

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY027
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Cahereen Heights Childcare
-------------------------	----------------------------

Address of Service:	26 The Meadows, Cahereen Heights, Castleisland, Co. Kerry
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	V92 KF72
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Marguerite O'Sullivan
-------------------------------------	-----------------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	23/04/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	47
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork. T23 X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	J Russell & S O'Brien
Title:	Inspection and Registration Manager & 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Cahereen Heights Childcare is a privately operated early years service located in Castleisland, Kerry. The service caters for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service offers full day care, part time and sessional service along with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday, 52 weeks of the year. The service is located in a purpose-built building that has 5 care rooms downstairs, offices and a kitchen. A larger kitchen and office space is located upstairs. The service has designated sanitary facilities for the children and staff along with an outdoor area located to the rear of the building. The service is also registered to provider school age childcare.

Staffing

There are 27 adults attached to the service which includes the registered provider. The registered provider is based in the service. Two students were carrying out work placement in the service but were not present on the day of inspection.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the inspectorate.

A referral has been made to the fire officer in relation to the use of stair gates on fire exits in the service.

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*

(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,*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy who was able to deputise if needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and the named deputy were on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that two new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. One student had begun work placement in the service also since the last inspection. Garda vetting for one staff member whose disclosures was identified as due for renewal was requested for review. A total of four files were reviewed.
- (a) Five of the references available were from a past employer and were validated.
 - (b) One of the references available were from another source and was validated.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member as they had not lived outside of a country for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) One staff member held a relevant qualification in early childhood care and education at level 8 on the national framework of qualifications. The remaining staff member worked directly with the school age children and the two students did not require a qualification.

(7) The registered provider and person in charge ensured that adults attached to the service received information and necessary training around the following:

(a) policies and procedures of the service.

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations

- The service had self-referred to work with Better Start, the National Early Years Quality Development. The inspectors were informed the work with Better Start was due to start soon.
- Staff had completed various professional development courses, including Active Supervision training.
- The induction process for new staff was detailed in conversation with the person in charge. This was confirmed as the process that recently hired staff had experienced, in discussion with them. This was in keeping with the information in the staff training policy.
- On discussion with the person in charge, training needs were identified through quarterly supervision sessions with management, a written record of this was kept on file. Supervision meetings were arranged more frequently as required.
- Information related to updates to policies and procedures in the service is sent to all staff via an App broadcast, and via email to all staff.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed and found to contain the required elements:

- Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children
- Policy on Staff training

The policies were observed to contain the relevant information to guide the staff in their care practices.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policies did not contain all the relevant information required to guide staff:

1. The Policy on Risk Management did not set out how long risk management records will be kept.
2. The Policy on Accident and Incidents stated that a Notification of Incident would be submitted to the Inspectorate when there was an incident which results in a child going missing from the service. The requirement of the regulation is that a Notification of Incident is submitted to the Inspectorate when a child goes missing while attending the service. Incorrect guidance could result in staff not following required procedures if an incident were to occur.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The policy was updated to include the retention period guidance for seven types of risk assessments the service may carry out. The service stated management will monitor regulatory updates and complete annual policy reviews to ensure all required information continues to be included. Policy updates will continue to be communicated and circulated to staff.
2. The policy was updated to make clear any incident where a child attending the service goes missing must be notified to Tusla within three days. The service stated management will monitor updates from Tusla and relevant regulatory bodies to ensure policies are amended promptly. Staff will also continue to receive guidance and refresher training on policy updates during team/group meetings and supervision sessions.

Supporting documentation submitted

The updated policies were submitted.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted have addressed the non-compliance identified and met the regulatory requirements.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed and met the minimum requirements

In the morning:

- In Creche room 1, there were 11 children aged between 1 and 2 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Junior Preschool, there were 16 children aged between 2 and 4 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Senior Preschool, there were 16 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Den Preschool, there were 11 children aged between 4 and 5 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

In the afternoon:

- In Creche room 1, there were 11 children aged between 1 and 2 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In Junior Preschool, there were 13 children aged between 2 and 4 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In Senior Preschool, there were 15 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Den Preschool, there were 8 children aged between 4 and 5 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

Creche room 2 was closed on the day of inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(8) On review of the staff roster it was observed that two staff were present while the service was in operation.

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;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

The following records were reviewed:

(i) A staff roster was available and outlined the start and finish time of each staff member.

(k) A sample of 27 accident and incident forms were reviewed from the Junior Preschool room. all records were observed to be fully complete and contained the required information.

Non-Compliance Information

(k) Accident and incident forms were not available for two incidents that occurred in the service. As a result, it was not possible to confirm whether the incidents had been managed appropriately and parents notified. Not completing the relevant accident and incident forms when required poses a risk to children's safety.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(k) two incident forms were completed retrospectively, signed by the parents of each child, and submitted to the inspectorate for review. These contained the required information. The policy and process for managing accidents and incidents was discussed at a team meeting, and all staff were made aware that these must be completed and signed by parents in each instance where they are required going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

The completed forms and minutes of a staff meeting were submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted have addressed the non-compliance identified and met the regulatory requirements.

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

(1)

(a) Basic Needs:

- The children were observed to have several opportunities to play in the outdoor area during the inspection.
- The children were observed having snack time and dinner which consisted of fruit, yogurts, mashed potatoes, sausages and gravy, and homemade scones. A calm and pleasant atmosphere was evident during mealtime routines. Children were appropriately assisted by staff while eating.
- Children's water bottles were available and accessible to them as required throughout the day.
- Tissues were available to the children, to encourage their self-care skills, and staff supported this as required.
- The staff were observed carrying out nappy changing at regular intervals throughout the day and as required.
- Children could freely access adjacent sanitary areas and staff were noted to support children by reminding them in relation to handwashing.
- The children were observed freely moving around the care rooms, and outdoor areas taking part in activities of choice. Children were encouraged to participate in all aspects of the daily routine and were noted to be comfortable and familiar with the routine.
- Rest areas were available to the children to take some time away from the larger group to sit and rest.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting Relationships:

- Family photos were on display to promote a sense of identity and belonging in the care rooms.
- The staff were observed working as a team and supporting each other as needed throughout the inspection. Good communication was noted between room staff around the needs of the children.
- The staff were observed communicating with the children and ensured they were at the child's level when talking to them. Children were noted to seek support and assurance from the staff, and staff readily provided this.
- The staff were observed encouraging the children to share toys and equipment with the other children. Staff were noted to anticipate situations and re-direct children who were struggling to cooperate with one another.

(b) The staff were observed to be attuned to the needs of the children. Staff were observed comforting children if upset, as well as supporting children during mealtimes. Staff were observed singing and chatting to the children. The staff spoke to the children in gentle tones of voice. The staff had developed a effective routine with the children for mealtimes, sleep and activities both indoor and outdoors.

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 external door of the building was secured. Entry for visitors was by means of a buzzer system, which staff monitored.
- Internal doors were appropriately secured and alarmed as necessary to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- In the outdoor play area, a safe enclosure was created through a combination of high-level fencing and secured gates, whilst these areas were in use.
- The service had implemented a system of regular head counts for all children when moving from one area of the service to the other, to ensure staff could account for all the children their care.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- At collection time, the service had implemented a system for children to be kept indoors in their care rooms from 16:30 pm, while the side gate to the service was left open to the service for parents to enter. Parents were observed to wait outside the care room door to collect their children, who were checked out one by one staff on the electronic app.
- Cleaning agents seen on inspection were stored out of reach of the children in the care rooms.
- Staff belongings were safely stored and were inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The staff stated each child had an adequate supply of toiletries including nappies and wipes as observed on the shelving in the children's sanitary areas.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play and nappy changing and before mealtimes. Warm water, soap and paper towel were available to the children.
- Staff in Creche Room 1 and Junior Preschool rooms were observed to clean down the nappy changing mat after each nappy change.
- Foot pedal operated bins were in use throughout the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. During dinner time in Creche Room 1, it was observed that children were eating large pieces of sausages. This posed a risk of choking to the children.
2. The horizontal window in the Junior Preschool sanitary area was not secured to prevent a child exiting into the outdoor area from it. The window could be accessed via steps up to the nappy changing table, from which the window was reachable. The window was able to fully open out. This posed a risk of injury to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service stated the cook was informed and reminded that sausages and similar foods must be cut into small, age-appropriate pieces before being served to children to reduce the risk of choking.
Staff members were also reminded to visually check all food before serving and during mealtimes to ensure it is safe and suitable for children to chew and swallow safely. Meal time procedures and checklist have been reviewed with all staff members and the discussion of choking hazard awareness was discussed during a team meeting. Staff will continue to supervise children closely during meals and conduct safety checks on food before serving.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The service repaired the safety latch on the window and stated Staff have been reminded to ensure furniture and equipment are positioned safely and do not provide children with access to windows or other hazards. Staff will also continue to immediately report any maintenance and safety concerns to management.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- An updated food checklist was submitted
- A photograph of the repaired window safety latch was submitted.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted have addressed the non-compliance identified and met the regulatory requirements. These will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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

The staff in the four care rooms in operation on the day of inspection of were observed supervising the children by sight.

The staff were observed supervising the children in the sleep room of Creche Room 1 sufficiently.

The staff were observed sitting with the children during meals and were available to support when needed.

The care rooms were laid out to allow for the staff to clearly see the children at all times.

Staff from both the Junior Preschool and Senior Preschool rooms were observed at outdoor time to actively supervise the children in the respective outdoor spaces whilst the children played.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) The registered provider failed to ensure that two incidents were notified in writing to the Inspectorate within three working days of becoming aware of these occurring in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) Following the inspection, the two incidents referenced were reviewed and notifications were submitted to the inspectorate. Management reviewed the notification procedures to ensure understanding of the regulating requirement that incidents involving a child going missing while attending the service must be notified to Tusla within three working days. The relevant policy was updated to accurately reflect this requirement. Management will monitor incidents weekly to ensure all reporting obligations are met promptly.

Supporting documentation submitted

The two completed notification forms, and email to show these were retrospectively submitted, as well as the updated policy were submitted.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted have addressed the non-compliance identified and met the regulatory requirements.