

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024LS003SA
Name of School Age Service:	Ballinakill Afterschool Club
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Mary Mansfield
Address of School Age Service:	Parochial Hall, The Square, Ballinakill, Co. Laois
Eircode:	R32 A309

Date of Inspection:	24 June 2026			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	Not applicable	PM	9

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain
Title:	Early Years Inspectorate

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:	Ballinakill Afterschool Club is a standalone school age service registered to care for children in the age range 4 to 15 years between the hours of 12.15 and 5.00pm. The service also provides a breakfast club between the hours of 8.00 and 9.15am. The service operates from the ground floor of a leased community building in Ballinakill town, south Laois. Rooms in use include a
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playroom, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation off the playroom for use by children and staff. The service uses an enclosed play area and outdoor amenities in the town to enable the children to avail of outdoor space to play.

Staffing:

The registered provider employs 2 staff members. The registered provider also works directly in the service and was present with one staff member of the day of inspection.

Additional Information:

The inspector conducted a planned focused inspection of 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 member who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

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

Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c)(d): Vetting disclosures;

Regulation 9(2): Staffing levels;

Regulation 11: Premises;

Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

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

Regulation 8(2): Vetting disclosures;

Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The inspector reviewed the actions that the registered provider submitted. The non-compliances found on inspection have been addressed with the exception of 58(G), work which the registered provider stated will be completed before the service opens in September. The actions taken will be reviewed on the next inspection of the service.

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)(a)(b)

A written reference from a past employer and a written reference from a reputable source were held on file in respect of the registered provider. A written and validated reference from a past employer and a reputable source was held on file in respect of both staff members working in the service.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána was held on file in respect of the registered provider and both staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of all staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as records demonstrated that staff had not lived outside of

the state for over six months as adults

Regulatory Requirement not met

(2)

Records held on file confirmed that staff members provided direct care to the children prior to having two references in respect of one staff member and one reference in respect of the second staff member validated.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in the CAPA response to the inspection report that all references are validated. As a preventive measure, the registered provider advised that all references will be validated for new staff before they begin work in the service.

Summary of Findings

The non-compliance identified has been addressed by the registered provider.

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)

The minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained on the day of inspection. On arrival of the inspector at 2.50pm, 2 adults cared for 9 children in attendance in the service. At 4.10pm, the 2 adults cared for the remaining 6 children in the service. The record of attendance for the children confirmed that the maximum number of children currently in attendance in the service is 16. The service is staffed by 3 adults.

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) Children have access to the outdoor play area of a sessional early years service, located across the road from the service for daily outdoor play. The outdoor play area is secured by building walls and a cast iron gate to guard against unsupervised access to the road. The registered provider also advised the inspector that children are taken to the green on nearby church grounds and a community playground in Ballinakill for outdoor play. The service had an outings policy which included provision to secure parental consent for taking children on outings. The inspector reviewed risk assessments completed by the registered provider in advance of taking children on outings.

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

A staff member working in the service had first aid responder (FAR) training with an expiry date of 28 October 2027. The staff member also had paediatric first aid training with an expiry date of 26 March 2028

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Regulatory Requirement not met

A fire exit with a low-level push bar was observed to open directly from the playroom to an adjoining roadway, posing a risk to the childrens safety in the service. This exit was not fitted with an alarm to alert staff should the door be opened.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in the CAPA response to the inspection report that the owners of the building and the fire safety officer have been requested to both raise the level of the push bar on the fire exit door from the playroom and to fit an alarm on the door. It was also advised by the registered provider that these measures will be taken before the service reopens in September 2026.

Summary of Findings

The registered provider outlined the corrective actions to correct and prevent the reoccurrence of the non-compliance identified on inspection. The regulatory requirement remains outstanding until the measures proposed have been completed. It is acknowledged that these actions will be completed before the service opens in September.