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FOR DEAF PEOPLE**

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**ST. MARY'S RESIDENCE
FOR DEAF GIRLS,**

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**ST. MARY'S RESIDENCE
ROSARY HOUSE**

PROSPECTUS

November 2009

St. Mary's Residence

Rosary House

Introduction	1
Communication; Independent Unit; Homework; Life Skills; Personal Care	2
Unsupervised Outings; Activities; Meetings; Personal Plans/Care Plans.....	3
Weekend Arrangements; Permission Slips; Personal Belongings; General Guidelines for Behaviour	4
Sanctions; Complaints Procedure; Policy of Health and Safety;.....	5
Child Protection; Steps taken if a student goes missing;	6
Accident Policy; Management of St. Mary's Residence; Confidentiality Policy	7
Exit Interview; Information	8

Introduction

The purpose of this booklet is to provide information on the care and services offered by St. Mary's Residence and the policies and procedures which support the management of the residence. The care and development of the girls is paramount, and the services are offered with the support and co-operation of the girls and their parents. As St. Mary's residence takes on the temporary role of guiding each girl through her education at St. Mary's school, it is important that parents and care staff have good mutual understanding, open communication and develop a relationship of trust. Both parents and care staff give each other support in determining the right direction for each girl. St. Mary's welcomes parents to call or visit on a regular basis. If visitors want to see the Residence, they should approach a member of staff who will be happy to show them around.

St. Mary's Residence, is under the management of the Catholic Institute for Deaf People. St. Mary's residence at Rosary House was opened in 1974 and caters for Deaf girls who board from Sunday till Friday evening. There are six units currently being used in the Residence, including a separate infirmary and an independent unit for older girls. St. Mary's residence is funded by the Health Service Executive and St. Mary's school by the Department of Education and Science. There are no fees required for a girl to be accepted as either a day pupil or a boarder. St. Mary's recommends that each girl would have pocket money available to her each week.

St. Mary's aim is to make sure the girls are well cared for and that the residence is a healthy and safe place for all the young people, whilst recognising the distinctive needs of each girl in its care. There is a full time nurse on duty who looks after all the medical needs of the girls; and she together with the girl's parents and care staff will design a personal plan and a care plan for each girl.

One of the key roles of the care staff is to be good listeners, and if the girls ever have a problem, they try to enable the girls sort it out. St. Mary's also has designated trained persons in the residence to work with girls on more serious issues which may arise. As teenagers can go through stressful times, St. Mary's is willing to help parents source other support services if required via the onsite family support counsellor.

Girls who attend St. Mary's school which is a school dedicated to Deaf education are offered a place in the residence if travel to and from school on a daily basis is an issue. Girls are welcome from the age of 4 years old mainly because there is a critical need for Deaf children to develop their communication skills with specialist help as early as possible in their life. The key criteria for being accepted at both the school and residence is that the child is Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

If you are interested in sending your child to the Residence, you will be offered a tour of the Residence. A meeting will be arranged for you with the Director and the Leader of the unit your daughter would be residing in, and a full discussion of the possible content of any personal development and care plan for your daughter. A meeting will also be arranged with the Principal of the school and your daughters class teacher.

There are two care staff and a leader in each unit. Each unit consists of a shared kitchen, dining room, sitting room, bedrooms, toilets and showers.

The girls receive light lunch at 12.30am each day and their main meal at 5pm. There are various choices on the menus each day. St. Mary's strives for healthy home cooked options which are monitored by the nurse on duty. Food is also available at all times from the unit kitchen.

The residence also has:

- *Games room*
- *Computer room*
- *Exercise room with exercise bikes and running machines*
- *Sensory room - where girls can relax and unwind*
- *Art room*

Each unit has its own landline phone and a unit mobile phone to keep in touch with parents if required.

Communication

Some of our staff are Deaf and are proficient in the use of sign language. All our hearing staff have some sign language and continue to learn sign language to ensure that their capacity to communicate with the girls both orally and in sign is at a high level. It is expected that all staff will complete level three of sign language examinations to ensure quality communication with the girls. Within the residence and school signed, oral and written language is used, with the intent of enabling each girl become proficient in all three modes of communication. This in turn will ensure that isolation from the Deaf or wider community does not become an issue later in life.

Independent Unit

There is no supervision in the independent unit and the girls sign a contract so that they can be responsible for looking after themselves. The girls are 18 years and older and live as independently as possible taking various courses such as cookery, money management, computer classes, driver theory test etc to develop their independence.

Homework

After school the girls generally take some exercise or go for a walk to the local shops. The girls change out of their uniforms by 4 o'clock and are encouraged to do their homework at a set time which is supervised. The care staff on duty are available to help the girls with their homework. St. Mary's also facilitate girls who would like to do their homework in a room by themselves.

Life Skills

The girls will be called twice in the morning, the first call is at 7.45am and then at 8am. Girls are expected to be up at 8am. Breakfast is finished at 8.25am and each girl is responsible for a light chore e.g. washing up etc. The girls must present themselves appropriately for school and attend for assembly at 8.50am in the school hall next to the residence.

Bed times are according to age with 10-13 yr olds at 9.30pm, 14-16 yr olds at 10pm and 17-19 yr olds at 11pm. Girls are allowed a late night to watch a film with permission from care staff every now and then.

Personal Care

The girls are encouraged to shower every evening and wash their hair twice a week. Parents are responsible to update Toiletries each month e.g. sanitary towels, shampoo etc... Girls are shown how to do their own laundry, but uniform shirts and jumpers can be washed centrally if they prefer and name tags will be given to the girls.

Unsupervised Outings

Girls over sixteen with their parents consent can go into the city once a month unsupervised, from 3.30-9pm. Girls who are 17 yrs and older, with parental consent can go into town once a week usually on a Thursday night. Younger girls can be brought to Blanchardstown shopping centre with care staff and enjoy the shopping centre for two hours unsupervised, arranging to meet the staff at a set time and location, once parents permission is given.

Older students go to the local library twice a week. Some girls also go unsupervised to play basketball and participate in drama. The boys from St. Joseph's are invited to St. Mary's on a regular basis. The Irish Deaf Youth Association organises a school disco which is supervised by volunteers and the Scouts meet in a mixed group one evening a week.

The girls are encouraged to join different activities in the local community centre. Some units organise outings such as trips to the cinema to watch subtitled films.

All girls are expected to behave in a responsible manner and show a good example to each other. Respect and courtesy is essential for all staff and students. If any girl misbehaves a privilege may be stopped as a consequence e.g. going to town etc.

Activities

The following activities are available for the girls to participate in;

- *Cycling*
- *Swimming*
- *Football (this is occasionally organised by the school)*
- *Basketball (Tallaght and Cabra)*
- *Gym*
- *Drama*
- *Scouts*
- *Library*
- *Hip Hop dancing*
- *Kick boxing*

Staff also organise baking and cooking with the girls and events with St. Joseph's boys for some shared activities. Some of the girls offer support to the adult Deaf Blind in Brewery Road Stillorgan throughout the year.

Meetings

Regular staff meetings are held in St. Mary's, with all care leaders meeting monthly to discuss any issues or events that have arisen. Each unit holds regular group meetings with the girls so that views, ideas and concerns can be raised and discussed openly. A Committee of the girls is also in place with five girls on the Committee. They meet the Director and a staff leader on a monthly basis. Also a formal meeting between designated teaching staff, leaders on duty and the Director takes place every 6 weeks to ensure good liaison between both organisations. Communication between the residence and the schools takes place daily on an informal basis.

Personal Plans/Care Plans

Personal and Care plans are prepared once a year with each girl in consultation with, the family, teachers, nurse and care staff. Each term it is the duty of the care staff in the unit to review this plan with her to see what progress has been made and what additional areas need to be developed.

Personal and care plans contains a great deal of information about the girls and the kind of development and care they need. They mention any particular problems or needs, for example regarding a medical condition, food requirement etc. These plans will also focus on the things each girl is good at and skills she requires or wants to develop.

A log book is also written up by staff each day containing information about the day to day life of each girl. The girls can read their own log book in the presence of a staff member. The intention of this is to be sure that all relevant information is available to staff and indeed parents if they should ask.

Weekend Arrangements

As many friendships are formed while boarding in St. Mary's the occasion arises when girls like to stay over at weekends in each others homes. St. Mary's recommends parents communicate with each other in organising these arrangements which involves notifying the staff and escorts to ensure the appropriate supervision can be provided on Fridays. St. Mary's also requests written parental consent in advance as girls will not be allowed to travel to another girl's house without written permission.

Permission Slips

If the girls want to join outside activities unsupervised, written permission will be sought from the parents. If any girl needs to be absent from school and the residence at the end of a weekend, it is vital to inform staff in the residence as escorts will need to be notified in advance.

Personal belongings

St. Mary's provides lockers for each girl at the cost of a refundable deposit of €10. This is to prevent any loss of or conflict over belongings and each girl is responsible for their own items. Any valuables should be kept in the lockers as St. Mary's will not cover any loss or damage to personal items.

General Guidelines for Behaviour

Girls are expected to behave in a responsible manner both to themselves and others by showing consideration, courtesy and respect for their peers and the staff at all times. Bullying will not be tolerated and signs or language which is crude or insulting will not be acceptable.

Pupils are expected to show respect for the residence property and to keep their bedrooms tidy and free from litter.

House property and personal property are to be treated with care. It is the responsibility of each girl to care for her own possessions.

In accordance with Tobacco Smoking (Prohibition) Regulations smoking is forbidden in St. Mary's. Girls are not allowed to return to the residence under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

All girls are allowed to keep their own mobile phones provided they are not being used during school time or after bedtime. If this occurs the mobile will have to be handed up.

Mobile phones are to be used in a responsible manner, any misuse e.g. texts, pictures, or text bullying will not be tolerated. Girls are allowed to keep their mobile phones at night provided that they are not being used during the night.

The following items are not permitted in St. Mary's – **cigarettes, cigarette Lighters, fireworks, pornographic material, pen knives, drugs or alcohol.**

All girls must wear seat belts when travelling on buses / cars.

Sanctions

All pupils are to behave in a responsible manner to both themselves and others, showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other girls in the unit and to the staff at all times. If a girl misbehaves, sanctions are in place and will be explained to the girl orally and in ISL so that the pupil understands the reasons for the sanction. Sanctions depend on the severity of the behaviour, e.g. no television for one night or going to bed earlier than usual or no treats in the shop or no wii games or not being allowed to use the computers for an evening or; if there is evidence of text bullying the mobile phone will be taken from the girl. A more severe sanction would be suspension from the residence e.g. evidence of drugs etc. Parents are informed of any sanctions given to a girl in the residence.

Complaints Procedure

Who can make a complaint?

Any girl can make a complaint if she is unhappy about something.

Some complaints are small and can be easily sorted out with staff e.g. "I am asked to do someone else's chore and I don't like that". This can be sorted.

Some complaints are difficult and take time to resolve especially if there are several people involved e.g. "I am being bullied and I don't like how I am being treated and this is how I feel". This may take a few meetings with the people involved, but will be resolved together with the staff.

How can any girl in the residence make a complaint?

The easiest way to sort out any problem is to talk to the staff on duty in the unit.

If the problem cannot be sorted then the girl can talk to her key worker. Each girl in the unit is assigned a key worker. It is part of the key workers job to help girls with their complaints. If it is not possible to sort the matter out informally then the key worker will help the girl to make a formal complaint, which will be brought to the Leader of the unit or one of the Designated Persons at St. Mary's. These are specially trained staff in the area of protecting children. All complaints will be recorded confidentially. When the complaint is resolved the outcome will be recorded indicating if the girl / girls involved were satisfied with the outcome.

If the matter cannot be sorted within the unit by leader or the Designated Person it will be raised with the Director of Care.

If, having spoken to all of the above, the complainant is still unhappy she should inform the CEO of CIDP at 40 Lower Drumcondra Road, Dublin 9. The CEO of CIDP will ask someone independent to contact the girl to talk through her concerns and help sort it out.

Serious formal complaints are heard, addressed and resolved. This means they are taken seriously, looked into and sorted out. They are also recorded in writing.

Complaints forms are available on request

Policy of Health and Safety

St. Mary's has its own health and safety policy (see website). It has in place a care system which ensures the safety and good health of all girls and staff in so much as it can. St. Mary's recognises that some children can go through difficult times due to:

- *Fear of failure*
- *Sexuality issues*
- *Exam pressures*
- *Relationship difficulties / communication barriers*
- *Depression*
- *Bullying*
- *Rejection*
- *Anxiety*

In St. Mary's Residence the approach to this is to be open about it. A girl who has issues will be seen by the nurse with a staff member on duty immediately. The nurse will make a judgement as to what attention is required. Parents / Guardians will be notified immediately. It is expected that parents would bring their daughter home particularly if the matter was serious i.e. self harm. Families should then seek advice and help for their daughter in the local community after some initial contact with St. Mary's nurse and the on site family support counsellor.

St. Mary's Residence believes that communication is critical to the development of any child or indeed adult. In St. Mary's young people are encouraged to talk about their feelings with trusted adults. Any student with an issue will be accepted and listened to with non judgemental attitude.

Staff will try and help the girl identify the source of the problem and look for solutions and together with the family concerned will draw up a care plan around the issue.

A contract will also be drawn up with the young person and will be reviewed by staff; this may include the drawing up of alternative coping strategies if emotions are high.

It is important that families keep in touch with the staff and their daughter and keep as calm as possible. Parents should try to talk and be involved with their child as much as possible. The girl will need to understand that all staff involved will have to be informed about the issue especially if it is serious i.e. self harm. Escorts have to be notified and medication handed over to the appropriate person if travelling. If this is not feasible then prescriptions will be posted to the parents so they take charge of the medication. Parents are expected to come to collect their child if there is serious injury.

In the best interest of the girls it is St. Mary's policy to search the pupil's belongings, if she has a difficulty with self harm. This search will be carried out by staff on duty in the presence of the girl. Regular checks will be done and any objects / medication or anything that is not appropriate will be taken by staff.

Swine Flu is prevalent at the time of designing this prospectus and St. Mary's has steps in place to protect all personnel and to ensure that the residence is a healthy and safe environment for all. Good hand hygiene for staff and residents is essential and the cornerstone of prevention. If a child in the residence has a single case of influenza she will be referred to the local doctor for assessment and treatment. The pupil will be isolated and parents informed to bring their child home. Staff and residents who develop flu like symptoms are required to stay at home.

Child Protection

St. Mary's has a child protection policy and all staff are trained in this critical area. There are two Designated Liaison persons who have been trained to a high standard and their responsibility together with the Director of Care is to ensure all residents are protected. St. Mary's has an outside professional conduct a child protection audit every second year. It is the policy of St. Mary's that double cover is in place to ensure that two staff members are available at all times.

Steps taken if a student goes missing

Firstly all units of the residence are checked.

The other girls are asked for any information on the missing student.

The student is texted from the house mobile.

Two staff on duty will drive around the locality.

The Director must be notified that a student is missing.

When a student is missing for more than an hour, the local Garda must be informed and parents notified.

Accident Policy

In the event of an accident, the staff members who are aware that a student has had an accident will remain with the student and call for the nurse on duty.

Failing this, the staff member on duty who is trained in first aid will be called.

The leader of the unit where the student resides will be informed and the Director notified.

If the nurse is unavailable, the leader / Director will designate two staff members to accompany the student to hospital.

The parents will be informed and requested to come up to the hospital as soon as possible.

The staff will remain with the student until the parents are present keeping the parents updated until they arrive.

The staff will keep the leader / Director updated on the condition of the student.

Management of St. Mary's Residence

St. Mary's residence is a professionally run 'home away from home' for Deaf girls attending St. Mary's school which is located beside the residence. The residence is managed by a Director of Care who is supervised by an outside professional care consultant. The Director of Care reports directly to the CEO of CIDP, who in turn reports to the CIDP Board. The Director of Care has a staff leader in each unit who reports to the Director, and the staff in each unit report to the leader. All staff are supervised, trained in child care and child protection, and two staff have a specific remit around child protection namely the Designated Persons. There is a strong relationship and regular liaising between St. Mary's school and St. Mary's residence to ensure the continuity of the care and development of the girls.

St. Mary's residence is funded by the Health Service Executive and governed by the CIDP Board.

All of the policies and procedures of CIDP in relation to employment, health and safety, confidentiality and child protection etc apply to St. Mary's residence and these may be found on the CIDP website at www.cidp.ie

Confidentiality Policy

Confidentiality can be generally defined as "when personal information is given or received in confidence for a particular purpose. This information may not be then be used for a different purpose or passed on to anyone else without the consent of the information provider". The information may be held manually or in a computer or in a member of staff's head. It applies equally to both written information and visual information such as a photograph.

St. Mary's holds all personal information under strict legal and ethical obligations of confidentiality.

We must not use or disclose information that is given to us in confidence in a form that might identify a service-user (or other identifiable individual) without his or her consent. The same principle applies to staff and carer records.

There are a number of important exceptions to this rule that are described in the CIDP confidentiality policy, but St. Mary's, in most circumstances, involve residents and others, including carers and colleagues, in decisions about the use of their personal information.

Residents have the right to access their personal files, including paper and electronic files.

Residents have a right to expect that St. Mary's services will hold information about them in confidence.

Confidentiality is central to trust between residents and the service providers.

St. Mary's handling of confidential personal information must:

- Promote, support and protect the privacy, dignity and rights of the residents
- Command the support of residents, the public, staff, students, volunteers and partner services.
- Comply with best practice.
- Conform with the law
- Promote the care and welfare of residents and the effective operation of the service.

Other considerations:

- Without assurance about confidentiality, residents may be reluctant to give information St. Mary's needs in order to provide high-quality services and care.
- Staff must always be able to justify decisions about information sharing or disclosure in accordance with this guidance.
- Failure to comply with this guidance and these instructions may lead to disciplinary proceedings.
- All staff have a statutory obligation to safeguard the confidentiality of personal information. The relevant legislation includes the Data Protection Act 2003, the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003, common law and employment law. It is also central to professional codes of conduct. All staff must be aware that any breach of confidentiality may be a matter for disciplinary action or provide grounds for complaint or private legal action against them by the individual(s) concerned.

Exit Interview

St. Mary's is always keen to learn and develop its services. Parents with ideas are very welcome to come meet with the Director. Before any resident leaves St. Mary's at the end of her stay an exit interview takes place, giving the student a chance to say how things were for her during her stay and how St. Mary's could improve its services.

For more information please contact:

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