

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## School Age Services

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>               | TU2021DR005SA                                                          |
| <b>Name of School Age Service:</b>     | The Park Academy Childcare Thornwood                                   |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider(s):</b> | Louise Barrett                                                         |
| <b>Address of School Age Service:</b>  | The Park Academy Childcare Thornwood<br>Lapwing<br>Thornwood<br>Dublin |
| <b>Eircode:</b>                        | A94 C1P1                                                               |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>                                   | 31 October 2024 |
| <b>Number of school age children present during inspection:</b> | PM 31           |
| <b>Registration status:</b>                                     | Registered      |
| <b>Conditions (if applicable):</b>                              | Not applicable  |

|                                                |                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate</b> | Early Years Inspectorate<br>180-189 Lakeshore Drive<br>Airside Business Park<br>Swords<br>Co Dublin |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>               | M. McDonnell<br>R. Duff                                                                             |
| <b>Title:</b>                                  | 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:

The Park Academy Childcare Thornwood is located on the ground-floor of an apartment complex in a purpose-built building. The service is located in a residential area in Co Dublin. The service provides care to children aged 4 to 10 years old. An afterschool club is provided from 1.30 to 6.30pm during term time. The service operates from 8.00am to 6.30pm during non-term time. The children have access to two care rooms in the service with direct access to an outdoor area. There is a kitchen and sanitary facilities available. A sessional pre-school service is in operation in the morning.

### Staffing:

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are 11 staff members employed by the registered provider to work directly with the children.

### Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered following information received 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:

- 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:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies etc. of school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(3)(a)(b): 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:

- 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, in their preventive and corrective action plan, have addressed the non-compliances identified on 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

The staff files of the registered provider, 11 staff members and 3 contractors were reviewed. There were two written references available for each of the 15 adults from a previous employer or source other than a previous employer. These references were validated by the registered provider as required. Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the 15 adults working in the service. The documentation reviewed demonstrated police vetting was available as required. These documents were in place before the staff members commenced employment as required by legislation.

### 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 6 staff members working with 31 children. The children were supervised by staff and were engaged in a variety of activities. For example, there were small groups of children inside playing with water, doing jigsaws and making necklaces with staff. At this time other children and staff members were playing in the garden. Throughout the inspection, the staff were observed implementing the service's headcount policy and were aware of children who were moving throughout the service to go to the toilet or retrieve items from their bags in another room.

### 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's managing behaviour and complaints policy were reviewed. These documents contained required information as per Schedule 6 of the regulations to support staff in their practice.

## Regulation 12: Insurance

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

## Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured to provide care for 50 children. The insurance was valid from 1 July 2024 to 27 March 2025.

## 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)(2)(3)(a)(b)

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.

The staff members informed inspectors that there were no verbal or written complaints received.

### 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:

- Following a recent incident that the service had notified to the Early Years Inspectorate the service demonstrated that they had implemented the service's policies. There were records of the incident and evidence that risk management policies and critical incident plans had been followed and updated. The service also had plans in place for ongoing monitoring to review and assess the risk. These plans included engagement with the staff, children and parents. The service had evidence of engagement with parents and this demonstrated that the staff were engaging with the parents within appropriate timelines and with the outcomes of their investigations. In particular, the service completed a circle time session with the children before they returned to school following the mid-term break. The staff and children engaged in a discussion about 'Bus Rules' which reinforced the risk management procedures in place. The service had a school collection policy available and this was updated following the incident. The policy included the risk management procedures identified. Staff members were spoken with about the updated

procedures and the ongoing plans and these reflected the documented changes that were in place.

- There was evidence that staff had completed induction training and ongoing support through team meetings. There was evidence that staff had signed that they understood the service's policies and procedures. There was also evidence that they had demonstrated their knowledge of the procedures through the service's induction process.
- The staff were observed to interact kindly with the children. They engaged with the children when completing activities and supported the children in making choices and following directions. The sample of staff spoken with were aware of the individualised support required for children in their care.

## Regulatory Requirement not met

1. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 15 adults. However, one of these Garda Vetting disclosures had not been renewed within the last three years in accordance with the Early Years Regulatory Notice.

## Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

1. The registered provider submitted updated Garda Vetting and stated they will ensure all contractors and staff have vetting updated.

## Summary of Findings

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their preventive and corrective action plan, have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection.