

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DY026SA
Name of School Age Service:	NZone
Name of Registered Providers:	John Paul Nugent, Michael Nugent
Address of School Age Service:	Posey Row Kinsealy Dublin 17
Eircode:	D17 WK49

Date of Inspection:	16 November 2023
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 119
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	None attached

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell Ann 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).

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Description of Service:

NZone operates a school age care and early years service which is based in North County Dublin. The school age service caters for children aged 4-12 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday and provides a breakfast club from 7.15am to 9.00am and afterschool care from 12.55pm to 6.15pm. During school holidays the service operates between 7.15am and 6.15pm. The service operates from a large multi-purpose two storey building. The school age care is provided in the soft play and large sports arena at the rear of the property. An outdoor area is available on the property. Sanitary facilities for use by the school age children are available on the ground floor and there is an office and a kitchen area on the site.

Staffing:

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs 20 staff members who work with the school age children. This includes a centre manager, a dedicated afterschool manager and supervisor who work in a supernumerary capacity. There are 13 school age care staff (coaches) who work directly with the school age children. There are also two dedicated bus drivers, an administrator, and a cook who work on the premises. Nine staff members commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 22 April 2022.

Additional Information:

This inspection was conducted as follow-up inspection to a previous inspection which took place on the 22 April 2022.

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 inspectors wish 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:

The registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 11(a): Premises;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b): Complaints;
- Child Care Act 1991, 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)(a)(b)(c)(d)

The inspector reviewed the staff files of the new registered provider and the nine staff members who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 22 April 2022. There were written references available for the registered provider. There were two written and validated references available for the nine staff members, from a previous employer or source other than a previous employer. A Garda vetting disclosure was available for all nine staff members and the registered provider. A review of documentation demonstrated that police vetting was either not required or was available where required.

(2)

A review of the new staff members' start dates demonstrated that vetting procedures had been completed before they commenced employment 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)

On the day of the inspection, 13 staff members were working directly with the 119 children in attendance.

The inspectors observed appropriate supervision of the children. For example, as children arrived, they went to a pod with set staff members. A staff member was observed to take a small group of children for their lunch, and they were supervised by two staff members.

Regulation 11: Premises

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that-

- (a) an outdoor space to which the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or*
- (b) where no such space is provided, the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis to an outdoor space.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(a)

An outdoor area was provided directly behind and to the side of the service for daily access by children in the service. The area was safely secured by high walls. The back wall of the building had a high-level timber fence to guard against unsupervised exit to the carpark at the front of the building. A staff member confirmed that children in both the school age and pre-school services have use of the outdoor space on a staggered basis.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured from 20 June 2023 to 19 June 2024 for the maximum number of children the service is registered to accommodate. On the day of inspection, there were 119 school age children and 52 pre-school children in attendance.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The inspector reviewed the service's complaints policy. The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and the appeals process.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a record of complaints and records reviewed by the inspector demonstrated that they had been dealt with in line with the service's policy.

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

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- The inspectors observed procedures in place and reviewed documentation which demonstrated that there was a system in place to oversee the recording of children's attendance to support the children's safety. There was a daily record of children who would be attending the service. The staff maintained a list of the children they collected from local schools and then updated attendance records on their arrival to the service. Throughout the inspection, checks on the children's attendance were also completed by staff. The inspector observed that there were attendance records available for the morning and afterschool services. This demonstrated that the preventive action from the last inspection had been maintained. Children were also signed out of the service by designated staff members on collection by their parents and guardians. A sample of attendance records reviewed on the day of inspection confirmed that the above measures were in place from 13 to 15 November 2023.
- The service operated a pod system. The school age room was divided into four pods and children cared for in each pod were grouped according to age. This facilitated the provision of age-appropriate and safe toys in each pod depending on the ages and stages of development of the children. For example, soft bouncing and climbing frames were provided in the pod occupied by four to six year old children.
- The inspectors observed positive behaviour management in place. This was reflective of the service's behaviour management policy. The children were given many opportunities to choose an activity and staff were available to support these choices. In each area, staff

provided opportunities for active or more relaxed play. For example, in one area children were playing with building blocks whilst their peers played in the soft play area. A staff member was observed to praise a child who helped to clean a spillage at dinner time.

- The staff members discussed with inspectors the various meetings that the staff team had to support the children. The records, inclusive of risk assessments, demonstrated that new procedures for supervising children in the service during school holidays were discussed with staff. Staff outlined these procedures to inspectors which demonstrated they understood and implemented them following a recent review of an incident. The inspector reviewed records which demonstrated that staff had liaised with outside agencies for support and resolution concerning the incident and had communicated with parents.
- On the day of inspection, a hot dinner was provided to the children on their arrival to the service from school. Children were observed to enjoy chicken curry and rice. Water and fruit were freely available at the mealtime. Children indicated that they enjoyed daily dinner in the service.
- The main door to the service had a working alarm to alert staff should a child try to leave unsupervised. The service had records of regular maintenance of these alarms which demonstrated that the preventive measures from the last inspection had been maintained.
- There was a record of monthly fire drills that took place in the service. A sample of staff demonstrated to the inspectors that they were aware of the fire evacuation procedure. This demonstrated that the preventive measures from the last inspection had been maintained.