

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2022LH002		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Dun Dealgan Childcare		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	13 Demesne Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A91 E516		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Irenaeus McCaffrey		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	20/05/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM 21
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Flood and S. Skinnader		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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

Dun Dealgan Childcare is a privately operated service that provides full day, part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 2-6 years. The service is registered to operate from 8.30am – 6pm Monday - Friday and caters for a maximum of 39 pre-school children.

The service is located in a purposely renovated building in a residential area of Dundalk, Co. Louth. The premises consists of 3 playrooms, each with adjoining sanitary accommodation. A kitchenette, small office area and staff toilet are located off the hallway. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the front and side of the building.

### Staffing

The service employs 14 childcare staff including the registered provider and the designated person in charge who work directly with the pre-school children attending the service. Three additional adults are also employed in the service; one who works with the school aged service and 2 who are engaged in administrative, and catering duties for the preschool service.

### 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 and 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 registered provider, 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, 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required.

The designated person in charge and deputy person were on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 11.05am. The registered provider arrived on the premises at 11.30am approximately and was present for the remainder of the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Following a discussion with the registered provider and a review of the staff roster, 11 members of staff are still employed in the service since the last inspection on 04/12/2024 and their staff files met regulatory compliance at that time.

Six new members of staff have been employed since the last inspection and 1 staff member who attends the service in a supernumerary capacity.

These 7 new staff files were available for inspection and were reviewed:

(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written references from a past employer or an alternative source available for each of the 6 new members of staff and the 1 supernumerary staff member. All written references available were validated as required.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for the 6 new members of staff. The 1 staff member who works in a supernumerary capacity was under 18 years of age and therefore does not require Garda vetting at this time.

Garda vetting disclosures were also reviewed for the remaining 11 staff members employed in the service.

The registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes for all staff 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 for inspection, international police vetting was not required at this time for the six new members of staff.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the four new members of staff who work directly with the children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications, or a qualification deemed equivalent. The qualifications of the other staff who work directly with the preschool children were reviewed at the previous inspection and met regulatory compliance at this time.

### 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) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the three care rooms when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service:

**The Discovery Room:** There were 8 preschool children (aged 3-4 years) attending this care room with 2 childcare staff who were playing in the outdoor area. Two additional staff were also present and were completing the children's scrap books in the care room while the pre school children played outside.

**The Cherry Blossom Room:** There were 10 preschool children (aged 2-3 years) attending this room with 2 childcare staff members. One additional staff member was on their break at this time.

**The Aqua Room:** There were 17 preschool children (aged 3-5 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff.

Two additional staff members were also present and were engaged in administration and catering duties.

The registered provider arrived on the premises at approximately 11.30am and was present for the remainder of the inspection.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

### 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

(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

There were 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: namely The Discovery Room, The Cherry Blossom Room and The Aqua 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 Care Needs

- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children after toileting.
- Throughout the care rooms, children were observed to be provided with sensitive care and nurturing interactions by all staff. Staff supported the children to be independent with care practices; For example; *“...would you like a tissue...?...is it for your nose or your hands?...good job well done.”*

- All children had a change of environment to the outdoor areas located on the premises on a number of occasions during the day.
- Healthy eating was promoted in the service. Parents provided all snacks for the children which were appropriately stored in fridge. While some children brought in their own dinner, the dinner provided by the service was prepared by the resident cook and consisted of beef burgers, mixed vegetables, potatoes and gravy. A tablecloth was placed on the tables for dinner time in the rooms and assistance was given to children who required support with feeding. Staff were observed to sit with the children at mealtimes, and this time was used to encourage conversations between the children. Consistency of the dinners were observed to be age appropriate throughout all rooms and extra portions were available for any children who requested some. In the Aqua Room dinner was provided later in the day for a child who did not like to eat it at lunch time.

### Supporting relationship around children

- Throughout the care rooms, soft tones, positive and supportive language was observed in interactions between the children and staff. For example, *“Good job.... You did it all by yourself...Well done”*. The staff provided the children with choice and facilitated their choices during various activities e.g. *“what do you want to do..? ..painting ...and what colour of paint will we go for...? “give me a wee second buddy”*.
- “The voice of the child” was on display in the Discovery and Aqua Rooms and this detailed specific information about the individual children including; my strengths, how I interact, my interests and how you can support me. Details of supportive interventions and strategies were also included to support children on a daily basis.
- Emerging interests of the children were documented on a white board in the care rooms.
- The staff when questioned stated that they use an electronic interactive communication system to record and share information about the children’s daily activities and care needs with parents. Pictures of activities, games, curriculum plans, and the children’s learning journey are also shared through this ‘app’. Partnership with parents is also supported through verbal communication at drop off and collection, social media and email. The staff have a communication group where they share information through a messaging service. The staff also report regular staff meetings in the service and also advised the inspectors that they had recently completed external training together which they all enjoyed. Parent / educator meetings were planned to take place in the service.

- A key worker system was in place in the service, and this was on display in the care rooms. It was observed that each staff member had a small group of children assigned to them and the key person took the lead in supporting that child's transitions, recording their daily activities, maintaining relationships with their families, and documenting their learning and development. The service was also showed recognition of inclusiveness of other cultures by partaking in Africa day where a parent was to come in and show elements of African culture to the children.

### 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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

##### General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or made inaccessible to the children. Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments was evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.

##### Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection, after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play and prior to snack time.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Staff when questioned were able to verbalise correct cleaning processes for toys and equipment.

##### Safe Sleep

- No child was observed to sleep during the inspection

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

The following cross infection risks were observed:

1. The nappy bins observed in use on the day of the inspection were considered unsuitable as the pedal operating function was broken and the staff had to push the soiled nappies through an opening on the top of the bin. One of the bins also had a front panel open exposing the content of the bins. This is at variance with the infection control requirements to have a pedal operated sealed, airtight, leak proof container for the disposal of soiled nappies.
2. One child's own chicken dinner which was not eaten at lunchtime was not returned back to the fridge and left sitting out on the worktop. Allowing food to remain at room temperature for longer than 2 hours has the potential to permit the growth of food poisoning bacteria.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Actions

1. The nappy bins were removed and replaced with new bins that are lined with bags. These are foot operated and meet the standards required for cross infection. Monthly risk assessments are in place and the bins will be checked to ensure they meet compliance.
2. All staff have been advised to return all foods if not consumed by the child to the fridge and the lid placed on the box afterwards. Staff all signed off in this and are aware of the potential food poisoning bacteria if left out.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of new bin

Circular regarding prompt refrigeration of food signed by staff members

### Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection

### 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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for three adults in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were available in the service and were stored in conspicuous location where they are easily accessible in the event of an emergency.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

*(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

*(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

- In the toilet off the Aqua Room, mould spots were evident along the edges of the ceiling. Paint was observed chipping off the walls in places and there was a lingering odour of 'damp'. In addition, there was a lingering odour of damp emanating into the hallway when the door to the Discovery room opened.
- The second toilet in the Aqua Room was kept locked throughout the inspection and after the morning session chairs were stored in front of the door. The toilet was therefore not freely accessible at all times to the children. This was also evident when all the children were queuing to wash their hands, and 1 child had to seek out a staff member to say they needed to use the toilet. The staff member had to open the 2<sup>nd</sup> toilet to allow the child use it.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Actions

1. All the walls of the Aqua room were washed down. An electoral air freshener has been ordered from Initial hygiene. This will be part of the monthly risk assessments of the rooms and toilets to ensure that they are compliant at all times.
2. The second toilet in the Aqua room is now open at all times and the key has been removed. There is no items blocking the door. The staff in the Aqua room were spoken to regarding the second toilet that it must remain accessible at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence

Circular regarding access to toilets in Aqua room signed by staff members

## Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance together with photographic evidence. Further supporting information was requested and received by email. Based on the information submitted the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 have been addressed and will be reviewed at the next inspection.