

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023FL008SA
Name of School Age Service:	Willow Tree Afterschool
Name of Registered Providers:	Jennifer Herbert Claire Maguire
Address of School Age Service:	Clonsilla Community Hall, Weavers Row, Clonsilla Road, Dublin 15.
Eircode:	D15 AT28

Date of Inspection:	5 September 2024		
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM	24	
Registration status:	Registered		
Conditions (if applicable):	N/A		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Brunel Building, St. John's Road West, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8. D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	Aileen Bradshaw
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).

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Description of Service:

Willow Tree Afterschool is a school aged service based in a community centre in Clonsilla village. It is owned and operated by the two registered providers. The service is registered to operate from 1.30pm to 6pm, Monday to Friday and cares for children from the ages 4 up to 12 years of age. They can accommodate up to 48 children at any one time. They offer care outside of the school term if required.

The service has the sole use of the building during operational hours. This includes the main hall and a room which is used for children to complete their homework. The staff and children's sanitary facilities are adjacent to the hall. The service has the use of the kitchen also.

The children use the green area on the other side of the road.

Staffing:

There are a total of five staff employed in the service including the registered providers. The registered providers work with the children.

On the day of the inspection, there were two staff and one of the registered providers working with the children.

Additional Information:

The inspection was completed on the receipt 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 co-operation of the children, registered providers, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On inspection, the registered provider were found to be 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(1)(2)(3): Complaints;
- Childcare 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 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,*
- (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)(2)

The inspector reviewed five staff files. The following was noted:

- There were written validated references available for the five staff members.
- Garda vetting was available for five staff members.
- Documentation available for five staff members demonstrated that police vetting was not required.
- The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

The files available demonstrated that procedures specified under regulation 8(1) in paragraph 1 were carried out before staff members being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age 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)

During the inspection, the registered provider ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained. The 24 children attending the service were supervised directly by 3 adults. Discussion with staff members, a review of the staff rosters and records of the children's attendance from 4 June 2024 to 28 June 2024 demonstrated the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during this period.

During the inspection, staff were observed to adequately supervise children walking from school and reminding the children of the rules of the road. Two staff walked with 14 children from the school to the afterschool service.

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

On the day of inspection, the policies and statements specified under Schedule 6 were available. In addition, the service had a Health and Safety statement which was updated in 2024. There was evidence available to demonstrate that the staff members had received a copy of the policies and procedures and had read and understood them.

Regulation 11: Premises

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that-

- (a) an outdoor space to which the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or*
- (b) where no such space is provided, the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis to an outdoor space.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(b)
The children attending the service have access to the outdoor space across the road. The staff members and children use the pedestrian crossing to access this area. The children discussed with the inspector the route they take to play on the green.

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 48 school age children.

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)(2)(3)

There was a complaints policy in place which detailed how to make a complaint. The policy also included how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. It referenced how a complainant would be informed of the complaint's procedure. Documents available to the inspector on the day demonstrated that the complaints procedures were followed as set out in the policy.

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

On the day of inspection, the inspector observed the health, safety and welfare of the children being supported by the following:

The premises were secure on the inspector's arrival. The space was bright and clean, and a staff member stated that it had recently been decorated. The door was secured with the use of a keypad and the inspector was requested to sign in on arrival.

The children's sanitary area included two toilet cubicles, and two hand washing sinks with warm water, soap and disposable paper towels. The staff had a separate designated sanitary area. The outside of the building was tidy and clear of obstruction. Evidence of completed daily risk assessments for these areas was available to the inspector.

The equipment and materials available to the children were age and stage-appropriate for the children accessing the service. During the inspection, older children did their homework in a room off the hall with a staff member supporting them with their queries or questions.

Two staff members collected 14 children from the local school. Before leaving the service, they each reviewed the master collection list for the week. Each staff had a list of the children they were due to collect and checked this list off as each child arrived at the designated point in the school. The list was rechecked once all the children had arrived. Each child was given a visibility jacket to wear, and a staff member also carried a small first aid kit and their phone in case of an emergency. A staff member walked at the front of the group and the second staff member walked at the back of the group. The list of children was rechecked when the group arrived at the door of the service. These procedures were in line with the service's drop-off and collection policy.

During this time, a staff member highlighted, to the inspector, the high-risk areas on the walk back to the service. At these points, the staff were vigilant particularly where cars were leaving commercial premises. The children told the inspector the rules of the road, where they had to

walk in pairs, on the footpath and behind the bollards. They also told the inspector the importance of using the pedestrian traffic lights when crossing the road.

The inspector accompanied a staff member as they risked assessed the outdoor area before the children could use it. This space included a woodland area and a large green space which was fenced and accessed through a gate. The staff member described how the younger children enjoy the fairy woods with the fairy doors and the older children prefer the bigger space to play ball games. They described how the staff members place themselves to ensure they can see the children at all times. The staff member used personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning the area. This was supplied by the local council. The staff completed a risk assessment checklist and there were completed forms for the inspector to review. These practices are in line with the service's policy.

The inspector reviewed the service's fire policy. The completed supporting documents were also available including records of the monthly fire drills and maintenance records of the firefighting equipment. The two fire exits were clear of obstructions during the inspection. A staff member explained that September's fire drill would be carried out at the end of the month.

The services Safety statement was reviewed by the inspector, and this included a completed risk assessment carried out on 17 June 2024 as there was work being carried out on the public footpath at the front of the building. This was signed by two staff members working on that day.