

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019WW021SA
Name of School Age Service:	The Hideout
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Quinn
Address of School Age Service:	St Patrick's Loreto NS, Vevay Rd, Bray, Co. Wicklow
Eircode:	A98 F652

Dates of Inspection:	09 December 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	N/A	PM	21
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 and R. Duffy
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

Description of Service:

The Hideout is located in Bray, Co Wicklow. It is registered to cater for up to 50 children aged 4 to 12 years old. It is registered to operate from 7.30am to 8.50am and 1.30pm to 4.30pm. The registered provider informed the inspectors that the breakfast club is not in operation. The service operates during term time only.

The service operates from a single-story building which is located on the grounds of St Patrick's Loreto National School. The children have access to one care room. There is a kitchen area and sanitary facilities available within the building. The children are provided with an outdoor area on the school premises.

Staffing:

There are six adults employed within the service, including the registered provider. The registered provider works directly with the children.

On the day of inspection, there were four adults 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:

- 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, registered provider, 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.

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 requirement has not been met for Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure and it remains outstanding. It is noted that the registered provider has provided actions to outline the measures which have been put into place regarding obtaining references and police vetting prior to staff being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with children. However, to date, two of the three outstanding references and the police vetting documentation has not been submitted to the Inspectorate.

This regulation will be assessed 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)

Documentation relating to six staff files was reviewed. The required Garda vetting disclosures were available for the six staff members. It was demonstrated that 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)

(a)(b) It is noted that nine of the twelve validated references were available. However, three references were not available for review.

(d) Police vetting was required for one adult however; it was not available for review.

(2)

It was demonstrated that the required documentation was not in place prior to all staff being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

The procedures as required for the consideration of references and police vetting was not carried out prior to staff being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with children.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)

(a)(b) The registered provider stated they will ensure that they receive two written references for each new staff member before they start working in the service. The registered provider will ensure that all references are followed up with a verbal verification before a new staff member starts in the service. A folder has been set up on the computer with a file created for each staff member where all documentation required by Tusla for each staff member will be saved.

One validated reference from a source other than an employer was submitted.

(d) The staff member has contacted the relevant authorities and requested their police clearance. Once this is received, it will be submitted to the Inspectorate. The registered provider stated that they will ensure that a police clearance certificate is received before a new staff member starts working with us, if they have lived outside of Ireland for more than 6 months.

(2)

The registered provider stated that they will ensure that all required documentation including references and police vetting is received for every new staff member before they start working in the service.

Summary of Findings

The requirement has not been met for Regulation 8: Vetting disclosure. It is noted that the registered provider has provided actions to outline the measures which have been put into place regarding obtaining references and police vetting prior to staff being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with children. However, to date, two of the three outstanding references and the police vetting documentation has not been submitted to the Inspectorate.

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)

The adult to child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were four adults present with twenty-one children.

The adults were observed to actively supervise the children while remaining at a close distance. For example, at 3.20pm the twenty-one children were observed to be within small groups in various areas of the care room. At this time, the children were observed to complete their homework, engage in floor play with blocks, dancing and engage with an arts and crafts activity. The staff members were observed to move freely between the different groups of children and provide the children with guidance and support, as required. For example, staff were overheard to encourage a child who was finished with the art and craft activity to choose a game and/or equipment from the press. During this time, another staff member was overheard to encourage a child who was sitting on their own drawing a picture to join the main group of children.

Staff members were observed to adjust their supervision strategies throughout the inspection. For example, when children went to the hallway or to the toilet, the staff members positioned themselves at the door of the care-room until the child returned.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement met

The service was insured for 48 children to attend at any one time. The policy was dated from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.