

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2019CC009
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Curious Minds
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Tullylease National School, Tullylease, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P56 V977
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Marie Sheehy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	21/08/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	8	PM	4
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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

Curious Minds Tullylease is an early years service offering a choice of full day care service. The facility is registered for children aged 2 years to 6 years of age and operating hours are Monday to Friday from 7.15am until 6.30pm, 50 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 9.00am and 12 noon and a school age service is available.

Curious Minds Tullylease operates from a classroom located within Tullylease National School in County Cork. The large room has two children's toilets one of which has a changing unit, a kitchen area, sleep room and an adult toilet located opposite the classroom. The children have access to the outdoor play areas at separate times to the school children. The service operates as part of a multi service provider.

### Staffing

There are six staff in total attached to the service, three of the six staff are currently employed in the service and the additional three staff are available from a sister service for additional cover if required. This includes the registered provider who does not work directly in 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. 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, 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service had a designated person in charge and 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, early years educators and relief workers.

(2) There are six staff attached to the service; all six staff files were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 12 references required, 10 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 12 references required, 2 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all six staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for two of the six adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the two adults.

(4) All six staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

### 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.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof 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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation. In the Preschool room, a mix of early years children and school aged children were combined.

- In the morning there were 3 staff working with 14 children in total, 6 of these were school aged children and 8 of these were early years children aged between 2 years and 3 months and 6 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 6 children in total, 2 of these were school aged children and 4 of these were early years children aged between 3 years and 3 months and 6 years.

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster from the two weeks preceding the inspection and observation on the day demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

### 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

(1) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 10 of the children registered as attending the service. The records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

### 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

1(a) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff

- Examination of relevant documentation.

### Basic needs:

- Children were brought outdoors frequently over the course of the day. Staff were attentive in regularly applying children's individual sun creams prior to going outdoors.
- There was access to a jug of water and plastic cups if the children did not have a drink. Drink bottles of water were brought in from home, children had access to these bottles at all times.
- 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 and placing them on plates.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.
- 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.

### Physical environment:

- The care room was broken into clearly identified areas including construction, role-play, kitchen, creative and cosy corner.
- Sensory play was encouraged with sand play areas.
- Children's artwork was displayed throughout the service.
- The materials and equipment observed were age appropriate and well kept.
- Gross motor development was supported through outdoor play through a variety of outdoor equipment such as bikes, trikes, balance bikes, slides, outdoor kitchen play and climbing frames.
- The indoor environment allowed for children to freely move about and choose activities and equipment linked to their personal interests.

### Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke at the child's level in a calm, soothing tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.

- Parents and guardians were updated electronically through a mobile childcare application and staff would communicate verbally at drop off and collection times.
- Staff were observed to be sitting on the floor with the children engaging in play including role-play as doctors, farm animals and colouring.
- Staff were observant of children's needs and were seen to comfort children when they were upset.
- Children had opportunities to play with their older siblings.
- Staff were observant of the children's needs and would remind children of toileting.

### 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.
- All foods were stored in the onsite refrigerator.
- Water temperatures were thermostatically controlled in the care room and adjoining sanitary facilities to not exceed 43°C.

##### Infection control:

- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Staff cleaned the tables between activities and mealtimes.
- Regular handwashing was observed by staff and children. Children's hands were washed prior to mealtimes, after outdoor play and after nappy changing. Staff hands were washed prior to meal times, after outdoor play and after supporting children with toileting.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the main room and sanitary facilities.
- Staff ensured to change aprons and gloves between each nappy change.

##### 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.

### Safe sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on day of inspection. Children had access to a sleep room which consisted of stackable beds if they required it.

### 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.

## 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 staff trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) were at all times immediately available to the children. All six staff held up to date training in First Aid Responder (FAR).

(2) The first aid box was assessed on day of inspection and was fully stocked.

(a) The first aid box was stored up high, out of reach of children and easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid box is accessible to staff in the event that a child may require it.

## 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.