



# Rice College, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare.

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## Admissions Policy Document

Rice College is a Voluntary Co-Educational Secondary School, under the Trusteeship of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. It is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills.

The admissions policy for 2018/19 has been agreed for publication by the Patron. On receipt of the Patron's agreement, the policy is then approved at a meeting of the Board of Management, signed by the Chairperson and retained with the minutes of the Board meeting. The policy is distributed to local primary schools, is available on request to parents/guardians from the college office and is published on the college website [www.ricecollege.ie](http://www.ricecollege.ie).

All new applicants to the school will receive the admissions policy, the college prospectus and an application form. The policy is reviewed and monitored annually by the Board of Management. Our school supports the principles of parental choice, inclusiveness and equality of access and participation in relation to enrolment. The school expresses respect for diversity of traditions, beliefs and culture.

### **ETHOS**

Rice College 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.

Rice College is a Catholic college. We see our college not only as a centre of academic excellence but a community animated by the spirit of the Gospel, where Roman Catholic values are transmitted and where personal faith is nurtured and developed. The Good News of the Gospel and the celebration of the Sacraments forms and informs how we treat all, believers and non-believers alike, within our school community.

The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter values are underpinned by our philosophy of Education that has at its centre the unique dignity of the human 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, pastoral care and faith development. 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 faith. The School celebrates the major Christian Feasts. We hope that the Gospel values inherent in the culture 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 welcome all who share this vision and wish to benefit from it.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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.

## **MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Management (BOM) manages the college within the Regulations and Programmes of the Department of Education and Skills (DES). It respects the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter. It operates with the funding and resources available to promote education according to the above philosophy.

**ORGANISATION** Board of Management, Principal, Staff, Parents Council and Student Council.

## **RESOURCES**

The Department of Education and Skills, parent contributions, fund raising and teacher allocation provide the financial and teaching resources of the college.

The implementation of the school plan and its policies must have due regard to:

- Resources and funding available.
- Regulations as laid down from time to time by the DES and the curricular programme prescribed by the DES, which may be amended, in accordance with *Section 9 and 30* of the Education Act 1998.

**CURRICULUM** See Prospectus for the general Curriculum offered by College.

The **Transition Year Programme** option is a one-year educational programme available, (depending on internal demand), to Rice College students who have completed their Junior Certificate programme. It offers students space to learn, mature and develop, by studying and participating in a wide range of subjects and activities. The Transition Year subjects include: Gaeilge, English, French, German, Mathematics, Business Studies, Science, Computer Studies, Media Studies, Environmental and Social Studies, Religious Studies, Physical Education, Construction Studies, Music, Art, Career Guidance, Work Experience, First Aid, Tourism, Car Maintenance and Spanish. For further details on this programme please see College Prospectus.

Any student in Rice College wishing to do Transition Year can apply. There are 24 student places in each TY class. If necessary, places are allocated on the basis of an interview. Entrance to TY will be determined by the interview results. This process will be undertaken by external interviewers. Parents must include all information on the TY application form that they feel is relevant for the interview panel to consider for securing a place. The interview questions will be given to pupils in advance of their scheduled interview. The questions at interview will be designed to determine the students' suitability for this programme. The criteria looked for will include level of maturity, responsibility, ability to work on own initiative and suitability to work under varying levels of supervision as the TY programme will demand. If a Transition Year candidate is unsuccessful at interview level, parents have a right to appeal the refusal to enrol by following the Board of Management Appeals Procedure on Page 6 of the Admission Policy.

## The **Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)**

The College offers further education and an openness to learning new skills in communication, problem solving, team work, flexibility and independent thinking through its Leaving Cert Vocational Preparation (LCVP) course. This programme is open to all Rice College Senior Cycle students, subject to internal demand and option choices set by the DES.

Students will receive the same Leaving Certificate as other leaving certificate students with an additional statement of the result of the link modules. A distinction, merit or pass will be awarded to the successful students. Students applying for a degree, diploma or certificate course in the institutes of technology or universities may submit their link module grade in place of their sixth subject. Students who complete this course should be more employable, flexible and enterprising as they join the workforce.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR** See attached Prospectus

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The College 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 to determine the specific help they need. All first year students complete a screening assessment for reading comprehension and numeracy.

Acceptance of students with special needs may depend on the DES providing the necessary extra resources/help 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 college for suitable extra help, having assessed the particular needs of the prospective student.

### **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION**

A voluntary contribution of €50 is payable on acceptance of a place in Rice College. This voluntary contribution covers administration and processing costs of the admissions procedure. In addition there is an annual administration voluntary contribution of €75 per student or €95 per family. This annual administration voluntary contribution covers personal accident insurance for the students, photocopying, school journal, parental texting, in-house examinations and exam booklets. If parents find themselves in difficulties contributing they may contact the Principal.

### **APPLICATION PROCEDURE**

**Class size** Classes will have a maximum of 30 students for general subjects and 24 for specialist subjects. Once these limits are reached, the class(es) in question are full.

#### (a) **New First Year Entrants for September 2018**

- Applications are invited for students (from Primary Schools only) that have reached the age of 12 years by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January of the calendar year following entry into 1<sup>st</sup> year. Applicants must be willing in conjunction with their parents/guardians to accept the characteristic spirit of the school and accept the school's Code of Behaviour.
- **The First Year Application Form is specific to the incoming First Year Students for September, 2018 ONLY.** The closing date is **Friday, 26th of January, 2018.** **All applications must be received by the due date. Late applications will not be considered part of the admissions process.**
- **Applications will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information has been received.**
- Rice College has **144** places available for 1st year students for the school year 2018 – 2019.
- In accordance with section 19(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, decisions on enrolment are communicated in writing within 21 days of deadline for applications.
- After the closing date deadline, **Friday, 26th of January, 2018**, parents/guardians will be informed in writing of the Board's decision as soon as possible, but not later than 21 calendar days of deadline for applications. For those accepted, the letter will include details that an open night will take place on **Wednesday, the 7th March, 2018 at 7:00pm** for those students and their parents/guardians and a formal assessment will take place on **Saturday, the 10th March, 2018 at 10:00am** (for mixed ability class formation only). When a place in the School is offered, Parents/Guardians will be required to confirm in writing their acceptance of the place, if the place is not accepted by the date specified in the letter of offer the offer will be withdrawn.

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

1. Applicants with brother(s)/sister(s) in Rice College (current and/or in the past). The term brother/sister applies when there is a least one parent in common or the process of legal adoption has been completed.
2. Applicants who have a Parent currently a staff member in Rice College on the closing date referred to above.
3. Applicants from Ennis CBS Primary. Pupils in this category must have been enrolled in the Ennis CBS primary for at least 3 years prior to the date of admission to Rice College. 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 3 year period.
4. 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 by a representative of the Board of Management and an independent external person nominated by the Board using Applicants' PPS Numbers. Siblings will be treated as separate applicants and allocation of a place to one does not guarantee allocation of a place to another.* As demand for places normally exceeds places offered it is advisable to apply to more than one school. Rice College operates a drawn lottery waiting list as part of the admissions process. Applicants drawn on this list will be notified and have a chance of a place if a successful applicant does not accept their place. The waiting list is for the duration of the admissions process only.

The Board of Management is responsible for admissions. The processing of applications is delegated to the Principal subject to the above criteria, limitations of space and the capacity of the college to educate these students. Students applying to the college must be 12 years on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January in the calendar year following the student's entry into 1<sup>st</sup> year. (DES Rule)

An appeal to the BOM can be made for unsuccessful applicants. (See Page 6)

**(b) General Applications**

A General Application Form must be completed by any applicant who wishes to apply to Rice College. 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). In a general application, acceptance is dependent on a place being available in any particular year group. Being unsuccessful in the 1st year application process does not affect this right. Once the first year admissions process is over, applications to Rice College for that year have to be made on the general application form. Applications for Transition Year places must also be in the form of a general application.

**General Application Forms must be completed by the following applicants –**

- those late for the First Year process;
- those unsuccessful in the First Year process;
- those transferring from other schools;
- those students wishing to repeat any year in Rice College
- and any new entrant to the Irish Education System.

**Applications will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information has been received**

## **Transfers from other Schools**

The maximum number of students in each year group is 120 but this year the first year group will have 144. TY classes have a maximum of 24 per class.

In the case of 5<sup>th</sup> year intake, the number is determined by the Transition year dynamics for the particular year in question.

Students wishing to transfer to this college will be accepted on the following basis:

- a) That the board has parental consent to contact the school from which the student wants to transfer for release of relevant information.
- b) That the applicant is between the ages of 12 years - 18 years and age appropriate for the year group.
- c) That the board is satisfied with their previous school record (Academic and Behavioural).
- d) The reason for transfer.
- e) That there is available space in the year group being applied for and that the college has the capacity to educate these students.
- f) That the college can offer the subject choices being studied by the transferring student.
- g) That there are spaces in the core subject classes at the levels chosen by the transferring student.

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.

## **Repeat Students (any year group)**

Students between the ages of 12 years - 18 years and age appropriate for the year group, wishing to repeat at this college will be accepted on the following basis: (subject to DES circular M05/95)

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

## **RIGHT TO REFUSE**

The Board of Management reserves the right to refuse an application in exceptional circumstances.

The right to refuse may arise if:

- (i) The school cannot meet the special needs of a student or provide that student with an appropriate education.
- (ii) In the opinion of the Board of Management the applicant possesses an unacceptable risk to other students, to school staff or to school property.

## **DATA PROTECTION**

The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003. Personal data supplied on the enrolment form will be used for the purposes of student enrolment, registration, administration, child welfare and to fulfil any other legal obligations. While the information provided will generally be treated as confidential to the school, from time to time it may be necessary for the school to exchange personal data on a confidential basis with other bodies including the Department of Education and Skills, Department of Social and Family Affairs, An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, National Educational Welfare Board. Contact details will also be used to notify you of school events and activities.

*The school relies on parents/guardians to provide us with accurate and complete information and to update us in relation to any change in the information provided. You should write to the Principal should you wish to update or access your child's personal data.*

A copy of the notice (Circular 0047/2010) to parents, guardians and students over 18 is available from the Department of Education and Skills outlining how personal data of students of students in this school is returned to the Department of Education and Skills, and how this data is fairly processed and in compliance with the Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003.

## **SCHOOL RULES**

For full breakdown of specific School Rules see attached School Prospectus.

**Please Note:** Once you have secured a place in Rice College, Parents and students will be required to sign a College Code of Behaviour before the start of the school year.

### ***BOARD OF MANAGEMENT APPEALS PROCEDURE ON REFUSAL TO ENROL A STUDENT***

All appeals involving the BOM must be submitted within 14 calendar days of refusal.

1. If enrolment is unsuccessful, and a parent wishes to follow the appeals procedure, a formal letter of appeal shall be made in writing to the appeals sub-Committee of the BOM (which will consist of the Principal and any 2 members of the BOM), stating clearly the grounds/reasons for asking for the appeal.
2. The Sub-Committee will examine the contents of the letter and the reason for the appeal.
3. Using the BOM's criteria for admission, the Sub-Committee will make a decision on the appeal before it.
4. This decision is communicated to the Parent/Guardian promptly.
5. If this is unsuccessful, a further appeal can be requested in writing (within 14 calendar days of refusal by the appeals sub-committee) to a full BOM meeting, where the Parent/Guardian may be invited to attend to make an oral presentation **or** invited to make a further written presentation of the issues they consider important to their case. The board will consider the case put before it and a final decision will be made.
6. The decision is communicated to the Parent/Guardian promptly.

A parent has the right to appeal the Board of Management's original decision without going through the Board appeals mechanism. An appeal against the decision of the Board of Management on enrolment is available under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and must be made within 42 days (DES Time Guidelines) from the initial date of the refusal letter by the Board of Management.

Agreed by Trustees 4/12/17.

Ratified by Board of Management 7/12/17.