

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022WH001SA
Name of School Age Service:	Ballymore Community Childcare
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Vincent McCormack
Address of School Age Service:	Market Hill, Ballymore, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Eircode:	N91 D264

Date(s) of Inspection:	3 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 M McDonnell
Title:	Early years inspectors

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

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:

Ballymore Community Childcare is a community run childcare service. The service is located in a residential area in the village of Ballymore, Co. Westmeath. The service cares for children in the age range 4 to 15 years and is operational between the hours of 7.45 and 9.10am and 1.50 and 6.00pm Monday to Friday. The service is also operational between 8.00am and 5.00pm outside of school term time. Rooms in the school age service include two playrooms. An additional room at ground floor level facilitates a pre-school service. A separate playroom at first floor level is not currently in use by the service. An office, kitchen, staff room and sanitary accommodation for both children and adults are available on the premises. Outdoor play areas are provided at both the side and back of the premises.

Staffing:

The school age service is staffed by six adults which includes the person in charge of the service. An auxiliary staff member is available to cook meals in the service. The registered provider does not work in the service.

Additional Information:

The inspectors conducted a planned focused inspection of the service as a follow-up to an inspection conducted on 7 December 2022.

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, 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 relation to:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- 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 service was compliant with the regulations inspected under the Registration of School Age Service Regulations 2018.

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)(a)(b)(c)(d)

Two validated references from past employers were held on file in respect of one new staff member employed to work in the service since the last inspection. Documented evidence was held on file to confirm that references were validated prior to the staff member taking up appointment in the service. Validated references were held on file in respect of existing staff members in the service. A Garda vetting disclosure was held on file in respect of both the new and existing staff working in the school age service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years. A review of the staff file demonstrated that police vetting was not required for the new staff member working in the school age service.

(2)

All vetting procedures were completed for the new staff member before the commencement of 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)

On their arrival to the service, the inspectors observed two staff members supervising four school age children. A review of the staff roster for the week of the 24 June 2024 and corresponding

children's attendance records confirmed that the minimum of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during this period.

(4)

The children were cared for in the junior school age room on the day of inspection. Staff were observed to appropriately supervise the children while in the playroom and in the adjoining outdoor play area.

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 behavioural management policy and the afterschool collection policy. Both policies were recorded as effective from 1 September 2023 and subject to review in September 2024.

The behavioural management policy was in keeping with the requirements of schedule 6 and regulation 10. The policy included both strategies to support positive behavioural management and approaches for managing challenging behaviour and bullying by a school age child attending the service.

The afterschool collection policy advised of the measures taken to ensure all children listed for collection were collected by the drivers on arrival at the schools. The policy was in keeping with the requirements of schedule 6 and Regulation 10.

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 67 children in a full day care service. Insurance cover was valid from the 28 March 2024 to the 27 March 2025.

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 the children being supported as follows:

- The deputy person in charge was available to act in this capacity when the inspectors arrived. The person in charge arrived after this and facilitated the inspection from that point. A review of the staff roster for the inspection day confirmed that all staff present were rostered. The staff members working hours were noted on the roster.
- The person in charge of the service and the three staff members present informed the inspectors of the procedure for collecting children from the four schools associated with the school age service. All staff described how the “transport roll call” listing children to be collected was taken to schools. They also described the measures taken in the event of a child not presenting for collection at the school premises. Staff carry a mobile phone when collecting children from the school. Should a child not present for collection, the staff can ring the service to check if this child is attending the afterschool on that day. A review of the school collection policy for the service confirmed that the practice described

by staff was in keeping with the service's school collection policy as amended in January 2023 and subsequent to the last inspection of the service.

- A "communications after school book" was held in the afterschool room in the service. The book was used to record comments, conversations and any behavioural issues in the room involving school age children. It was observed that incidents recorded in the book for both the 14 November 2023 and the 27 May 2024 were also recorded in the accident and incident book for the service. Both incident records had parental signatures to confirm that they were informed of the incidents as required. It was observed by the inspector that the person in charge of the service signed off on all recorded accidents and incidents in the accident and incident book. The two staff members in the school age room and a staff member who worked in the office also confirmed that the "communications after school books" were used to record conversations with parents with particular reference to changes in the afterschool service.
- The person in charge of the service submitted the communications with parents/ guardians policy to the inspectors on the 15 July 2024 and subsequent to the inspection. The policy had been updated on the 12 July 2024. The policy advised that staff share the details of any concerns which are recorded in the "communications after school book" with parents and guardians. The policy also documented that parents/ guardians and staff will receive written notifications of any updates in the service. A copy of an email circulated to staff by the person in charge of the service to confirm they were made aware of the policy update was also submitted to the inspector.
- Two staff in the school age room advised the inspector of the measures in place in the service to support positive behavioural management and to manage challenging behaviour.
- Training and induction forms were stored in staff files to confirm the names of staff that had received training on the service policies and procedures and included school age staff in the service. The person in charge of the service confirmed that any updates or changes to policies were emailed to staff. An email of a change to a policy which was sent to staff on the 10 October 2023 was furnished to the inspector to evidence a policy review and subsequent communication with staff in the service. A staff member confirmed receipt of the updated policy following review.

- The service furnished the inspector with the Parent/Guardian handbook that was updated in September 2023 and subsequent to the last inspection of the service. The handbook included details of the service aims and objectives, operation of the service, health and food provision. The handbook was inclusive of the measures taken by the service to support healthy eating in the service following participation in a nutrition pilot programme in 2023. An overview of each of the service policies and procedures was included. Parents were requested to confirm receipt of the handbook and to confirm an understanding of the information in the handbook. Evidence of parent's receipt of the parental handbook was available on the day of inspection.
- Staff were observed to engage in conversation with the children and to encourage them to play indoors and outdoors with games and toys of their choice.