

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019DS007SA
Name of School Age Service:	Primary Pals
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Antionette Barry Lorraine Reynolds
Address of School Age Service:	Firhouse Community Centre, Ballycullen Drive, Firhouse, Dublin 24
Eircode:	D24 YY0H

Date of Inspection:	3 April 2024		
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM	31	
Registration status:	Registered		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw A. Spain
Title:	Early years inspector Registration support manager

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).

Description of Service:

Primary Pals is one of two school aged services owned and operated by two registered providers. It is based in the Firhouse community center, and the service has the use of the large amenity hall and three care rooms. Each of the care rooms is dedicated to activities, for example, the room on the ground floor is used for a quiet homework space, the second room is for more active activities and the 'den' upstairs is the arts and crafts area. The service is registered to operate from 7:30am to 9:30am and 1pm to 6pm. Outside of the school term the service operates from 7:30am to 6pm. The children have access to a fenced-in area at the side of the building.

Staffing:

There are a total of 17 staff members employed in the service. Both of the registered providers work directly with the children. On the day of inspection, there were 6 staff caring for 31 children.

Additional Information:

The inspector conducted a planned, focused inspection of the service. An Immediate Action Notice concerning the absence of four Garda vetting disclosures was issued on 4 April 2024. A response was received from the registered providers on 5 April 2024. The response met the requirements of Regulation 8 Vetting disclosures (8)(1)(c).

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered providers, the person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On inspection, the registered providers were found to be compliant in relation to the following:

- Regulation 9: Staffing levels;
- Regulation 12: Insurance.

On inspection, the registered providers were found non-compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Garda Vetting.

Conclusion and follow-up actions: The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have adequately addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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)(a)(b)

The inspector reviewed 17 staff files. There were 21 validated references from previous employers and 13 validated references from reputable sources available.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)

(c) Garda Vetting was not available for four staff members. However, it is acknowledged that Garda vetting was available for 13 staff members. An immediate action notice was issued on the 4th of April 2024 as four staff did not have the required garda vetting.

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member. It is acknowledged that the documentation reviewed showed that three staff members required police vetting, two of which were available.

(2)

Files available demonstrated that procedures specified in paragraph 1 were not carried out prior to staff members being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(c)

A response to an immediate action notice was received by the inspector on 5 April 2024. The registered provider submitted a copy of two vetting disclosures and evidence to show that Garda vetting for two staff members had been applied for. The registered providers stated that, in the interim, these two staff members have been removed from the roster.

(d)

The registered provider stated that the outstanding police vetting has been applied for but has not yet been received. A copy of the request to the embassy has been submitted to the inspectorate as evidence.

(2)

The registered provider has stated that going forward all vetting disclosure will be in place before a staff member is employed. A copy of the amended recruitment policy was submitted to the inspector.

Summary of Findings

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection and will be reviewed on the next inspection. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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)

During the inspection, the registered providers ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained. The 31 children attending the service were supervised directly by 6 adults. Both of the registered providers were available for support if required.

Through discussions with staff members, a review of the staff rosters and records of the children's attendance from 11 March 2024 to 22 March 2024, the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during this period.

Three staff members caring for children in the large amenity hall were observed to position themselves at various points in the room and maintain an overall view of the 16 children they were responsible for. Staff were observed to offer assistance and support as needed.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025 for a maximum of 50 school-age children at any one time and a total maximum of 130 school age children.