

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024CC014SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sherpa Kids Conna NS
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Jennifer Lee
Address of School Age Service:	St. Catherine's National School, Conna, Mallow, Co Cork
Eircode:	P51 EY05

Date of Inspection:	29 April 2026			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	N/A	PM	16

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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:	Sherpa Kids Conna NS is a privately operated school age service. The service is located in St Catherines National School in Conna, Cork. The service caters for children aged between 4 and 12 years. The service operates from 7.50am to 8.50am and from 1.30pm to 6pm, Monday to
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Friday. The service has access to one large classroom within the school building and a large outdoor area to the rear.

Staffing:

There are five staff employed in the service. The registered provider is not based in the service. On the day of inspection, there were three staff members working directly with the children. The area manager was also present.

Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered by 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, person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

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

- Regulation 9: Staffing levels
- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service
- Regulation 12: Insurance
- Regulation 13: Complaints
- Child Care Act 1992, 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:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures
- Child Care Act 1992, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The registered providers response was submitted to the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements. This will be reviewed at the next 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) There were five staff files reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a) Five of the references available were from a past employer and were validated.

(c) Garda vetting had been obtained for all five staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting had been obtained for two staff members who had lived outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)

(b) Five of the references available were from another source, however, one of the five references did not have a validation available.

(2) The procedures outlined in paragraph 1 were not carried out in respect of two staff members prior to being appointed, assigned or allowed access to the children attending the

service.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective action

- (1)
- (b) A reference validation was submitted in respect of the staff member.
- (2) The validation was submitted in respect of the staff member and the service completed risk assessments on all staff.

Preventive action

- (1)
- (b) A new policy and procedure on staff file documentation was introduced in 2026 identifying individuals responsible for the oversight of references and validations. A clear onboarding checklist has been developed.
- (2) A new policy and procedure on staff file documentation was introduced in 2026 identifying individuals responsible for the oversight of references and validations. A clear onboarding checklist has been developed. A staff file audit template has been developed to ensure that the relevant checks are carried out prior to a staff member being appointed, assigned or allowed access to the children. Documented evidence of the template was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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) The registered provider ensured there was an adequate number of staff caring for the children during the inspection.
- (2) At 2.45pm, there were 16 children being cared for by 3 staff members; therefore, the service maintained the minimum adult to child ratios for the duration of the inspection.
- (4) The staff supervised the children by sight in the care room and outdoor area of the 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

The following policies were reviewed:

- Complaints policy
- Statement of purpose and function
- Managing behaviour policy

The policies were observed to contain the relevant information required to support the staff in their care practices.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2026 and expired on 27 March 2027.

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)

(a) The complaints policy outlined the procedure to be followed by a person making a complaint in relation to the service.

(b) The policy outlined the manner in which the complaint would be dealt with.

(c) The policy outlined the manner in which the person who made the complaint will be informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.

(2)

(a) Records of two complaints received were available in writing.

(b) The evidence reviewed demonstrated the service adhered to their complaints policy.

(3) The records of the two complaints received by the service included:

(a) The nature of the complaint and how the complaint was dealt with.

(b) The record was available to be reviewed by the inspector.

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

- The children were observed playing with art and craft materials in the care room and freely moving around the outdoor area during the inspection.
- The children were observed having snack which consisted of fruit, crackers and yoghurts.
- The staff were observed showing empathy to children when they were upset. This was observed when a child was upset about a toy breaking and the staff sat and reassured the child.

Regulatory Requirement not met

1. While observing the collection of children, the door to the service was observed to be left unsecured and did not prevent a child from exiting the service unsupervised or unauthorised access to the service. When the inspector brought this to the attention of the person in charge, the door was secured. This posed a safety risk to the children.
2. Cleaning products were observed to be easily accessible to the children in a kitchen area within the care room. A container with cleaning products was stored on the floor and cleaning products were also observed in a cabinet under the sink. This posed a safety risk to the children.
3. On review of an incident report, it was observed that the parent or guardian of the child involved in the incident had not signed the report. It could not be determined if the child's parent, or guardian had read the report. This posed a safety risk to the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective action

1. A sign has been placed on both service doors to remind staff to close the door. Photographic evidence was submitted of the sign on the door.
2. A lock has been placed on the cabinet. Photographic evidence was submitted of the lock fitted on the cabinet.
3. An investigation was launched and inconsistencies were found in relation to the services approach to accident and incident reporting. The incident report has been updated to include the reason for the missing signature from the report form. Photographic evidence was submitted.

Preventive action

1. An email has been sent to all staff outlining the need to monitor access and egress at all times. An email has also been sent to the parents in relation to the collection procedures. A review of service roll calls to ensure that head counts are carried out regularly to ensure staff are vigilant as to the number of children present at all times.
2. A lessons learned forum was delivered to the programme co-ordinators and documents were sent to all staff on the correct storage of cleaning chemicals.

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3. Retraining for all staff in the communication with parents, accident and incident reporting, and a lessons learned forum was delivered to all programme co-ordinators.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response was submitted to the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.