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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board

Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS - a Steiner education



An Cimín Mór, Cappagh Road Knocknacarra, Galway,

H91Y38E Roll No: 20462d Tel: (091) 867 387

www.cngcns.ie

Health & Safety Policy

1 SCHOOL PROFILE AND RESOURCES:

Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School is a three teacher school and one SET teacher with 55 students (as of January 2020). It is housed on the former grounds of Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh in 6 pre-fabs. Each prefab has signposted emergency exits, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers and a separate fire exit.

2 SAFETY STATEMENT:

Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School is committed to the safety, health and well-being of its students, staff and anyone affected by the activities of the school. The BOM and teachers recognise that a high duty of care is owed to the students because of their vulnerability.

Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School complies with all statutory requirements regarding health and safety particularly those outlined in the *Civil liability Act 1961*, *Occupier's liability Act 1995*, *Health and Safety at Work Act, 2005*, and all legislation regarding child protection and will take all necessary steps to make the school as safe and healthy as reasonable possible.

However, Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School recognises that it is neither possible nor worth aspiring to eliminate all possible risks. Managed risk is an important learning tool for children to develop their own risk assessing skills and confidence. In order to minimise serious hazards, the following procedures will be followed:

3.1 SUPERVISION

- Students of Junior and Senior Infants will always be under direct supervision of a responsible adult.
- Normally, this responsible adult will be a regular teacher at Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS. Under exceptional circumstances the responsibility of supervision can be transferred to other members of staff at Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS or volunteers who are known to and vetted by Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS.
- Students of 1st to 3rd class will be supervised by a regular teacher or under exceptional circumstances by another member of staff or vetted volunteer whereby it is acceptable for the student not to be in direct sight for up to 15 minutes, provided the teacher has no reason to assume that the absence of direct supervision will have a negative impact on the student's or anyone else's health and safety taking into consideration the student's character and the particular situation.
- Students of 4th to 6th class will be supervised by a regular teacher or under exceptional circumstances by another member of staff or vetted volunteer whereby it is acceptable for the student not to be in direct sight for up to 30 minutes, provided the teacher has no reason to assume that the absence of direct supervision will have a negative impact on the student's or anyone else's health and safety taking into consideration the student's character and the particular situation.
- No student is allowed to leave the school grounds during school hours by him/herself.
- On any outing, a regular teacher and at least one other vetted adult will be present.
- For Junior and Senior infants, the adult-child ratio on outings will be no less than 1:6.

3.2 GARDA VETTING

- In compliance with the Garda Vetting Act, 2016, all members of staff and regular volunteers or volunteers who coach, mentor, counsel, teach or train children have to be vetted through the relevant organisation by the Central Garda Vetting Unit prior to commencement of the employment/volunteering arrangement. In case of staff or volunteers who have lived abroad at any time of their adult life, a police statement of criminal convictions has to be sought from the police authority in the relevant countries by the applicant.
- Teachers must make provisions that no adult who has not been Garda vetted has unsupervised access to students.

3.3 FURNITURE AND HEAVY OBJECTS:

- Cabinets, shelves and chests of drawers must be securely fixed to the walls to prevent the danger of falling and smothering students. Exempt are mobile play furniture which is light enough not to pose a serious hazard.
- Heavy objects should not be stored overhead.

3.4 HYGIENE:

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS requires its students, staff and visitors to wash their hands when coming in from outside, after going to the toilet and before handling food.
- Towels for washing hands in toilets are to be changed daily. (Responsibility of teacher and interns)
- Kitchen and bathroom surfaces will be cleaned daily with organic antibacterial detergents and floors in classrooms will be swept daily and mopped at least once a week.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS's food preparation procedures comply with the regulations outlined by the HSE.

3.5 POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES:

- Wherever possible, non-toxic and non-hazardous substances (such as organic cleaning products) will be preferred over dangerous ones. Particularly substances containing formaldehyde, phenol, petroleum distillates, ammonia, bleach and other toxic chlorine compounds will be avoided in Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS.
- possibly hazardous substances will be stored in staff room in locked rooms or locked cabinets.
- Hazardous substances will never be used by students. Materials used by students will generally be non-toxic and natural.

3.6 POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS APPLIANCES:

- No potentially hazardous appliances shall be installed in rooms where students have access.
- Portable appliances which are potentially harmful, like portable ovens and cookers, may be brought into classrooms for activities, if students were instructed and reminded about the safe use of the appliance and are carefully supervised.
- All appliances should be maintained in a safe working order and nobody should be expected to use appliances without being instructed in their proper and safe use.

3.7 USE OF POTENTIALLY HARMFUL TOOLS

- Potentially harmful tools will be stored in locked cabinets.
- Manual tools including saws, hammers and carving knives may be used in class activities. Students will be instructed in the safe use of these tools on a 1:1 basis. These activities will only take place under careful supervision.

3.8 INFECTIOUS DISEASES

- Children, staff and visitors are required to absent themselves from Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS when they are suffering from illness symptoms (diarrhoea, vomiting or high temperature), where an infectious disease cannot be ruled out.
- Staff and Students may only return after being symptom free for at least 48 hours.
- Parents are obliged to disclose to the school if their child is a chronic carrier of any disease. The admission of a chronic carrier can be refused if it is likely to threaten the health and safety of the school community.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS strongly recommend that children who are unwell in any way stay absent from the school.

3.9 UNSAFE BEHAVIOUR:

- While Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS encourages the living out of children's movement drive during various activities of the school day, the following actions must be prohibited: throwing of rocks and other heavy or sharp objects, quarrels involving potentially dangerous objects (scissors, knives, gardening tools...) or quarrelling near stairs or other deep falling hazards.

3.10 WALKING/ CYCLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

- Parents of children walking or cycling to school alone must inform the class teacher of this. A record will be kept of children walking/cycling to school alone.
- Parents of children walking or cycling to school alone must inform the school timely in case of absence or delay of their child. If a child who walks or cycles to school alone is absent upon school commencement, the parents will be called immediately and, if necessary, the police will be informed.
- Students of Junior and Senior Infants are not allowed to cycle or walk to or from school alone. If a child arrives unaccompanied to school, the teacher will not allow them to go back home alone and parents will be called to pick the child up.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS requires children cycling to school to wear helmets. If a student arrives on a bike without a helmet, the teacher will not allow the student to cycle back.

3.11 POSSIBLE HAZARDS ON NATURE TRIPS:

- Facilitating learning in nature is one of the main objectives of Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS. In planning and assessing nature trips, a special focus is given to strike a balance between the developmental need of children for adventures and managed risk and the necessity to minimise serious hazards.
- in choosing a location for a nature trip, teachers will make sure that free play spaces do not contain water deeper than 40cm (within 3 meters of the shore) or chasms higher than 180 cm (not including climbing trees).
- When students climb trees, the supervising teacher will assess the student's dexterity and caution and if he/she is doubting the student's ability to climb the tree safely, the teacher will spot the student.
- When building fires in nature, reasonable risk assessment will be made. Each class will define their own "fire rules". These include provisions against the fire harming any person, spreading or damaging the natural habitat.

3.12 ROAD SAFETY:

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS believes that the key to children's' road safety awareness is regular training in a safe environment. On the twice-weekly morning walks, Junior and Senior Infants practice to crossing a small road, internalising the "look right-left-look- right" ritual.

3.13 PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY:

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS provides a harmonious and caring learning environment free from pressure to perform and exaggerated competition that encourages healthy relationships. And psychological health and safety. The curricular subject SPHE is thoroughly embedded in all school activities.
- In order to make provisions for the psychological health and safety of students and teachers, an anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy has been ratified by the board of management.
- In section 4 (critical incidents) of this policy, procedures for the prevention of trauma after critical incidents shall be outlined.

3.14 MEDICAL RECORDS

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS keeps records of allergies and other medical conditions that might be of relevance in relation to a student participating in the school activities in the students files and class teachers or teachers who take students on outings should

familiarise themselves with them.

3.15 CONSTRUCTION WORK:

- From time to time the school will call on the services of a smaller contracting company, such as a plumber, electrician or carpenter, to carry out a variety of construction tasks.
- The board of management must ensure that the contractor is competent. This means that the contractor is suitably qualified and experienced and is registered.
- The contractor and the safety officer (role of safety officer elaborated later) meet before the project commences to ensure communication links are established before work starts and throughout the contract. The contractor should advise the safety officer about the likely duration of the work and any possible hazards, and how these will be addressed. The contractor should also provide the principal with a copy of its safety statement including any relevant risk assessments for the project to be undertaken.
- Likewise the safety officer should advise the contractor about necessary precautions which need to be considered, particularly if work is being carried out during school time.

4 CRITICAL INCIDENTS PROCEDURES

4.1 CRITICAL INCIDENTS:

- A critical incident can be defined as any incident or sequence of events, which overwhelms the normal coping mechanisms of the school and disrupts the running of the school.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS is committed to minimise the effects a critical incident can have on its students and staff by providing comprehensive procedures, communicating them to the school community and practice them on a regular basis.

4.2 EMERGENCY PHONES AND EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST:

- Teachers of Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS should carry a mobile phone with them in the classroom and to outings in order to call for help in the event of a critical incident.
- These phones should be kept on silence and only be brought out in the presence of students in case of a critical incident.
- An emergency contact list will be displayed in the school office, in the staff kitchen and kept in the first aid kits taken on outings. The safety officer is responsible for the updating of the list.

4.3 ACCIDENTS

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS sees the occurrence of small, harmless accidents like minor cuts and bumps as a normal part of life with children.
- Serious accidents will be recorded in an incidents book with date and time of the accident, how and where it occurred, the type of injury sustained and the action taken, signed by the supervising teacher and shall always be an inducement for reassessing the health- and safety procedures.
- If a severe accident occurs, the parents of the student will be contacted. In case of emergency, an ambulance will be called and the parents will be informed. If a member of staff is dispensable, he/she will accompany the student to the hospital.
- Teachers will apply the best practises of first aid and attend regular first aid training. They may also administer homeopathic/anthroposophical first aid remedies subject to the parents' consent.
- A first aid box will be kept in a central place in the school (staff kitchen top-left cabinet) and a first aid kit will be taken on any outing. The Health and Safety officer is responsible to ensure that the first aid box and first aid kits are adequately stocked at all times.

4.4 EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- Emergency exits must be sign posted, unlocked and kept free during school time.
- Teachers must keep record of all students present. (paper roll call sheets)
- Students should know emergency exits and assembly points. (The assembly point is by the mid-point of the wall running at side of main grass pitch/playing area.
- If evacuation should become necessary, the fire evacuation procedures will be followed.
- If a child is missing on the assembly point, the teacher may check the premises, if it is safe to do so, or pass the information on to the fire brigade.
- Each class will practice the evacuation procedure once a term in a playful way (without the use of the alarm bell). Full evacuation drills will be carried out once per year without notice by the safety officer.

4.5 FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES:

- The safety officer must ensure that firefighting equipment is kept in good order and adequate supply.
- staff and older students will be trained in the use of firefighting equipment. (fire extinguishing games).
- The safety officer must check the smoke alarms regularly.
- The safety officer must ensure that electrical equipment is kept in good order.
- All electrical appliances must be turned off or plugged off when not in use.

- No unattended cooking shall be allowed (except in slow cookers).
- Flammable substances must be stored properly (away from heat).
- Candles shall only be lit when an adult is in the room. Teachers should internalise rituals with their students to make sure candles are blown out before moving on to the next activity.

4.6 OUTBREAK OF EPIDEMICS:

- Students, staff and visitors must absent themselves from the school, if they are carrying, or suspected of carrying an infectious disease that includes symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea or high temperature or if they are infected with headlice.
- If a student develops symptoms of diarrhoea, vomiting or high temperature in the school, the school will inform the parents and request to pick the sick child up. The child should be separated from the other students and given the opportunity to rest until the parents arrive under the supervision of a member of staff.
- If a member of the school community suffers from one of the following diseases, he/she must inform the school of the condition: Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Scarlet Fever, Whooping cough, Influenza, Rota Virus, Noro Virus, Infectious Mononucleosis, Hand-mouth-foot-disease, Fifth disease, Poliomyelitis, Diphtheria, Infectious Tuberculosis, EHEC-enteritis or any disease subject to a pandemic alert. The school community will be informed about the outbreak and parents will make their own choices whether they will send their children to school.
- In the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease, the safety officer may order the following precautions if necessary: Regular sterilisation of surfaces toys and tools and machine washing (at min 60°C) of all fabrics, increase cleaning kitchen and toilet frequency to twice per day, use of antiseptic liquid soap, suspension of food preparation activities, suspension of activities that are associated with the passing on of germ (e.g. playdough), suspension of shared meals.

4.7 COVID – 19

- Cuan Na Gaillimhe CNS is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all our staff, and our pupils is met with regard to Covid- 19.
- Cuan Na Gaillimhe CNS will adhere to HSE guidelines, Department of Education guidance and ensure we follow the most up to date information in relation to Covid – 19.
- Cuan Na Gaillimhe CNS is committed to ensuring control measures are put in place to ensure Covid-19 is managed within our school.

- In the event of a suspected case, a person showing signs of Covid-19 or an outbreak of Covid – 19 in our school, the Principal/safety officer will follow the procedures included in our Covid Response Plan and follow the control measures included in the Risk Assessment to ensure the health and safety of all our staff and our pupils.

4.8 PREVENTION OF TRAUMA

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS provides a harmonious and caring learning environment that encourages mental health and healthy relationships. These are considered prime resources when dealing with critical incidents and potentially traumatic situation.
- Prevention of trauma methods will focus on supporting and counselling parents and teachers in how to care for children who have been involved in or witnessed critical incidents.
- In case of a critical incident, the school will draw on (or advice parents to draw on) the following resources: Emergency services, Medical Services, The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Employee Assistance Service (EAS)
- In case of a critical incident, the safety officer will meet with the class teacher(s) of the class(es) who have been involved or witnessed the critical incident and the school psychologist. This meeting will take place before the start of the next school day. At least one follow up meeting will be scheduled. In case of a severe incident, the team will meet daily for up to two weeks and a full staff meeting and parents meetings will be summoned to explain the events and the action plan.
- These meetings will entail the gathering of information, how to explain the events to the students and parents, how to explain the event to the public (school website, press release...) and which actions should be taken in regards to helping the students to get through this difficult time. It will also be discussed on how to identify vulnerable students.
- The team will be sensitive to the possibility of the spreading of rumours and correct rumours persistently.
- If one or a limited number of students is particularly affected by the event, or particularly vulnerable, the news will be brought to them first and separately.
- Vulnerable students will have access to individual support from teachers they know well during some time of the day.
- To provide a sense of security, it will be avoided to change the daily rhythm of school activities, but the students will be given the opportunity to discuss the event, if they have a desire to do so.
- The class teacher may arrange a home visit to affected families or visit injured students in the hospital.
- Critical incidents in a school may result in Garda investigations or media coverage. The safety officer will liaise with the Gardaí and the media and attempt to keep the impact of the investigations to the students as low as possible to avoid prolonged trauma or re-traumatisation. Media briefings and interviews shall take place out of school hours. Photographing, filming and interviewing by the media of students in relation to a

critical incident shall be prohibited by Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS National School. When adult members of the school community are being interviewed by the press, they must be truthful and sensitive to personal detail. Garda interviewing of students should take place outside the school premises.

5 HEALTHY LIFE STYLE

5.1 ROOM TEMPERATURES AND VENTILATION:

- Temperatures in all classrooms and activity rooms will be between 18°C and 24°C one hour after the beginning of the school day (or after coming in), with an exception of rooms purposed for high levels of physical activity, such as the gym, where a minimum temperature of 16°C is acceptable. These temperatures have to be remained for as long as the rooms are used for their normal purpose.
- All reasonable steps have to be taken to ensure that acceptable heating requirements are met.
- Arrangements will be made for sending children home, when room temperatures vary significantly from acceptable heating requirements.
- Thorough ventilation will be provided by opening all windows (and where applicable patio doors) in classrooms and activity rooms for at least 10min. per day. Windows will also be opened (hopper windows in case of rooms where children have access) when cooking and when handling odious substances.

5.2 HEALTHY NUTRITION

- Students of Junior and Senior Infants prepare and eat bread and soup in the school kitchen in line with HAS regulations. To establish healthy eating habits, a high consideration is given to an unhurried and joyous communal eating environment.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe has a healthy eating policy for all pupils.
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS has a reverse osmosis water filter to supply students and teacher with safe drinking water free.

5.3 FRESH AIR AND MOVEMENT:

- Students of Junior and Senior Infants will spend at least 60 minutes per school day outdoors. Exceptions from this rule are only acceptable in case of severe weather warning.
- Students of class 1st to 6th class will spend at least 45 minutes per school day outdoors. Exceptions from this rule are only acceptable in case of severe weather warning.
- Students of Junior and Senior Infants will not be required to spend more than 20

minutes at a time or more than 1 hour per school day in a sitting position.

- Students of class 1st to 6th class will not be required to spend more than 45 minutes at a time or more than 4 hours per school day in a sitting position.

5.4 CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

- Parents are made aware for proper clothing and equipment for various school activities. One (or more) spare sets of equipment are kept for each class, in case a student comes in without proper equipment.

5.5 SMOKING AND CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

- Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is strictly forbidden on the school grounds.
- Smoking (including e-cigarettes) will also be forbidden on school activities and extra-curricular activities associated with the school outside the school grounds in the location of the school activity (or in case of a location without defined boundaries in the sight of children).
- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS strongly discourages the use of electronic cigarettes and other "soft drugs" in the sight of children.
- No alcohol may be consumed on school activities or extra-curricular activities associated with the school.

6 RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOM AND SAFETY OFFICER

- The BOM of Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS assumes the overall responsibility for the health and safety of its staff, students and anyone who is affected by the school's activities and for the implementation of the outlined health and safety procedures.
- The BOM shall appoint a safety officer, who will take the prime role in the implementation, review and maintenance of the school's safety management system.
- The BOM appoints Deirdre Broderick as the Safety Officer for Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS

6.2 RESPONSIBILITY OF STAFF

- In accordance with the "health, safety and welfare at work act 2005", the body of staff is entitled to appoint a safety representative to consult with the BOM and the safety officer on matters of safety, health and welfare in the workplace.
- All staff members must comply with all statutory obligations on employees as designed under the "health, safety and welfare at work act 2005", and cooperate with

the school management in the implementation of this health and safety policy.

- Teachers are responsible for carrying out their own risk assessments for their classrooms and for planned activities within the framework of this policy.
- The Principal shall ensure that each employee shall obtain a copy of the Health & Safety Policy and shall be familiar with its contents. The Principal will make sure the induction of any new employee will include a review of the policy, and their signature in the Declaration of Sight appendix. The Policy shall also be made available to parents in a folder in the office and on the school website.

6.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS AND VISITORS:

- For events organised by the Parents Teacher Association, the organisers will carry out their own risk assessment within the framework of this policy and the PTA managing committee will take the responsibility over the health and safety during the event.
- Everyone attending the school, a school activity or an extra-curricular activity associated with the school, shall ensure his/her own and other's safety in the school and comply with the school regulations and instructions relating to safety, health and welfare.
- Should anyone notice any health and safety hazard in or around the school, he/she has the duty to bring it to the attention of the health and safety officer.

7 FOREST SCHOOL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Forest School is an integral part of Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School and Forest School activities must be in line with the school's Health & Safety Policy. Additionally Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School has policies and procedures specific to Forest School-Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS -Forest School Policy.

8 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

- Cuan na Gaillimhe CNS will take all reasonable steps to implement this policy and procedures. This policy shall be fully implemented by 27.01.2019.
- This policy shall be reviewed every two years or when the occurrence of a severe accident or a new law induces the need for a review.
- This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School on the 17.08.2020
- This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management of Cuan na Gaillimhe Community National School on 20th January 2025

Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 20th January 2025

Signed:

Principal/Secretary

Date: 20th January 2025



Chairperson of Board of Management

Chairperson of Board of Management

APPENDIX 1 – ACCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM

In the event of a major accident the following steps should be followed:

1. Secure medical attention for injured person e.g. First Aid and if required emergency services by contacting 999 or 112.
2. Next of kin should be contacted.
3. Inform the Principal.
4. The Principal will ensure that the area is made safe, isolate equipment/machinery, erect barriers or warning notices. Note: in the case of serious injury the scene should not be disturbed until advised otherwise by the BoM or the Health & Safety Authority
5. The Principal completes the accident report form and gathers any witness statements within 2 days.
6. The Principal assesses the accident report and statements and where required undertakes an investigation, and notifies the statutory authorities.
7. Where the accident investigation identifies the need, remedial measures will be considered to prevent or reduce the probability of a reoccurrence.
8. Any major accident will be discussed / reviewed at the following BOM meeting.

APPENDIX 2- INTERNAL ACCIDENT REPORT FORM

Injured Person							
Staff		Pupil		Contractor		Member of public	
Name:				D.O.B:	Sex:(M / F)		
Home address:							
Home Tel:				Work Tel:			
Date of accident:				Time of accident:		Weather:	
Location where accident occurred:							
<u>The Injury</u>							
place line through this section if not applicable							
				Name of Witness(es):			
Part of body injured:				Became unconscious: (Y / N)			
Treatment for injury:				By Whom:			
Ceased work on: (Date)				Off work / school for more than 3 days: (Y / N)			
<u>Details of Accident</u>							
Signature:				Date:			
Position:				continue on separate sheet if required			

APPENDIX 3 - ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

Cause Of Accident		Details			
Is there an apparent Cause? _____ Has there been a precedent? _____ Is there a root cause? _____					
Persons Informed	Y	N	Evidence	Y	N
Board of Management? Parents Safety / Rep? Insurance? Emergency Services? H.S.A.?			Pictures taken? Significant Info recorded? Inspection of area complete? All Forms Completed?		
Investigation Time Scale			Details		
Time / date of notification? When were accident forms completed When did the investigation start? When was location disturbed?					
Accident			Details		
Type of injury? Extent of injury? Was the work/ activity authorised? Were safe systems being followed? Was safety equipment used? Was supervision in place? Were environmental conditions a factor? Were mechanical faults a factor? Are corrective measures required? Is a further report required? Was required training undertaken?					
Investigator: _____ Date of Accident ____/____/____ _____ Injured Person: _____ Damage: _____ _____ Date: ____/____/____ Time _____: _____ Time of _____ Accident: _____/_____ Continue overleaf if necessary					

