

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019CW001SA
Name of School Age Service:	John Sweeney Park Afterschool, Carlow Regional Youth Service
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Kathryn Wall
Address of School Age Service:	48 John Sweeney Park, Co. Carlow.
Eircode:	R93 WN12

Date of Inspection:	29 February 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not Applicable	PM	12
Registration status:	Registered			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not Applicable			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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:

John Sweeney Park Afterschool, Carlow Regional Youth Service is located on the outskirts of Carlow town. The service opens from 2pm to 6.45pm Monday to Friday. A maximum of 15 children aged 4 to 12 years attend daily. The service is in a converted residential dwelling. There is a care room and kitchenette on the ground floor, and a care room, craft room and sanitary area on the first floor. It is one of three school age services operated by the registered provider within Carlow. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

The registered provider operates two additional School Age Services within Carlow town.

Staffing:

There are five adults employed within the service, including the registered provider.

On the day of inspection, there were four adults present in the service, including the person in charge. There were two transition year students also present in the service.

Additional Information:

The inspector conducted a planned focused inspection of the service.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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 co-operation of the children, person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

The inspector planned to focus on Regulation 8; Vetting disclosures, Regulation 9(1) (2)(4); Staffing levels Regulation 12; Insurance and Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

On inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in relation to the above regulations.

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The service was found to be compliant with Regulation 8; Vetting disclosures, Regulation 9(1) (2)(4); Staffing levels Regulation 12; Insurance and Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

(1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.

(2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)

Five staff files were reviewed, and the required documentation was available. The required validated references and garda vetting disclosures were in place for the five adults. Through review of documentation and discussion with staff, it demonstrated that police vetting disclosures were not required for the adults within the service.

The service carried out the above procedures prior to adults being appointed or permitted access to the children in the service.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)(4)

There was 12 children present with 4 adults during the inspection, there was 4 children on the first floor with 1 adult, and there was 5 children on the ground floor with 2 adults.

The children were observed to be appropriately supervised throughout the inspection.

Regulation 12: Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the school age service is adequately insured.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The registered provider had insurance in place from 04 March 2024 to 24 January 2025 for the number of children the service is registered for.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

In discussion with staff, the active participation of each child was outlined as the core foundation to the service. The staff outlined how children's interests and curiosities support the development of the curriculum and activities provided. This was reflective of the services managing behaviour policy which outlined how young people are empowered to develop their full potential.

The following was observed and discussed with staff and children:

- A staff member outlined that after trying fruit smoothies in school, the children discussed how they would like to make a fruit smoothie in the service. The staff member explained the children were encouraged to research the ingredients and the required amount of ingredients for all the children who wanted to have a smoothie. The children were provided with leaflets from local supermarkets to determine the cost of the ingredients. The staff accompanied the children to the supermarket to buy the ingredients. The staff member outlined when the children returned to the service, they made the fruit smoothies. Evidence of the children's research into the ingredients and costing was displayed on a white board within the care room on the ground floor. On the day of inspection, the children overheard the conversation between the staff member and the inspector, and excitedly shared their experience with the inspector.
- On the day of inspection, two children in the ground floor care room were overheard asking if they could do hairstyles in each other's hair. The staff member discussed the children's interest in creating hairstyles with the inspector, and explained it was a reoccurring interest with the children. The children were provided with various hair styling equipment including hairclips and hair bobbins. Children discussed their hairstyle ideas while they created hairstyles on staff members and other children who were present.

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- In discussion with a staff member, it was outlined how the children enjoyed creative materials and activities. During the inspection, four children were working with modelling clay and discussed their interest in music and creative projects with the inspector. The children excitedly discussed their enjoyment of a recent project of making a lighthouse.