



## Student Support 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 SST 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 Student Support Team (SST) 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 SST 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 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.

### **Formulation of the Student Support Team**

Following a Management decision, and based on the *Student Support Teams in Post Primary Schools: A Guide to Establishing a Team or Reviewing an Existing Team (2021)* a Student Support Team was formulated comprised of a member of Senior Management, a Guidance Counsellor, the SENCo, the JC Curriculum Planning Co-ordinator, the SPHE Co-ordinator, the Wellbeing Co-ordinator.

This structure, and the accompanying policy, will be reviewed by all stakeholders, including parents, staff and students, prior to ratification by the board of Management early in the 2023-2024 academic year.

The membership of the core team may change over the course of the year, if deemed necessary by management.



The membership for 2023-2024 will consist of:

Deputy Principal – Claire Culligan

Guidance Counsellor – Breda Whelan

SENCo- Barbara Hanley

JC Curriculum Planning Co-ordinator – Ann Clohessy

SPHE Co-ordinator – Lorraine Hogan

Wellbeing Co-ordinator – Ellen Chambers

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 may be available to attend all meetings. Attendance at meetings will be managed by the co-ordinator of the team. Once three members are available, the meeting will take place.

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

The members of the Student Support Team are also members of the Critical Incident Management Team, with the exception, in 2023-2024, of Ann Clohessy.

**Critical Incidents and the Student Support Team**

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



### **Child Protection and the Student Support Team**

Rice College SST 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 Student Support Team**

It is necessary that the SST 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. This communication may take the form of emails, or items being placed on the agenda of Year Head Meetings, which generally take place weekly. It is important to note that the SST is NOT responsible for any disciplinary action following challenging or inappropriate behaviour of students – the SST is aware of the Rice College Code of Discipline and other relevant policies.

### **Guidance and the Student Support Team**

The Guidance Counsellor is a member of both the SST and 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 SST members**

The members of the SST will bring to meetings their knowledge and expertise in the relevant areas.

Each member will share this knowledge and expertise to ensure that all needs, emerging or otherwise, are acknowledged, and actions agreed upon in an effort to meet those needs.

The team will also endeavour to prevent “doubling up” of interventions, by sharing content from within their area of expertise.



## **Communication**

The Student Support 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:

Staff are aware of the SST, and a report is shared at Staff Meetings.

### With parents:

References to the Student Support Team are made in relevant policies.

The Student Support Policy is on the school website.

### With students:

The role and function of the SST is outlined in communication with incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Years and their parents, and mentioned at Open Nights.

The SST is represented at the Student Council meetings at various times during the school year.

### 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.

## **SST Procedures:**

- Meetings are held monthly, and adequate records are kept.
- The SST meeting record is stored securely in the office of the DP
- Dependent on the information shared, actions are agreed upon, a member is assigned to carry out the action, and this is recorded on the Meeting Record Template.



## **Confidentiality**

The Rice College SST recognises the need for balance between keeping staff informed of any matters arising in the context of the SST 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 SST is aware of the importance of data protection, and are aware that the Data Protection Acts of 1988-2018 apply.



**Policy Review:**

This **Student Support Team 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](http://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.