



Name of Service:	Little Scholars Creche
Address and contact details of service:	The Parish Centre, Maynooth Rd, Dunboyne, Co. Meath, A86 FD26
TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020MH012SA
Type of Service and age profile:	School Age Care for children aged 4 to 10 years old.
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Byrne Farrell
Inspection Date:	22 September 2023
Previous Inspection Date:	Not applicable
Inspectors:	Inspection undertaken by: A. Bradshaw - Early years inspector C. Whelan - Inspection and Registration Manager
Registration Status:	Registered
Date of Registration:	17 November 2020
Conditions Attached to Registration:	None attached

Additional Information:	The inspection was completed on receipt of information the service submitted to the Inspectorate.
Legislation:	Tulsa's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Care Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation: • The Child and Family Agency Act 2013 Part 12 58 (G). • The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018). A School Age Care Service is one which caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post primary education. The service may provide a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable. It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.
Inspection Methodology:	The inspection was unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018) and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013. The findings on inspection are based on: • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above. 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 corrected the non-compliance and will prevent them 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.
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Description of Service:

Little Scholars Creche is one of two services operated by the registered provider. It is a combined school age service and operates from 7.30 to 9.10am and 2 to 6.15pm. It caters for a maximum of 38 school aged children at any one time. The service is situated in the Oak Parish Centre in the centre of Dunboyne town. The service has the use of two designated care rooms and assigned sanitary facilities within the centre. The service also has an outdoor space to the rear of the premises and access to a large hall.

On the day of inspection, there were 21 children between the ages of 4 to 11 years of age being cared for.

In this building, the registered provider also runs a sessional service for children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years.

Staffing:

The registered provider employs a person in charge and four staff members for this service. On the day of inspection, the designated person in charge and three staff members were present. Shortly after the inspection commenced, the general manager arrived at the service to provide support. The registered provider was not available on the day of the inspection. However, the weekly roster evidenced they are rostered to work in the service one day a week and are available to work with the children during the week if required.

Acknowledgements:

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, the general manager, the person in charge, and the staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

The registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c) (2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b): Complaints;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The registered provider was found to be non-compliant in:

- Regulation 7(1): Notification in change of circumstances;
- Regulation 9(4): Staffing levels;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The inspectors reviewed the actions and evidence that the registered provider submitted as part of the CAPA process. The non-compliances found on inspection have been adequately addressed.

Regulation 7: Notification of change in circumstances

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that you notify the Agency in writing of any proposed changes in relation to the school age service identified in the register within specified timelines.

Core Regulatory Requirements

Does the service have systems in place to notify the Agency of any change of circumstances?

Regulatory requirement not met

(1)

The registered provider had not notified the Agency in writing in advance of implementing the following changes:

- change of the person in charge.
- change in the age profile of the school age children cared for in the service. The service is registered to care for 4–10-year-olds. However, on the day of inspection, there were children up to the age of 11 years being cared for.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated that they submitted a change of circumstance with Tusla to ensure all information was up to date, including the change of person in charge and the age profile of the children to 4–12 years of age. These changes have been approved by Tusla.

They stated that they will ensure future proposed changes are submitted immediately and that all information is correct when submitting renewal forms when required. A copy of the form was submitted as evidence.

Summary

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance under regulation 7(1) that was identified on inspection.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure

Purpose

As the registered provider, you must ensure that an effective management structure is in place, and appropriate people are recruited to ensure the quality and safety of the care provided to the children attending the service.

Core Regulatory Requirements

Does the service have clearly defined governance arrangements and structures?

Regulatory requirement met

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)

The inspector reviewed the personnel files of the registered provider, the general manager, the person in charge, three staff members, and one staff member who was not rostered to work on the day of the inspection.

There were Garda Vetting disclosures in place for the seven staff. The registered provider had ensured validated references had been obtained for all relevant staff. There was documentation available to show no staff member required Police vetting.

(2)

The records reviewed demonstrated all staff had commenced their employment after the vetting disclosures had been received.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

Purpose

Your service must ensure that an adequate number of staff are available at all times during the provision of services to meet the needs of the children attending. At all times, the number of staff within the service will be appropriate to the needs of children, the type of service and the care provided.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Is there an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times?

Regulatory requirement met

(1)(2)

During the inspection, there were appropriate staffing levels in place. There were 3 staff members available for 21 children. The general manager and the person in charge were available to offer support if or when required.

Regulatory requirement not met

(4)

During a school collection on the day of inspection, eight children aged between six to nine years old were not adequately supervised during their transition from school staff to the care of two of the service's staff. The service's two staff waited for the children at an allocated collection point in a schoolyard. The collection point was known to the children. The eight children exited the school building from different locations and within a couple of minutes of each other. They walked to the allocated collection point. There was no direct handover from school staff to the service staff in respect of these children. This collection arrangement presents a risk that a child could go missing during their transition from school staff to service staff at school collection time. During the inspection, a service staff member noted that it may be safer practice for the staff members to each wait for the children at the main school exit points instead of both waiting together at the collection point.

It is acknowledged that the inspector observed staff adequately supervising the eight children when they arrived at the collection point and during their walk from school to the service. The staff members checked the children in attendance against a prepared attendance document. They walked in front and behind the lines of children ensuring visibility. They also promoted the children's road safety awareness during conversations with them and took a safe walking route.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated that two staff members will always be on school collections and each staff member is allocated two separate collection points, to ensure that there is one staff member to collect within the junior yard, and one staff member to wait in the senior yard. The registered provider noted that this ensures staff are more accessible to the children with a reduced space within collection points.

The registered provider also stated that they spoke with the teaching staff and requested physical handovers. The policies and procedures have been updated to include a school collection policy, which has been received and signed by each stakeholder. They also stated that high-visibility jackets have been sourced and will be used in the new collection procedures. A copy of the updated policies and photographic proof of the high-visibility jackets was submitted as evidence.

Summary

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance under regulation 9(4) that was identified on inspection.

Regulation 10: Policies etc of a school age service

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must develop, approve, distribute and review policies, procedures and statements in a consistent way. Policies and procedures will standardise your service's approach to implementing best practice and ensuring compliance with the legislation and regulations.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Are all the policies, procedures and statements in place for the school aged service?

Regulatory requirement met

On the day of inspection, the following policies and statements were in place for the service: a child safeguarding statement, a statement of purpose and function, infection control policy, medication policy, behaviour management policy, drop off/collection policy, fire safety policy, and complaints policy which met the requirements of the regulations.

Regulation 12: Insurance

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must ensure that the school age service is adequately insured.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Has the service obtained adequate insurance for the type of care and number of children attending the service?

Regulatory requirement met

The service had insurance cover in place for a maximum of 38 children in attendance daily. The insurance was valid from 1 September 2023 to 27 March 2024.

Regulation 13: Complaints

Purpose

As a registered provider, you must be open and responsive to people making complaints about the service. You must develop and implement a complaints management process that is consistent, fair, transparent and impartial.

Core Regulatory Requirement

Has the complaints policy been implemented? If so, is there evidence that the process was consistent, fair, transparent and impartial?"

Regulatory requirement met

(1)(a)(b)(c)

There was a complaints policy in place which detailed how to make a complaint. The complaints policy also detailed how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure.

(2)(a)(b)

Records of complaints made to the service were available on the day of inspection in accordance with the service's policy. The person in charge explained that policies are emailed to parents when their child is enrolled. There was documentation available to demonstrate that in January 2023, parents had received a copy of the policy documents including the complaints policy. There was evidence to demonstrate that a complaint was duly dealt with in accordance with the service's complaints policy.

(3)(a)(b)

Records of complaints included details of the nature of the complaints and the manner in which they were dealt with.

Health, Safety and Welfare of children

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

Purpose

The protection and welfare of the children in your service is paramount, and the children's safety and wellbeing is the priority. As a registered provider, you must be committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of children in your care, and to providing a safe environment where they can play, learn and develop.

Core Regulatory Requirements

Does the service provide appropriate care and attention in a safe environment and meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of children?

Regulatory requirement met

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- Staff were observed engaging the children in a variety of activities such as playing with building blocks, doing arts and crafts, designing a birthday card, and outdoor play. The children appeared to enjoy the activities.
- The children appeared content in the presence of staff members. One child smiled and hugged a staff member on their arrival at the school collection point. Another child appeared happy with how a staff member knew about their area of interest and how they had informed others about this.
- Staff members appeared vigilant regarding the medical condition that one child was diagnosed with. They were observed monitoring the child's presentation and providing them with timely support at various times during the inspection.

Regulatory requirement not met

1. The registered provider did not ensure that all staff members had followed the services dropping off and collection of school-age children policy. Through discussion with staff, this was evident as they had not been aware of their responsibility. For example, the policy outlines how staff members are expected to exhaust the contact numbers available on a child's registration form or to contact the school immediately when a child is not at the meeting point in the school as arranged. The service notified the inspectors that these steps in the policy were not followed on one recent occasion. This situation presents possible risks to the health, safety, and welfare of the children such as a child being unaccounted for.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

1. The registered provider stated that a full risk assessment was completed. They also stated that policies and procedures were amended to ensure updated protocols were in place to ensure no incidents re-occur. They noted that all staff attended an urgent staff meeting to discuss the severity of the incident and the agenda of this meeting was submitted as evidence. They also noted that the drop-off and collection policy was updated and that a copy will be sent to the parents of the school-age children. They stated that staff were informed that disciplinary action would be appropriate if this were to re-occur. A copy of the risk assessment, revised policies and procedure, and a staff sign-off sheet was submitted as evidence.

Summary

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliance listed above, under the Health, Safety and Welfare of Children, Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013, that was identified on inspection.

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