

Rice College – Religious Education Policy

Mission Statement

Rice College is operated according to the religious and educational philosophy of the Christian Brothers. We are a caring school. We strive to live up to Christian values and show genuine concern for our school community. Our core aims are to provide a broad and comprehensive education and to recognise the needs and develop the talents of each person. We strive to enrich all those with whom we are privileged to come in contact. We strive to succeed.

Vision of an Edmund Rice School

We aim to highlight the Christian ethos in all aspects of education through the example and the life of Blessed Edmund Rice. Our pupils will come to appreciate their place in the history of the Christian Brothers.

Rice College Ennis: Policy on Religious Education

It is our policy to make students aware of the special contribution of the Christian Brothers to the work of Christ in the world. While Rice College is a catholic school, we welcome students of all religious backgrounds.

Religious and Education Philosophy of the Edmund Rice School

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values;
- Promoting partnership in the school community;
- Excelling in teaching and learning;
- Creating a caring school community;
- Inspiring transformational leadership;

Rationale for the Policy

As a Christian Brothers School, we are committed to the importance of formal religious and moral education. This policy allows us the opportunity to reflect on, explore and articulate what it means to be a Christian Brothers School. It is our hope and privilege to harness the religious development of our students and to provide opportunities for them to know their God. We strive to be faithful to the founding intention of Edmund Rice and the implications of what it means to be a catholic school in this Edmund Rice tradition in third millennium Ireland.

Aims of Religious Education

- To contribute to the religious development of our students.
- To develop care for the weak, co-operation between students, justice and fair play towards all, respect for truth, a passion for the environment and a love for learning.
- To provide opportunities to deepen sacramental awareness.
- To encourage our students to ask and seek answers to important questions.
- To contribute to the whole school approach of the well-being of our students

Objectives of the Policy

- To ensure the status of Religious Education in the school.
- To promote the religious and overall development of the students.
- To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to provide a framework to encounter these traditions.
- To lead to a greater degree of clarity in respect of aims, procedures and roles for religious education in the school.

Content of the Policy

- Staffing
- Curriculum and resources
- Staff support and development
- Faith formation and the liturgical year.
- Parents / Guardians
- Parish and Parental Involvement
- Inclusion

Staffing

We consider Religious Education to be an integral part of our school ethos and school community. Each class group has three R.E. periods per week.

Religious Education Team

Ms. Catriona Molyneaux

Ms. Joan Hanrahan

Mr. Michael Lyons

Mr. Tony Cleary

Ms. Ellen Chambers

Chaplain: Fr. Joy

Subject departments, including a Religious Education department exist in the school and a formal meeting takes place in September at which the syllabus provision is planned. Schedules of work for each year group are agreed on. The first year students follow the DES Syllabus but will not be sitting the state exam. The 2nd and 3rd year Junior Cycle students follow the DES Syllabus for the state examinations. The Senior Cycle students follow the non-exam DES Syllabus. The main text book is Seek and Find, Veritas. Fr. Joy is the school Chaplain. He provides the opportunities for the school community to have sacramental experiences through:

- Junior and Senior opening school year masses
- Advent / Lent prayer services
- Lenten Ashes
- Parish Easter Liturgy
- Graduation Mass for sixth years
- Parish Advent Mass
- Weekly Lenten masses for students and staff

Curriculum and Resources

The school is linked to the Diocesan Office, and the Diocesan Advisor Mr. Luke O' Connor provides Religious Education teachers with resources, DES Syllabus advice. The ERST charter and head office provide guidance in our programme.

Each class group in the school studies Religious Education for three periods per week. School liturgical celebrations are evaluated by the RE department.

The school has provided each teacher with a set of text books. The NUA program and prayer room is also available. A religion folder has been created for sharing and storing resources on the staff drive.

Junior Cycle Programme

The first year students follow the DES Syllabus but will not be sitting the state exam.

The 2nd and 3rd year Junior Cycle students follow the DES Syllabus for the state examinations.

The text book used is The Question of Faith.

Senior Cycle Programme

The Senior Cycle Religious Education Programme is a core subject at 5th and 6th year, but is not an examination subject.

Teachers in Senior RE choose the appropriate time and content required to explore each of these areas, taking into account the needs of the students. This also determines whether the topic is covered in fifth or sixth year.

The text book used is Seek and Find Katherina Broderick, Elaine Costello and Brendan O' Regan

Transition Year students are following a program formulated by the R.E. Dept.

Relationship, Sexuality Education is taught through Religious Education class. The teacher takes into consideration the R.S.E programme content, the R.S.E policy and the Catholic ethos of the school.

Content and Assessment Techniques

The Religion Dept. is committed the whole school approach and will endeavour to implement the Literacy and Numeracy, Group Work and AFL Targets.

Staff Support and Development

The School management provides support for the delivery of the RE curriculum in the following ways:

- ERST, The Board of Management, The Diocesan Advisor, School Chaplain and priests in the parish.
- RE teachers are allowed to attend in-service.
- Cover is organised for teachers involved in parish liturgy.
- Staff are invited to be involved in school services and masses.
- Funding is provided for Senior RE resources.

Faith Formation and the Liturgical Year

The liturgical seasons are marked in the school in the following ways:

- Advent Wreath in the sacred space
- Parish Advent Mass.
- Christmas – Crib, tree, class prayer service, reconciliation service.
- Lent – ashes offered to the students, weekly Lenten mass offered to staff and students, reconciliation.
- Easter – students are brought to St. Joseph's to do the Stations of the Cross.

Christian Unity Week and Catholic Schools Week

Christian Unity Week and Catholic Schools Week are celebrated in January through our sacred space, poster competitions and reflections

Graduation Mass

The sixth year graduation mass takes place in May and involves students, their parents and staff.

Parish Involvement.

Our annual parish Advent Mass and St. Patrick's Day Mass takes place in the Cathedral. Students participate in the Easter ceremonies in the cathedral.

Outreach Programmes

The school's involvement in a wide range of outreach programmes ensures religious education is experienced through faith in action. These programmes include:

- Pope John Paul II Awards – Parish involvement and social awareness programmes
- Involvement in Edmund Rice Awards programme.
- Faith Friends
- Concern fast.
- Parish liturgy for advent.
- Visits to Friary and Poor Clare's Convent
- Hope Foundation
- Retreats – Mustard Seed
- Pilgrimage – Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg
- Opportunity to travel to Taize
- Volunteer on the Annual Diocesan Pilgrimage Lourdes
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul – Annual Food Appeal
- Fundraising
- Guest Speakers
- Community Work – Linked with St. Clare's School for children with special needs

Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are informed of the aims, objectives and content of Religious Education Programmes and RSE Programme by means of:

- First Year Open Night presentations
- Parents receive information on up-coming retreats, Pope John Paul II Awards, SVP, retreats , pilgrimages and Faiths Friends by letters, text and newsletters

Parish and Parental Involvement

Guest speakers from the community are used e.g. The Samaritans, St. Vincent de Paul
The school chaplain is a member of the parish team, providing a strong School-Parish link.

Inclusion

Rice College promotes a Christian and Catholic Ethos following the Edmund Rice Vision and Charter. Throughout the school year we will mark the important liturgical occasions both in school and in Church

As an inclusive school we welcome students of all faiths and none to join us in our celebrations. Students who do not share the Christian Ethos can only be excused from events with written permission from their parents prior to an event. Parents will be responsible for supervision of all such students for the duration of the particular event.