Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report
School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DR001SA
Name of School Age Service:	Little Puddles Childcare
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Padraig O'Connor
Address of School Age Service:	13 Glandore Park Monkstown Glenageary Dublin
Eircode:	A96 KN73

Date of Inspection:	24 April 2024	
Number of school age children present during inspection:	**PM**	30
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 I. Cronin
Title:	Early years inspector National Inspection Manager

Authority to Inspect

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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:	Little Puddles School Age Service is located in a residential area of South Dublin. The service caters for children registered in a school setting aged 4-10 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday between 7:30 to 9:00am and 12:30 to 6:30pm. The service is located in the registered provider's own home on the ground floor. There are two care rooms in the main house and a purpose-built room in the garden. There are two toilets and handwash basins in the main house for children, with staff facilities upstairs. There is an outdoor area with direct access from the main house and garden to the rear of the property.
Staffing:	The registered provider works in the service. The registered provider employs six staff members, five work directly with the children and there is a driver. One staff member had commenced in the service since the last inspection conducted in February 2023.
Additional Information:	The inspectors conducted a planned focused inspection of the service. The inspection also reviewed information received by the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate had received information that a preschool service was in operation at the premises. The service is not authorised to have a preschool service and this matter is currently before the courts. Inspectors found that there were three preschool children present on the day of the inspection. This was discussed with the registered provider who outlined that they would furnish a plan to the Inspectorate in relation to the current attendance of these children.

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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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered provider, person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

Summary of Findings:

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 13(1)(a)(b)(c): 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:

- 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, have 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 Síochana 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.

Regulatory Requirement Met
The inspector reviewed the new staff member's files and a contractor who provides activities for the children. There were two written and validated references available for the staff member and the contractor, from a previous employer or a source other than a previous employer. A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff member and the contractor The documentation reviewed on inspection demonstrated that police vetting was either not required or available were required.

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)(4) On the day of the inspection, 5 staff members were working directly with the 30 children in attendance. The inspectors observed appropriate supervision of the children. This was observed during the collections which occurred on the day of inspection where there were appropriate numbers of staff with the children on site, whilst other staff members completed collections.

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.*
Regulatory Requirement Met
(1)(a)(b)(c) The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. There was an informal, formal, and escalation process documented in the policy. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and the appeals process. On the day of the inspection, staff members informed the inspector that there were no complaints.

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 non-compliances from the previous inspection of 1 February 2023, in relation to Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency were reviewed as part of this inspection. Inspectors found that: • The registered provider had other staff available to support the children should a staff member be unavailable. • The inspectors reviewed a sample of children's records which were available on the

premises. These contained parental details and emergency contacts for the children.

Regulatory Requirement not met

1. A Garda vetting disclosure for two staff members was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

1. The registered provider submitted updated Garda vetting disclosures for the two staff members. As a preventive action the registered provider stated that a dated system will provide an alert before vetting expires so new applications can be made.

Summary of Findings

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