

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## School Age Services

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>              | TU2021LK006SA                                                                            |
| <b>Name of School Age Service:</b>    | Unikids Childcare                                                                        |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>   | Noel Noonan                                                                              |
| <b>Address of School Age Service:</b> | University Business Complex,<br>National Technology Park,<br>Castletroy,<br>Co. Limerick |
| <b>Eircode:</b>                       | V94 A529                                                                                 |

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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>                                      | 8 August 2024 |
| <b>Number of school age children present during inspection:</b> | AM 18         |
| <b>Registration status:</b>                                     | Registered    |
| <b>Conditions (if applicable):</b>                              | N/A           |

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|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate</b> | Brunel Building,<br>Saint John's Road West,<br>Heuston South Quarter,<br>Dublin 8.<br>D08 X01F |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>               | A. Bradshaw                                                                                    |
| <b>Title:</b>                                  | Early years inspector                                                                          |

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| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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:

Unikids Childcare is operated from purposely built premises. It was established in 2005. The school age service operates from 7.45am to 8.30am and 1pm to 5.45pm during the academic year and outside of the school term the service operates from 7.45am to 5.45pm. The service is a purpose-built facility in an urban setting. There is a designated school age room and a second room which is shared with the preschool children once the early childhood care and education session has concluded. The children have access to an outdoor play space directly off each playroom, in addition to a large outdoor play area at the rear of the service. Unikids Childcare is also registered as a full day care service for preschool children.

### Staffing:

The service employs five staff to care for the school age children, this includes relief staff. The manager is not rostered to work directly with the children but is available for support if required. The registered provider does not work in the service.

### Additional Information:

The inspection was completed as a result of 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, the person in charge, and the staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Summary of Findings:

On inspection, the registered provider was found compliant in relation to the following:

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

On inspection, the registered provider was found non-compliant in relation to the following:

- 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 corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance 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

(1)

The inspector reviewed seven staff files including the registered provider's file. The registered provider had ensured that validated references were available. Garda vetting was available for seven staff as required. Records demonstrated that police vetting was required for one staff member, and this was made available to the inspector.

However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under the following section of this report: Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 (G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

(2)

Evidence was available to demonstrate that relevant vetting disclosure procedures were carried out prior to any person working directly with the children.

## 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 registered provider ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained during the inspection. Eighteen children attending the school age service were supervised directly by two adults. Discussion with staff members and a review of the staff and children's attendance records from 6 May 2024 to 31 May 2024 demonstrated the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during that period.

During the inspection, staff were observed to engage with children. On the inspector's arrival, 18 children were eating their snacks with 2 staff members sitting with the children and joining them in conversation.

## 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 inspector reviewed the service's complaints policy, the behaviour management policy and the statement of purpose and function. The policies and statements contained 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 from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025 for a maximum of 145 to attend the full day care service. On the day of the inspection, 18 children attended the school age service and 69 children attended the pre-school service.

### 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 complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. There was an informal, formal, and an escalation process documented in the policy. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and the appeals process. On the day of the inspection, staff members informed the inspector that there were no written complaints received and any minor issues are dealt with informally.

## 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

Staff were noted to supervise the children in their care. The staff team was observed to place themselves strategically in the large outdoor area to ensure that all the children could be seen. A staff member described the team's awareness regarding the importance of being aware of the children's conversations during play and described how they would only intervene if they were concerned, or if a child appeared to be upset. Staff described how they have recently introduced these procedures as a team and all new staff are briefed on the importance of supervision. The staff had also introduced a new procedure called a 'toilet pass' which regulates how many children return indoors to use the toilet or retrieve a toy or book from the room. The inspector observed this process on the day and the children were familiar with the system. Through discussion with the staff, they demonstrated that they were aware of their roles regarding their safeguarding responsibilities to the children and the reporting process. Staff confirmed they had completed online and face-to-face Child Protection training. A record of this training was available for the inspector. Management stated that policy documents are emailed to staff and parents. The manager described how new staff are issued a copy, and then allowed to read and agree to the policies. Proof of receipt of these documents was available to the inspector.

## Regulatory Requirement not met

1. The service did not follow the procedures outlined in the recruitment and selection policy, the staff training policy and the supervision policy. While it is acknowledged, staff members confirmed that an induction process was carried out for all new staff and that team meetings are held when required, these are not recorded as prescribed in the policy documents. For example:
  - There were no written records of staff induction procedures as per the policy;
  - There were no written records of team meetings as per the policy;
  - Through discussion with the staff, it was evident that annual supervision meetings were not scheduled or carried out as per the policy;
  - A review of policies was not included in the team meetings as a continuous agenda item per the policy.
2. While it is acknowledged that relevant vetting disclosures were in place the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under the following section of this report: Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 (G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

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

1. The registered provider stated that new staff members who were employed in August 2024 completed induction training. This training includes role information, policies, and procedures, including the child protection policy. These policies are provided to the new staff member before they commence their employment. There is a written record maintained of the induction training. A copy of a completed employed induction checklist was submitted as evidence.  
  
The registered provider stated that regular staff meetings have been scheduled and a copy of the minutes of the last staff meeting with agenda items listed was submitted as evidence.

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The registered provider stated that all staff members have been informed that annual appraisal meetings will commence in January 2025. A copy of the template which will be used was submitted as evidence.

2. The registered provider stated that it is the policy of the service that all Garda vetting renewals are completed every three years however that was an administrated problem with one staff member. This has now been rectified and the evidence was submitted to support this.

### Summary of Findings

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