

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2024WW006

Name of Service: Little Harvard Child Care Ltd

Address of Service: The Broomhall Business & Enterprise Park, Merrymeeting, Rathnew,
Wicklow, Co. Wicklow

Eircode:

Name of Registered Provider: Regina McGovern, James Hargrave

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 17/06/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	63

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Loughlinstown Health Centre,
Loughlinstown Drive,
Loughlinstown,
Co. Dublin.
A96P3Y6

Inspection undertaken by: M. Condon & H Bourke

Title: 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).

Conditions if applicable N/A

Description of service

This service is located in a residential area in Rathnew, Co Wicklow. The premises consists of a two-storey standalone building with eight playrooms, one sleep room, sanitary accommodation for both children and adults, a kitchen, staff room, storage rooms, an office and an entrance hallway. The outdoor play area for the service is sited at the back of the premises and car parking is provided at the front of the building.

The service is registered to provide full day care for a maximum of 190 pre-school children aged one to six years, and the hours of operation are between 07.00- 18.00.

Staffing

Presently there are twenty-three staff employed which includes a chef and a cleaner. On the day of inspection sixteen staff were providing direct care of the children in six of the care rooms. The person-in-charge and deputy person-in-charge and regional manager were present and available to provide support in the rooms as needed. After commencement of the inspection the operations I manager arrived at the service and remained until the inspection was completed.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection plan was to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9(1)(a), (b), (2)(a)-(d), and (4) Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1), (2) and (8)(a) Staffing levels

Regulation 15(1)(a)-(i) and (3) Record of a Pre-school Child

Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) Health welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety

Regulation 27 Supervision

However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16(1)(i) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, deputy person-in-charge, regional manager and operations manager, 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) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the Inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

There were thirteen new staff members employed since the previous inspection. These thirteen files were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(a)&(b) There were twenty-six written and validated references for thirteen new staff members.

(c) Documentary evidence of processed Garda Vetting Disclosures was available for thirteen new staff members. In addition, Garda Vetting Disclosures for twelve adults who were employed previously were in place. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for six new staff members who had lived in another state for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Documentary evidence was available to confirm that twelve new staff members who worked directly with children had 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.

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) Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children. There were 65 children attending the service being supervised by sixteen adults on the day of inspection.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection.
- (8)(a) There were more than two adults in the premises throughout the inspection and the staff roster confirmed that there are at least two adults present at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1)(g) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(g)

Twenty files were examined. The records required (1)(a)-(g) were completed.

(3)(c) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) (g) was open to inspection on the premises by the inspectors.

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 main entrance door to the service was secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons gaining access to the pre-school. The doorway to each care room is secured with a stair gate to prevent a child exiting the room unsupervised. The release push-button to exit from each hallway are out of children's reach. A visitor's book was available in the hallway on arrival.
- All toys and equipment in the care rooms inspected and in the outdoor area were in good condition and suitable for use for the relevant age group.
- Safe storage was provided for cleaning agents and equipment, which were out of reach of children.
- Documentary evidence was available of daily risk assessments being carried out in each room the service.
- A checking system was in use to ensure that the children moving within the service, for example to the outdoor area, are accounted for.

Infection Control:

- Each child's soother was stored in individual containers and were sterilised daily.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No child received medication during the inspection. The staff members were knowledgeable regarding the procedure to be used if needed and documentation was reviewed which demonstrated that the procedure was adhered to.

- Written parental consent was available should temperature reducing medication be required to be administered to a child.
- All medication was stored in a safe place and was clearly labelled for each individual child.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed. The procedure for evacuation was on display in each room.

Outing:

- It was confirmed by the manager that no outings are undertaken by the service at this time.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In Wobbler1 room there was no written record of the cleaning of the ball-pool which was available to the children. When examined there was dust and debris at its base which required cleaning. As children of this age put toys in their mouth, this is an infection control risk.
2. The practices observed during nappy changing did not demonstrate best practice in relation to infection control as follows:

Nappy Changing Wobbler 1 Sanitary Area

During the nappy changing procedure in Wobbler 1 each time the bin was required the foot pedal operation was not used which caused over-handling of the bin, posing a risk of cross infection.

The staff member did not remove gloves at the required time to avoid the risk of contamination.

One staff member did not wash her hands following nappy-changing and one child's hands were cleaned using a baby wipe.

Nappy Changing between Toddler 1 and Pre-school 1 Sanitary Area

The changing of five children's nappies were observed. The staff member did not wash her hands between each nappy change, the protective apron used was not changed between nappy changes and the changing mat was not cleaned between uses for each child.

Toilet Training Pre-school 1

Following assisting a child using the toilet, a staff member and the child did not wash their hands. The foot-pedal function for opening the bin was not used.

Strict handwashing, nappy changing and cleaning practices are essential for infection control purposes

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep room temperature was not maintained between the required temperature of 18°C-22°C for the comfort and safety of the pre-school children who were aged 1-2 years. At 12.30 the temperature of the cot 1 sleep room was recorded at 23.4°C when nineteen children aged 1 to 2 years were sleeping. The air conditioning unit in the room was used and the temperature reduced to 21°C when four children were asleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- Daily/Weekly cleaning record has been updated to include mandatory cleaning of the ball pit.
- Staff have been reminded of the importance of complying with our nappy changing policy. Further training has taken place for all staff on 18/06/25. Local and senior management will closely monitor that our policy on nappy changing is being followed at all times.
- Air conditioning dials were reset on the day of the inspection by maintenance staff, allowing for cooler settings to reduce room temperature quickly. Management will ensure that the correct temperatures are maintained by the use of our air conditioning system. Management will contact our maintenance staff immediately if temperature gauges need to be reset.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- Copy of updated cleaning record.
- Sample of nappy changing policy training card completed and signed following training.
- Photograph of cooling setting mode on air conditioning controls.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1)
Evidence was available that each child attending the service is checked in on arrival and checked out on departure each day.

(3)
(a) The registered provider ensured that no other person other than those numbering (i)-(v) above, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.
(b) A record in writing was kept of all visitors to the service. This was signed by the inspectors upon their arrival

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) Adults trained in First Aid Response were present and immediately available to the pre-school children.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in the pre-school room.
- (b) At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 10/06/2025.
- (b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarm, dated September 2024 and December 2024 respectively.
- (4)
- Notices were displayed in conspicuous positions, detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

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

Children were supervised by staff members at all times in Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Wobbler 3 and Wobbler 4, Toddler 2, Toddler 3, and Pre-school 2 rooms for the duration of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

At 10.50 am in the sanitary area between Toddler 1 and Pre-school 1 there were three children present from Toddler 1 room with a staff member and two children from the Pre-school 1.

1. The supervision of the three children by one staff member from Toddler 1 room was inadequate. While the staff member was changing a child's nappy, another child went into the Pre-school 1 room unnoticed by the staff member. The child was sent back to the sanitary area by an adult from the Pre-school 1 room.
2. The two children from the Pre-school room 1 were not supervised by any staff member from their room, while in the sanitary area.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.and 2.

One to one supervision training for all staff took place on 18/6/2025 with particular emphasis placed on the supervision of children during nappy changing times.

Local Management will closely monitor the supervision of children and any variations from our policies will be immediately brought to the attention to the staff member concerned. Our policy on supervision of children will feature frequently during the course of our staff meetings.

Supporting documentation submitted

Please see sample of one staff training card on supervision completed on 18/6/2025.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23. As this is a practice issue it will be reviewed on next inspection.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)

It is acknowledged that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children during the inspection. However, the written roster which was available did not accurately reflect the staff present in the service. The area manager was recorded as working in the service from 09:00 to 18:00. This area manager was not present in the service on arrival of the inspectors at 9.50. but arrived at 11.20am.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Local Management have been instructed to ensure that rosters accurately reflect the staffing at the time.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 16.