

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2024CC008
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Youghal Together Pre-School & After School Club
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	South Abbey N.S., Golf Links Road, Youghal, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 HN47
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre O'Sullivan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/11/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	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
<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).

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

Youghal Together Pre-School & After School Club was recently registered to provide sessional care and education for children aged two to six years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is accommodated each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. While the service is registered to operate from 8.15am to 11.45am and from 12.00pm to 3.00pm, current hours of operation are from 8.45am to 11.45am. An afternoon sessional service is not provided at present. A school age service is also facilitated at the setting.

The early years service is based in a classroom, within South Abbey National School, in the town of Youghal in Co. Cork. There are children's sanitary facilities adjoining the classroom and staff have access to an adjacent toilet facility. An outdoor play area is located at the rear of the building.

### Staffing

At present, there are five adults attached to the service, including a relief staff member and one adult who works only with school age children. The registered provider is not service based, but can provide cover if required. Each of the adults who work directly with the children has attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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 announced 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 inspector wishes 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*

*(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) The registered provider had appointed a person in charge to oversee the day-to-day operation of the service. A named deputy was also assigned.
  - (b) The registered provider, person in charge and the deputy were at the service for the duration of the announced inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the five adults who worked at the setting were assessed for compliance and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Ten written and validated references were required in total. Of these, nine had been provided by past employers.
  - (b) One of the references on file was from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) Not applicable. Following review of the staff files, there was no evidence that international police vetting was required.
- (4) Copies of recognised qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, were on file in respect of the four staff members who worked with early years children. A qualification was not required for the adult who worked only with school age children.

### 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) During the period of inspection, it was noted that a sufficient number of adults were working with the children who attended the service.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children exceeded the requirements of the regulation. There were 3 adults responsible for the care and supervision of the 15 children who attended the sessional service. These children were aged 2 years and 10 months to 4 and a half years.

### 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:*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Information regarding the type of service provided and the age range of the children accommodated, was clearly visible in the main classroom.
- (c) The sessional category adult child ratio of 1:11, was displayed in writing.

### 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:

- The mid-morning snack was observed at 10.15am. During this occasion, a relaxed social environment was evident and it was noted that children were assisted to open food packets and containers.
- The children's reusable water bottles were stored on top of the fridge in the care room, which ensured that liquids were freely and consistently accessible.
- As adjoining sanitary facilities were provided, children were noted to access these areas independently, with adults readily available to supervise handwashing practice and offer verbal reminders, as deemed necessary.
- An inviting rest area, furnished with soft floor mats, cushions, soft toys and well stocked bookshelves, was incorporated to accommodate children's need for rest and relaxation.
- Within the care room, adequate space was available to cater for a range of play activities, such as imaginary play, construction and table top activities. Exploration and active play in the outdoor space, were also observed to be facilitated on the day of inspection.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- An inclusive environment was promoted at the setting, with children encouraged to contribute to caring for their surroundings and to participate in daily routine activities. For example, several children were observed helping to clean a table after a messy play activity, while other children worked together to lay a tablecloth, in preparation for snack time.
- The children's independence and self-care skills were supported by the adults, as was observed when children were prompted to retrieve their own lunches from the fridge and when encouraged to put on their coats, before going outdoors.

- In working in partnership with parents and guardians, methods of communication included daily informal face to face discussion, a messaging application and phone calls. The inspector was also advised that the service was in the process of incorporating the use a digital application, which would allow for increased sharing of information with parents.
- Communication between staff was ensured through the use of a messaging application and a formal staff meeting each term. Minutes from the most recent staff meeting were presented for review.

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

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- There was a sufficient supply of waist height tables and child size chairs available to the children.
- All of the materials and play resources on offer were positioned at the children’s eye level, which facilitated ease of access.
- The range of indoor interest items included age and stage appropriate materials. For example, a tool bench, connectable shapes, plastic bricks, a car garage, jigsaws, a play kitchen, dress up clothes, art and craft supplies and musical instruments. These resources were accessible within clearly defined areas, which supported the children to categorise materials according to their use.
- In the outdoor play space, the children were observed exploring with sand, using ride on toys and constructing with building blocks. Seesaws, footballs, a mud kitchen and a play house were also provided.

### 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

- The parents or guardians of the children who attended the service provided the food and drinks for their snack breaks. Examples were noted to include sandwiches, crackers and cheese, yogurts and a selection of fruit, such as blueberries, raspberries and apples. Water was available as a drink.

- The person in charge advised that there was flexibility in relation to the timing of the daily snack break, which could be accommodated earlier in the morning, if a child expressed that they were hungry. Similarly, a child could select a snack from their lunch box outside of routine meal breaks.
- The inspector was informed that some of the children had dietary requirements and food intolerances and were provided with suitable snacks by their parents or guardians. In the event of a special occasion or celebration involving food, staff communicated with the parents of these children in advance, in order to ensure that appropriate foods could be supplied. A nut free policy was also in place at the setting.

### 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:

- The exit door that led to the school yard was fitted with a door sensor alarm, which emitted an audible sound once opened. This reduced the risk of a child exiting the classroom, while unsupervised. The exterior of this door was key locked, to minimise the risk of unauthorised access.
- The outdoor play area was enclosed by wooden fencing, with an incorporated gate.
- Staff demonstrated awareness of potential choking hazards. The grapes that one of the children had brought for their snack were chopped up by an adult, before being served to the child.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Blind cords were secured with safety clips.
- The first aid box was stored at adult height and was inaccessible to children.
- Firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.

##### Infection Control:

- The children had access to suitable handwashing facilities; a supply of warm running water, liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins were available.
- During the morning, it was noted that the children washed their hands after messy play, before eating their snack and after playing outdoors.
- The children's perishable snacks were refrigerated before the mid-morning snack.
- Personal belongings such as coats and bags, were appropriately stored on wall hooks.
- Windows in the care room and sanitary areas were open, which allowed for the circulation of fresh air.

### Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication to a child was not observed.
- Medication prescribed to one of the children was found to be in-date and was clearly labelled.

### Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep during the inspection period.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from any obstruction that may delay a timely exit in the event of a fire.

### Outing:

- An outing from the premises was not conducted.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. Safe storage of medication was not ensured, which increased the risk of a child accessing and accidentally ingesting this medication. Prescribed medication was stored in one of the children's bags, which was hung on a wall hook, within reach of the children. It was acknowledged that once alerted to this risk, a staff member removed the medication from the bag and placed it at adult height.

### Infection Control:

2. Appropriate nappy changing practice was not followed, which increased the risk of cross infection. During conversation, one of the staff members outlined that when required, nappy changing was accommodated by placing a changing mat on the floor of the sanitary facility, to change a child's nappy. This was subsequently observed in practice and was at variance with the service's Nappy Changing policy, which stated: *As children are over the age of 2 years and 8 months, nappy changing is not required.* Since it was found that children within this age range did require nappy changing, this policy therefore did not address how staff could safely ensure this practice, in order to meet the needs of the children.
3. A disposable apron was not worn by the staff member during the observed nappy changing procedure. Prior to this, the staff member had stated that disposable aprons were unavailable. This further increased the risk of cross infection.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

### General Safety:

1. In her written reply, the registered provider stated that medications will be stored at adult height and that staff have been made fully aware of this practice.

### Infection Control:

2. The written response outlined that as the service is located within a National school setting, provision was unavailable for nappy changing. Therefore, all children were required to be toilet trained before commencing. The child has since transitioned to wearing pull-ups and no longer requires nappy changing. As staff support children who are toilet training, they will ensure that these children are in pull-ups and not nappies, when attending the sessional setting. However, if this issue persists, a nappy changing unit will be installed in one of the sanitary facilities, at a future date.
3. Staff have been made aware of the risk of cross infection and a roll of aprons is now available on the premises at all times.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. A photograph demonstrating where the medication will be stored.

#### Infection Control:

2. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
3. A photograph of the disposable aprons.

### Summary Comment

Based on the statements and evidence submitted by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.