

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2020MN003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Scotshouse Community Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	St Enda's National School, Scotshouse, Clones, Co. Monaghan		
<b>Eircode:</b>	H23 H678		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Martina Beattie		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/10/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM -
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Skinnader and J. Mayock		
<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>	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Scotshouse Community Childcare has been operating as a community-based childcare service since 2020. The service provides a sessional service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 09:30 - 12:30hrs each weekday and caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from a room in the local primary school in the rural area of Scotshouse Co. Monaghan. The service currently has 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a sectioned off kitchen area. The children have access to an outdoor area on the school grounds.

### Staffing

There were 5 staff employed in the service, including the person in charge who work directly with the children.

### 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-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 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,

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

There were 5 staff files reviewed at inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 3 members of staff.
- Two staff had 1 written and validated reference.
- One staff had a second written reference.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 5 staff members and the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) One staff member did not have a 2<sup>nd</sup> written and validated reference.  
One written reference was not validated.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) A 2<sup>nd</sup> written reference obtained and validated for staff member.  
The reference was validated for the 1 staff member.

The person in charge has introduced a checklist for each file, to make sure the necessary documents are present, validated and up to date.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of outstanding references.

## Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the registered providers response and supporting documentation. The non-compliance has been addressed.

### 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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the early years' service.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct.
- In the Preschool Room there were 19 children aged between 2 years and 10 months – 4 years being cared for by 3 staff. A fourth member of staff arrived at approximately 10.30am.

### 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

- There was one care room in operation on the day of the inspection - the Preschool Room.
- (1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

#### Basic Needs:

- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.

- The children had free movement in the care room and also had a change of environment to the outside area.
- The children were dressed appropriately to go outside.

### Supporting relationships:

- There was a key worker system in operation.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. The staff also confirmed that an electronic application (app) was used to communicate and to share information with parents.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children for example when some of the children wanted to run inside, staff were observed to use the following to distract them from running “we are walking inside” “good listening” and “what are we going to play with now .....”. The children were observed to actively seek out staff members.
- A staff member sat with and joined the children who were having their lunches and the staff were also observed to lower down to the children’s levels while engaging in play activities.
- Transitions between activities were smooth.

### Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were resourced defined interest areas such as the home corner, messy area with sand, water trays, art supplies and painting easel, role play area, a construction/ work bench area, books and push and pull toys.

### Programme Of Activities.

- Evidence of daily, long and short-term planning were on display outside the room and staff advised that scrapbooks would be commenced on each child as the year progressed with observations and samples of artwork, so that parents could see some of the activities that the children engaged in during their day.
- Artwork linked to the seasonal Halloween theme was on display and consisted of handprint ghosts, paint stamping, paper plate ghosts and “Our Autumn Pictures”.
- A helper system to get the lunches out daily was in use in the care room.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day,

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were 2 cloth covered sofas, a large floor mat and 5 fabric cushions situated in the room for the children to relax on or take a rest from activities if they so wished.

(2)(a) There was an outdoor area directly outside the door of the service which belonged to the adjoining primary school and to which the children had access. There was a large, tarmacked area which had a large area of fencing to the back. The 2 sides were supervised by the staff and cones were in place to stop the children going out to the front of the building. There was also an enclosed grass area which was fenced and gated. It contained a wooden shed with scooters, planters and a bug hotel.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) The sofa in the care room was in disrepair as the back corners were torn and the foam was exposed.

(2)(a)

1. The back gate in the grass outdoor area which led to large bushes was open when the children went out to play. This is a safety risk. It is acknowledged that the staff member closed the gate when it was brought to their attention by the inspector.
2. There were 2 wheelie bins inappropriately stored in the grass area which were accessible to the children.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a) The sofa covers have been repaired.

The person in charge will be more aware of wear and tear in the environment and act on repairs and the up-keep right away.

(2)(a)

1. The gates have been added to the daily outdoor risk assessment checklist. The staff are to be more aware of health and safety risks that can occur any day and bring them to the attention of management.

2. The wheelie bins are moved to the side of the school, where the children do not play. For staff to be more aware of health and safety risks that can occur any day and bring them to the attention of management.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and copy of updated Outdoor Risk assessment checklist.

### Summary Comment

The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response and the non-compliances have been addressed. These will be for review at the next inspection.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Healthy eating was promoted in the service. The children brought in their own lunches and they were stored appropriately in the fridge. A "rolling lunch" system was in operation, where the children could go and eat their lunch at the table whenever they were ready for it. Staff were vigilant as to who had not eaten and encouraged these children to go and have some lunch.

Lunches were observed to consist of fruit, chopped vegetables, sandwiches, cheese, bagels and raisins. Drinks of milk or water were provided by the service and the children had access to their drinks throughout the day.

Food was available in the service should a child forget their lunch.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that all reasonable measure were ensured to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service in relation to the following examples:

##### General Safety:

1. There were unprotected sharp corners on the desk at the door, the black table and one of the brown shelves. These were a potential injury hazard.
2. The electrical lead of the wall mounted television was hanging and unsecured and accessible to the preschool children. This is a health and safety risk.

##### Infection Control:

3. It was observed by the inspectors that the children did not wash their hands before eating their lunches. This is an infection control risk.
4. Although nappy changing was not observed on the day there were no aprons available for staff to wear during nappy changing. This was confirmed by the person in charge. This was also at variance to the nappy changing policy of the service which stated aprons were to be worn.
5. The nappy changing mat was stored incorrectly in the care room behind the doll's house. This was a cross contamination and infection control risk.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. Protected covers were put on all sharp corners referenced in the report. A discussion was had with the staff team around health and safety. The team discussed our reasonability in ensuring that the environment is a safe place for the children attending our service. Going forward staff will be more vigilant for potential injury hazards.
2. A hook was attached to the wall, up beside the television. It leaves easy access to hang the lead on and keeps it out of reach from the children. Following on from our group discussion, staff will take extra care to spot potential injury hazards and correct them straight away.

### Infection Control:

3. The service took “Rufus” out again. Hand washing was incorporated into our weekly planning to refresh the children and the staff on the importance of hand washing before eating. During a staff discussion, there was a discussion on staff role as the adult to encourage, support and ensure that everyone washes their hands throughout the day; before eating, after using the bathroom, after nappy changing.
4. Aprons were ordered and made available to staff when changing nappies. All staff read the nappy changing policy to refresh their knowledge on best practice and procedure when changing nappies.
5. The nappy changing mat is now stored in the bathroom, fitting securely behind the old towel rail mounted on the wall. Management have a better understanding of the risks occurred with cross contamination and going forward, will ensure that all reasonable measures are followed to reduce the risk of infection.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

### Summary Comment

The Inspector have reviewed the registered provider’s response and supporting documentation and is satisfied the non-compliances have been addressed. These will be for review at the next inspection.