



## Iontaobhas Scoileanna Éamainn Rís Edmund Rice Schools Trust

### **Admission Policy of Rice College, Ennis**

School Address: New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Roll number: 61910K

School Patron: The Edmund Rice Schools Trust.

### **1. Introduction**

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 4/9/2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for the Rice College, Ennis admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

## **2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school**

Rice College is a Catholic co-educational voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust

‘Catholic Ethos’ in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:

a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and

(b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and

(c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus;

and

(d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of Rice College, Ennis shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.”

Rice College, Ennis is operated according to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) Charter. This Charter provides guiding principles against which all schools and communities of learning in the Edmund Rice Network will assess themselves. These principles are:

**Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values,**

**Promoting partnership,**

**Excelling in teaching and learning,**

**Creating a caring school community, and**

**Inspiring transformational leadership.**

The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter values are underpinned by our philosophy of education that has at its centre the unique dignity of every person. We expect nothing but excellence from ourselves as educators and demand nothing but excellence from our students. We see the interaction of people from different backgrounds as a gift that will enrich the community of the school and will promote the growth and learning of all. We value each student and their family. We welcome and are sensitive to each one, seeking to respond to their individual needs through:

**The Curriculum:**

We provide a broad range of subject areas, encouraging students to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and decision-making.

In Rice College Ennis students may follow the Junior Cycle, Transition Year, Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes.

(For further details on these programmes, please see the Rice College, Ennis Prospectus).

**Student Support/Special Needs Education:**

We support and challenge our students to make the most of their time in school by providing language support, learning support, personal counselling where necessary, and developing links with family by working in partnership with parents and guardians.

Rice College, Ennis welcomes applications from parent(s)/ guardian(s) of students with special educational needs. The school will use the resources, finance and personnel provided by the DES to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special educational needs and will ensure that these students are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school in so far as is reasonably practicable.

Rice College, Ennis offers support to students with special needs. This support is available to students who experience general learning difficulties and concentrates on his/her individual needs. New entrants are tested by the Special Needs teaching staff of Rice College, Ennis to determine the specific help they need. All first year students complete a screening assessment for reading comprehension and numeracy.

While recognising and fully supporting the rights of parents /guardians to have a school of their choice for their children the school's ability to provide for students with particular educational needs is dependent on resources suitable to those needs being supplied by the DES. Acceptance of students with special needs may depend on the DES providing the necessary extra resources/help needed to educate these students. In some cases, a provisional acceptance will issue and confirmation of the acceptance will depend on the response of the DES to requests from the school for suitable extra help, having assessed the particular needs of the prospective student.

Rice College, Ennis commits itself to working closely with the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO) to ensure that students with special needs are given all reasonable assistance, subject to available resources, to achieve their educational potential.

Rice College, Ennis Student Support Team works closely with Senior and Middle Management, and with the Guidance Counsellors all staff members and, together with the relevant agencies, strives to support and assist all students through any challenges which may arise, in order to ensure that the full potential of every student is reached.

### **Faith development:**

We have a special commitment to the development of the spiritual dimension of the lives of our students. Faith formation and the religious education programme play a key role. Students follow the State programme in religious education which is suitable for students of all faiths, and those of no faiths. Rice College, Ennis celebrates the major Christian feasts. We hope that the Gospel-based values inherent in the culture of the school will be internalised in the values, attitudes and behaviours of all members of the school community and will find expression in their respect and care for one another. The school is open to and welcomes all who share this vision, and who wish to benefit from it.

### **Class Size:**

Classes will have a maximum of thirty students for general subjects, and twenty-four students for specialist subjects. Once these limits are reached, the class(es) in question are deemed full.

### **3. Admission Statement**

Rice College, Ennis will not discriminate in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

- (a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
- (h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
- (i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

Rice College, Ennis is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it admits a student of the Catholic faith in preference to others.

Rice College, Ennis is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class**

Not applicable at the moment.

#### **5. Admission of Students**

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

- a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)
- b) a parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

Rice College, Ennis is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not of the Catholic faith where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

#### **6. Oversubscription**

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

##### **Incoming First Years:**

Decisions regarding student admissions are delegated to the Principal by the Board of Management of Rice College, Ennis in accordance with the school's Admissions Policy, the Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000, and the Equal Status Act 2000-2015. The Principal will have regard for any relevant DES provision in respect of class size, staffing and other relevant requirements concerning accommodation such as physical space or the health and welfare of the students.

The processing of applications is delegated to the Principal, subject to limitations of space and the capacity of the school to educate these students. Students applying to the school must be 12 years of age on the 1st of January in the calendar year following the student's entry into 1st Year (DES Rule).

**Students are accepted according to the following enrolment criteria, in the order of the preference listed below:**

1. Applicants with brother(s)/sister(s) in Rice College, Ennis (current and/or in the past). The term brother/sister applies when there is at least one parent in common or the process of legal adoption has been completed.

2. Applicants from Ennis CBS Primary School. Students in this category must have been enrolled in Ennis CBS Primary School for at least three years prior to the date of admission to Rice College, Ennis. The only exception to this requirement is in the case of applicants who by virtue of a change of domicile necessitated a change of school during that three year period.

3. All other applicants.

Where there are excess applications for places a lottery is held in the relevant categories. The lottery draw for places, if applicable, is undertaken using applicants' PPS numbers. It is overseen by an independent external person nominated by the Board. Siblings will be treated as separate applicants and allocation of a place to one does not guarantee allocation of a place to another. PPS numbers will be drawn until all places are filled. As demand for places normally exceeds places offered it is advisable to apply to more than one school.

Once all places for the year group have been filled a letter will be issued to parent(s)/guardian(s) of those students who are not being offered a place. The letter will advise that, should he/she wish to have his/her name placed on a waiting list for Rice College, Ennis, he/she must return the attached form indicating this desire.

Immediately after this date, waiting list(s) will be compiled by means of a draw, in the relevant categories if necessary, to determine the order of the list(s). The PPS numbers of all students who have returned the relevant form by the date specified will be included in the draw(s), to ensure anonymity and equal opportunity.

Like the initial admissions draw the waiting list draw(s) will be overseen by an independent external appointee nominated by the Board of Management. Siblings will be treated as separate applicants and allocation of a place to one does not guarantee allocation of a place to another. If places become available throughout the year, students on this waiting list(s) will have a chance of a place in Rice College, Ennis if a previously successful applicant does not accept his/her place. If a waiting list has been necessary in Category 2 this list takes preference over a waiting list in Category 3.

Any incoming first year student who applies for a place in Rice College, Ennis after the closing date will be advised that his/her name will be added to the end of the waiting list, and the date of his/her application will be recorded to further ensure the equity of the list.

This waiting list will remain valid for the duration of the relevant school year.

## **7. What will not be considered or taken into account**

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

- (a) A student's prior attendance at a pre-school service, including naionrai;
- (b) The payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school.
- (c) A student's academic ability, skills or aptitude.
- (d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
- (e) A requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission.
- (f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school; other than, siblings of a student attending or having attended the school.
- (g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school; this is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

## **8. Decisions on applications**

All decisions on applications for admission to Rice College, Ennis will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

(Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

## **9. Notifying applicants of decisions**

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

## **10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant**

In accepting an offer of admission from Rice College, Ennis you must indicate:

- (i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and
  
- (ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

## **11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn:**

The Board of Management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. In addition, the Board of Management is required under Section 15(1) of The Education Act 1998 to provide, or cause to be provided, an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that Board has responsibility.

An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school, or risk significantly interfering with the right of other students to an appropriate education.

An offer of admission may also not be made or may be withdrawn by Rice College, Ennis where—

- (i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
- (ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
- (iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or
- (iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of ‘acceptance of an offer’ as set out in section 10 above.
- (v) “The board of management has a duty of care to ensure as far as practicable the health and safety of the students and staff of the school. An application for admission may be refused, therefore, where the admission of the applicant would pose an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of the applicant or students and staff of the school.”

## **12. Sharing of Data with other school**

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

### **13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription**

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to Rice College, Ennis were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of Rice College, Ennis is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

### **14. Late Applications**

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.

### **15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year**

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school to classes or years other than the school's intake group are as follows:

**A General Application Form** can be completed by any of the following applicants who wish to apply to Rice College:

- Those late for the First Year process
- Those transferring from other schools
- Those students wishing to repeat any year in Rice College
- Any new entrant to the Irish Education System
- Those transferring to the school during the school year

It is open to Parents/Guardians to make a general application to the college at any time for a place for their son/ daughter (Education Act 1998). The General Application Forms are available from the school office or can be downloaded from [www.ricecollege.ie](http://www.ricecollege.ie).

General Applications are subject to the Rice College Admissions Policy.

When an application form, properly completed and signed, is received, it will be stamped with the date on which it was received. Applications will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information has been received. In a general application, acceptance is dependent on a place being available in any particular year group.

Transition Year classes have a maximum of 24 students per class. The Transition Year is an optional programme and subject to internal demand. External applications for Transition Year places must also be in the form of a General Application Form. External applications will not be considered until the internal application process has been completed.

Where a student of Rice College, Ennis has left the school, and subsequently seeks to re-enrol the application will be treated as a transfer from another school in accordance with this policy.

The maximum number of students in each year group is 120 however in the case of 5th and 6th Year intake, the number may be determined by the Transition Year dynamics for the particular year in question.

On Acceptance – applicants must be willing, in conjunction with their parents/ guardians:

- To duly recognise the school's characteristic spirit
- To accept the school's Code of Behaviour
- To provide an appropriate psychological assessment to the school, in the event of a student having a special educational need.

The procedures of Rice College, Ennis in relation to the admission of students who are transferring from other schools are as follows:

Students wishing to transfer to this school will be accepted on the basis of the points listed above, and

- That the applicant is between the ages of twelve years to eighteen years, and age appropriate for the year group.
- That the Principal has parental consent to contact the school from which the student wants to transfer for release of relevant information
- That the Principal is satisfied with their previous school record (academic and behavioural)
- That there is available space in the year group being applied for and that the school has the capacity to educate these students
- That the school can offer the subject choices being studied by the transferring student
- That there are spaces in the core subject classes at the levels chosen by the transferring student
- The school must be satisfied with the reasons for the transfer. To this end, information will be required from the student's former/ present school regarding attendance, behaviour record, educational progress, subject choices, term reports, disabilities and special needs, reasons for transfer, etc.
- The Principal, believing that the move will be in the best interests of the student and will not have an adverse impact on the learning environment of other students and staff in the school
- A copy of the two most recent examination results, a reference and a copy of the disciplinary record from the previous school are essential for all such applicants.

The procedure of the school in relation to Repeat Students, in any year group, is as follows:

Students between the ages of twelve to eighteen years, and age appropriate for the year group, wishing to repeat a school year at Rice College, Ennis, will be accepted on the basis of the points listed above, and the following: (subject to DES Circular M05/95)

- The Principal must be satisfied that such a repeat year will be educationally beneficial to the student
- There must be space in the year group and the option classes that the student would be entering
- The Principal must be satisfied that such a repeat year will not detract from the new year group
- That the school can offer the subject choices being studied by the repeating student
- That there are spaces in the core subject classes at the levels chosen by the repeating student.

The procedures of the school in relation to the admission of students who are not already admitted to the school, after the commencement of the school year in which admission is sought, are as per General Application procedure above.

#### **16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees**

The board of Rice College, Ennis or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

- (a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
- (b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

#### **17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction**

The following are the school's arrangements for parents of students and students (over 18) who have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school:

These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students. Parents of students and students (over 18) who wish to opt out of RE class should make a written request to the principal. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent or the student, as the case may be, to discuss their options. Throughout this process the constitutional right of the parent/ student (over 18 years) will be respected by the school.

The 1998 Education Act states that schools are required to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students (Section 9 (d)). At Rice College, Ennis the allocated time on the timetable for Religious Education responds to this. Students who opt out of RE class are required to use this time to study material relating to their own religious tradition or belief, for example sacred texts. Students of no religious faith, who opt out of RE class, are required to study relevant literature or philosophical texts. A list of suggested texts can be provided by the school. In line with the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter, Rice College, Ennis places great importance on the religious or spiritual formation of all its students. Each student has his/her own personal journey which will be encouraged and respected. Students who opt out of RE class will not be offered extra tuition or study periods.

## **18. Reviews/appeals**

### Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant must request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

### **Right of appeal**

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant must request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management). This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant may request a review of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management). This request must be received by the board not later than 21 days after the applicant has been informed in writing as to the decision of the school in accordance with Section 9 of this policy.

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

**Approved by Trustees on 4/9/2020.**

**Ratified by Board of Management on 9/9/2020.**