

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025CC024SA
Name of School Age Service:	Mad Hatters
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Sandra Kenneally
Address of School Age Service:	CYMS Hall, Mc Curtain St, Fermoy, Co Cork
Eircode:	P61 CR62

Date of Inspection:	25 May 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:	Mad Hatters is a privately operated school age service based in the town of Fermoy, Cork. The service is located in a community owned building. The service caters for children aged 4 to 15 years. The service operates from 7.30am to 9am and 1.30pm to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service also
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operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm, Monday to Friday during non-term time.
The service consists of a large room, kitchen, office and sanitary facilities.

Staffing:

There are eight staff members employed in the service. The registered provider is based in the service. On the day of inspection, there were five staff members and a student on work experience present in the service.

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 provider and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN0204	25/05/2026	Evidence of international police vetting was not available for one staff member who was present in the service on the day of inspection and had access to the children. The person had evidence of ECRIS Garda vetting.
Status	The registered provider submitted corrective actions which were accepted and addressed the statutory notice. A preventive action was requested but not received. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.	

Summary of Findings:

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

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c): Vetting disclosures
- Regulation 9(2): Staffing levels
- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service
- Regulation 11(b): Premises
- Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

The registered provider was found non-compliant under the following:

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

Conclusion and follow up actions:

Documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate of correspondence in relation to obtaining international police vetting. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to regulation 8(1)(d) remains outstanding.

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) Eight staff files were reviewed including the files of the registered provider. The file of the student was also reviewed.
- (a) Three references were available from a past employer and were validated.
 - (b) Fifteen references were available from another source and were validated.

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

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)

(d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0204 served.

(2) The relevant procedures outlined above were not carried out prior to one staff member being appointed, assigned or allowed access to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective action

(2) The staff member has sent all details to a company to obtain the international police vetting. The Embassy has also been contacted and awaiting an appointment. Police vetting has been received.

Preventive action

(2) The service will not employ anyone unless they have a police clearance certificate, if required. The employment contracts have been updated to outline that employees who require police vetting will not commence employment until police vetting is obtained.

Summary of Findings

The registered providers response in relation to regulation 8 (2) and 8 (1)(d) has met the regulatory requirements.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

(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

Regulatory Requirement Met

(2) There were 16 children being cared for by 4 staff members. The registered provider was also present to provide support to the staff if required.

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 policy was reviewed:

- Drop off and collection policy

The above policy was observed to contain the relevant information to guide the staff in their care practices.

Regulation 11: Premises

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

(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 service had access to a large yard on a daily basis which was located in a national school adjacent to the service. The children were observed spending time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

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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

- Three staff members held an in date certificate in first aid and were available in the event of medical attention being required.