

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022LS003SA
Name of School Age Service:	After the Bell Afterschool
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Christine Downes
Address of School Age Service:	Railway Street Portlaoise Co Laois
Eircode:	R32TW1C

Date(s) of Inspection:	22 July 2024			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not applicable	PM	4
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
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:

After the Bell Afterschool is a school age service located on the first floor of a semi-detached property in Portlaoise town. The service cares for children in the age range 4 to 15 years between the hours of 7.00 and 8.40am and 1 to 6.30pm daily. The service is open from 8.30am to 6.00pm during non-term school times. The four rooms available to the school age service include two playrooms, a relaxation room and a games room. Sanitary accommodation for children and staff is provided. A Kitchen is provided to prepare meals and snacks. A cloakroom provides storage for children's personal belongings. The person in charge advised that the children have access to a public park close to the service.

Staffing:

The service is staffed by two adults. The registered provider is also available to provide relief cover in the service.

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 reoccurring. 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 member 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 12: Insurance;

Conclusion and follow-up actions:

The service was compliant with the regulations examined and there are no follow up actions following the 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,*
 - (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)(c)(d)

Two validated references from past employers were available in respect of both staff members. References from past employers were also held on file in respect of the registered provider. A Garda vetting disclosure was held on file in respect of the three staff members working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(2) Documented evidence was on file to confirm that all vetting procedures were conducted prior to appointment of the staff to work 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)

Two staff members were caring for four children on arrival of the inspector at 1.00pm. Staff were observed to sit at the tables with the children and engage in conversation as both the children and staff made jigsaws and played card games. Records reviewed by the inspector which included the rosters for the day of inspection and week of 15 July 2024 demonstrated that the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained while the service was operational.

(4)

The staff in the service were observed to sit with children for both supervision purposes and to promote play in the service.

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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 36 children in daily attendance in a school age service. Insurance was valid from the 25 March 2024 to the 27 March 2025.