

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

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TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025DS012SA
Name of School Age Service:	Sherpa Kids Gaelscoil Laighean
Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Lee
Address of School Age Service:	Bóthar Chnoc Ainbhil Baile Atha Cliath Dublin 14
Eircode:	D14RF67

Date of Inspection:	16/10/2025			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	N/A	PM	32
Registration status:	Registered for school age care			
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable			

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff A. Spain
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).

Description of Service:

Sherpa Kids School Aged Service is a registered school age service located in Dublin 14. It is part of a chain of school age services located throughout the country. The school aged service is based in an Irish speaking primary school and provides care through the use of the Irish language. The service has use of three classrooms, a kitchen area and a large secure outdoor area.

The service is registered to accommodate up to 48 school age children between the ages of 4- 12 years at any one time. Opening hours are 1:10-18:00 term time and 7:30-8:30 for breakfast club. The service does not operate outside term time.

Staffing:

There are a total of 5 staff members employed in the school age service including the person in charge. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. On the day of the inspection, an area manager was present at the service and was working directly with the children. On the day of inspection there were 5 staff caring for 32 children.

Additional Information:

This inspection was completed on foot 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

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, area manager and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

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

- Regulation 8: Vetting Disclosures
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing Levels
- Regulation 10: Policies
- Regulation 13: Complaints (1)(2)

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

- 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 actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan for Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013, have adequately addressed the non-compliance 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

- (1) The inspection included a review of the required documentation for five adults employed. The following documentation was available;
- (a) (b) Of the ten written and validated references that were required, eight were available from a past employer, two were available from a reputable source.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for five adults employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures were also available for review for the area manager.
- Garda vetting disclosures from all adults were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Garda vetting which was dated within the last three years was available for six adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult who was employed to work in the service as they had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.
- (2) The above procedures were carried out by the service prior to the adults working in the service and/or directly with children.

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)

During the inspection, the registered provider ensured that appropriate staffing levels were maintained. The 32 children attending the service were supervised directly by 5 staff. Staff were observed to work closely with small groups of children to play board and card games, organise art activities, help with homework and spend time chatting with children. Staff were also observed to engage with children to organise and coordinate games when outdoors. In discussion with a staff member with key responsibilities, it was outlined that staff members were also available from the registered provider's other school age services to ensure that the adult to child ratio was maintained.

(4)

The children were observed to be appropriately supervised by the staff members while they were indoors and outdoors.

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 inspection included a review of the dropping off and collection policy, complaints policy, child safeguarding and risk assessment policy. The policies reviewed were observed to be in keeping with the requirements of Schedule 6 of this regulation

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 insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 48 school age children and an expiry date of 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.*
- (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)(b)(c)

A complaints policy was available within the service for a person to make a complaint. The policy detailed the procedures to follow, including the assigned person responsible for dealing with a complaint, how complaints are dealt with and communication strategies in the case where a complaint is made to the service. The policy also included an appeals provision should the complainant wish to appeal the outcome of the complaint investigation.

(2)(a) The service's policy outlined that the service would retain the record of complaint for 2 years from the date the complaint was dealt with.

(b) One complaint available for review, showed the complaint was dealt with in accordance with the providers complaints policy.

(3)(a)(b)

The record of the complaint reviewed included the nature of the complaint and was open to inspection by the inspectors. The record also confirmed the lessons learnt by the service following the complaint investigation.

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 inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place on the day of inspection. The children moved freely around the rooms – playing and engaging with each other and staff.

The service is based in an Irish speaking school, and the school age service operates through the medium of Irish. Staff were observed to support children to use the Irish language throughout the day. Staff addressed children by name and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative. Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. The service provides an afternoon meal for children; on the day of inspection the children were offered rice cakes, cold meats, fruit and yogurt, children also brought snacks from home.

A range of age-appropriate equipment was available to children and children were observed to take part in an organised art activity. Children were supported to complete homework by staff who sat with them while others played quiet games at the tables.

Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and staff were observed playing games and organising activities for children whilst outdoors.

All children joined together after 4pm in the outdoor area and staff reported that this is the system used for collection by parents each evening.

Regulatory Requirement not met

The inspectors were furnished with minutes of meetings following a recent incident in the service and the learning from the incident. There was no evidence of the safeguards taken by the service to advise of how changes to drop off and collection times and routines would be managed, recorded and effectively communicated to staff.

- (1) Attendance records available in the junior and senior infant's room were inaccurate with 2 additional children recorded on the register who had left to go home. Staff present stated that 16 children were recorded on the register, but 14 children were counted in the room. This was following the first set of school collections by parents and drop off by the school bus. This presents a risk to children's safety in the event of a child leaving the

service unaccompanied or in an emergency evacuation.

- (2) During the school collection managed by the service, the system used to monitor children's arrival and departure was not accurate, staff identified a time lapse to the inspector. This resulted in confusion for staff who did not have accurate records of children present. This presents a risk to children's safety in the event of a child leaving the service unaccompanied or in an emergency evacuation.
- (3) Information on children's attendance or absence was not monitored and communicated effectively to staff, this led to confusion at school collection and drop off times. For example on the day of inspection, a staff member returned to pod 2 with a child who was not collected by a parent or guardian as anticipated by the staff member. On making contact with the parent, it was outlined that an extra day had been added to the days the child would remain in the service for a longer time period. This information was communicated to management but had not reached the staff members caring for the child. This presents a risk to children's safety in the event of a child leaving the service unaccompanied or in an emergency evacuation.
- (4) The inspectors reviewed four accidents and incidents records for October 2025. There was no parental signatures on the records to confirm that parents and guardians were informed of the incidents. This could pose a risk to the safety of the children in the service. It was acknowledged that a staff member was aware that parents and guardians are required to sign the accident and incident record when queried by the inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider has stated:

(1) (2) (3)

Back up printed lists are now in use and on display to avoid any inaccuracies appearing in the attendance software in use that may lead to risk in dropping/collecting procedures. The Area Manager initiates the daily updating of the back-up attendance lists in use.

The person in charge has been instructed by email on the back up source to cross check

attendances to avoid inaccurate readings or attendance lists on any given day.

The service staff have been instructed that at least 4 Roll Calls be taken daily as a mandatory step to ensure minimised risk of attendance oversight.

The person in charge has been instructed to log into the school building Wi-Fi (rather than depending on 4G data) to ensure the risk of 'time lag' is fully eliminated. This has been successfully achieved.

(4) All 4 incident reports have now been signed by the parents.

Two instructions have been issued to service staff regarding the requirement for parent/guardian signatories on incident forms, and the need for service staff to report to AM on any incidences of unsigned/outstanding unsigned incident report forms.

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

Summary of Findings

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector. The regulation has been met.