

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025CC005SA
Name of School Age Service:	Curious Minds Burnfort
Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Sheehy
Address of School Age Service:	Burnfort National School, Burnfort, Mallow, Cork.
Eircode:	P51 FN32

Date of Inspection:	04 February 2026
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 7
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	2nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V35 XT5F.
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien & J Dennehy
Title:	Early Years Inspector & Inspection Registration Manager

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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

Description of Service:

Curious Minds Burnfort is a standalone school age service catering for children aged 4 to 12 years old. The service operates from one classroom within Burnfort National School. There is access to children's sanitary facilities within the classroom as well as a storage area. The service has access to the school hall and the outdoor courts. The service is registered to operate from 7.00am to 9.00am and 1.45pm to 6.00pm. Operational times may vary depending on the care needs of the children. The registered provider operates multiple other school age and early years services.

Staffing:

There are currently five adults attached to the service. The service is currently operated single-handedly and there are four adults available to act as the emergency person if required. This includes the registered provider.

Additional Information:

This inspection was carried out as a result 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:

- 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 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 and person in charge 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 10: Policies of a school age service
- Regulation 12: Insurance
- Regulation 13: Complaints

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

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures
- Regulation 9: Staffing levels
- 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 registered providers response and documented evidence were reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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) Following a review of previous information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that five staff files were subject to inspection.

(a) Three references were available from past employers and were validated.

(b) Three references were available from sources other than a past employer and were validated.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four of the five adults. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate

Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

- (d) Police vetting was available with the required translations for one staff member who had lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)

- (a)&(b) Four written and validated references were not available in respect of two staff members.

(c) Garda vetting was not available for review in relation to one staff member, the person in charge confirmed in discussion with inspectors that this person would provide emergency cover if required.

(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who confirmed that they had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months. It could not be determined through review of staff files or discussion with the person in charge if police vetting was required for two other staff members.

(2) The registered provider did not ensure that the procedures specified in paragraph 1 had been fully carried out prior to one adult being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with the school age children attending the service. This posed a possible safety risk to the children as the registered provider did not adequately complete the required checks to ensure the suitability of the staff member in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective Action

(1)

- (a) Three references from a previous employer were submitted and were validated.

(b) One reference from a source other than a previous employer was submitted and validated.

(c) Garda vetting for the emergency staff member has been placed in the staff file. A Garda vetting disclosure was submitted in respect of the one staff member.

(d) Police vetting for one staff member has been placed in the staff file. A police vetting

disclosure was submitted in respect of the one staff member.

(2) Written references, reference checks and garda vetting have been forwarded to the service and placed on file.

Preventive Action

The team lead and area manager have thoroughly checked all the staff files and ensured that all necessary documentation is in place. A checklist has been developed and completed for each staff member and will be used for any future staff joining the service.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response and documented evidence have been reviewed by 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.*
- (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) There was one adult present in the service during the inspection which was adequate to ensure the care needs of the children were met.

(4) It was observed that the adult supervised the children at all times during the inspection. The adult was observed chatting and playing with the children. The children were observed by sight and sound.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(2) On review of the children and staff checking in and out records, it was observed that on 14 January 2026, there were 13 children present in the service being cared for by one staff member. This did not adhere to the minimum adult to child ratio of 1 adult to 12 children. This posed a safety risk to the children.

(3) The service did not have a second person familiar with the operation of the service within a close distance to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency. It is acknowledged that the service had four people listed as an emergency contact, but none were in a close proximity to the service. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective Action

(2) Due to an extracurricular activity being cancelled on the 14th of February 2026, one additional child attended the service. It has been outlined to the team lead that under no circumstances can the service work out of ratio. The primary school has also been informed.

(3) All documentation for an emergency person who is within close proximity to the service is now available and can provide emergency relief cover if needed.

Preventive Action

(2) It has been outlined to the team lead that under no circumstances can the service work out of ratio. The primary school has also been informed.

(3) An emergency relief staff member employed and vetted by Curious Minds lives close to the service and will be available to provider cover if required.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response and documented evidence was reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.

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 following policies were reviewed:

- Complaints policy
- Managing behaviour policy
- Drop off and collection policy
- Statement of purpose and function

The inspector reviewed the policies and they were observed to contain the information required as per Regulation 10 and Schedule 6 of the regulations.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The registered provider ensured the school age service was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 15 August 2025 and expired on 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*
- (4) A registered provider of a childminding service shall ensure that the parents or guardians of children attending the service are aware of the service's complaints policy.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

- (1) The registered provider ensured the complaints policy of the service:
- (a) Outlined the procedure to follow by a person when making a complaint in relation to the service.
 - (b) Outlined the manner in which the complaint is dealt with.
 - (c) Outlined the procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint will be dealt with.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that:
- (a) A record in writing should be kept of complaints made in respect of the service as outlined in the service's complaints policy. In discussion with the person in charge, it was determined that the service had received one complaint to date and as this was still in process no records were unavailable for review by the inspectors.

(4) The services complaints policy was accessible within the service. The service used an online application to communicate with parents and send updates as required.

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 sitting completing homework with the support of the staff member when needed.
- The children were observed to freely move around the care room. The children were observed playing with a marble game, painting, a basketball and a beanbag game. The children were observed playing and chatting to each other.
- The staff member was observed interacting with the children in a positive manner and with a respectful tone of voice.

Regulatory Requirement not met

Twenty-six accident and incident reports were reviewed from October 2025 to February 2026. It was found that seven of the reports had not been signed by the parent or guardian of the child. This posed a safety risk to the children as it could not be determined if the parents or guardians had been informed of the accident or incident.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective Action

All parents are advised of any accident or incident as they are logged on an online application. The parents of children currently attending the service were requested to review the incident reports and have signed them. Documented evidence of the signed report was submitted.

Preventive Action

The accident and incident log will be stored near the door where the children are collected from to remind staff to ask parents to read and sign the reports. The staff have been reminded of the importance of all incident reports being read and signed by parents.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response and documented evidence was reviewed by the inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.