

HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE INQUIRY

De La Salle Order: Rubane House

Date:

Statement of

BR 7I **BR 7** will say as follows;

1. I entered the Novitiate of the De La Salle Order in [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
2. Following a [REDACTED] I left the Order in [REDACTED] I worked as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] of a statutory Children's Home in [REDACTED] between [REDACTED] Following this I took
up a post in [REDACTED] and I am currently a [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] with the Western Health and Social Services Trust.
3. In [REDACTED], after **BR 1** had been removed from the De La Salle Boys Home in Rubane I
was approached by my Provincial, **BP 4** who asked me to go to Rubane as [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] to **BR 2** I had no formal appointment in Rubane prior to [REDACTED]
but I had helped out during summer holidays in [REDACTED]
4. I arrived in Rubane in [REDACTED] as [REDACTED] to **BP 2** and stayed until [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] During **BP 2** absence in autumn [REDACTED] was acted up as
[REDACTED]
5. I was based in the main house in an administrative role with a principal focus on the care
element. I was responsible for preparing review meetings, writing up reports, attending case
conferences, internal reviews, meeting houseparents, meeting residents, meeting social
workers, developing programs of care, preparing and filing statutory returns for the various
Social Services Boards, reporting/investigating incidents, answering the phone, and
organising training events. I also, when the opportunities arose participated in events and
excursions, like trips to the Mourne and Glenariffe.
6. As indicated, I had previously worked at the [REDACTED] It was an
assessment centre, primarily dealing with children who had come through the Courts and
were 'on remand'. There was a focus on the observation of children and their behaviour and
the care staff were specifically trained not only in relation to observing the children, but in

recording information about the children and in preparing and drafting case review records. It may well have been my experience in this type of work that led to my Provincial asking me to go to Rubane.

7. At Rubane I was responsible for creating and developing the system which led to a much more detailed recording of the children's life events. I introduced the individual child log which can be found in the personal files of many of the Post 1980 residents. The purpose of this log was to capture as much information as possible about a child's life, experiences and behaviour so that the interaction with social workers via the monthly case reviews was as informed as possible. All care workers responsible for a boy were expected to prepare their own individual reports on each resident prior to his monthly review. The log was an important source of information.
8. The facilities at Rubane were better than those at Finglas. Finglas was a newer building but was still based on the dormitory style of accommodation. The boys had much greater freedom at Rubane.
9. I would have been aware of the risk of bullying but there was very little awareness if any of 'peer abuse' or sexual bullying and there was no training on either the propensity or possibility for such events to occur or in how to deal with them if they did.
10. I was alert to the fact that when I arrived in Rubane that **BR 1** had been removed some months previously. I understood that complaints had been received that he had undertaken medical examinations of the boys and that a live RUC investigation was ongoing. I never spoke to the boys about **BR 1** and my recollection is that the Brothers were conscious that they did not wish to be seen or considered to be discussing the case with potential witnesses. I was also aware on my arrival that a lay staff member, namely **DL 509** **DL 509** was suspended, pending a RUC investigation. We were all alert to the sexual connotations of these complaints and I would say both the staff and the social workers were hyper vigilant in relation to sexual issues throughout the period of my career in Rubane.
11. On reflection I would say that the atmosphere was subdued during my first year in Rubane, probably due to the **BR 1** investigation, but thereafter there was a very good atmosphere in the Home and among the boys.
12. **BR 2** instigated the 'Head of Unit Meetings' which took place every fortnight. These meetings between the 'Heads' of the Chalet units were designed to give the unit managers an opportunity to raise important generic issues or discuss specific problem cases. Records of these meetings survive and are attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**. If issues arose in the interim periods the managers were all well aware of their ability to approach **BR 2** **BR 2** or myself for assistance.
13. I particularly recall **DL 240** Head of Chalet **DL 240** She was brilliant and made life in the home very special for the boys. She was a very gifted cook and indulged the boys with treats and birthday cakes. **BR 5** Head of Chalet **BR 5** was a real grandfather figure. He had

great insight. My recollection is that all the boys loved him. He was very caring and if anything tended to spoil the boys.

14. The employment of lay staff had been a problem and there is no doubt that there were grumblings among staff about conditions of employment. **BR 2** worked hard to implement some restructuring, particular around the provision of pensions for lay staff, and to make Rubane more attractive to work in.
15. I'm aware generally that residents have made allegations, both of a physical and sexual assault, during the time that I was in Rubane. I appeared as a witness in the case of **DL 324** **DL 324** v The De La Salle **BR 2** in late 2011. Care staff were trained and advised to document injuries within the individual log books. I find it difficult to believe that any significant or noticeable injury would have not been noted, recorded and depending on the circumstances reported to me or **BR 2**. The boys were well versed in their rights and were not afraid to ventilate them. Similarly, perhaps due to the vigilance post **BR 1** **BR 1** the Houseparents would have asked questions and demanded answers if they suspected anything untoward was occurring. At no stage did I receive any report from a resident of physical or indeed sexual assault by staff. I was aware of an incident involving **DL 413** and **DL 81** which I understand was contemporaneously documented as I would have expected it to have been. I was not aware of any other incidents.
16. I also acted as Secretary to the school's Board of Governors. Two members of the Board were external and independent appointees for the Ministry of Education. It was the Board of Governors who would have dealt with issues relating to events within the School.
17. I liaised closely with Pauline Richardson who was a Social Worker employed by the Down & Connor Welfare Association. As part of her role of supporting staff to deliver good standards of care, she attended the home one day a week and would have dropped in from time to time on other occasions as well. She was very knowledgeable in respect of child protection and child care generally. She chatted to all the kids, informally, but individually, and spoke to the care workers independently as well. Ms Richardson would have met with myself or **BR 2** **BR 2** on arrival each week to tune into any current issues or problems that were affecting staff or children. Again, before leaving, she would meet with me, to provide an update on anything that arose in her conversations with children or staff and to highlight any concerns. This was a great support to us in managing the home as Pauline was good at picking up on the feelings of children and staff at ground level and this helped us identify and defuse any tensions that arose.
18. The Department Social Workers were regular visitors, as the boys personal files will testify. Of course, by this time, post Kincora and post **BR 1** the Social Workers, just like ourselves were very vigilant, particularly in relation to sexual issues. If my memory is correct, each social worker was required to visit their child on a monthly basis,
19. There was a focus on developing what we would today call 'best practice'. I recall going to Barnardos to view their 'independent living programme'. It was designed to assist boys

preparing for post 16 permanent departure from the home and gave them a chance to 'fend' for themselves in terms of timetabling, grocery provision, food preparation and budgeting. I took this concept to Rubane. We could not offer the separate building that Barnardos had but we did use one of the vacated Chalet units to offer this programme to the boys. Similarly I would have attended other meetings at Barnardos and Nazareth Lodge to share information and ideas on child care.

20. I specifically recall hosting a child care conference at Rubane on understanding and helping the 'Unattached Child'. This took place about [REDACTED] and approximately 40 social workers and care workers from the statutory and voluntary sector attended. The principal speaker was Dr Cotter, a Child Psychiatrist from Dublin, whom I knew from my days working in [REDACTED]. My recollection is that the conference was sponsored by the De La Salle Brothers.

Signed:

BR 7

Dated: 5th September 2014

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITSPRESENT:

BR 2

BR 7

BR 5

Chalet

DL 12

(Chalet

DL 89

(Chalet

The Meeting attempted to set out guidelines for future meetings.
It was decided that:

- (1) Heads of Units should meet with the Manager every two weeks -
Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.
- (2) General Policies affecting the quality of care should be
constantly reviewed.
- (3) Matters arising from Internal Staff (Chalet) Meetings and
unresolved problems arising from General Staff Meetings should
be discussed and decisions taken in the light of overall
objectives of the Home.
- (4) ~~Immediate~~ ^{Serious} problems arising when Heads of Units are off duty
should be referred to the Member of Management on duty.

BR 2

MEETINGS OF HEADS OF UNITSPRESENT:

Br. BR 2
 Br. BR 7
 Br. BR 5
 Mr.
 Mrs.

1. Leisure Time: Since September [REDACTED] a number of problems had occurred, due to a restructuring of the timetable. The employment of new Staff and a greater emphasis on individual choice among the boys. While a large number continued to be interested in organised activities and games, a small number of boys found it difficult to occupy their free time positively. This has led to a noticeable increase in vandalism and bullying. It was decided that activities should be compulsory from 4. 00 to 5. 00 p.m., and the period after supper to be discussed at a general Staff Meeting.
2. Sanctions: It was agreed that there should be more uniformity of sanctions where boys from different units were involved in the same offence, e.g., absconding. While the guidelines laid down in the handbook were acceptable, it was thought that extenuating circumstances in individual cases should be considered. Within the Unit the Head would keep the Staff informed of decisions.
3. Clothing: The following decisions were made:
 - (a) Boys who steal their clothing allowance should pay back the money through their savings. - Back a/c.
 - (b) No money should be given to boys going home.
 - (c) Boys found stealing must accompany Houseparents shopping.
 - (d) Clothing and receipts should be checked by Houseparents after purchases.
4. HAIR CUTS: Only Heads of Units could sanction haircuts for boys within their Units.
5. Support for School Staff: As part of the overall support plan, it was agreed that Residential Staff would attend School Staff Meetings.
6. Group Sessions: It was decided to re-establish the group session involving boys and Residential Staff every Thursday at 7. 00. p.m.
7. Broken Windows: The cost of replacing windows broken during the week came to £17.42. This was to be shared by the boys involved [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Br. BR 2

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITSPRESENT:

BR 2
 BR 7
 BR 5
 DL 12
 DL 89

8. LEISURE TIME: Arising from the previous meeting and from the general Staff meeting, a number of points had become clear.
- (1) A small number of boys were unable or unwilling to utilize their free time in a positive way.
 - (2) The range of leisure pursuits seemed to be limited.
 - (3) There seemed to be a lack of follow through and consistency in projects which had been initiated and the basic cause of this seemed to be the structure of the present time table.
 - (4) It was felt that there should be a core group among the Staff who would specialize in leisure time pursuits.
9. PRIVILEGES AND SANCTIONS: It was strongly felt that there was an over emphasis on sanctions. BR 7 suggested that a more positive approach should be taken and privileges based on group loyalty and effort should be encouraged. It was agreed that he should put his view to the next general staff meeting.
10. GENERAL MAINTENANCE: BR 2 stated that there would be no major maintenance repairs until the next financial year. A number of items were listed as needing attention, by DL 11
11. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES: In view of recent complaints, BR 2 thought it would be appropriate to remind all staff of the procedures laid down.

Signed: _____

BR 2

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITS

PRESENT: Br. BR 2,
 Br. BR 7,
 Br. BR 5,

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and adopted.

12. PROPOSED NEW TIME TABLE: The thinking underlying the proposed changes in the existing time table were outlined.
- (1) The utilization of Staff to better advantage.
 - (2) The creation of greater consistency in Staff-boys relationships.
 - (3) Better Staff supports during the "high risk" periods, e.g., 3.30. - 8.30. p.m.
 - (4) The creation of a Staff core group to specialize in leisure time pursuits.

There was general agreement with the structure of the proposed time table and a number of minor changes were suggested.

- (1) The Member of Staff on night call on Saturday night should take up duty at 7.00. p.m.
 - (2) The fourth Member of Staff should have one day off during the week and the hours made up at the weekend.
 - (3) The time table should be subject to change during holidays and days off school.
13. VISITORS: Due to problems arising from recent visits of old boys, BR 2 promised to draw up an acceptable visits procedure.
14. JOB DESCRIPTION HANDOUT: It was thought that certain items should be clarified, and suggestions were requested for the next meeting.

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITS15. PROPOSED NEW TIME TABLE :

A further discussion was held on the proposed new time table. Beside the problems stated at the previous meeting, Br. **BR 5** observed that the Member of Staff on the morning rota might need support. It was agreed to put the timetable to the general Staff Meeting for suggest

16. INCENTIVE SCHEMES:

Br. **BR 7** presented a paper and Br. **BR 5** gave an evaluation of a pilot Scheme which he had initiated in his Chalet.

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITSPresent:Br. BR 2,
Br. BR 7,

17. Timetable: The final draft was discussed. Mr. [REDACTED] pointed out an old problem of the split rota occurring on Staff Member A's day of and that there was no advantage to B & C in this arrangement. Whilst agreeing it was not the best possible arrangement, Br. BR 2 pointed out that it was necessary to give all members of Staff a day off per week, and it had the advantage of reducing the number of hours for B & C.
18. Duties of Assistant Houseparents: With the introduction of the new time-table it was thought necessary to clarify some points for the assistant houseparents. These included for Staff Member A -
- (1) Observation sheets to be filled in daily,
 - (2) Checking of boy's personal belongings, lockers, and housework,
 - (3) Responsibility for maintenance and marking of school clothing.
 - (4) Responsibility for personal cleanliness of boys, e.g., checking hair and medication.
- The following structure was suggested for Staff Member D -
- 3.30. - 4.00 p.m. - Supervision of boys returning from school,
 - 4.00. - 5.30 p.m. - Organization of activities,
 - 5.30. - 6.30 p.m. - Assisting in Chalet duties,
 - 6.30. - 8.30 p.m. - Yard supervision and social leisure pursuits.
19. Chalet Two Staff: It was agreed that Br. BR 2 should proceed to look for a suitable candidate who would be employed on a temporary basis.
20. Complaints Procedure: In view of recent complaints it was thought necessary to detail the procedures re dissatisfaction, complaints and grievances.
21. Easter Holidays: It was agreed that a request from Br. BR 9 to postpone closing of the school for 1 day before Easter would not present any serious difficulties.

MEETING OF HEADS OF UNITS

PRESENT:

Mr. BR 9
 Mr. BR 7
 Mr. BR 5

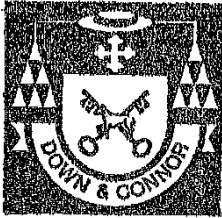
22. CHALET STAFF: It was confirmed that Miss [REDACTED] would be leave her post at the end of May. Mr. BR 9 pointed out the difficulty of appointing new Staff on a temporary basis, and at short notice. The current financial situation also presented a problem in appointing new members. Mr. [REDACTED] agreed to consider timetabling the remaining [REDACTED] until the summer holidays, when staffing would be reviewed.
23. RECORDS: It was noted that the following records were of statutory obligation --
1. Medical records,
 2. Dates of admissions and discharges,
 3. Record of events of importance,
 4. Fire drill records
 5. Menus of meals provided,
 6. Corporal punishment returns,
 7. Individual record sheets.
24. IN TIME: Clarification was sought about the times boys should come at night. Mr. BR 9 stated the current practice was that boys expected to be in their Chalets at 8.30. p.m. This was partly due to tradition, and the fact that the fourth member of Staff goes off duty 8.30 p.m. Mr. BR 5 thought that a more flexible approach should be adopted and that the boys should be allowed to stay out later, particularly on good evenings and with such little of interest on TV. Mr. BR 9 agreed, provided there was adequate supervision.
25. WEEKEND MEALS: Mrs. [REDACTED] raised the point that some boys were not turning up for lunch in the canteen at weekends.

HEADS OF UNITS MEETING

Present:

Br. BR 9
 Br. BR 7
 Br. BR 5

22. LONG WEEK-ENDS: In view of the long weekend off school from Thursday [REDACTED] it was decided to keep the boys in week-ending Friday [REDACTED] Social Workers would be informed of this decision.
23. FIRE DRILL: Br. BR 5 and Mr. [REDACTED] commented on the effectiveness of the fire bell in Chalets 1 and 2. It was thought that the bell was loud enough and that the push buttons were inappropriately placed.
24. VISITING GIRLS: Mr. [REDACTED] and Mrs. [REDACTED] expressed concern about unplanned visits of girls to the boys, and in particular, the visit of [REDACTED] girl friend who was supposed to be practicing camogie in McKenna Park. It was thought that the girls parents should be made aware of these visits, and that the staff in Rubane House were not encouraging unscheduled visits.
25. SPORTS DAY: Br. BR 5 queried if there was to be a sports day this year and the most suitable day for them.
26. INDEPENDENT LIVING: Phase III was planned to commence this weekend with 3 boys involved - [REDACTED], [REDACTED]



catholic family welfare society

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FOR THE INFORMATION OF VOLUNTARY CHILDREN'S HOMES

RETURNS UNDER CYPR 1975

The following returns are required under Children and Young Persons (Voluntary Homes) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1975 and should be made to Child Care Branch, Department of Health & Social Services Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SF. (Tel. Belfast 650111 X 316).

1. When a person in charge of a home ceases to be in charge of that home and any new appointment to the position.
2. The death of any child in the home and of the relevant circumstances.
3. The accident in the home resulting in serious injury to a child or a member of the staff.
4. If known to the administering authority, the death of any child who dies within two months of ceasing to be in the home and of the relevant circumstances so far as they can by reasonable enquiry be ascertained.
5. Any outbreak among the children in the home under five years of age of infective gastro-enteritis, and of any outbreak of infectious disease among any of the children which in the opinion of the medical officer or other medical practitioner attending the children in the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified.
6. Any outbreaks of fire in the home.
7. At the commencement of each quarter, particulars of corporal punishment imposed during the preceding three months. In this regard, it is expected that a 'Nil Return' will be sent (as per sample enclosed) at the end of each quarter.

RECORDS TO BE KEPT IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCHEDULE 2 OF THE REGULATIONS

The compilation of the following records is the responsibility of the person in charge of each home. The records should be kept available for inspection by any person visiting the home under Paragraph 3 or by any person authorised by the DHSS under Section 168 of the CYP Act (N.I.) 1968.

1. Medical Records
2. Date of admission and the date of discharge of every child accommodated in the Home;
3. A record of events of importance connected with the Home
4. A record of every fire practice or drill conducted in the home, together with records of all fire precautions agreed upon after consultation with the Fire Authority.
5. Menus of the meals provided for the children in the home kept in sufficient detail to enable any person inspecting them to judge whether a balanced diet was available.

REV. JOHN C. O'CONNOR (DIRECTOR)

Head of Units Meeting - [REDACTED]Arising from Minutes

1. Long weekends: Br. **BR 9** reminded Staff of the long weekend from Wednesday [REDACTED]
2. Fire Drill: Fire Inspection Officer had been around and would send in his report re fire alarm bells.
3. Visiting Girls: No further problems reported.
4. Sports Day: [REDACTED]
5. Independent Living: Phase II was progressing satisfactorily. Three more boys - [REDACTED] - would start on Monday for a period of 2 weeks. Mr. [REDACTED] queried the decision to deduct £10. from the Chalet Food Budget. Br. **BR 9** said that he had presumed that this had been the practice since the Independent scheme had started, but only lately had been informed otherwise. He had instructed Br. [REDACTED] to deduct the correct amount for the appropriate time to the boys in the Independent Living Budget.

Mrs Doran said there were unscheduled visits of boys to the Independent Living Units and that the connecting doors in the Chalets were unlocked. Attention was drawn in particular to the clothes store in Chalet [REDACTED]

6. Cycling Tour: Br. **BR 7** announced that he was organizing a short cycling trip over the weekend and would take a few boys with him.
7. Sunday Mass: Mr. [REDACTED] referred to the increase in the number of local people who attended Mass on Sundays, leaving very little room for the boys or Staff. It was felt there was still room for everyone and no action should be taken until Fr. Haughey objected.

Summer Staffing: Br. **BR 9** pointed out the difficulty of getting voluntary helpers over the summer and that we would have to rely on our own resources. It was hoped that each Unit could operate independently. If this was not possible, then it would be imperative for Chalets to amalgamate. It was agreed that the former suggestion should be implemented and that if Staff wanted time off, it would be possible to amalgamate for a short time. Voluntary helpers would be mainly used to organize activities in the afternoons and evenings.

Staffing: Br. **BR 9** stated that due to financial difficulties he could only allow 3 members of staff to each unit and that the time would have to be organized on this basis. If the numbers in the Home continue to decline, then it was inevitable that only two Units could operate.

Heads of Units Meeting
[REDACTED]

Present:

Br. BR 9

Br. BR 7

Br. BR 5

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved.
2. A short review of the summer arrangements took place and it was agreed that they had worked quite well, in spite of the absence of some regular members of Staff.
3. Br. BR 9 enquired if the closure of Chalet [REDACTED] at the end of [REDACTED] had any ill effects on the boys. It was thought that they had adapted remarkably well and that there had been no serious repercussions, in contrast to previous occasions when boys were moved around and new Staff arrived.
4. Br. BR 7 informed the Meeting that the Independent Living Programme would recommence shortly. It was his plan that the boys chosen should have had some previous experience in the Programme, and that their time in Chalet [REDACTED] should be extended to a month. He also indicated that some of their financial responsibilities should be extended.

Mrs. [REDACTED] pointed out the need for closer supervision of the Unit in view of the unscheduled visits of other boys to the Unit and the danger of alcohol being brought in.

5. Br. BR 9 recalled the incident which occurred between [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] and outlined the procedures which had been followed and as outlined by the Management Committee.

Heads of Units Meeting - [REDACTED]

Present:

Br.	BR 9	~	[REDACTED]
Br.	BR 7	~	[REDACTED]
Br.	BR 3	~	Head of Chalet [REDACTED]
Br.	BR 10	~	Head of Chalet [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]		~	Head of Chalet [REDACTED]
			Down and Connor Social Worker.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were read.

2. Matters arising from minutes:

(a) Independent Living Programme: Br. BR 7 reported on the current situation. [REDACTED] were experiencing severe difficulties and it was the opinion that neither boy could cope adequately with this type of programme. While [REDACTED] seemed mature in many respects, he manipulated the situation at every opportunity. [REDACTED] was totally dependent. In view of the decisions made at their last external review, it was thought that [REDACTED], Social Worker, should be informed and a case review set up for [REDACTED].

(b) Staffing: All the new Staff had settled in. [REDACTED] reported that they had expressed satisfaction with the support and supervision they had received from their Heads of Units. She promised to follow up enquiries from the Members of Staff who had expressed a wish about further courses.

She also suggested that after Christmas, a number of films might be available from St. Josephs.

(c) Timetable: All Meetings were held as scheduled. Br. BR 9 reported that it was difficult to supervise all Staff adequately on the present time table. He suggested a rota system, e.g., Chalet 1 week one, Chalet 2 week two, Chalet 4 week three.

(d) Fire Drill: Due to unforeseen circumstances, the drill due to take place on [REDACTED] was postponed. Chalet four held its drill on 1st December. Chalets one and two were rearranging their own.

(e) Key Worker Concept: Mrs. [REDACTED] invited Mr. [REDACTED] from Haberton House to talk on the subject. It was agreed in principle to adopt the system and adapt it to local needs.

3. Daily Meetings:

It was thought that daily Staff Meetings on an informal basis would serve a number of purposes:

i. Improve communication between Staff.

Over/..