



WHOLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE POLICY

School Name: Rice College, Ennis, Co. Clare

Address: New Road, Ennis, Co Clare. V95 FV10

Details: Rice College is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the Trusteeship and the Patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a co-educational school.

School Management: The Board of Management of Rice College is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

Rice College is operated according to the religious and educational philosophy of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter (ERST).

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.

Ethos:

Inspired by the vision of Blessed Edmund Rice, the Christian Brother School prioritises education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ. His aim was to show special concern for the poor and underprivileged and develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.



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Introduction

This policy has been developed to support Whole School Guidance (WSG) provision in Rice College. Rice College is a co-educational school operated according to the religious and educational philosophy of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter (ERST).

From our school’s perspective, the term ‘Guidance’ is synonymous with the terms ‘Guidance counselling’ and ‘Guidance and counselling’.

Guidance ‘refers to a range of learning experiences provided in a developmental sequence, that assists students to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives’ – Department of Education & Science 2005.

These learning experiences are designed to assist students to make changes pertaining to these choices.



From the perspective of Rice College, these choices may be categorised into 4 separate but interlinked areas:

- Moral and Spiritual
- Personal and Social
- Educational
- Career

Rationale and Context of this Policy:

Section 9 of the Education Act (1998), subsection C, states that schools must ‘ensure that students have access to appropriate guidance to assist them in their educational and career choices’ and subsection (d) obliges schools to ‘promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students’. Paragraph 4 of DES Circular 0009/2012 sets the context



for the provision of guidance in schools. It states that schools have '*autonomy*' to '*allocate and manage staff*' for the '*provision of guidance to students*'.

It is believed by Rice College that good Guidance is essentially holistic.

Aims and Objectives

The Aim of this policy is to provide a framework for a Whole school approach to Guidance in line with the school ethos.

Objectives

To define Whole School Guidance from the perspective of Rice College.

To identify the key stakeholders' roles and responsibilities

Whole School Approach:

Rice College operate a Whole School approach to Guidance. While the Guidance Counsellor is primarily responsible for overseeing the design and delivery of the Guidance plan, all members of staff and stakeholders have essential contributions to the delivery of the Whole School Guidance programme.

A Whole School approach to Guidance in Rice College refers to the role of School Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Tutors (where available) Guidance Counsellor, Subject Teachers, SNA's, Parents, Students and Local Community.

The provision of Guidance can be broken down to Guidance for all, Guidance for some and Guidance for a few.

The Board of Management and School Management team have a responsibility to ensure that provision and practice of guidance in the school is of a very high standard.

The Year Head of the year group plays a key role. He/she is the first point of contact between home and school. The Year Head is responsible for classroom demeanour, integration into school life and holistic development of each pupil in his/her care.

This is achieved through:

- Daily interaction with each student.
- Liaison with teachers of each pupil.
- Meetings with students.
- Availability to parents throughout the year.
- Meetings with Principal.
- Provision of reports for parents twice a year and in addition, on a need's basis.
- Attendance at assemblies.



The Guidance Counsellor has a professional role in each of the main areas of Guidance. However, she/he depends on the help and support of all school staff. The Guidance Counsellor liaises with year heads, learning support teachers, subject teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal, SPHE teachers and RE teachers.,

Teachers involved in pastoral care, extra-curricular activities, SPHE and RE, have a particular relationship with the student body and play an important role in their personal, social, moral and educational development.

All staff members may consult with the Guidance Counsellor on the needs of an individual student and may refer a student to the Guidance Counsellor or the Student Support Team. In line with Government Children First Guidelines, the Principal must be kept informed of any 'Child Protection and Welfare' concerns as DLP (Designated Liaison Person). A monthly meeting with the Principal, at a minimum should take place so that he/she can be informed of the Guidance Department's workload and the presenting needs of the student population.

Parents have huge direct/indirect influence on the choices made by their son(s)/daughter(s). Parents have a major influence on the environment in which the young person lives, including values, attitudes and lifestyle. Parents can participate in the Guidance process through:

- Support for school ethos, mission statement.
- Attendance at information evenings and other meetings at school.
- Contact with Year Head.
- Contact with Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Contact with Guidance Counsellor.
- The Parents' Association.

Students (through the students' council) can help to identify and establish the priorities of the Guidance plan.

The local community participates through its agencies, organisations, institutions, which provide young people with resources for spiritual and moral development, career exploration, information and other forms of assistance and support.

Support refers to the support provided to parents, teachers, school principal, Board of Management and referral agencies in assisting the personal, social, vocational and educational development of students. Support includes advocacy on behalf of the student and developing JC Wellbeing, TYP, LCVP and SPHE programmes.

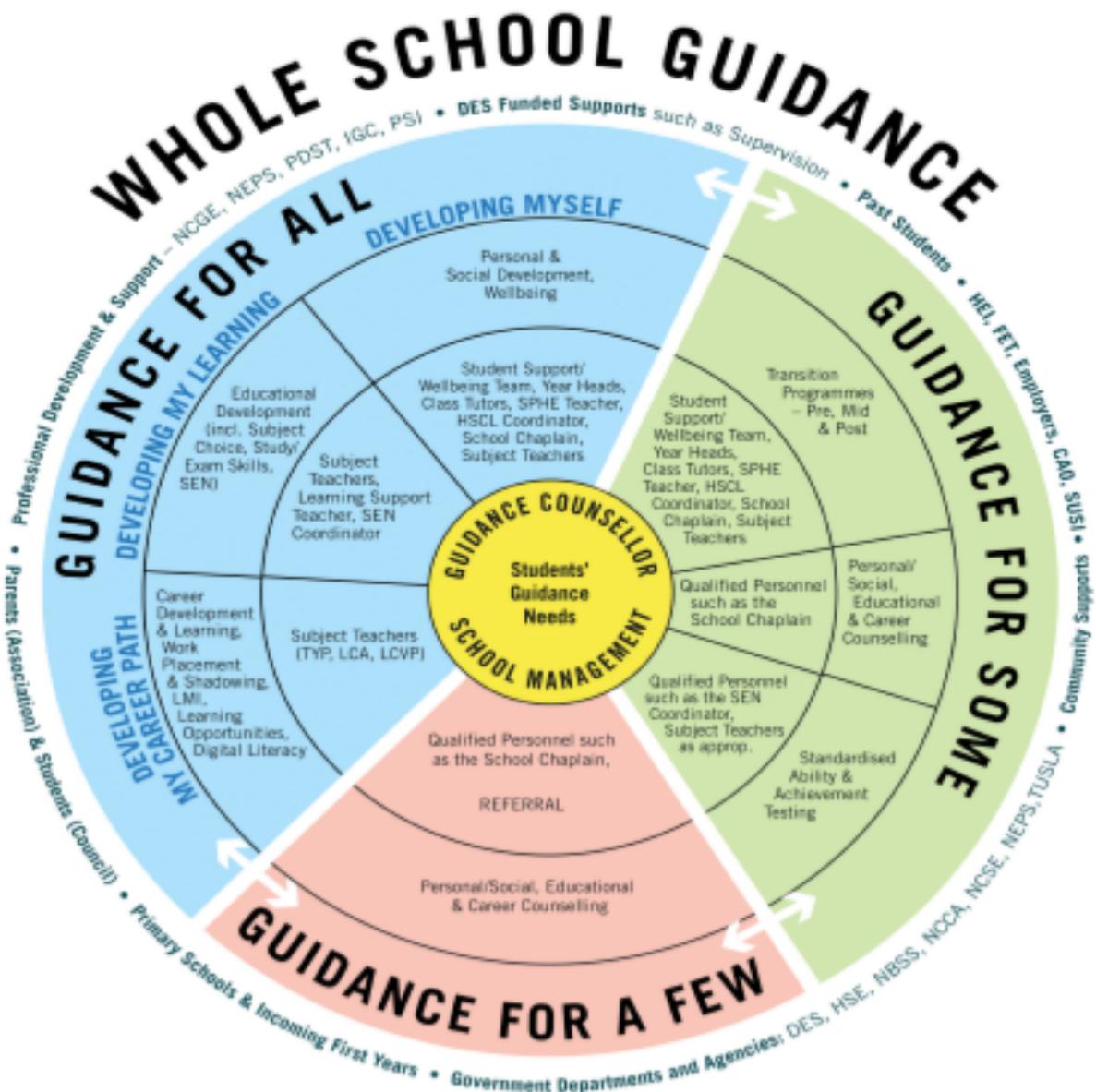
Information – assisting students to acquire, interpret and use information relevant to their personal, social, educational and vocational development. The Guidance Counsellor needs to know:

- a) The requirements of students, parents, teachers.



- b) The sources of useful information.
- c) Systems for acquiring, storing and disseminating information.

Excerpt from - 'NCGE: A Whole School Guidance Framework'
 © National Centre for Guidance in Education 2017.



Note: school programmes and staffing indicated are not meant to be exhaustive i.e. programmes/staff involved in whole school guidance will vary across schools. This intends to highlight programmes/staff which may be involved in the delivery of a whole school guidance programme.

Full document can be accessed via www.ncge.ie/school-guidance-handbook



Referrals

There are two type of referrals:

- a) The Guidance Counsellor can refer a student to other qualified professionals or agencies inside/outside of school when a student is experiencing difficulties that require extra support and professional input.
- b) Students are referred to the Guidance Counsellor if they need support with personal, social or emotional concerns.

Role of Guidance Counsellor

Guidance Counsellors are trained to undertake the following tasks within the school Guidance programme:

- Counselling
- Specific Career Education
- Assessment
- Information
- Referrals
- Advice
- Educational Development Programmes
- Professional Development

Counselling can be 'group' or 'individual' counselling. Counselling can be personal, educational, vocational or a combination of all three. Counselling can be part of a developmental learning process and at times of personal crisis.

Specific Vocational Education provides the necessary knowledge, skills and concepts to enable students to make the transition to higher/further education, training or work. It includes preparation of Curriculum Vitae and other data for employment – including interview preparation.

Assessment refers to helping students obtain a better self-understanding through the use of psychometric tests and school examination performance. The Guidance Counsellor and the CAST Team also use these results also to identify students who need educational support to achieve their potential.

Advice refers to making suggestions based on the Guidance Counsellor's own professional and personal knowledge and experience.

Educational Development Programmes provide transfer of knowledge and skills relating to study skills, examination performance as well as choice of subjects and levels.



Professional Development: The Guidance Counsellor should keep abreast of on-going changes in the fields of counselling, education, vocational areas and child welfare.

Evaluation:

Self-Appraisal and department evaluation allows the Guidance Counsellor ascertain whether targets are achieved and to identify on-going goals.

Record Keeping:

The Guidance Counsellor keeps records of personal interviews with students. These records are stored safely in line with the GDPR regulations.

Structure of the Department of Guidance and Counselling:

Allocation of Guidance hours is dependent on the number of pupils in the school (See relevant Circular on Approved Allocation of Teaching Posts). This can be calculated according to the Department Ratios. Job sharing can be facilitated at the discretion of the Board of Management.

Although the Guidance Counsellor is an expert in the area of guidance, the guidance programme cannot be delivered in isolation and a Whole School approach is essential. As a result, a Whole School Guidance Plan and Guidance Department Plan should be developed and reviewed annually. In order to plan the Whole School Guidance Plan, a team should be formed and input sought from each stakeholder. These meetings and documents allow for the effective delivery of the Guidance Programme Plan and indicate any short falls which should be highlighted to the Board of Management annually.

The needs of the student who accesses personal counselling can vary a great deal. Students who are coping well with good family support may require little support, others may require considerable support from the Guidance Counsellor, Pastoral Care, Year heads etc.

Counselling issues arise in many of the following areas:

- Academic Performance which does not match ability.
- Disruptive or antisocial behaviours
- Personal issues leading to high levels of anxiety, stress, depression, eating disorders etc

The Year Heads, Deputy Principals and Principal play a huge role in helping students who present with some of the above issues. The role is one of talking through whatever appears to impede the student's performance or causes them distress. The aim is to provide support, clarify issues and help students develop resilience by learning better coping mechanisms so that they can function better, be happier in themselves and strive to reach their full potential.



If there are still concerns for the student, the co-operation of parents/guardians are contacted and a referral may need to be made to outside professionals/agencies. If there are any Child Protection or Welfare concerns these are reported immediately to the DLP (Designated Liaison person) the Principal or in their absence the Deputy DLP.

The Guidance Counsellor delivers guidance in various settings, such as classroom-based guidance (guidance for all), meeting in smaller groups (guidance for some) and 1:1 individual guidance (Guidance for a few). This can vary from year to year depending on the priorities of the school, students, resources and the timetable. Schemes of works can be located in the Guidance Department plan.

Psychometric Testing is completed by Rice College upon entry to the school in 1st year and again in 3rd year. This is to identify students who may need additional academic support by the CAST team and also to support students in making decisions with regard to their subject choices and career pathways.

The local community in Ennis, Co. Clare support the students through offering work experience in Transition Year.

Study Skills are provided at various times during the students academic years in with Rice College.

All students in Leaving Certificate can request one to one or group meeting with the Guidance Counsellor and get support with the the various progression pathways and information provided on DARE; HEAR; CAO; FET; UCAS; EUNICAS & APPRENTICISHIPS etc.

Rice College policy does not bring students to open days. Students are encouraged to attend college open days and events preferably at weekends. If the student attends an open day on a school day they are marked as absent.

Communication

Communication is via department meetings, Microsoft teams, emails, information evenings, the careers notice board, the school web site.

Conclusion:

The Guidance offered within Rice College is holistic. The Guidance Counsellor, CAST Department, Year Heads, SPHE/RE Teachers, Subject teachers, SNA's and Senior Management implement the Guidance Plan to support the academic and holistic development of the student and support parents. The partners in education all work together. All staff and stake holders are involved in delivering the Guidance Policy.

The Guidance Policy does not operate in isolation and needs to be cognizant of the other polices within the school community. It has been reviewed by Students, Staff and Parents.



Policy Review:

This Whole School Guidance Policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis. The policy is circulated amongst all staff and can be viewed on the school's website, www.ricecollege.ie.

Approval: This policy has been ratified by Rice College Board of Management on 8/11/21.

Signed:  Date: 8/11/21
Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed:  Date: 8/11/21
Principal, Rice College.