

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2020CC009 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Naíonra na Mara |
|-------------------------|-----------------|

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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Gaelscoil Chionn tSaile, An Cappagh, Chionn tSáile, Co Cork |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | P17 VF84 |
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|                                     |               |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Patricia Ryan |
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|                      |           |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 18/05/2026 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 18 | PM | N/A |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|

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|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440 |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | D Prendergast                                                                                          |
| <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).

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### Description of service

Naíonra na Mara is privately operated and is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years, on a sessional basis. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) is accommodated from 9.00am to 12.00pm daily, over 38 weeks of the year.

The early years service operates from a room within a Gaelscoil, near the town of Kinsale, in Co. Cork. The premises is a modular building and there is a designated outdoor play area available onsite.

### Staffing

There are four adults attached to the service, all of whom work directly with the children. This includes the registered provider. Each of the four adults holds a major award in early childhood care and education. Three staff members were present at the time 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.

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 -

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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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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### 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.
- (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 person in charge of the service was the registered provider, who had also nominated a designated deputy, to deputise in her absence. This information was displayed in writing.
  - (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider was working at the setting and remained available to facilitate the inspection process. The deputy was also present.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the four adults attached to the setting were assessed for compliance and the following information was noted:
- (a) There were eight written and validated records required in total. Five of these were from past employers, with

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records of validation in place for four of the five references.

(b) A further three references were from sources other than previous employers, with corresponding records of validation available for two of these references.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff members.

(d) Police vetting was in place for all four adults, each of whom had resided in other jurisdictions, while over the age of 18.

(4) Written evidence regarding the attainment of a recognised award in early childhood care and education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, was on file for the four staff members.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Records of validation were unavailable for two of the references on file in respect of one of the adults.

(3)

The procedures outlined in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to some of the adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service, as follows:

- It was noted that the Garda vetting disclosures held in respect of two staff members were dated after the staff members had commenced working at the service.
- The Garda vetting disclosure on file in respect of one of the adults had been obtained through another organisation. Registered providers are required to process their own staff with regard to Garda vetting, before staff are allowed access to or contact with children.
- As per part (2)(a)(b) above, two validation records had not been obtained before the adult commenced their role at the early years service.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The written reply outlined that there are now two references and corresponding reference checks on file for the staff member. As a preventive measure, employee files will be regularly audited to ensure full compliance with the regulations.

(3)

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The required Garda vetting has been applied for in respect of the adult and the processed disclosure is awaited. Going forward, employees will not commence employment until Garda vetting has been obtained through the necessary channels and all references will be checked before employees commence working at the service.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

(2)(a)(b) Two references validations in respect of the adult.

(3) Evidence in relation to the Garda vetting application process was submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The response and evidence submitted in relation to part (2)(a)(b) are accepted.

Regarding part (3), evidence in relation to the application for Garda vetting, was reviewed in respect of the staff member. However, a copy of the completed Garda vetting has not been submitted to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9(3) remains outstanding.

## **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 an adequate number of adults were responsible for the direct care and education of the children in attendance.

(3) The adult child ratio was correct and maintained; there were 3 adults available to 18 children present, who were aged 3 ½ to 5 years.

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### 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) Ten of the 18 available child registration records were sampled. Each of the 10 records were assessed in relation to parts (a) to (i) above and were deemed to meet the requirements.

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### 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:*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The attendance records reviewed by the inspector covered the period 13 April to 18 May 2026 and were found to be complaint.
- (k) Three accident and incident records were on file for the current school year. Each of the records had been fully completed and included parent signatures.

### 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)

##### Basic needs:

- During the mid-morning snack, a relaxed and social environment was apparent, with lots of chatting among the children. Staff members also sat with the children and readily assisted them with tasks, such as opening food packaging and containers.
- Drinking water was accessible in the classroom throughout the morning; the children's reusable water bottles were clearly visible on a low-level table.
- Tissues were available within the children's reach, which supported them to attend to their own personal hygiene.

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- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met through the provision of suitable areas within the classroom, where they could take time to relax and read books.
- Within the indoor environment, ample space was available for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. There was also a focus on outdoor play, as the children were facilitated to spend extended time exploring outdoors.
- While outside, the children were dressed appropriately in outdoor clothing and wellies.

### Supporting relationships:

- An inclusive, respectful atmosphere was evident throughout the morning. The adults were present, kind and patient during their interactions with the children. For example, the children's views and opinions were listened to and the children were afforded choice in relation to their activities.
- Care of the environment was promoted; children were encouraged to tidy up before moving onto the next task and one of the children was supported to wash up, after they had finished a painting activity.

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### art 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 entrance door to the classroom was maintained secure when not in use. This safety precaution reduced the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the care room and the risk of a child exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor play space was enclosed by high-level fencing and gates.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a location that was inaccessible to children.
- Window blind cords were securely anchored with suitable tension devices.
- Cables from electrical equipment were out of reach of the children.
- The first aid box was maintained at adult height.

##### Infection control:

- Good handwashing practices were supported through the availability of warm running water at each of the wash hand basins, along with liquid soap and disposable paper towels. The children were supervised by the adults, as they washed their hands after playing outdoors and in preparation for the mid-morning snack. Staff were also observed to wash their hands before assisting the children at snack time.
- A foot pedal operated bin was available for the disposal of used paper towels.
- Suitable storage was in place for the children's belongings; a large container was used for their wellies, and coat hooks were provided for their outdoor clothing.
- Perishable snacks were stored in the fridge, which minimised the risk of food spoilage.
- Adequate ventilation of the care room was ensured through open windows.

##### Fire safety:

- Fire exit signage was clearly visible.
- Fire exits were maintained free from obstruction.

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### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the four adults held current First Aid Response (FAR) certification.

### 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) Written records indicated that regular monthly fire drills were carried out, the most recent of which was dated 14 April 2026.  
 (b) Documentation provided by a fire safety company demonstrated that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 11 June 2025.  
 (4) The service's fire evacuation procedure was displayed in the classroom.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)  
 (b) A record of servicing dated within the previous 12 months, was unavailable for the smoke alarm. This is required to ensure efficient functioning of the smoke detection and alarm system, in the event of a fire.

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

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### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The fire detection and alarm system inspection certificate has been obtained. As a preventive measure, an annual audit of the fire safety records will be carried out to ensure full compliance.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the fire detection and alarm system servicing record was forwarded.

### **Summary Comment**

The response from the registered provider was assessed and accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.