

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2019DY005
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Block A4 Bridgefield, Northwood, Santry Demesne, Dublin 9.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D09H3VY
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	James Hargrave
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	80	PM	53
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8, D08 X01F
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Griffin and C. Harte
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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.

### Description of service

Little Harvard Childcare is located in North Dublin and operates from the ground floor of a residential premises. Little Harvard Santry is 1 of 21 services operated by the registered provider. The service operates Monday to Friday from 7:00am to 6:30pm. The service is registered to offer care to children aged 0 to 6 years old on a full time, part time and sessional basis. At the time of the inspection, the service did not have children under 1 years old registered to attend. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. There are 6 care rooms in the service: the Wobbler Room, the Junior Toddler Room, the Toddler Room, ECCE Room, Preschool 1 and Preschool Senior Room. The ECCE room operates morning sessions only between 9.15am to 12.15pm. There is an onsite kitchen, staff room and a cot room adjoining to the wobbler room. There is also an outdoor play area located to the front of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and employs 22 adults. Adults employed include a regional manager, a person in charge, 19 adults to work directly with the children, two of whom were employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and one ancillary staff a chef. On the day of inspection, the person in charge and 16 adults working directly with the children including two AIM staff and two college students who were on work placement. The regional manager arrived shortly after the inspection began and remained on the premises throughout the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was not present on the day

### 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under: Regulation 16, Regulation 19, Regulation 23 and Regulation 27.

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.

## Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received from the service provider to the inspectorate.

Immediate action notices were issued to the registered provider on 10 March 2025 in relation to concerns identified under Regulation 23, Safeguarding the Health, Welfare and Development of child. Responses which adequately addressed the concerns were received on 11 March 2025. Further details are available under Regulation 23.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the regional manager, person in charge, staff, students 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

- (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.
- (2) It was confirmed by the person in charge that there were three adults on site which had not been present on the last inspection. This included one adult who was providing cover from another service operated by the registered provider and two students who were on work experience. The files of the three adults were reviewed as part of the inspection along with two Garda Vetting disclosures for two staff members whose files had been reviewed on the last inspection.

- (a) One written and validated reference was available from a past employer.
- (b) Five written and validated reference were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the five adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was available in respect of one adult who had lived in a country other than Ireland for more than six months as an adult.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the one adult who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- (7) (a)(c) The files of six adults who work directly with the children were reviewed.

Evidence demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there was an induction, appraisal and probation process. Demonstrated by the following examples:

New adults employed as part of their induction ticked a box to confirm that they had read the following documents:

- policies and procedures of the service.
- Staff handbook/employment policies.
- Health and safety statement.

There was evidence that staff induction included a breakdown of key policies and relevant information about the service. Induction included reading information about the following topics.

- Safety statement, fire safety, first aid, accident and incident reporting, nappy changing procedures, children's toileting, food and refreshments, safe sleep, hand washing, cleaning products, exclusion policy, administration of medication, outdoor play risk assessments, exclusion policy, parent handover, complaints, observations, curriculum, confidentiality, child protection and general information about the role of the staff member.
- There was evidence to show that the six new adults employed had completed staff appraisal meetings and a probation period.

### Non-Compliance Information

(7) There was documentary evidence available to show that the roll out of staff supervision was at variance with the service supervision policy. Evidenced by the following:

- A sample of six staff files were reviewed as part of the inspection. There was documentary evidence to show that four of the six staff had not been provided with regular supervision meetings as per the service supervision policy.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(7) A supervision meeting schedule has been created and implemented for all staff. Priority was given to staff members who had gone the longest without attending a supervision meeting. The Manager will take responsibility for ensuring supervision meetings are carried out as per the schedule, with records maintained and reviewed monthly. Compliance will be monitored through monthly audits of supervision records conducted by the senior management team.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

*(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 14 adults caring for 80 children in the morning and there were 11 adults caring for 53 children in the afternoon. In addition, the person in charge and the regional manager were available to provide support in the care rooms where required.

(4) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

## 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:*

*(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)
- (j) A review of nine medication administration records demonstrated that all the details were completed on each record.
  - (k) A review of fifteen accident and incident records demonstrated that all the details were completed on each
- (3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspection team were available for review.

## 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

The registered provider ensured that.

(1)(b)

- Discussion with staff showed that children are offered breakfast between 7am to 9am. The service also provided a morning snack of chopped fresh fruit and two hot meals which were prepared for onsite by the in house cook. Different dietary requirements were catered for, and additional portions of food were available if required.
- Water was available and accessible in each care room for the children to drink.
- Children were observed to have the freedom to move freely in their care room and independently choose their activities and play experiences. Activities and materials available were suitable for the age and stage of the children in the care rooms.
- Language used by staff was observed to be kind and supportive during activity time. Staff praised children and encouraged the children to try new activities.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children at set times or in between when required.
- Lighting was observed to be subdued in the sleep rooms and soft music was played.
- There were cosy areas with a soft mat, cushions, cuddly toys and books for rest and relaxation present in each care rooms. In addition, there was an adult sized sofa in the Wobbler room which was observed in use when a child who was settling in was observed to need comforting.
- All children were observed to spend time in the outdoor play area.
- Parents/guardians were given information on their child's food intake, toileting and sleep via a daily handover sheet and conversation at pick up times.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b) The registered provider did not ensure the care needs of the children were carried out in a promptly manner. Evidenced by the following:

- Children were observed wearing outdoor clothing for example coats and hats in preparation to attend the garden at 11.33am however they remained in their care room wearing outdoor clothing and were observed to engage in a circle time activity. The children did not enter the garden until 11.47am. It was a warm day and the temperature in the room was recorded at 23.2. This did not support the comfort of the children and posed a risk of the children overheating. It is acknowledged one child was assisted to remove a coat.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b) Staff were reminded of the importance of responding promptly to children's comfort and well-being needs, including removing outdoor clothing when indoors. Staff have been retrained on practice guidelines for transitions between indoor and outdoor activities. Management will conduct regular spot-checks during the day to ensure compliance with all aspects of Regulation 19.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of staff training.

### Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19.

## 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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.

- Medication was observed to be stored safely out of the reach to the children.

### Infection Control:

- In the ECCE room perishable snacks such as yoghurt and cheese brought by the children from home for morning snack time were observed to be stored in a fridge reducing the risk of bacteria multiplying.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels. Children were observed to be familiar with the routine of handwashing after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were cleaning schedules on the wall of the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.
- During sleep time, low floor mats were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child.
- Individual bed linen was used for the sleeping children and staff were familiar with the washing schedule.
- Windows in the care rooms were observed to be open which allowed for circulation of air and reduced the risk of cross infection.

### Administration of Medication:

- The service had an individual health plan to identify the medication requirements and procedures in place for three children who had a specific medical condition. Through discussion with staff, it was evident that staff were familiar and aware of the procedures to follow as per each care plan.

### Safe Sleep:

- Outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Children under two years of aged were provided with a cot for sleeping. Children over two years of aged were provided with their own individual sleep mat and individual bed linen.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one the age of one slept.
- Staff maintained a record of the children that slept, to include their colour, breathing and position every 10 minutes.

### Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in the hallway in the

service and the care rooms. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The outdoor play area posed a significant risk to the safety of children. Evidenced by the following:

1. The coded lock was not working on the entrance gate to the outdoor play area making it accessible to unauthorised persons. This posed a safety risk.
2. Fragments of a broken plastic toy were found in the outdoor play area while children were present. The fragments were sharp and posed a risk of injury.
3. Gaps in the outdoor fencing resulted in discarded toys, rubbish and a bait box for rodents being accessible to the children who were present in the outdoor play area. This posed a risk of injury.

An immediate action notice was issued in relation to points 1, 2 and 3 on the day of the inspection. A response was received by the person in charge on 11 March 2025 which mitigated these risks.

4. Cleaning agents were observed to be stored in a press with a broken safety lock under the sink in one of the care rooms. This posed a risk of injury to the children present. An immediate actions notice was issued. It is acknowledged that the person in charge took immediate action and removed the cleaning agents when the inspectors brought the identified risk to their attention. A response was also received by the person in charge on 11 March 2025 which mitigated this risk.
5. Two of the five Garda vetting disclosures reviewed were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. This posed a safeguarding concern.
6. There was evidence that the ECCE garden area risk assessment had not been completed the week previous dated 3 March 2025. In addition, this room did not complete the garden risk assessment before going outdoors on the day of the inspection. This is at variance with information given to the inspectorate that garden checks would be completed prior to children going outdoors to play.

#### Infection Control:

7. There was a sensory tray which was first observed to be stored in the sanitary area and then used a short time later for playing in one of the care rooms. This posed a risk of cross infection.

#### Fire Safety:

8. The ECCE children's attendance record book which details the children's time of arrival and departure had not been completed on the day of the inspection. There was evidence to show that it had not been

completed since 3 March 2025. This posed a risk of safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The lock was immediately replaced as per immediate action notice reply.
  2. The fragments of broken toys were removed immediately. Staff have been retrained on our outdoor play policy, emphasizing that children's safety is a priority. A comprehensive risk assessment of the outdoor play area must be conducted, ensuring adherence to our policy during all garden play activities.
  3. Safety netting was attached to the panels of the fence to prevent children from reaching out for any objects placed outside the perimeter.
  4. The press in the ECCE classroom has been rearranged to ensure all cleaning products are securely stored well out of children's reach.
- \* In relation to point 1 to 4 local, regional and senior management will carry out frequent checks to ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 23.
5. The two outstanding vetting applications were prioritised and submitted immediately. The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Senior Manager will conduct quarterly audits of vetting records to ensure ongoing compliance.
  6. A refresher training session on completing risk assessments and maintaining accurate records has been conducted. Staff have been reminded of their responsibility to complete daily garden risk assessments before outdoor play. The Manager will conduct weekly audits to ensure compliance.

##### Infection Control:

7. All staff were verbally reminded of appropriate storage practices. A targeted refresher training session on infection control and equipment storage was completed.

##### Fire Safety:

8. All staff have been retrained on the fire safety procedure, with emphasis on real-time, accurate attendance recording for safe evacuation. Management will carry out checks daily and conduct weekly audits of attendance records.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of new lock on outdoor gate. Documentary evidence staff were retrained in outdoor policy, safety and risk assessments.
2. Documentary evidence staff were retrained in outdoor policy, safety and risk assessments.
3. Photographic evidence of new netting. Documentary evidence staff were retrained in outdoor policy, safety and risk assessments.
4. Photographic evidence of new lock on press. Documentary evidence staff were retrained in indoor safety and risk assessments.
5. Documentary evidence of up-to-date Garda Vetting for the two staff members.
6. Documentary evidence of staff refresher training session on completing risk assessments and maintaining accurate records.

### Infection Control:

7. Documentary evidence of staff refresher training session on infection control and equipment storage.

### Fire Safety:

8. Documentary evidence staff retrained on the Fire Safety Procedure and accurate attendance recording for safe evacuation.

## Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

### 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 documentary evidence to show that six adults held certification in First Aid Response training and that one adult was rostered to be available at all times to the children attending the preschool.

(2) (a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

#### Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that preschool children attending the service were supervised at all times.

This was evidenced by the following:

- At 11.57am two staff members were observed to be standing side by side in the outdoor play area and holding adult conversations. Due to the layout of the outdoor play area the two staff members did not have a full view of the children at all times. During this time the inspector observed one child become upset after been pushed by another child. The staff members did not witness this happen. Staff need to stand in a location where they can view the children and be able to step in and offer appropriate support where required.
- At 12.45pm there was one adult in a care room caring for 5 children aged between 1 to 2 years. The adult was observed to take one child to have their nappy changed into the nappy changing area just off the care room. This meant that during this time there were four children in the care room that were not within her

line of vision. It is acknowledged that the other staff member who had been carrying out sleep checks entered the room at 12.48pm. However young children need to be visible at all times and should not be left unsupervised to ensure they are kept safe.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- Staff have been reminded of the importance to maintain active supervision of the children at all times, staff have been reminded that they should not congregate together and must ensure that the children are being closely supervised at all times.
- Staff have been reminded that they should seek assistance in the room while carrying out nappy changing duties.

Management will conduct regular supervision checks throughout the day to ensure adherence to correct procedures and compliance with all aspects of Regulation 27.

### Supporting documentation submitted

No documentary evidence submitted.

## Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider in the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 27.