

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD020							
Name of Service:	Early Days Preschool							
Address of Service:	C/O St. Pauls National School Lisduggan Waterford							
Email Address:	stpaulsbnspreschool@gmail.com							
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Ms. Suzanne Griffin							
Type of service registered:	Sessional		☒					
Date of Inspection:	1	1	0	6	2	0	2	1
No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM		26	PM		n/a		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford							
Inspection undertaken by :	M. Ryan							
Title:	Early Years Inspector							

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection

Governance	Health, Welfare and Development	Safety
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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 Not applicable

Description of Service	Early Days Pre-School is located on the grounds of St. Pauls Boys National School on the outskirts of Waterford City. The service was set up in 2004 by the board of management of the national school. The service presently offers two sessions of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. Early days operates from 09.00hrs to 12.30hrs Monday to Friday for children aged 3 to 5 years of age. The service runs from two rooms attached to St. Pauls Boys National School with the use of the school facilities including the various outdoor playgrounds and gardens. Each room can accommodate a total of 22 pre-school children at any one time. A secured area adjacent to the service entrance has been designated for outdoor play for the sole use of the children attending the early years service.
Staffing	The school principal is the registered provider. The service has a pre-school leader as the designated person in charge, as well as three childcare workers. All the staff holds at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and higher.
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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that the inspector spend in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	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.

GOVERNANCE

Part III - Management and Staff

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (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.
- (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;

Compliance Information:

- (2)
- (a) Three staff files were reviewed for staff that had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection. All these staff had written validated references from past employers.
 - (b) Not applicable as neither of these two staff were from past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available on file for the three new members of staff employed in the service.
 - (d) Not applicable as neither staff had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (7)
- (a) The designated person in charge and staff present on the day of inspection confirmed to the inspector, that each staff member had been informed of and provided with a copy of the revised policies, procedures and statements for the service, in line with COVID-19 Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) guidance. Documented evidence was available on the completion of a variety of online Hseland training that staff had completed during the lock down period. Examples of these courses were infection prevention and infection control, using personal protective equipment, hand hygiene and back to work.

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.

Compliance Information:	The inspection focused on the following policies and procedures that were reviewed and revised in line with COVID-19 public health advice: • Risk management policy • Drop off and collection procedures • Infection control policy • Correct procedures for hand washing • Procedures for cleaning and infection control A hard copy of each of the policies and procedures were available on the premises in a designated folder. The preschool leader confirmed that all parents received a copy of the revised policies and procedures via email.
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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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) *Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—*
(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information:	(1) The staff rosters reviewed indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. The children and staff were divided into two play pods. <u>Pod one early years room one:</u> There were two staff working directly with 12 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years old. <u>Pod two early years room two:</u> There were two staff working directly with 14 children aged 3 to 5 years of age. The staff: child ratios were maintained in line with the recommended ratios in both rooms throughout the duration of the inspection.
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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

Compliance Information:

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

The playgroup leaders of each room were available to parents at drop off and pick up times and happy to meet with parents privately at their request. Other communications with parents was predominately through social media applications and phone calls.

The atmosphere was pleasant and the staff spoke about the children with concern for their wellbeing and communicated interest for each child's individual circumstances. The children were observed to be happy and actively engaged and engrossed with art activities and at free play outdoors. Staff were observed to interact with each child individually encouraging and helping when necessary.

There was a comprehensive handbook for parents giving an overview of the policies and procedures for the service. The service had introduced staggered drop off and collection times for each room. Parents observed social distancing practices in the playground area when collecting the children.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The early years service operated between two rooms that were connected by door and corridor to the main school premises. The rooms were set up in accordance with the play/pod system as recommended by HPSC COVID 19 public health guidelines. The staff and children were allocated to their respective pod care rooms. Both rooms were comfortable, pleasant and well ventilated. The walls were tastefully decorated with examples of the children's paintings and paper craftwork. The rooms had age appropriate furniture and accessible shelving for the children.

Both rooms were well resourced and laid out with designated areas of interest such as home corner, messy play areas with sand and plumbed child height sinks for water play and children's hand washing. There was a varied and large supply of tabletop activities. Each room had defined relaxation areas with soft seating and display cases of age appropriate books for the children to look through. Additional equipment and toys was stored on high shelving and the staff informed the inspector that these toys were rotated regularly during the pandemic period.

Outdoor area

A further new addition to the service included a secured outdoor playground with synthetic grass covering. This area was adjacent to the early years rooms and was observed to alternate usage between the pods. Children were observed enjoying ball games and using the tricycles.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Non-Compliance Information:	PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT There were no outdoor storage units available in the outdoor play environment. Most of the outdoor play equipment was stored indoors in both rooms. This equipment was observed to encroach and limit access to a considerable part of the available space in room two. In room one the water play though was used for storage of this equipment. Outdoor storage units shall be obtained to store this equipment.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	CORRECTIVE ACTION: The registered provider stated in the response on the 30 June 2021 that due to the school closure for summer holidays that there was a limited time frame to respond within the ten working days for these requirements. The response stated that these requirements will be addressed between the 1 and 10 of September 2021. The registered provider stated in the response on the 9 September 2021 that all outdoor play equipment was removed from internal preschool rooms. Outdoor storage units were purchased to house outdoor play equipment. This unit is positioned in a separate gated area inaccessible to children, adjacent to preschool yard play area. This storage unit it locked at the end of each day. Preventive Action The registered provider stated in the response on the 9 September 2021 that all outdoor play equipment will be stored in this unit. The unit to be inspected periodically to ensure it and housed play equipment are in good condition. All play equipment inspected daily (by preschool room leaders/designate) before use by children to ensure such equipment is clean and safe for use. Any defective item removed from use and fixed or disposed of as required. Evidence Submitted. Photographic evidence was supplied to the Inspectorate on the 9 September 2021 of the new outdoor storage unit.
Summary Comment:	Evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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:	The service has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending: GENERAL SAFETY:
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Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

The service was secured with high fencing and a spring loaded gate at the entrance to the play area ensuring that children had no access to the surrounding grounds to the school. Each early years room had further security with child safety gates at entry.

Water and heater temperatures were thermostatically controlled within the required ranges. All cleaning agents were stored in a locked storage cabinet cupboard inaccessible to children.

Attendance records were completed daily for the staff and for the children attending. The attendance book corresponded with the number of children present on the day of inspection.

INFECTION CONTROL

The service had updated and extended the infection control policies and procedures in line with HPSC COVID-19 public health advice and the following measures were observed on the day.

Guidance signage was displayed at various locations throughout the school complex advising on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and social distancing. The service had introduced a queuing system with two meters markings as prompts for parents and guardians to use when collecting their children.

Hand sanitiser was available at the entrance to the childcare service in both early years rooms and at the outdoor play area. Hand washing facilities were provided in the children's toilet areas with liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.

Supplies of tissues were readily available and foot pedalled lidded bins were supplied in various locations for the waste disposal of these. Child friendly prompts with picture instructions for respiratory etiquette were displayed. There were daily and weekly cleaning records documented and displayed in all the areas used by the children and staff. These were completed and up to date. Staff were observed cleaning after the children had gone home.

All staff wore face coverings throughout the duration of the inspection. Staff who spoke with the inspector demonstrated an understanding of the importance of hand washing, respiratory etiquette for the children and of suitable physical distancing practices for the adults. A dedicated isolation room was available on the national school complex. This room was easily accessible to the early years service in the event of a child or staff member becoming unwell.

Non-Compliance Information:

INFECTION CONTROL

The inspector was informed that since government schemes had lowered the age range for entry into early years education an increasing number of children were starting pre-school in nappies. On the day of the inspection, two children were wearing nappies. The service did not have appropriate arrangements for safe nappy changing procedures, such as a suitable toddler changing table and adult hand washing sink. The lack of these arrangements could pose as an infection risk.

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

Corrective & Preventive
Action submitted by the
Registered Provider

INFECTION CONTROL

CORRECTIVE ACTION

The registered provider stated in the response that due to the school closure for summer holidays, coupled with the limited time frame to respond within the ten working days, the service will be unable to carry out the structural works for safe nappy changing procedures. The response on the 30 June 2021 stated that these requirements will be addressed between the 1 and 10 of September 2021 when the school reopens.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

The registered provider stated in the response on the 9 September 2021 that as there is insufficient space to install a toddler nappy changing table one toilet cubicle has been assigned as a nappy-changing area with a suitable nappy disposal system/bin provided. The window in this toilet cubicle is kept open to ensure adequate ventilation is provided. A new adult-height hand-washing sink unit has been installed in this designated nappy-changing area.

The registered provider also stated in this response that a post-inspection staff meeting was held to discuss this non-compliance and measures to address them as follows:

Nappy-changing to only take place in new designated area, staff must wear appropriate PPE (disposable gloves, apron, visor if necessary), all used nappies to be disposed of in nappy disposal bin, nappy-changing area must be cleaned and disinfected after each nappy change. All gloves/aprons disposed of correctly, adults and children must wash hands before exit from nappy changing area.

The nappy disposal system must be checked regularly to ensure it is emptied regularly and as required, is never overflowing and refill cassettes changed as required.

Any wet or soiled clothing will be wrapped in a plastic bag and sealed for parents to take home. The nappy changing policy and cleaning schedule have been adapted to reflect these enhancements.

PREVENTIVE ACTION.

The registered provider stated in the response on the 9 September 2021 that the preschool room leader will monitor all infection control measures and safe nappy changing practices identified above to address non-compliances identified.

All child protection, infection control and nappy-changing policies and procedures are also communicated to new and relief staff as the need arises.

Updated nappy changing procedures are now posted in designated nappy changing area.

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Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

	<u>EVIDENCE SUBMITTED.</u> A revised nappy changing policy and cleaning checklists were supplied to the Inspectorate on the 9 September 2021.
Summary Comment:	Evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.