



Pastoral Care 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 gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life and mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was. Has a special concern for the poor and underprivileged. His aim was to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.



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Introduction

In Rice College we recognise the significant role that schools play in the promotion of wellbeing through supporting “the academic, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual development of all children and young people”. (1)

The World Health Organisation says “Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.”

The Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines state “Wellbeing matters not simply because it leads to better educational outcomes or can influence young people’s outcomes as adults. Wellbeing matters in the here and now.”

Rice College aims to ensure that all of our students develop holistically as strong, resilient young people. The PCT deals with the promotion of student wellbeing at all levels of the Continuum of Support, i.e. Support for All, Support for Some, Support for Few. Rice College recognises the many different challenges that may affect students as they proceed through their studies. Our Pastoral Care Team (PCT) will continually strive to identify such students, and to provide them with avenues of care and support.

We will always strive to support students by allowing them a safe forum to discuss their challenges, and by adopting a solution focused approach where we empower the student to find their own solutions. In the event where this is not possible, we will endeavour, with the aid of the entire staff, and/or parents, and/or outside agencies, to support the student in the



most appropriate manner. Our approach involves all education partners – students, teachers, parents/guardians, other relevant professionals.

Rice College is an ERST school. A key element of the ERST Charter is “Creating a caring school community”. As a school we aim to ensure that all students feel safe, and have a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

All members of staff of Rice College are aware of their responsibilities as “mandated persons” and are fully trained on Child Protection Guidelines, having completed the Tusla “Children First” e-learning programme.

The PCT is aware of, and follows, Child Protection legislation, and the Child Protection Policy of the school, including the revised Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, which came into effect from September 1st, 2023.

The Designated Liaison Person (DLP) is Mr. Louis Mulqueen, Principal.

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Ms. Claire Culligan, Deputy Principal.

Details of the DLP and the DDLP, along with details of Pastoral Care in Rice College, and the team members, are printed in the school journal. Should these details change in the course of a school year students will be notified by Year Heads. Details of the DLP and DDLP are posted in the Reception area of the school, and details of the PCT members are posted in numerous areas around the school.

Formulation of the Pastoral Care Team

Following a Management decision, a Pastoral Care Team was formulated comprising a gender balance of teachers, with representatives from mainstream teaching staff, middle and senior management, the SENCo and the Guidance Counsellor.

Following on from the recommendations from the DE and NEPS, a review of the PCT was carried out in the academic year 2022-2023, to be ratified early in the 2023 academic year following consultation with staff, students and parents, and the Board of Management.

The membership of the core team will, as a result of this review, change.

The membership for 2023-2024 will consist of:

Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, SENCo, JC Curriculum Planning Co-ordinator, Year Heads, mainstream teacher. The membership of the SST may change from year to year – any change, agreed at the beginning of the year, will not impact/ change the procedures of the SST.

On occasion, when deemed appropriate/necessary, others may attend the SST meeting, e.g. the Principal, NEPS psychologist, professionals from relevant external agencies, key adult in the young person’s life. This list is not exhaustive. When an “other” is present, only the student for whom that person is present will be discussed.



It is recognised that not all members will be available to attend all meetings. Attendance at meetings will be managed by the co-ordinator of the team. Once four members are available, the meeting will take place.

The Pastoral Care Team will serve as an overarching team concerned with co-ordinating, planning and providing for the wellbeing of all students.

Critical Incidents and the Pastoral Care Team

Rice College has a Critical Incident Management Plan which is reviewed annually. There are representatives of the Pastoral Care Team on the Critical Incident Management Team. It is acknowledged that consultation with the PCT will be important for the development and monitoring of the CIMP. In Rice College, generally, the Pastoral Care Team operates as the CIMT, with the added input of the Principal and the Secretary.

Child Protection and the Pastoral Care Team

Rice College PCT recognises that the DLP, Mr. Louis Mulqueen, has responsibility for ensuring that the reporting requirements for any alleged child protection concerns are followed correctly. The DLP is supported by the DDLP, Ms. Claire Culligan. It is also acknowledged that every member of the school community, including the members of the Board of Management, shares the responsibility for the implementation of child protection procedures.

Rice College Behaviour Support System and the Pastoral Care Team

It is necessary that the PCT has strong links with the behaviour support system of the school. This is ensured through ongoing clear communication with the DP with responsibility for discipline, and the Year Heads. It is important to note that the Pastoral Care Team is NOT responsible for any disciplinary action following challenging or inappropriate behaviour of students – the PCT is aware of the Rice College Code of Discipline and other relevant policies.

Guidance and the Pastoral Care Team

The Guidance Counsellor is a member of the Pastoral Care Team. The team, and indeed any staff member, can draw on the expertise of the Guidance Counsellors in planning, coordinating and delivering guidance related learning associated with wellbeing promotion in the whole school.



Responsibilities of PCT members

The responsibilities of the core team members are agreed, recorded and subsequently reviewed on an annual basis. The membership of this team may change from year to year, depending on school personnel, roles, and the identified needs of the students.

The Co-ordinator:

- Organise meetings
- Gather referral forms in advance of meetings
- Prior to meetings, liaise if necessary with any additional attendees; arrange to meet with Year Heads and other staff members, parents, students, if necessary
- Brief any new attendees about procedures, confidentiality, issues arising, if necessary
- Liaise with relevant agencies and/or parents, if necessary
- Arrange feedback to parents, agencies, staff
- The identity of the co-ordinator may change from year to year- this decision is taken at the beginning of each academic year. The identity of the co-ordinator will not impact/change the procedures of the SST.

The Chairperson :

- Structure the PCT meeting in accordance with time allocated and agenda
- Engage all PCT members in discussion
- Assign actions to members at the meetings
- Ensure actions previously agreed are subsequently reviewed as part of the agenda
- Make appropriate referrals or allocate tasks/actions to another person

The Minute-taker :

- Ensure all records of the PCT meetings are logged
- Ensure that the PCT meeting records are secure, and are circulated only when necessary and in accordance with agreed procedures and requirements of GDPR

The Guidance Counsellor:

- May share relevant information on students where this is deemed necessary and appropriate, and within the limits of confidentiality
- May agree to provide on-going support to individual students
- Support subject teachers in their work
- Liaise with outside agencies
- Be a link person for parents/guardians who have concerns about their children
- Co-ordinate whole-school wellbeing initiatives



The SENCo:

- Share specialised information on students with learning difficulties
- Advise on the appropriateness of supports for particular students
- Provide support or interventions to individual students or groups of students
- Provide information and /or advice to subject teachers as needed
- Liaise with outside agencies
- Link with parents/guardians if deemed necessary

The Year Heads:

- May collate information from teachers in relation to particular students or issues
- May collaborate with the PCT members in certain cases
- May give feedback to relevant teaching/support staff
- May contact parents/guardians and be available to monitor/ support individual students

The JC Co-ordinator:

- May support the planning and timetabling for the JC wellbeing curriculum and share information with the PCT as needed
- May suggest appropriate supports/programmes/initiatives
- May organise consultations with students, parents, staff to gather their views and suggestions on JC wellbeing or whole school wellbeing promotion
- May plan for new programmes/ initiatives to meet emerging needs

Communication

The Pastoral Care Team recognises that good internal communication will influence the structure and operation of the team. Communication with other school staff, students, parents/ guardians and also outside agencies will also be key to the success of the team.

With staff:

When a student is in receipt of ongoing support from the PCT, or another staff member as a result of a referral to the PCT, a note may be placed on the SEN toggle on VSWare. The Year Head will be informed of this by the PCT, and the Year Head will be asked to communicate this to the teachers of that student.



With parents:

The members of the PCT are listed in the School Journal.

References to the PCT are made in relevant policies.

The Pastoral Care Policy is on the school website.

With students:

The role and function of the PCT is outlined in communication with incoming 1st Years and their parents, and mentioned at Open Nights.

The PCT and its members are advertised around the school building.

The role of the PCT is outlined in the student journal.

With outside agencies:

Rice College has a designated LINK PERSON with NEPS.

The Guidance Counsellors have contact with representatives of various agencies.

The SENCo has contact with representatives of various outside agencies.

PCT Procedures:

- The PCT meeting record is stored securely in the office of the DP
- Regular meetings are held, for which adequate time is allocated.
- A designated minute-taker records the meeting, and circulates actions agreed to the team members after the meeting.
- A Referral Form is used by staff and students to communicate to the PCT any concerns around a student. These are stored securely in the office of the Deputy Principal.
- The Pastoral Care Team Meeting Record is stored securely in the office of the Deputy Principal.
- Dependent on the referral, actions are agreed upon, a member is assigned to carry out the action, and this is recorded on the Meeting Record Template.
- If a Student Support Plan is in place for the student, actions agreed upon may be added to that plan.



Confidentiality

The Rice College PCT recognises the need for balance between keeping staff informed of any matters arising in the context of the PCT which is necessary to enable them to carry out their duty of care to the student, and avoiding unnecessary disclosure of personal information about students and their families. However, teachers of any student who is being supported will, if possible, and with the consent of parents/ guardians, be made aware of the support.

Staff are always advised of the importance of confidentiality and privacy in relation to any information shared about students.

The PCT is aware of the importance of data protection, and are aware that the Data Protection Acts of 1988-2018 apply.

2023-2024

Pastoral Care Team members: Ms. Claire Culligan, Mr. Pat Devitt, Ms. Breda Whelan, Ms. Barbara Hanley, Mr. Martin Brooks, Mr. John Brosnan, Ms. Cora Brooks, Ms. Lorraine Hogan, Ms. Ann Clohessy, Ms. Edel Handley.



Policy Review:

This **Pastoral Care 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 approved by Rice College Board of Management.

Signed: Lourda McKeon

Date: 9/11/23

Acting Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: Louis Mulqueen

Date: 9/11/23

Principal, Rice College.