

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020TY021SA
Name of School Age Service:	Scolairi Oga Pre-School
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Michelle McGrath
Address of School Age Service:	7 Carrig Derg, Ballycommon, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Eircode:	E45V277

Date of Inspection:	18 January 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not applicable	PM	23
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
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain M McDonnell
Title:	Early years inspectors

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:

Scolairi Oga Pre-School is a preschool and school age service located in the village of Ballycommon in north Tipperary. The school age service cares for children in the age range 4 to 12 years. The service is operational between 7.30 and 8.30am and between 1.40 and 6.00pm for 50 weeks of the year.

The rooms in use are located on the ground floor of a two storey building. Rooms used by the service include three interconnecting playrooms, a rest/sensory room, sanitary accommodation for children and adults, a storage room and a kitchen. An outdoor play area is available at the back of the service with direct access from one of the playrooms.

Staffing:

The school age service is staffed by five adults which includes the registered provider.

Additional Information:

The inspection was conducted following information the service submitted to the Inspectorate.

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:

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

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies etc of a school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c): Complaints;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

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

- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider address the non-compliances identified on inspection. These actions will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service.

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)

A reference from a past employer and a reference from a reputable source was held on file in respect of the registered provider. All four staff members had validated references from past employers. A second validated reference from a past employer was held on file in respect of one staff member. A validated reference from a source other than a past employer was held on file in respect of the remaining three staff members. A Garda vetting disclosure was held on file in respect of all staff working in the school age service. Employment histories confirmed that none of the staff lived outside of the State for over six consecutive months as adults.

(2)

There was evidence on file to confirm that vetting disclosure procedures were conducted prior to the appointment of staff 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)

There were nine school age children cared for by four staff members after the first collection of school age children from the nearby school at 1.30pm. Subsequent to the second collection of 14 school age children at 2.30pm from the nearby school, there were 30 children in the service cared for by 4 staff members. The 4 staff members cared for a total of 23 school age children and 10 preschool in the afternoon in the service.

While children were in the service, staff were observed to adequately supervise the children. They were observed to adjust their level of care and attention for the children. This was dependent on the interconnection rooms in use, the age mix and the size of the group of children moving to different areas throughout the inspection. For example, the four staff members were observed to facilitate sibling interaction at 2.10pm when 9 school age children joined the 10 preschool children present in the service.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had a drop off and collection policy as reviewed by the inspectors.

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 30 school age children in attendance at any one time. Insurance cover was valid from 28 March 2023 to 27 March 2024.

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.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

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

The service had a complaints policy which outlined how complaints were received, dealt with and escalated if necessary. The complaints policy also advised as to how outcomes of concerns raised were communicated to the complainants.

There was no record of complaints in the service. The registered provider furnished blank complaint forms available in the service to the inspectors. The registered provider advised the inspectors that no complaints have been received to date.

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 entrance door to the service was secured when children were present in the service.
- The outdoor play area was safely enclosed and divided into three separate areas to guard against unsupervised exit by children and to allow the combination of both preschool and school age children to avail of safe outdoor play.
- Two staff members in the service had certification to confirm up to date first aid training with expiry dates in September 2024.
- The service had a record of risk assessments conducted subsequent to any accidents and incidents in the service. This was to assess how a reoccurrence could be prevented and to document any changes that needed to be implemented following the accident or incident. For example, a map showing the introduction of a revised route taken by the staff when walking children from a nearby school was furnished to the inspectors. This new route to the service from the school was introduced following a risk assessment of an incident which occurred on the 12 December 2024. The inspector accompanied 2 staff to a school collection at 2.30pm and observed 14 children being collected from a collection point outside the school grounds by the service staff. It was observed that high visibility jackets were provided for the children. The revised route from the school to the service avoided crossing a driveway close to the entrance road that led into the estate where the service was located. All staff members confirmed that they had training in relation to the use of the new route and had safely accompanied children from the school to the service implementing the revised pathway as introduced.

Regulatory Requirement not met

1. Children were not routinely signed in and out of the service on arrival from school and at collection time from the service. The absence of accurate completed attendance records posed a risk to the safety of children and staff in the event of an emergency and the necessity to ensure that all children and staff were safely evacuated from the premises.
2. In the service's drop off and collection policy, it was stated that children were collected from the school premises when transitioning from the school to the service. On the day of inspection, 9 children in the age range of 4 to 6 years were collected at 1.30pm by two staff members at a collection point outside of the school grounds. Two staff members also collected 14 children in the age range 6 to 12 years at 2.30pm from the same location. On the day of inspection, there was no direct handover of children from the school staff to the staff in the service with responsibility for supervision of children at school collection times and after school hours. As the collection point was outside of the school grounds and there was no direct handover, this posed a risk that a child could go missing during the transition from leaving the school building and arrival at the collection point outside of the school grounds. It was acknowledged that children were aware of the collection point outside of the school grounds. It was also acknowledged that staff had a list of children to ensure all children were collected.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

1. The registered provider advised that a new rota was devised to capture all children arriving from school after both 1.30 and 2.30pm collection times. A sample of the completed rota for the week of 4 to 8 March 2024 was submitted to the inspector. The rota reflected the names of the children as they arrived from school and also reflected the time each child was collected from the service. The registered provider advised that the new rota has been in place since the 19 January 2024 to guard against a reoccurrence of this non-compliance.
2. The registered provider advised that the teachers from the nearby school now walk the children to the school gate. Staff collect the children from the designated point that the children are aware of outside the school gates. The registered provider also advised that if a child does not come to the meeting point, the staff ask the teacher if the child was in school that day. The registered provider also submitted a copy of the revised drop-off and

collection policy for the service reflecting the collection point for children. It was advised that the policy was in place. The registered provider submitted an email confirmation to the inspector on the 11 April 2024 to confirm that all staff members were furnished with a copy of the revised drop-off and collection policy

Summary of Findings

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