

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020WW002SA
Name of School Age Service:	Little Harvard Childcare
Name of Registered Provider:	James Hargrove
Address of School Age Service:	Little Harvard Merrymeeting, Rathnew, Co Wicklow
Eircode:	A67V9K5

Date of Inspection:	10/09/2025			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	N/A	PM	84
Registration status:	Registered			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff A. Spain
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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:

Little Harvard Merrymeeting is a combined school age and preschool service located in a commercial area of Rathnew, Co. Wicklow. The service is operational between the hours of 7.00am and 7.00pm and cares for school age children between the age range 4 to 12 years. The premises consists of a single storey building. Rooms in use in the service include an entrance hallway, an office, four playrooms, sanitary accommodation for both children and staff, a staff room, a combined cleaning store and sluice room and a kitchen. An enclosed outdoor play area is provided at the front of the service.

Staffing:

There are a total of 15 staff members employed in the school age service, including the person in charge, a cook and two bus drivers. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. On the day of the inspection, the regional manager and operations manager arrived at the service.

On the day of inspection there were 10 staff caring for 84 children.

Additional Information:

This inspection was completed on receipt of information by 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:

- caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- 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
- 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 person in charge, the regional manager, the operations manager, staff and children 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 school age service,
- Regulation 13: Complaints,
- 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:

This section will be completed by the Inspectorate on finalisation of the inspection report.

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) The inspection included a review of the required documentation for fifteen adults employed. The following documentation was available;

(a) Of the thirty written and validated references that were required, twenty four were available from a past employer.

(b) Six written and validated references were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for fifteen adults employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures were also available for review for the regional manager, operations manager and the registered provider. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice , requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for two adults who were employed to work in the service and had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 consecutive months as adults.

(2) Records confirmed that the necessary vetting procedures were carried out by the service

prior to the adults working directly with children 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)

During the inspection, the registered provider ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained. The 84 children attending the service were supervised directly by 9 staff. Through a discussion with staff members, a review of the staff rosters and records of the children's attendance for the week of the 4 August 2025 and week of the 11 August 2025, it was demonstrated that the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during this period.

(4)

Children were observed to be appropriately supervised at all times by the staff members present on the day of inspection.

During the inspection, staff were observed to work closely with small groups of children to play board and card games, imaginary play for example, hairdressers, read stories and spend time chatting with children. Staff were also observed to engage with children to organise and coordinate games when outdoors. The staff members were observed to alter and adjust their supervision strategies during the inspection depending on the children's location, the activity and individual needs of children. In discussion with a staff member with key responsibilities, it

was outlined that staff members were also available from the registered provider's other school age and preschool services to ensure that the adult : child ratio was maintained at all times 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 the required policies as specified under Schedule 6. These included complaints, administration of medication, statement of purpose and function, managing behaviour and fire safety policy.

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 96 school age children in daily attendance in a school age service. Insurance cover was valid from 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.

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.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall—
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Regulatory Requirement Met

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

The service had a complaints policy which outlined the procedure for making a complaint, the manner in which a complaint was dealt with and the procedure for keeping the complainant informed of the manner in which the complaint was dealt with.

(2)(a)(b)

The inspectors reviewed a record of a complaint held of file. The record confirmed that the complaint policy was adhered to when following up on the complaint.

(3)

The record of the complaint reviewed included the nature of the complaint and was open to inspection by the inspectors on the day of inspection. The record also confirmed the outcome of the complaint investigation.

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

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place on the day of inspection. The children moved freely around the afterschool 1,2 and 3 rooms open on the day of inspection. Children were observed playing and engaging with each other and staff. Staff addressed children by name and positively interacted with them. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative. Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. The service provided a hot meal for children at 2:30 and 3:30 and a snack in the late afternoon. Children also brought snacks from home.

Children were supported to complete homework by staff who sat with them while others completed organised activities at the tables in the three rooms.

Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and staff were observed playing games and organising activities for children whilst outdoors.

Accident and incident books were maintained in all rooms in the service. Incidents recorded on 5 June 2025, 9 July 2025, 7 August 2025, 11 August 2025 and on 9 September 2025 were observed to be in keeping with the accident and incident policy reviewed by the inspectors.

The service held records of both training and induction carried out by all staff members working in the service. Records confirmed dates of refresher training also conducted in the service. For example, it was recorded that refresher training on the service behaviour management policy was

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conducted on 14 August 2025, on the supervision policy on 18 August 2025 and on recording accidents and incidents on 21 August 2025. A record was also available to confirm the staff members who availed of the refresher training on these dates.

The service held a record of monthly staff meeting conducted in the service to review practice and refresh training. Monthly meeting were recorded for 29 May 2025, 12 June 2015, 12 July 2025 and 20 August 2025.