied up their dining space and returned to an activity of their choice.

The service was inspected during the summertime when there were a mix of early years and school aged children present. Many of the children had siblings or relatives attending the service. The children were free to choose where and with who they played with, whether that was with their friends, siblings, cousins or on their own. Staff were present in both the indoor and outdoor environments to supervise the children which supported the free movement of children between indoor and outdoor environments throughout the day.

The staff set up a variety of indoor activities which the children could engage in. Equipment and materials, both indoors and outdoors, were easily accessible to the children so that they could see and reach the materials they wanted to engage with.

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 door between the entrance lobby and the activity rooms and the gate into the outdoor play area were kept secured to prevent any unauthorised access to the service or a child exiting the service unsupervised or gaining access to a roadway.

Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.

Soft fall matting was fitted under and around the outdoor climbing equipment.

Infection Control:

The children and staff washed their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after outdoor play, before eating, after using the toilet and after messy play.

The service had a cleaning schedule for the premises, toys and equipment. Cleaning tasks were signed off on when completed.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy regarding the administration of medication to a child attending the service. Signed parental consent was sought prior to the administration of any medication whether prescription or non-prescription.

Safe Sleep:

None of the children currently attending the service had a daytime sleep. There was a sensory/rest room in the service and camp beds available if a child wanted to sleep.

Fire Safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

Outing:

The service had a policy regarding the safe conduct of outings.

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 one member of staff present on the day of inspection who held current certification in first aid response (FAR) while the other two staff held current certification in paediatric first aid. Additional staff with FAR certification were available to work in the service when required to ensure that there was at least one member of staff present who held FAR certification at all times while the service was in operation.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available on a shelf in the front room where it could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the 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 written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 4 June 2024.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Firefighting equipment was serviced annually, most recently in October 2023. There was a wired smoke alarm system in the premises which was checked regularly.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency on the wall in the entrance lobby and above every alarm activation point in the service.