

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024LH006SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sherpa Kids Realt Na Mara BNS
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Jennifer Lee
Address of School Age Service:	Realt Na Mara Boys National School Donacarney Mornington Meath
Eircode:	A92 WC52

Date(s) of Inspection:	24 June 2025
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 5
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable.

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell and L.A. Webster
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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:

Sherpa Kids is a nationwide organisation which currently provides school age services. Sherpa Kids Realt Na Mara BNS is based in on the first floor of a national school, which is in a residential area in Co Meath. The service provides care for children aged 4 to 12 years old. A breakfast club is provided from 7.50 to 8.50 am and an afterschool club from 1.50 to 6.00pm during term time. The children have access to sanitary facilities within the care rooms and there is an outdoor area onsite.

Staffing:

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs two staff members to work in the service. Relief support may also be obtained from two other staff members working in another registered school age service on the school complex.

Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered following 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:

- 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 commence.

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:

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c): Vetting disclosures.
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels.
- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service.
- Regulation 12: Insurance.
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b): Complaints.
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be non-compliant in:

- Regulation 8(1)(d)(2): Vetting disclosures.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The actions submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan has addressed the non-compliances identified on 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

The inspector reviewed the files of four staff members who were available to work in the service. There were two written and validated references available for each of the four adults from either a previous employer or source other than a previous employer. Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the four adults. These Garda Vetting disclosures were dated within the last three years demonstrating compliance with the Renewal of Garda Vetting regulatory notice. Documentation available demonstrated that police vetting was not required for three staff members. The inspector was able to review one of the two police vetting required for one staff member.

Regulatory Requirement not met

- (1) (d) One of the police vetting's required for one staff member, who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for six months or more, was not available for review.
- (2) The registered provider had not ensured that vetting procedures had been completed

prior to staff being employed and working directly with the children as the required documentation was not in place in respect of police vetting for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

- (1) The registered provider stated the staff member in question ceased working for the company in June 2025 and that a mistake was made when checking police vetting. The registered provider submitted confirmation of resignation and an application for the police vetting made by the former employee.
- (2) The registered provider has stated that correspondence was sent to all staff who hire staff to ensure all future staff are fully compliant with the vetting regulations, for all jurisdictions they have prior to working directly with children. This correspondence was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary of Findings

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider in their corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection.

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.*
- (3) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service singlehandedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance in operating the service to the person in charge is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to*

attend the service to assist the person in charge or the registered provider of the childminding service in the event of an emergency.

(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 were two staff members working with five children.

The inspectors observed appropriate supervision of the children throughout the inspection. On the children's arrival to the service the staff played games and chatted with the children. During the inspection the children went outside to play football with a staff member. Appropriate supervision was observed with children being visually supervised on the walk through the school to the outdoor area and whilst they played outside.

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 service's drop off and collection and complaints policy were reviewed. These documents contained required information as per Schedule 6 of the regulations to support staff in their practice.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had insurance cover 44 children in daily attendance in a school age care service. Insurance cover was valid from the 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.

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,

Regulatory Requirement Met

The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and specified timelines for responses.

The service also had a children's complaint's policy, and the person in charge discussed children voicing complaints and these being dealt with informally.

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 children being supported by the following:

- A member of management staff, the person in charge and staff members discussed a

previous incident which had occurred during a collection. The staff members were aware of the incident and the inspectors were advised of measures that had been taken following the incident. A documented record of these measures was provided to the inspectors, which included training and improved communication.

- The inspectors observed collections on the day of the inspection. Staff members had a list of children who were due to be collected. The staff members discussed a system in place which was followed should a child not be at the collection point and this included phoning parents. During the collection the children were observed to listen carefully to staff members and follow instructions to support the safety of the collection process. The collection of the children on the school site was reflective of the service's drop off and collection policy.
- A menu was on display in the service on the day of the inspection. The children were provided with sandwiches, crackers and fruit which was reflective of the menu for the day. The staff members discussed that snacks were provided at set times throughout the day but children could request food if hungry. The person in charge described how the provision of food differed during camps and that this was communicated to the children and parents. An example of this communication was viewed by the inspectors.
- On the inspector's arrival children were playing games with their peers and drawing and colouring. Staff were interacting with the children at this time and discussing the children's day at school. The children were provided with outdoor play on the premises with the children describing how they enjoyed playing football and being outdoors. The staff members discussed that the children were involved in planning activities and there were choices available.
- The staff members and person in charge discussed outings provided during camps, which included trips to a local play area. The staff members discussed the route to the playground and the management of risks to the playground and whilst there. A documented risk assessment was available for the last outing completed.