

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019LS008SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sherpa Kids Holy Family National School
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Sarah Grange and Amy Grange
Address of School Age Service:	Holy Family National School, Aughnaharna, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
Eircode:	R32 CY05

Dates of Inspection:	14 August 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	48	PM	46
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:

Sherpa Kids Holy Family National School is located on the outskirts of Portlaoise town in County Laois. The service operates within the premises of a primary school. It is registered to accommodate 120 school age children aged 4 to 12 years old. During school term, the service operates Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 9am and 1.30pm to 5.30pm. Outside of term time, the service operates from 8am to 6pm.

There are two care rooms within the service. The children have access to various outdoor areas within the school premises including a basketball court and an all-weather pitch.

Staffing:

There are 21 adults employed within the service which includes the registered providers.

On the day of inspection, there were 17 adults present in the service including the person in charge, chef and HR personnel. Of these, 15 adults worked directly with the children.

Additional Information:

The inspector conducted a planned focused inspection of the service.

On the day of inspection, there were 7 pre-school children in attendance. It was confirmed the 7 pre-school children had not attended a primary educational setting.

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:

- a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- b) 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
- c) 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:

On inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in relation to the following:

Regulation 8(1)(c): Vetting disclosures;

Regulation 9(1) (2)(4): Staffing levels;

Regulation 12: Insurance.

On inspection, the registered provider was found to be non-compliant in relation to the following:

Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(d)(2): Vetting disclosures.

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The registered provider provided actions and supporting documents which demonstrated the measures put into the service to correct and prevent the re-occurrence of non-compliances under Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure (1)(a)(b)(d)(2). It is acknowledged that the application has been made in relation to Police Vetting for one staff member. However, as it has not been received to date, it remains outstanding and will be reviewed on the next 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)(c)

The required Garda vetting disclosures were available for review for the 21 adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)

Files for twenty-one adults were reviewed and the following was noted:

(a)(b)

Ten references were not in place and available on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that there was thirty-two references available from a previous employer and/or from a source other than a previous employer.

(d) Police vetting was required for two adults, however, only one was available for review.

(2)

The procedures as required were not carried out prior to adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service. Through a review of documentation, it was determined that fifteen adults were employed prior to the consideration of their Garda vetting, police vetting and references.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)

(a)(b)

All references listed have been followed up and confirmed. The service recently hired a HR manager who has put in place a new hiring and induction procedure. The service have also engaged a new piece of HR/rostering software which will allow us to track more readily all items of paper work relating to our team members. This should ensure that no items of critical HR paperwork will be left unattended.

Ten validated references were submitted by the registered provider.

(d)

With regards the second police check, this is coming from a country where unfortunately it can take up to a year for them to provide. The team member has provided proof that the application has been made so the service will keep it on file. During the interview process, the service will confirm with potential employees the need to have a police check provided from any country they have lived in for 6 months or more since turning 18. Police checks from some countries can take a while to provide and the time line of obtaining that may not be practicable to employment.

The registered provider provided supporting documents to demonstrate that the staff member has applied for Police Vetting.

(2)

Permission to carry out Garda vetting is now sought during the interview process. This means that the garda vetting process will be completed before the new employee starts onsite. Also discussed at interview is the necessity to have a police check if the person has lived outside of the country. As part of the procedures mentioned above no new team member is allowed be onsite until their garda vetting has been completed and disclosure returned to us.

Summary of Findings

The actions and supporting documents submitted by the registered provider with regard to validated references and the carrying out of the procedures prior to the adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service have been accepted by the Inspectorate.

It is acknowledged that the Police Vetting has been applied for, however, it has not been received to date and it remains outstanding. The requirements of Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure have not been met and will be assessed 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)

There was an adequate number of adults present throughout the inspection. On the morning of inspection, there were 7 adults working directly with 48 school age children. Throughout the inspection, there was 12 adults available on the premises to provide additional support if required.

The children were appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. Various supervision strategies were implemented by the adults remaining in close proximity and completing head counts.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured for 120 children to attend at any one time. The policy was dated from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.