

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CC008
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Name of Service:	Classes Childcare
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Address of Service:	2 Maryville, Friars Walk, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 TX9D
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frances Cunningham
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Building, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork. T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
Title:	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).

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Description of service

Classes Childcare is a privately owned early years service in operation since 2020. It is a registered full day care service, catering for children aged from 2 to 6 years and registered to operate from 07:30 to 17:30 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The premise is a town house that has been converted into a childcare facility. The service is located in an urban setting within walking distance of Cork city. The ground floor consists of one care room, adult and children's toilet and nappy changing facilities, an office and a kitchen. The second care room is located on the first floor with one children's toilet facility located beside the care room. The children have access to a designated secure outdoor play area located to the rear side of the facility.

Staffing

There were 11 staff attached to this service, including the registered provider who is not service based. There were four core staff members working directly with children. There were also four named staff members from a sister service who provided relief cover, two of whom were present on the day of inspection. In addition, there were two auxiliary staff, one of which is the cleaner and the other works in the kitchen.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, it was identified that the service was operating with a different person in charge than registered. The inspector was informed that the person in charge had changed in March 2026. It is acknowledged that the service submitted a change of circumstance application on 21 July 2026 following the inspection.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written response, the registered provider stated that the information had been submitted to Tusla and they were now aware of the importance of informing Tusla of such changes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Confirmation of the submitted change in circumstance form.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 8 is still in process of being rectified and will be assessed at the next 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

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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 had a named person in charge and a deputy that could deputise as required.

(b) Both the person in charge and the deputy person in charge was on duty when the inspectors arrived at the premises and remained on duty 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 seven new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection, five of whom work directly with the children. A total of seven files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Fourteen of the required references were available from a past employer and a written validation was on file.

(b) Not applicable, as the fourteen references required were from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 10 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Garda vetting was not required for one staff member who only had incidental access to children.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for five members of staff as they had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4)

Five staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The two auxiliary staff did not require a qualification.

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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.

(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)

The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room on day of the inspection.

(2)

During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each care room. The rooms were in operation as follows:

In the morning:

- The ground floor care room had nine children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by two staff.
- The first-floor care room had eight children between 3 and 5 years being cared for by one staff.

In the afternoon:

- The ground floor care room had twelve children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by three staff.
- The first-floor care room had eight children between 3 and 5 years being cared for by one staff.

The service met the minimum adult to child ratios requirements during the inspection.

(8)

(a) The roster for the service indicated that at least two people onsite at all times throughout the day.

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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) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(3)
(c) The person in charge advised that there were 33 children registered to the service on the day of inspection and 33 records were open for review by an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
A sample of ten children's records were inspected and were not observed to contain the relevant information outlined from (a) to (i). Of the ten inspected:

- One did not contain a contact number for either of the parents.
- Two did not contain consent for medical treatment.
- One did not contain the name and contact information for a general practitioner.

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- One had no information regarding details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.

Failure to collect and retain accurate information and consent in relation to the care and safety of the children in the service may pose a risk to the safety of the child if this information was needed in an emergency

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In her written response, the registered provider stated that a full review of children's records had been undertaken and the required information gathered. The staff team were reminded of the importance of ensuring all consents and relevant information is gathered and maintained correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered providers statement is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 15 (1) has been adequately addressed.

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

Basic needs:

- Children were observed to play in the outdoors on the day of inspection.
- Children had access to water at all times throughout the day. Children's water bottles were at child height in each care room.
- Children were reminded to use the bathroom, and staff were observed to offer help if needed.
- Rooms were set up in such a way that children had freedom of movement and resources were placed at child height.
- Mealtimes were spread evenly throughout the day to ensure children were not hungry.
- It was reported to the inspector that food was available at all times outside of mealtimes.
- Children had the choice to bring their own food from home or avail of the food provided by the service.

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- Children were offered extra portions of the main meal and fruit afterwards.
- Staff sat with children and chatted freely during the lunchtime meal. The atmosphere was relaxed during this time.
- When children finished their snack, they were free to move away from the tables and play as they wished without having to wait for the others to finish.
- Staff spoke to children with respect and care on the day of inspection.
- Some children were new to the setting and staff were observed to give extra time to these children to support this transition.
- Children were observed to be offered freedom of choice. Activities were set up in such a way so that children could opt in or out of them. The inspector noted children being asked which activities they would like to do and if they wanted to nap or not.

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

The registered provider has ensured that ample and suitable furniture, play equipment and resources were available for children. On the day of inspection, it was noted that:

- Each care room had a variety of materials to support various types of play. For example, there were home corner areas to support imaginative play, construction areas to support small world play and sand tables to support sensory play.
- Each care room held sufficient furniture for the number of children attending.
- All furniture and equipment were age and stage appropriate.
- The outdoor area, although small, contained space for physical play. There were also areas set up outside for children to participate in water play, creative play and constructive play.

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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 doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised.
- The external doors were secured to restrict unauthorised access.
- Cleaning agents observed on inspection were stored out of the reach of the children.
- The blind cords observed were secured.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off the floor.
- Windows in each care room had been made safe to prevent children from exiting or falling.
- The outdoor area was securely fenced to prevent unauthorised access.
- Flexes and cables were observed to be out of reach of children.
- When previously inspected, the roots of a tree had led to an uneven surface in the outdoor area, this had been rectified and the area made safe.

Infection Control:

- Pedal operated bins were in use throughout the service.
- Each bathroom and nappy changing area were fitted with liquid soap and paper towels.
- Nappy changing areas were supplied with disposable gloves and aprons.
- The nappy changing area observed was equipped with clean and intact nappy changing mats with the surrounding area maintained in a clean condition.
- Barrier creams were individually labelled for each child.
- Windows were open in the care rooms to aid natural ventilation.
- Each hand wash basin was equipped with warm running water. Temperatures ranged between 36.8° and 42.7°c.

Administration of Medication:

- Supplies of individually labelled fever reducing medication were stored out of reach of children in the care rooms. Staff were clear on the procedure for administering such medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Children over the age of 2 years napped on appropriate sleep equipment.

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- Ratios were maintained during the nap time as staff remained in the room while children slept or rested.
- Temperatures were maintained within the recommended guidelines of 21.9°C while children over 2 were sleeping.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed on the day of inspection.
- Wall tethered firefighting equipment was available throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Low level doors and windows in the ground floor care room had not been fitted with visibility strips. This posed a risk of injury to children.
2. A wooden fence in the outdoor area, located close to the doorway leading from the care room was splintered. This posed a risk of injury to a child.
3. A heavy storage unit in the ground floor care room had not been anchored. This posed a risk of injury to children.
4. A storage unit in the ground floor care room was observed to be damaged. The top of the unit was not fitted correctly to the unit and left a pinch point should a child place their hand in the space. This posed a risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

5. Sandwiches for the children's teatime snack had not been refrigerated. At 13:35 the inspector noted the ham sandwiches on the counter in the kitchen area. The afternoon snack was scheduled for 15:00. Failure to refrigerate perishable food may lead to foodborne illnesses.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

In her written response, the registered provider stated:

1. All low-level windows had been fitted with visibility strips.
2. The wooden fence had been repaired.
3. The heavy furniture had been anchored.
4. The storage unit had been made safe.

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Infection Control:

5. The registered provider stated that staff have been reminded of the importance of the correct storage of perishable foods. Staff had been availed of a refresher course on HACCP and food safety.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence was submitted of the visibility strips on low level windows.
2. Photographic evidence was submitted of the repaired fence.
3. Photographic evidence was submitted of the anchored furniture.
4. Photographic evidence was submitted of the repaired storage shelf.

Infection Control:

5. Evidence that staff had taken part in refresher training.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed

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.

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Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by an employee on the day of inspection.

- (3)
- (a) The registered provider has ensured that any person other than an employee, a preschool child of a person dropping the child off cannot gain entry to the premises. The door to the service is set on a mechanical release which can only be opened by a staff member.
- (b) The Inspector was asked to sign the visitors book on arrival, and it was evident that a record is kept of any such person who enters the service.