

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021GY060SA
Name of School Age Service:	Wild Roots Afterschool
Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Gavaghan
Address of School Age Service:	Croi an Bhaile, Carrabane, Athenry, Co. Galway
Eircode:	H65 Y766

Date of Inspection:	15 October 2024
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 20
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	N/A

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S Meehan & S O'Brien
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:

This service operates a school age service for children aged from 4 to 12 years. The service operates from 8.00am to 9.30am and 12.30pm to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday. This service is located in a purpose-built building in Carrabane village in Co. Galway. This service has 2 playrooms, and a kitchen and dining area. It also has a well-equipped outdoor area which is accessible from the playrooms. Wild Roots Afterschool is also registered as Wild Roots Preschool and offers a full day care service for preschool children.

Staffing:

The service employs 5 staff to care for school-age children. The registered provider is not rostered to work directly with the children but is available for support if required.

Additional Information:

The inspection was completed 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, registered provider, person in charge, and staff 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 8: Vetting Disclosures.
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 12: Insurance.
- Regulation 13: Complaints
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

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

- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service in relation to the drop off and collection policy
- 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:

On review of the registered providers response, documented and photographic evidence, it has been deemed that the non-compliance in the report have now been rectified.

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*

(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

On the day of inspection, 6 staff files were reviewed including the registered provider.

- (1)(a) Eleven references were available from past employers and were validated by the registered provider.
- (b) One reference was available from a reputable source.

(c) All 6 staff including the registered provider had Garda Vetting disclosures available for review. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(2) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the relevant vetting disclosure procedures were carried out prior to any person working directly with the school age children.

Five of the six staff working in the service held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. Three of the staff had First Aid Responder training completed.

There was evidence of supervision meetings with staff on a regular basis which was in line with the supervision policy.

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)

The registered provider ensured that adequate staffing levels were maintained during the inspection. Twenty children attended the service and were supervised by four staff. Staff were observed collecting children from the local national school, group one had twelve children with 2 staff and group two had eight children with two staff. Children were adequately supervised by staff in the care room and outdoor areas.

There was documented evidence of a roster available for the staff and the times staff checked in and out of the service, break times were recorded and available for review.

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 policies were assessed and contained information to support the staff in their care practices:

- Supervision Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Accident and Incident Policy

The inspectors reviewed the above policies, and they contained the information required as per Schedule 6 of the regulations to support staff in their practice.

Regulatory Requirement not met

The drop off and collection policy was assessed and did not meet the requirements for the drop of and collection of school age children.

- The policy given on the day was for the early years' service and was not adapted to cater for the school age requirements.
- The policy did not outline the procedures for dropping and collecting children from the national school.
- There was no clear process for the dropping and collecting of children which may pose as a safety risk for a school age child.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in the response on the 08/11/2024:

Corrective Action

- An updated policy for drop-off and collection has been submitted and adapted to cater for the school-age requirements
- The policy outlines clear procedures in relation to the collection and dropping off school-aged children from the national school. No corrective action is required here as we believed we were acting within the legislation set out under the childcare act.

Preventive Action

- All staff have read the updated policy and will continue to use the booking system and practice safely assisting children to and from school.

Summary of Findings

The Early Years Inspectorate reviewed the documented evidence submitted and has deemed that it has met the regulatory requirements.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025 for a maximum of 66 school age children attending the service at any one time.

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)

The complaints policy was available for review by the inspectors. The policy detailed the procedure of how to make a complaint and how the complaint would be dealt with. It outlined that the complainant would be kept informed of the complaint's procedure. There was also a child friendly complaints policy that was given to the children at the beginning of the term outlining how they could make a complaint if 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

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- The staff were observed speaking to the children in a respectful way. The staff chatted to the children walking to the service from the national school and ensured the children walked safely on the footpaths and steps due to slippery surfaces. The staff were observed asking the children how their day was at school and listened to each child's needs.
- The staff were observed listening to the children around mealtimes. Cottage pie was served the children on arrival to the service. Children who did not want this dinner were given the option of brioche and fruit as an alternative. Water and milk were also available to the children.

- The children seemed happy to be in the service and were observed playing with plastic bricks, marble towers, colouring and playing outside.
- The accident and incident book were assessed on the day of inspection. A sample of five records were reviewed dated from 19 September 2024 to 4 October 2024 and all were correctly completed and signed by the parent or guardian of the child, a staff member and the registered provider.

Regulatory Requirement not met

The following regulatory requirements were not met and may present as a safety risk to a school age child:

1. The sanitary area was shared with the preschool children also attending the service. There were no designated toilets for the school age children. It is acknowledged that this rectified on the day and school age children were assigned toilets.
2. The dignity of the school age child was not respected at toileting, there were no locks on the doors in the four toilets in the sanitary areas.
3. The sanitary area was not maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. The sanitary area had peeling contact paper near the toilet doors, the area around the sinks were poorly maintained and in need of repair. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children using this area.
4. The service did not have a planned daily routine for children. There was an emphasis on free play rather than having themes and structure to the day.
5. Although the registered provider and the staff were able to explain the process of risk assessment, there was no written record of any risk assessment being carried out for the service. This poses a health and safety risk to school age children.
6. At collection time at the national school, documented attendance records were not recorded by the staff and when asked by the inspectors, they only signed them on arrival to the service.

7. On review of the documented attendance records, there was no distinction made between the two school age services owned by the registered provider for example the inspectors could not identify which service a school age child was attending.

8. While observing school age children being collected at the national school, it was observed that children crossed a busy road. The children were not given high visibility jackets and staff did not wear the same. The inspectors highlighted this safety risk to the staff at the 2pm collection and it is acknowledged at 3pm collection, all children and staff wore high visibility jackets.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated on their response received on the 08/11/2024:

Corrective Action

1. As acknowledged, this was rectified on the day of inspection
2. Children are supervised at toileting and doors will be closed to ensure the dignity of the child.
3. Peeling contact paper has been removed and painted. The area around the sinks has also been painted.
4. Planned themes are put in place and are child led.
5. There is a daily risk assessment in place and submitted to the Early Years Inspectors.
6. Record Books are now being brought to the school, and children will be marked in at the school
7. Individual roll books for the two school age services owned by the registered provider has been put in place for recording the attendance of the school age children.

8. A high-vis vest is now worn at each collection; this was also observed by the inspectors at the 3 pm pick up on the day of inspection

Preventive Action

1. Rectified on the day of inspection and designated toilets are now available for the school age children.
2. Staff will continue to supervise toileting by school age children.

3. The area around the sinks has also been painted.
- 4.Planned activities will be offered to after-school children. Planned themes are put in place.
5. Risk assessments
6. Record books are brought to the school and children will be marked in at the school on
- Separate roll books are now in place
7. Roll books for the 2 school age services will be completed on a daily basis for the attendance of school age children.
- 8.High vis vests are now worn on drop off and collection of school age children.

Summary of Findings

The documented and photographic evidence submitted has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and has met the regulatory requirements.