

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019LS013SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sherpa Kids Portlaoise Educate Together NS
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Sarah Jane Grange Amy Grange
Address of School Age Service:	Portlaoise Educate Together NS Summer Hill Downs Portlaoise Laois
Eircode:	R32HX45

Date of Inspection:	2 December 2024		
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM		PM 22
Registration status:	Registered		
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain
Title:	Early years inspector

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

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:

Sherpa Kids Portlaoise Educate Together NS is a school age service located in a primary school in Portlaoise town. The service cares for children in the age range 4 to 12 years and serves three adjoining schools on site. The service is operational after school between the hours of 1.30 and 6.00pm. A Breakfast club is offered between the hours of 7.30 and 8.30am. The service is also operational between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm during school holidays. The service has the use of two classrooms in the school up until 3.10pm and thereafter moves to the school hall. A store room for toys and equipment is available to the service off the hall. Sanitary accommodation for both children and staff is provided directly off the hall in use by the service. There is direct access to the enclosed school yard and outdoor play area directly off the room in use by the service. Children are collected directly from the door leading from the service to the outdoors which is secured from inside. Meals provided in the service are prepared in an adjoining school age service and served in the school age room.

Staffing:

The service is staffed by six adults. The registered providers do not work directly 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:

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

Summary of Findings:

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

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(2): Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 12: Insurance.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

On the day of inspection, the service met the requirements of the regulations inspected under the Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018.

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)(c)(d)

Two validated references from past employers were held on file in respect of four staff members. A validated reference from a past employer and a validated reference from a source other than a past employer was held on file in respect of the remaining two staff members. Garda vetting disclosures were held on file in respect of all six staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Police vetting was held on file in respect of a staff member who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as an adult.

(2)

Records available in the service demonstrated that the necessary vetting procedures were conducted prior to the appointment of staff to work 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)

Three staff cared for 22 children in the room referred to as the blue pod on the arrival of the inspector at 3.10pm. Two staff cared for 15 children in the adjoining room referred to as the green pod at this time. At 3.15pm, children from both rooms were moved to the hall for the remainder of their day in the service and were cared for by the 5 staff members in attendance. A

staff member was observed to electronically sign each child out of the service as parents arrived to collect individual children from the service.

The inspector reviewed both the children's attendance records and the staff roster for the week of the 7 October 2024. Records confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance was 65 children. Records also confirmed that the maximum number of children in attendance at any one time was 45 children with 5 staff members present.

(4)

The five staff members were observed moving between the children sitting at three separate tables in the hall. Children were served an option of plain pasta or a pasta chicken dish in a bolognese sauce. Staff provided the children with paper and markers to engage in drawing activities. Children were also supervised as they played with beading, threading and magnetic toys and engaged in homework activities.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 48 children in a school age service and 60 children in attendance in a holiday camp. Insurance cover was valid from the 28 March 2024 to the 27 March 2025.