

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021WW025SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sweet Pea Afterschool Club
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Erin McDyer
Address of School Age Service:	Unit 24 Willowbrook, Main street, Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow
Eircode:	A63 W9P9

Date of Inspection:	22 February 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not Applicable	PM	11
Registration status:	Registered			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not Applicable			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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:

Sweet Pea Afterschool Club is located in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow. It caters for a maximum of 24 children aged 4 to 10 years and operates from 8am to 9.30am and 1.30pm to 6.30pm from Monday to Friday. The service is located in a purposefully adapted unit on the ground floor of a residential unit. There is one care room with an adjoining sanitary area for the children.

There is outdoor area adjoining the service.

Staffing:

The service employs two adults, including the registered provider.

There were two adults present on the day of inspection, including the registered provider.

Additional Information:

The inspector conducted a planned focused inspection of the service.

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 inspector wishes 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 inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in relation to the following:

- Regulation 8(1)(2): Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- 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) Two staff files were reviewed. Garda vetting and the required validated written references were available for review. From a review of documentation, Police vetting disclosures were not required.

(2) The procedures, as required, were carried out for each adult prior to commencement of their employment within 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 was an adequate number of adults working with the children on the day of inspection. At 3.00pm, there were two adults with eleven school age children.

The children were appropriately supervised throughout the inspection.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

Insurance was in place for the number of school age children registered to attend the service.

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 inspector observed the health and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- The environment was calm and unhurried throughout the inspection. An example of this included when a staff member asked the children what activity they would like to do, and one child exclaimed water play. The staff member provided the children with the water and supporting equipment. The group of children were observed to be fully engaged with the activity for approximately 1 hour. The staff member remained close-by and recognised the children's interest of playing with water through discussing similar activities with water which the children previously engaged in. In discussion with the adult, it was outlined the children actively contribute towards the activities provided each day. The adult discussed children's individual interests, including art and crafts, and drawing. It was outlined by the staff member that while these activities are freely available within the room, the staff would provide a group activity for the children also.
- Interactions were warm, responsive and playful. This was reflective of the services managing behaviour policy which outlines children's achievements are recognised and acknowledged. The following was observed during the inspection:
 - On children's arrival to the service at 3pm, the two adults supported children to take off their coats and put their school bags into their storage boxes. At this time, the adults encouraged conversations with the children on how their day at school was, sporting events which took place and occasions which the children celebrated. The adults listened while the children shared their experiences.

- At 3:45pm, an adult sat at the table with four children who were eating their snack. A child was overheard to share the story with the staff member of how they had recently lost a tooth. The staff member playfully engaged with the children, and the children were laughing while sharing their own stories. Other children excitedly joined the conversation and shared how many teeth they recently lost. The children continued laughing while sharing their own stories with the staff member and their peers.
- Children had independence and autonomy the choice which they made. For example, on arrival to the service, there was a selection of food on the table which included bagels, cheese, salami, jam, yogurts and fruit. The staff members explained the children choose when they eat, and what they would like to eat. The children were observed to make their own snacks and return to the table intermittently throughout the inspection.