



Admissions Policy

2020/2021

TYPE OF SCHOOL

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.

MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management (BOM) is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998. It 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

The Board of Management, Principal, Staff, Parents Council and Student Council.

MISSION STATEMENT

We are an Edmund Rice 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.



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1 INTRODUCTION

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.

2 CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT

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.

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

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

Faith Development - We have a special commitment to development of the spiritual dimension of the lives of our members. 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.

3 PURPOSE OF OUR ADMISSIONS POLICY



The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each candidate applying for enrolment into Rice College Ennis receives fair and equitable treatment in line with all legal requirements and according to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) Charter.

4 POLICY CONSTRUCTION & ADMINISTRATION

The admissions policy for 2020/21 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 also published on the college website 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.

5 OPERATING CONTEXT

Rice College Ennis operates within the legal context of Relevant sections of:

- Education Act 1998
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2011
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004
- Disability Act 2005
- Education Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2007
- Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):
The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data provided to Edmund Rice Secondary School in respect of an application for admission is subject to the terms and provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998), the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003) and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We rely on Parents/Guardians to provide us with accurate and complete information and to update us in relation to any changes in the information provided. Should you wish to update or access your child's personal data, you should write to the School Principal, Rice College, New Road, Ennis, Co. Clare V95 VF10

Rice College Ennis also operates within the regulatory, legal and financial context of:

- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills
- The rights of trustees as set out in the Education Act, 1998
- The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter
- The Articles of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools

OPERATING CONTEXT (contd.)

- The regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and the curricular programmes so prescribed which may be amended from time to time in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act, 1998.



Rice College Ennis (An Edmund Rice School)

- The funding and resources available to the school at any given time. The financial and teaching resources of the school are provided by a combination of grants and teacher allocations from the Department of Education and Skills, voluntary contributions, and occasional fundraising. Implementation of the school plan and school policy has due regard to the resources and funding available.

Within this operating context, Rice College Ennis is a school that

- Is inclusive in intake
- Supports the principle of equality of access to and participation in education
- Recognises and supports the rights of parents to choose with regard to admission in secondary school
- Welcomes students with different values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life and seeks to meet their particular needs, subject only to available resources and support for the ethos of the school.

6 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.

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.

7 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

DATA PROTECTION (contd.)

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.

8 CURRICULUM

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

Junior Cycle Subjects

Currently Students study 10 subjects for examination purposes, 8 of which are compulsory - Irish, English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Business Studies. Included in the 8 compulsory subjects is a Language - French or German. They must select 2 Practical Subjects from the following 4 subjects Wood Technology, Graphics, Music, Visual Art.

Transition Year Programme

It is a one-year optional educational programme available, (depending on internal demand), to Rice College students who have completed their Junior Cycle programme. It is the stated intention of the Board of Management of Rice College that as many students as possible experience the Transition Year programme in the school. This programme is designed to broaden the educational experience of the student and to further prepare him for the Leaving Certificate Programme.

Because of the finite nature of resources, it may not be possible to accept all students that apply. 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.

Internal Applicants: Any student in Rice College wishing to do Transition Year can apply. There are 24 student places in each TY class. Entrance to TY will be determined by an interview process. The questions at interview will be designed to determine the students' suitability for this programme.

External applicants: Applicants can apply under the General Application. Consideration of the general application for TY will only occur when the internal process is complete and will also involve an interview process if there are places still available.

CURRICULUM (contd.)

Leaving Certificate Subjects

Irish, English and Mathematics are studied by all students and the balance of their subjects, usually four, are chosen from the following: French, German, History, Geography, Accounting, Business, Economics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Construction Studies, Art, DCG and Music.

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.

9 EXTRA CURRICULAR See Rice College Prospectus

10 SPECIAL NEEDS

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

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.

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 Department of Education & Skills. 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.

The school commits itself to working closely 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.

11 ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES

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

New First Year Entrants for September 2020

Applying

- Rice College has 120 places available for 1st year students for the school year 2020 - 2021.
- Applications are invited for students (from Primary Schools only) that have reached the age of 12 years by the 1st of January of the calendar year following entry into 1st year.



This is a Department of Education & Skills requirement. A copy of the Birth Certificate must accompany the application.

- Application can be made only on the official School First Year form. This Application form will be available from Wednesday, the 9th of January, 2020 from the school office, primary schools and can be down loaded from our website - www.ricecollege.ie
- The First Year Application Form is specific to the incoming First Year Students and is only available during the First Year Application process until its closing date.
- The closing date for receipt of the completed application for First Year 2020/21 is Friday, 24th of January, 2020. All applications must be received by the due date.
- Applications will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information has been received.
- Late applications will not be considered part of the admissions process
- Applications from twins etc. will be treated as separate applicants and the allocation of a place to one does not guarantee allocation of a place to another.
- On acceptance - Applicants must be willing in conjunction with their parents/guardians:
 - i. To duly recognise and commit themselves on their own part to the school's characteristic spirit, in the event that their child is admitted as a student to the school.
 - ii. To accept the school's Code of Behaviour. To sit a formal assessment, which is not an entrance examination as the student will have already been allocated a place in Rice College.
 - iii. To provide an appropriate psychological assessment to the school, in the event of a student having special educational needs.

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES (Contd- First Years – Sept. 2020)

Decision making process

Decisions regarding Student Admissions are a matter for the Board of Management of Rice College 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 Board 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 students.

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 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 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 a least one parent in common or the process of legal adoption has been completed.



1. Applicants who have a Parent currently a staff member in Rice College on the closing date referred to above.
1. 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.
1. All other applicants.

Procedure

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 a representative of the Board of Management and an independent external person approved 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.*

When all places are filled, Rice College also operates a drawn lottery waiting list as part of the admissions process. The PPS. Numbers of applicants will continue to be drawn to establish the order of the waiting list. Applicants drawn on this list will be notified and have a chance of a place if a successful applicant does not accept their place. This drawn waiting list is for the duration of the first year admissions process only.

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES (Contd. - First Years – Sept. 2020)

Notification of Result

- In accordance with section 19(3) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, after the closing date deadline, Friday, 24th of January, 2020, decisions on enrolment will be communicated in writing to parents/guardians within 21 days of this deadline.
- For those accepted: When a place in the School is offered, Parents/Guardians will be required to confirm in writing their acceptance/non-acceptance of the place. Successful Applicants will be given to a letter including details that an open night will take place on Wednesday, the 11th March, 2020 at 7:00pm for those students and their parents/guardians and a formal assessment will take place on Saturday, the 28th March, 2020 at 9:00am (for mixed ability class formation only). If the place is not accepted by the date specified in the letter of offer or an applicant indicates in writing that they are not accepting a place -the offer will be withdrawn.
- For those on Drawn Waiting List: A Letter will be sent inviting them to indicate their interest in being on the Waiting list or not. This letter will also indicate their placement on the Waiting List. This drawn waiting list is for the duration of the first year admissions process only.
- For all other applicants: A letter indicating the outcome will be sent to parents/guardians.



An appeal to the BOM can be made for unsuccessful applicants. (See Page 13)

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES

General Applications

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

- 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
- any new entrant to the Irish Education System.

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

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. 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.



TY classes have a maximum of 24 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. External applications will not be considered until the internal process has been completed.

Where a student has left Rice College 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 but this year the Third year group will have 144.

In the case of 5th & 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 special educational needs.

ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS AND ADMISSION PROCEDURES (Contd. – General Applications)

- The school being satisfied with the reasons for the transfer. To this end, information will be required from the student's former/present school concerning attendance, behaviour record, educational progress, subject choices, term reports, disabilities and special needs, reasons for transfer etc.
- The Board of Management 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.

Transfers from other Schools

Students wishing to transfer to this college will be accepted on the basis of the points listed on page 11 and the following:

- That the applicant is between the ages of 12 years - 18 years and age appropriate for the year group.
- That the board has parental consent to contact the school from which the student wants to transfer for release of relevant information.
- That the board 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 college has the capacity to educate these students.
- That the college 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.

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 basis of the points listed on page 11 and the following: (subject to DES circular M05/95)

- The board must be satisfied that such a repeat 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 board must be satisfied that such a repeat will not detract from the new year group.
- That the college 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.

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.

12 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.

- 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.
- The Sub-Committee will examine the contents of the letter and the reason for the appeal.
- Using the BOM's criteria for admission, the Sub-Committee will make a decision on the appeal before it.
- This decision is communicated to the Parent/Guardian promptly.
- 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.
- 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.

This policy has been ratified by the Rice College Board of Management on 9th of December, 2019.

The Edmund Rice Schools Trust has agreed this policy for publication on 7th of November, 2019.
