

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022WH001SA
Name of School Age Service:	Ballymore Community Childcare
Name of Registered Provider:	Vincent McCormack
Address of School Age Service:	Market Hill Ballymore Mullingar Westmeath
Eircode:	N91D264

Date of Inspection:	29 July 2026			
Number of school age children present during inspection:	AM	2	PM	2

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 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

Description of Service:

Ballymore Community Childcare is a community run combined school age and preschool service. The school age service cares for children in the age range 4 to 15 years. The service is operational between the hours of 8.00 and 9.15am and from 12.30 to 5.30pm during school term. Outside of the school term, the service is operational between the hours of 8.00am and 5.30pm. The school age service operates from the “Willow Room” and the “Laural Room” on the ground floor. Additional rooms at ground floor level include the “Cherry Blossom” room, sanitary accommodation for children and staff, a kitchen, a photocopier room, an office and a utility room. Rooms at first floor level include “Little Acorn” room, sanitary accommodation for children and staff and a staff room. Outdoor play areas are provided at the back, side and front of the service. The service is located in a residential housing estate in Ballymore village, Westmeath

Staffing:

The school age service is staffed by four staff members which includes the person in charge of the service. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

Additional Information:

The inspection was conducted in response to 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:

- 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, person in charge, and staff 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)(2): Vetting disclosures;

Regulation 9(2)(4): Staffing levels;

Regulation 10: Policies etc. of school age service;

Regulation 11: Premises;

Regulation 12: Insurance;

Regulation 13: Complaints (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a);

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:

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

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The measures taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance found 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

The inspector reviewed the files for the registered provider, three existing staff and one new staff member working in the school age service.

(1)(a)(b)

Two written and validated references were held on file in respect of one staff member. A written and validated reference from a past employer and a reputable source were held on file in respect of the remaining three staff members. Two written references from reputable sources were held on file in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána was held on file in respect of all staff members working in the school age service and the registered provider. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of the registered provider. Please refer to the information outlined under Section 58(G) of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as documented evidence on file confirmed that none of the staff in the school age service had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(2)

Records held on file confirmed that the necessary vetting procedures were conducted prior to staff members having contact with the children cared for in the school age service.

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.

(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

(2)

The minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained on inspection. On the day of inspection, 3 staff members cared for 13 preschool children aged 3 to 5 years and 2 school age service in attendance at 1.00pm. At 4.00pm, the three staff members cared for the 5 remaining preschool children in the service.

The inspector reviewed the attendance records and staff roster for the week beginning 12 January 2026. Records confirmed that two staff members were present daily and cared for a maximum of 10 children in attendance in the school age service.

(4)

The children were observed to be supervised by both sight and sound on the day of inspection.

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 observed to be in place in the service.

Staff recruitment policy

Staff training and induction policy

Staff supervision policy

Accident and incident policy

Policy on managing behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement

Complaints policy

Regulation 11: Premises

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

(a) an outdoor space to which the school age children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(a)

There was direct access from the Laurel school age room to a mud kitchen area at the side of the service. The area was sheltered by an open perspex roof covering. Areas with an all weather ground surface were also provided at both the back and front of the service for daily outdoor play. The outdoor play areas were secured with a combination of concrete walls and heavy duty plastic fencing safely anchored to the ground. A cast iron gate on the open gable end of the premises guarded against unsupervised exit by children when playing in the mud kitchen area.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 67 children in daily attendance in a full day care service. Insurance cover was valid from 28 March 2026 to 27 March 2027.

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.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The service had a complaint policy which outlined the procedure for making a complaint, the manner in which complaints were dealt with and a procedure for keeping the complainant informed of the manner of investigation. The complaints policy also included an appeals provision should the complainant be dissatisfied with the manner of investigation of a complaint. It was observed that the complaints policy included a child friendly version should a child in the service wish to make a complaint and that the policy was subject to a review on 2 July 2026.

(2)(a)

The person in charge of the service advised that no complaints have been received to date.

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

Records were held of staff files to confirm that staff working in the school age service had signed a “child safeguarding declaration of understanding” to confirm that they received, read, understood and accepted their responsibilities and actions set out in the statement.

The training and induction records for staff confirmed that staff had received training on both the child safeguarding policy and the child protection policy for the service. Certification was held on staff filed to confirm completion of Introduction to Children First training in April 2026 and Children First Mandated Person training in September 2025. When queried by the inspector, a staff member working in the service was familiar with the named designated liaison person (DLP) for the service, who was present in the service and aware of their role.

Induction records held on file for staff members confirmed that staff in the school age service received training on the service mission statement, policies and procedures, their roles and responsibilities and facilities in the service as part of their induction process. When queried, a staff member working in the school age service confirmed receipt of the service policies and procedures.

Records were held on file to confirm that staff in the service had availed of managing challenging behaviour in all children including neurodiverse learners in August 2025.

The inspector reviewed in house support and supervision meeting notes from meetings held with staff in the school age service in July 2025, September 2025 and January 2026. Agenda items included safeguarding, recording of accident and incidents, and reminders to staff to read and update themselves with the service policies and procedures.

The inspector reviewed records of staff meetings conducted in the service. It was noted that the agenda items on the staff meeting for June 2026 included parental feedback, accident and incident form recording and any concerns arising from records documented in the

“communications book” maintained in the rooms in the service for feedback to parents and guardians of children in attendance in the service. It was also noted that feedback from a recent inspection conducted in the service and outdoor play featured at a staff meeting conducted in January 2026.

The inspector reviewed a sample of eight records of accidents and incidents recorded for the school age service between January 2025 and July 2026. The records were observed to be in keeping the service accident and incident policy on recording accidents and incidents and included remedial measures, where necessary to guard against reoccurrence of an accident or incident.

Regulatory Requirement not met

Garda vetting was available for the registered provider and the four staff members working in the school age service. However, a vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice “EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting”.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in the response to the inspection report that the outstanding renewed Garda vetting was mis-placed and a renewed Garda vetting disclosure was immediately re-applied for subsequent to the inspection. A secured Garda vetting disclosure, dated 18 August 2026 was submitted as supporting documentation. As a preventive measure, the registered provider advised that Garda vetting disclosures will be reviewed on a monthly basis. A monthly checklist schedule for checking expiry dates of Garda vetting expiry dates was submitted as supporting evidence by the registered provider.

Summary of Findings

The non-compliance identified on inspection has been addressed by the service and there are no follow-up actions required.