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Coláiste Rís, Dundalk

Admissions Policy (March 2019)

1. Type of School:

Coláiste Rís is a co-educational Catholic Voluntary Secondary School under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST).

2. Characteristic Spirit

- The characteristic spirit of Coláiste Rís is based on the vision and values of the ERST Charter. The five characteristics of an Edmund Rice school underpin the operation of Edmund Rice Secondary School, namely:
 - Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values,
 - Promoting partnership,
 - Excellence in Teaching and Learning,
 - Creating a caring school community,
 - Inspiring transformational leadership.
- For further information on the Edmund Rice Schools Trust and the ERST Charter see www.erst.ie
- In Coláiste Rís, the ERST Charter values are reflected in everything that we do.
 - This is seen first and foremost in the warmth of welcome for all who visit our school.
 - We believe that we must do everything to get our students to achieve their full potential. This is achieved in the very broad range of subjects offered and the desire to help students realise their strengths and from there working to be the best they can be. Our teachers strive to be positive role models and work with our students to strive for excellence in teaching and learning.
 - One of the findings of our most recent WSE Report was that the school has fostered a positive school climate, characterised by mutually respectful relationships, care for students' wellbeing and a focus on their holistic development.
 - We aim to further the message of the Gospel. Practically this meant in the last year:
 - That the start of First Year and the end of Sixth Year were marked by Year Group Eucharistic Celebrations.
 - That a November Mass of Remembrance took place for deceased members of the Teaching Staff;
 - That Year Group Penitential Services were held at Christmas;
 - That Year Group Retreats took place for non-exam classes;
 - That our 5th Years climbed Croagh Patrick to mark Edmund Rice Day and simultaneously fund-raised for SOSAD.

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- We work to cultivate a spirit of fairness and to provide an education in the spirit of Edmund Ignatius Rice where all our students get the very best chance possible regardless of background.
- We strive to develop our young students into school leavers who are ready to take their place in society.
- The school is open to and welcomes all who share our vision and wish to benefit from it.

3. Operating Context

Coláiste Rís operates within the legal context of relevant sections of:

- Education Act 1998;
- Education Welfare Acts 2000;
- Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2011;
- Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004;
- Disability Act 2005;
- Education Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 2007;
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003: The school is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Acts. Data provided to Coláiste Rís in respect of an application for admission is subject to the terms and provisions of the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003). 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.

Coláiste Rís 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;
- 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*;
- 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, Coláiste Rís is a school that

- Is inclusive in intake;
- Supports the principle of equality of access to and participation in education;

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- 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.

4. Eligibility of Applicants and Admission Procedures:

This section sets out the policy of the school with regard to eligibility of applicants and admission procedures and for entry into the school.

4.1 Students eligible for admission to First Year

To be eligible for admission to First Year, students must:

- Have reached the age of 12 years by 1st of January of the calendar year following entry into First Year (as required by Department of Education and Skills regulations);
- Have completed Sixth Class in Primary School or its equivalent;
- Be willing, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, to accept the characteristic spirit of the school [see section on characteristic spirit above];
- Be willing, in conjunction with their parents/guardians, to accept the school's Code of Behaviour;
- Be willing to sit an Assessment Test, the date for which will be communicated in writing to the parents/guardians of the students accepted for admission at the school. This Assessment Test is not an entrance examination as the student has already been allocated a place in the school.
- Be willing to complete all requested student data forms that will be issued during the process of admission.

4.2 ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES

Coláiste Rís Secondary School supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in the school. First year applications are accepted irrespective of social background, gender or academic achievement. The Board of Management of Coláiste Rís will determine the number of places available to First Year students in any given year.

1. Enrollment in Coláiste Rís operates on a first come first in basis after our **enrolment criteria** set out below have been applied.
2. Application for a place in Coláiste Rís must be made on our official school application form.
3. Application forms can be acquired by contacting our school office or can be downloaded from the school website.
4. All application forms received will be numbered, dated and placed on a list in the order that they were received.
5. Receipt of Application will be acknowledged by return email or text.

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6. The return of these completed Application forms neither constitute enrolment nor entitlement to enrolment (see section on **Refusal of Admission**)

The Board of Management of Coláiste Rís will determine the number of places available to First Year students in any given year. For 2019 this is 104 students.

1. Excess applications are numbered and dated and a waiting list operates.
2. Parent(s) / guardian(s) are informed of their child's position on this list upon request.
3. Placement on such a list does not guarantee enrolment in the school.

In September of each year an invitation to the Coláiste Rís Open Night is sent by post to all applicants on the list.

Open Night

In October of the year prior to admission to 1st year (This is the second Wednesday in October – 10th October 2018) prospective students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) attend an open night in Coláiste Rís Secondary School.

1. A register of all applicants in attendance is taken.
2. This register is checked against the list of applicants.
3. Depending on the Board of Management's allocation of places for the upcoming 1st year group, offers of places are sent by post (subject to Criteria set out in 4.3 below) within one week of the open night.
4. The following are required from parent(s)/guardian(s) whose son/daughter has been offered a place within 10 working days of the offer being posted by the school. Otherwise the place may be offered to the next applicant on the list.
 - Return of acceptance slip;**
 - A long version of the Birth Certificate;
 - €25 Administration Fee.
5. All other open night attendees beyond the allocated number of places are informed of their position on the waiting list.
6. On filling the designated number of places, all other applicants are informed by letter that there are no further places available.

In this letter applicants are asked if they would like to be put on a final standby list; if interested they can contact us and we will take note of their continued interest. The order on this list is determined by the order of the original list of applicants. These applicants are encouraged to take a place in another school if offered as the standby list only applies in the unlikely event of someone who has accepted dropping out.

** *On this slip all parents are asked to indicate an interest, or otherwise in a place in the school's Irish Stream. Places in the Irish Stream are offered on the basis:*

- *Of this interest;*
- *On evidence from tests on Assessment Day.*

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4.3 Enrolment Criteria:

Offers of places will first be made to applicants who have attended the Open Night (See Refusal of Admission – Point 2) in the following order:

1. Brothers and sisters of students who have attended or are attending Coláiste Rís;
2. Children of the current staff of the school (who have at least one year of service in the school by the September before admission);
3. Pupils **from the current academic year's 6th classes from CBS Primary School, Dundalk** who have done at least one full year in the CBS Primary School. In this regard the parents/ guardians of an applicant must have an application form submitted to Colaiste Rís by June 1st of the year before entry to take advantage of these criteria. After that date all applicants from the CBS Primary School will be placed on the waiting list.
4. Once the above criteria have been satisfied, places will be offered to the allocated number of applicants on the list in the order that they were received.

4.4 Decision Making:

The decisions relating to applications are made by the Principal of the school in accordance with the published criteria in the school's Admissions Policy.

The final decision with regard to enrolment of students in Coláiste Rís Secondary School, Dundalk, and with regard to all matters covered in this Admissions Policy, lies with the Board of Management. The Board of Management will review this policy on an annual basis.

4.5 Circumstances Where Places cannot be offered or Where Admission is refused:

(a) Places in our school may not be offered in the following circumstances:

1. If an applicant, because of a late application, is too far down the waiting list to be considered.
2. If an applicant fails to attend the open night for incoming first years or fails to make the school aware that he/she will not be attending. In this regard the parent (s) of the applicant is/are responsible for informing the school office of any change of contact information between filling of an application form and the sending out of Open Night invitations.

(b) Refusal of Admission:

1. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) cannot accept the ethos and/or code of behaviour of our school.
2. If, for reasons of health and safety, the applicant is considered a serious threat to the other students and/or staff.

4.6 Admission to other than first year:

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The normal and usual point of entry to the school is First Year. It is only in **exceptional circumstances** that a student is accepted into any other year group. Admissions to other years and during the school year will be considered on a case by case basis. Decisions in such cases will depend on:

1. The subjects we can provide;
2. The numbers in all classes that a successful applicant would hope to attend; in this regard the size of Colaiste Rís classrooms (given the age profile and development of the school plant) prevents more than twenty-six students in a significant number of the rooms.
3. The current dynamic within a particular group within the school.

Colaiste Rís reserves the right to consult with the authorities of an applicant's previous school and request certain information e.g.

1. Academic reports;
2. Attendance records;
3. Behavioural records
4. Educational progress reports;
5. Special needs requirements.

The student is interviewed in the company of a parent/guardian. Unaccompanied students will not be enrolled. Before registering a student from another school, Colaiste Rís will provide the parent(s) / guardian(s) with a copy of the Code of Behaviour and School Rules. As a condition of registering such a pupil parent(s) / guardian(s) will be asked to confirm in writing that the Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable effort to ensure that their complies with the code.

- As a general rule we consider it unwise to move schools between 2nd and 3rd Year and as a result we don't accept school transfers into the 3rd Year group except in very exceptional circumstances which has been referred to and considered by the Board of Management
- The Board of Management of Colaiste Rís reserves the right to refuse an application for admission.

Admissions within the school to Transition Year (TY):

All third year students and their parents are invited to an information evening in early March regarding TY. All students are welcome to submit an application form and each student is interviewed individually. Every effort is made to provide the TY option to all who apply but a number of important considerations are taken into account. They are:

- The total number of applicants and how they can be fitted into working groups making the best use of school resources eg 18 – 24 giving 1 group, 36 – 48 giving 2 groups etc;
- The student's disciplinary, attendance and homework records and in light of these how he/she is going to handle the freedom and changed learning environment within TY;
- Whether the student needs the time that TY will provide to mature.

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Final decisions on admission to the TY class will be made by the TY Coordinator in consultation with the School's Principal and Deputy Principal.

4.8 Repeating a year:

Students who apply to repeat a year must fulfil the conditions laid down by the Department of Education and Skills.

4.9 Leaving Certificate Repeat Students:

Students from Coláiste Rís who wish to repeat their Leaving Certificate must apply to the school stating the reasons why they wish to repeat and nominating the subjects and subject levels.

At the first staff meeting of the year the advice of teachers who taught the student during the previous year is sought. If there is a consensus that a repeat is in the best interest of the student he/she is accepted only if the student agrees to reasonable conditions laid down by the Principal and will be subject to parameters of the time table.

Repeat leaving certificate students from other schools may be accepted if there is a place for them. They too must apply and satisfy the school that a repeat is the best option for them. Coláiste Rís reserves the right to consult with the authorities of the school in which he/she previously sat the Leaving Certificate.

4.10 Students suspended or expelled from another Post Primary School:

After formal contact has been made with the school the student is;

- Interviewed in the company of a parent /guardian. Unaccompanied students will not be interviewed. The student is required to be absolutely truthful and honest about his/her disciplinary record in the school from which he/she was suspended/expelled.
- Contact is made with the Principal of the school from which he/she was suspended/expelled. A student profile is taken. The Principal will endeavour to establish as far as possible that there is no danger to other students or members of staff under Health and Safety at work legislation.
- A copy of the School Code of Behaviour and School Rules will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child.
- Before enrolment can be considered an assessment of the educational needs of the student must be made. It is essential at this stage to establish if the resources of the school can meet the student's needs.

If it is felt that there is a danger to the welfare of any student or member of staff the school will appeal to the Department of Education & Skills to cater for the needs of the student. Enrolment will not take place until such time as the Department responds in a positive manner to the needs of the student.

The final decision to admit a student who has been expelled from another school will rest with the Board of Management of Coláiste Rís and the Board of Management of Coláiste Rís reserves the right to refuse an application for admission.

5. Appeals:

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- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of applicants who are not offered a place in Coláiste Rís Secondary School, Dundalk, may appeal the decision to the Board of Management in the first instance. The Board of Management may be contacted by letter addressed to The Secretary of the Board at the school address.
- Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, gives parent(s) / guardian(s) the right to appeal refusal to enrol. Queries regarding appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, can be directed to the Appeals Administration Unit, c/o Post-Primary Administration Section, Portlaoise Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly (Telephone 0506-24330 or 0506 – 24327)

6. Admission of applicants with Special Educational Needs

- Coláiste Rís welcomes applications from parents/ guardians of students with special educational needs. The school will use the resources provided by the Department of Education and 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.
- While recognising and fully supporting the rights of parents/guardians to have a school of their choice for their child, 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 and Skills.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to make the Board of Management aware of any special needs as early as possible, as it may take some time for the Department to process applications for the resources needed.
- In order to determine the specific resources, facilities and learning support required, the Board will request a copy of the student's medical and/or psychological report. Where such a report is not available, the Board will request an immediate assessment. The purpose of the assessment report is to assist the school in establishing the educational needs of the student relative to their special needs and to profile the support services required. Following receipt of the report, the Board will assess how the school can meet the needs of the student as specified in the report.
- The school will also request information from the student's primary school with regard to such matters as learning support and/or resource hours. Where the Board deems that further resources are required, it will, prior to the student commencing to attend the school, request the Department of Education and Skills to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of the student as outlined in the psychological or medical report.
- A representative of the school will meet with the parents/guardians of the student to discuss the student's needs and the school's capacity to meet them. It may be necessary for the Board to postpone the attendance of a student at the school, pending the receipt of an assessment report, and/or the provision of appropriate resources by the Department of Education and Skills to meet the needs specified in the psychological or medical report.

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- The school commits itself to working closely with 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.

7. Consultation and review:

This policy has been drawn up by the Board in consultation with parents, staff and representatives of our feeder schools. It is operative for the school year 2017/18. It will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually (and in circumstances where such review is delayed this version of the policy will continue to operate). Submissions for such review are welcome and should be forwarded to the Board by 30th November 2018.

8. Ratification and Publication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on April 3rd 2019 and was agreed for publication by the Edmund Rice Schools Trust on April 10th 2018.

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