

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2020KE007
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Harvard Childcare Ltd
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Carton Wood, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
<b>Eircode:</b>	W23 X8KK
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	James Hargrave
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
<b>Date 1 of Inspection:</b>	03/02/2026
<b>Date 2 of Inspection:</b>	04/02/2026

<b>No of pre-school children Day 1:</b>	AM	89	PM	63
<b>No of pre-school children Day 2:</b>	AM	82	PM	62

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
<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).

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

This service is 1 of 22 private early years services operated by the registered provider. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 124 children aged between one and six years. The service currently operates from 07:00 to 18:30, Monday to Friday and offers full day, part-time and sessional education and care. The service is provided from a purpose-built, two-story building in a housing development in Maynooth, Co. Kildare. The premises includes seven care rooms with sanitary facilities, a cot room and an outdoor area. Two care rooms were used in the early morning to accommodate pre-school children for breakfast. Children were then allocated to one of six care rooms. The seventh room was not in use during the inspection.

### Staffing

There are 21 staff employed to work in the service including the service manager, a chef and four staff who work with school aged children. Fifteen staff are employed to work with the pre-school children. Thirteen of these adults were allocated to work with the pre-school children on the days of inspection along with two adults from the company's other services. One of the regional managers was rostered to support the newly appointed service manager. The company's operations manager arrived during the first day of inspection. A second regional manager arrived during the second day of the inspection. All four managers worked directly with the children and provided break cover.

### 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, safety, and complaints. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the managers, staff and children who were present on the days 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 person in charge and a named person to deputise.
  - (b) A person who could deputise was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service. Either the person in charge or a person who could deputise was rostered to be present at all times of opening.
  - (c) The management structure was clearly documented. The company had a general manager, an operations manager and two regional managers to oversee 22 services. The service manager reported to one of two regional managers. Staff demonstrated an awareness of their individual roles and the lines of authority.

(2) The registered provider demonstrated that consideration was given to the suitability and competency of staff prior to their employment as outlined:

- (a) & (b) A minimum of two references were available for each adult with a record of verification.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting had been sourced for all adults for whom it was required.

(3) All records outlined under regulation (2) above were dated prior to the adult's start dates.

(4) All adults working directly with children held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. There were 6 adults working directly with 26 pre-school children across two care rooms when the inspectors arrived unannounced on Day 1 of the inspection. This increased to 15 staff members working with a maximum of 89 children across 6 care rooms. The service manager and one regional manager were rostered to provide assistance and break cover on both days of inspection. The operations manager arrived on Day 1 of the inspection and worked directly with the children. A second regional manager arrived on Day 2 of the inspection and worked directly with the children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were always more than two adults present during the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be present at all times of opening.

### 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.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(b) The children moved freely within their rooms, engaging in play and activities. The children wore coats when playing outside as required. They were provided with regular meals and snacks. Drinks were available within the rooms and offered regularly. The children sat together when eating and the staff provided support as needed. Younger children wore bibs to protect their clothing from becoming wet or soiled.

Nappy changing was carried out at regular intervals and staff reported that nappies are changed as needed outside of these times. Children in the Wobbler room were placed to sleep according to their individual routines. They were made comfortable for sleep and their outer clothing was removed. Blankets were provided, and soothers were given to those who used them. Children in the Toddler room were provided with an opportunity to sleep before dinner.

(3) The inspectors observed staff interacting kindly with the children and being gentle when providing direct care. Staff in the Wobbler room were observed carrying and comforting a child who was new to the service and was upset. The inspectors observed positive behaviour management techniques being used including distraction. Children were supported to interact kindly with each other with adults emphasising using “kind hands”. Staff reported they had read the service’s policy on behaviour management and demonstrated a good awareness of prohibited practices.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. The inspector observed the front of a child’s trousers were wet in the Pre-school 3 room at 13:33 on day one of the inspection. The child appeared to be uncomfortable, pulling at the trousers and approached one of the adults. The adult pulled the child’s trousers up slightly and pulled their sweater down over the wet part. The child approached the adult a second time pulling at the trousers saying, “I’m wet”. The adult told the child “It’s just water”. The child ate dinner in the wet trousers and walked around the room pulling at the trousers after dinner. None of the adults present in the room offered to change the child until requested by the inspector at 14:02.
2. On day two of the inspection in Pre-school room 1, the inspectors observed two children pulling up their clothing in the classroom area after toileting independently. The children were visible to others in the classroom and from the corridor. The adults did not guide the children to return to the toilet area to maintain their privacy.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All staff were reminded of the importance of maintaining children’s privacy, adhering to good toileting, and ensuring that children’s clothing is promptly changed in the event of spills or accidents. Staff were specifically briefed on the need to respond quickly to ensure children’s comfort and wellbeing.
2. To reinforce these practices, a training card was developed, and comprehensive training covering toileting,

privacy, handwashing, and changing clothes after spills was delivered to all staff members. Relevant policies were also reissued to provide clear guidance. Local and Regional Management will carry out spot checks regularly to ensure compliance with all aspects of regulation 19.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

## 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:**

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Equipment and materials were appropriate to the age and stage of children in attendance. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Items that could pose a hazard were secured out of children's reach including cables and cleaning products.

#### **Infection Control:**

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of spreading infection. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained. Staff discussed cleaning schedules which included regular laundering of fabric items including bed linen. Children's nappies were changed in accordance with the service's nappy changing procedure to minimise the risk of spreading infection. Waste was properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal.

#### **Administration of Medication:**

Medications were stored in the original packaging out of reach of children. Staff demonstrated an understanding of how to administer medication safely if required. This included obtaining written parent/guardian consent, having a second staff member witness the administration and making a detailed record.

### Safe Sleep:

Children were placed to sleep in cots or on low beds appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff remained in the room with children while they slept on low beds. Staff demonstrated an awareness of measures to safeguard children when sleeping. They were observed regularly checking sleeping children and making a record of the checks which included their position, colour and breathing status.

### Outing:

The person in charge reported that the children are not taken on outings from the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The inspectors were unable to unlock an emergency exit door on the ground floor. A member of management informed the inspectors that this lock was intentionally adjusted to include a “knack” to prevent the children from opening it. It took the service manager approximately two minutes to open it, posing a risk to the timely evacuation of children in the event of a fire. It is acknowledged that a maintenance person was present at the close of inspection installing a mechanism to allow the door to be easily opened by adults whilst preventing children leaving unsupervised.

#### Infection Control:

2. Children were not adequately supported to wash and dry their hands in the Pre-school 1 and 3 rooms. Children in Pre-school 1 were observed leaving the toilet without handwashing. In Pre-school 3 many children left the sanitary area with wet hands after handwashing before dinner. They had used the electric hand dryer for less than four seconds which had been ineffective. One child used toilet paper for hand drying. Failure to adequately support children with handwashing can pose an increased risk of spreading infection within the service.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Maintenance staff were contacted immediately following the observation, and the emergency exit door was assessed and appropriately adjusted before the inspection concluded. A magnetic locking system with a release button, positioned out of reach of children, was installed to ensure the door can be easily operated by adults in an

emergency while preventing children from opening it unsupervised, thereby supporting the timely evacuation of all occupants. Local and Regional Management will ensure ongoing weekly safety checks of all exits have been implemented to ensure continued compliance.

**Infection Control:**

2. As previously outlined, all staff were retrained on our toileting policies, which include handwashing procedures, and the importance of supervising children while using the toilet to ensure that our handwashing policy was being followed in full. In addition, blue roll dispensers have been installed within the rooms at children’s reach to support effective hand drying in cases where children are not yet able to use the electric hand dryer independently or effectively. Management will carry out regular spot checks to ensure consistent adherence to hygiene and supervision practices.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

**Infection Control:**

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the stated actions.

**Summary Comment**

The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

**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**

The children were adequately supervised during the inspection. This included when playing indoors and outdoors, when eating, when sleeping and when transitioning between different areas of the premises.

### Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
  - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.
- (5) The requirement in paragraph (4) is without prejudice to any requirement to retain the record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) under any other enactment or rule of law.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a), (b) & (c) The service had a policy which specified the regulatory requirements for managing complaints.
- (2)
- (a) Records were available of complaints made in relation to the service.
  - (b) Records showed that complaints were dealt with according to the policy.
- (3)
- (a) The records included the nature of the complaints and the manner in which they were dealt with.
  - (b) The records were made available to the inspectors.
- (4) & (5) The records were dated within the previous two years. Managers were aware of the requirement to keep the records relating to a complaint for two years from the date it is dealt with.