

Edmund Rice College



Pastoral Care Policy

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Introduction

Edmund Rice College is a voluntary maintained Secondary School under the trusteeship of the local parish and the Congregation of the Christian Brothers of Ireland. It has an enrolment of approximately 600 pupils.

The College has a long and proud history in educating thousands of boys and preparing them for life. The college has its roots in the famed Hardinge Street School which first opened its doors more than a century ago.

Since those early days the school has demonstrated its continuing concern for the personal and social development of all its pupils. As well as taking great pride in its academic achievement the College is equally proud of the development of those other dimensions such as social, personal, emotional etc. which go to make up the whole person.

This approach has not always been the norm. Unfortunately, in many schools' pastoral provision has had a lower status, with the pupil's intellectual development being regarded as paramount. Current educational thinking however has attempted to redress the Academic/Pastoral imbalance by arguing for the development-on an equal footing with the pupil's academic potential-of those personal social, emotional and moral/spiritual dimensions, so much neglected in the past.

In its Pastoral Care Provision, this school will attempt to reflect this change in thinking.

Mission Statement

Educational excellence for all pupils
Respect for self and others
Care in the home, school and community

Our Aims

The philosophy of the school is soundly based on Christ, Christian teaching and Christian attitudes. In all its endeavours Edmund Rice College seeks to follow the way of Christ. Ideally, this means genuine love and respect for the individual student based on an awareness of his unique personality and destiny. It means also, on the part of the teaching staff, self-sacrifice and dedication to the education and welfare of the pupils.

- To provide a broad balanced and flexible curriculum, through which each pupil can achieve their potential.
- To create a disciplined environment where students will feel safe and happy.
- To instil in students a sense of responsibility for their own actions and achievements.
- To foster in the students a desire to live by the Gospel values and through this to recognize the dignity of the individual.
- To encourage the personal development of each student by enabling them to develop their talents, acquire a healthy self-image and to form positive relationships with others.
- To foster an effective partnership between home, school and the community.
- To develop in students, the skills and attributes necessary to meet the challenges of adult life.

Promoting Respect

Respect is a key ideal promoted at all levels in Edmund Rice College. It is not just a term, but an integral part of everyday life in the school. Through the guidance and leadership of the Principal, the positive relationships built between staff and students, the activities taken, the classes taught etc, it is our vision that respect becomes instilled in every student in our care. Through this vision, pupils are empowered with a sense of self worth, and a sense of belonging which can only be beneficial to all involved within the school community.

Spiritual Dimension

Religion

As a Catholic School we aim to create the atmosphere of a believing community, committed to living out in its daily operation the Christian way of life. Religion permeates throughout every subject taught within the College, but it is also a subject in its own right from which an academic qualification can be gained.

The spirituality is reflected through

- Morning assemblies presented by the students.
- Attendance at class and year masses.
- Retreats for senior students.
- Class visits by school chaplains.
- Prayers at the start of the class.
- Attendance at the Sacrament of Reconciliation each Advent and Lent.

Living the Faith

Pupils are constantly involved in community projects:

- Raising funds for the Children's Hospice.
- St Vincent DePaul.
- Christian Brother Zambian Mission Fund.
- Edmund Rice Award Scheme.
- Cross community ventures.
- Choir sings at different venues and functions.
- Fund raising projects.

The need for effective Pastoral Care

It is recognised that children growing up in the 21st century face many different challenges than those from previous generations. Although the pupils who attend Edmund Rice College still generally come from the same socio/economic background as past pupils, the school has accepted that changing needs have to be addressed, for example attitudes towards issues such as sex, drugs, health etc, are ever changing, and have a major impact on the daily behaviour of our pupils both inside and outside of school. To deal with such issues the school constantly reviews its PD programmes so as to ensure relevant and practical advice is passed on to all pupils.

Family stability is another identified concern. The school now deals with increasing cases of parents separating and the emotional and practical effects for the children in our care. In many instances the concept of the nuclear family is a thing of the past, and this adds to a growing feeling of isolation on the parts of parents who are left coping alone. As well as dealing with behavioural issues which in many instances can be linked to outside factors, the school also finds itself dealing with the root causes such as basic parental difficulties in raising children. Edmund Rice College in this respect works closely with a range of external agencies such as Social Services, Independent Counselling Service for Schools (ICSS), the Education Authority – North Eastern and Belfast Region, CCMS, to name but a few in order to help both parents and children.

To conclude, a strong Pastoral Care provision is a hallmark of a Catholic school. It is integral to the life of the school and is intermeshed with the academic, social and cultural dimensions. This document is intended to give a clear insight into how the college is attempting to deal with an ever changing landscape while still staying true to its fundamental ethos.

Composition of the Board of Governors:

Chairperson / Trustee	Mrs C Bell
Vice-Chairperson / NEELB Representative	Mrs B Byrne
Principal/Secretary	Mr P Friel
Trustee	Rev John Forsythe
Trustee	Mr C McCavana
Trustee	Mr R Morgan
Trustee (ERST)	Mr G Scannell
DENI Representative	Mr C Toner
Parent Representative	Mr J Geehan
Teacher Representative	Mr C Mulgrew

Pastoral Role of the Board of Governors

Governors in Edmund Rice College have always played an important role in giving schools a sense of direction and in supporting the principal and staff in their work with pupils and parents. They make a vital contribution to school life and development in many different areas. Examples of their duties would include:

- ❖ Working with the Principal.
- ❖ Appointing staff.
- ❖ Ensuring the curriculum of the school satisfies legal requirements.
- ❖ Take account of inspection findings.
- ❖ Ensure Religious Education provided.
- ❖ Set admissions criteria.
- ❖ Monitor LMS budget.
- ❖ Overview disciplinary and grievance procedures.

From a pastoral perspective the school governors contribute to the pastoral care programme in various ways. By working closely with the Principal they ensure that the ethos of the school is upheld, that all policies and programmes reflect the values inspired by Christ. Pastoral structures are based on a shared understanding of what it means to be a Catholic school. They agree principles that reflect the care of the Good Shepherd and which underpin the schools pastoral care programme. These include recognition that:

- ❖ Each person is a unique creation of God and worthy of respect.
- ❖ Pastoral care is for all in the school and not just for those with particular problems.
- ❖ Each member of the school community – pupil, teacher, parent, chaplain- has a responsibility for the caring life of the school.
- ❖ Pastoral care permeates the whole life of the school, including the curriculum, and is not confined to set periods.
- ❖ Pastoral care is not imposed but is a loving response to discerned needs.
- ❖ The schools pastoral care policy takes account of the special needs programme within the school.

To conclude, the governors help to ensure that the pastoral system reflects a sense of justice, forgiveness and respect for the needs and rights of all.

Pastoral Care Structure

The Pastoral Care System is co-ordinated by Head of Pastoral Care (assisted by Assistant Head of Pastoral Care). Each class group has a Form Teacher and each year group has a Year Head. Most Form Teachers will be with the same form group for five years.

Organisation of Pastoral Care

This school has adopted a horizontal system of Pastoral Care, based on years 8 to 14 and involving Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Head of Pastoral Care and the Principal. (See Pastoral Care Structure)

<u>PASTORAL CARE STRUCTURE</u>					
PRINCIPAL					
HEAD OF PASTORAL CARE <i>Assistant Head of Pastoral Care</i>					
HEAD OF JUNIOR/SENIOR SCHOOL					
YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13/14
Each class are assigned a Year head who will follow the pupils through their school life from Year 8 to 12.					

Form Teacher

The opportunity given to Form Teachers to influence pupils is greater than that of any other teacher. A form teacher's role is to monitor and help pupils achieve high standards of:

- a) Attendance
- b) Punctuality
- c) Dress
- d) Behaviour
- e) Standards of work.
- f) Attitudes to teachers and other pupils.

They should also seek to develop positive links with parents. The **use of SIMs** should help collate information about the class in general.

Specific Duties:

1. Get to know as much as possible about each pupil and inform teachers of any change in circumstances in the home situation that may possibly affect the pupil. The counselling period will play a vital role regarding this duty.
2. Assist pupils when they are experiencing difficulty either at home or in school. (Be aware that some difficulties need to be referred to the Designated Child Protection Teachers – Mr McMeekin, Mrs Davey, Miss Deery and Mrs Ritchie).
3. Steer the pupils towards positive behaviour.
4. Liaise with parents. It is best if contact with parents is through form teachers or year heads.
5. Registration and de-registration on SIMs.
6. Daily check on uniform.
7. Complete reports at end of term and provide constructive and enlightening comments for parents.
8. Keep a record of all documented incidents and follow ups on SIMS.
9. In line with school discipline procedures put pupils on report book after consultation with year head and monitor each book on a daily basis.
10. Keep year heads informed of a pupil continually exhibiting problems across various classes.
11. Permission for early departure from School.

Year Head

The work of the Year Head may be described under the following three headings.

- i. The efficient administration of the year.
- ii. Supporting the work of Form Teacher.
- iii. Care of pupils in the year group.

Responsibilities Include:

1. The Year Teacher leads the prayers of the year assembly.
2. Lead a team of Form Teachers and provide support as required.
3. Chair monthly pastoral meetings and keeping records.
4. Promoting standards of behaviour within the Year Group are in accordance with the School Discipline Code.
5. Monitor the Attendance, Academic Progress and Personal Development of each individual in the year group.
6. Responding to and dealing with Discipline Matters when referred by form teachers. (As in Discipline Procedures).
7. Interview of parents whose child has been suspended or sent home for any reason.
8. Liaise with and contact parents/guardians on appropriate matters of Academic Progress, Conduct and General Welfare of pupils.
9. Take registration/de-registration when required. Attendance and Detention is checked and followed up by year teacher. Pupils who deliberately miss or refuse to attend detention will be spoken to by the Year Teacher, if necessary, parents /guardians will be contacted.
10. Spot checks – regular visits to form classes to address issues that have arisen regarding behaviour.

Head of Junior/Senior School

Mrs Gallagher (Junior School) and Mr Berne (Senior School)

The Head of Junior/Senior School play a very important role in Edmund Rice College. The Heads of Junior/Senior School works closely with the Head of Pastoral Care and the Principal to ensure the effective running of the College. The main duties they perform are as follows.

1. Leadership of the team of Year Heads and Form Teachers.
2. Promotion of good behaviour.
3. Liaise with Year Heads regarding the behaviour of individual pupils.
4. Deal with referral when year head feels that an incident has occurred and is so serious that it merits a suspension.
5. Keep a record of suspension and a copy of the suspension forms sent to the Education Authority.
6. Keep Principal and Head of Pastoral Care informed on record of suspensions.
7. Recommend to Head of Pastoral Care pupil for referral to psychology service.
8. Liaise with Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and outside agencies.
9. Help with the review of behavioural support procedures and other relevant policies.
10. Assist with training of staff regarding pastoral related issues.
11. To assist the Head of Pastoral Care in the administration of the Pastoral Guidance Centre.
12. To recommend to the Head of Pastoral Care potential students for EOTAS.
13. Responsible for the Official Detention System.

Role of Head of Pastoral Care – P McMeekin

(Assisted by Assistant Head of Pastoral Care - Mrs Davey)

The Head of Pastoral Care is a member of the Senior Management Team. Within that team he works closely with the Principal to ensure the effective running of the College. He, in consultation with the Principal is responsible for overseeing the development of the pastoral structures to ensure students set and achieve challenging personal, social and academic goals through a planned developmental approach.

The Head of Pastoral Care also supports the Principal in promoting an atmosphere of care and respect within the school community, so that all pupils and staff will feel secure, welcome and valued.

Major Responsibilities

1. To promote student well being and self-esteem.
2. Designated teacher for Child protection/provide training for all staff.
3. Liaise with relevant outside agencies.
4. Develop, co-ordinate and review Pastoral Policies.
5. Develop a programme for Personal Development for all Form Teachers.
6. To develop the counselling services in the college.
7. To be responsible for staff development in the area of Pastoral Care.
8. To deploy Form Teachers and Year Heads in consultation with the Principal.
9. To set the agenda for Pastoral meetings.
10. To liaise with the SENCO regarding pastoral issues.
11. To liaise with the Principal in relation to suspensions, expulsions and possible referral to EOTAS.
12. To monitor and evaluate the effective running of the Internal Behaviour Support system.

Whole-School Approach to PD - Overview

Whilst all our pupils will have a weekly lesson of PD we feel that, the teaching of all academic subjects to all pupils should contain a Pastoral Care dimension. Pring (1984) intimates as much when he observes that while Pastoral concerns are likely to enter the curriculum "... through tutorial periods and other aspects of the Pastoral System of the School-or indeed, through the treatment of Topics in the Humanities, Religious Education or Social Studies---Recently, however, various reports have expressed the view that Personal and Social Development needs a more central and explicit place in the Curriculum."

This school, therefore, will seek opportunities to introduce personal, social, emotional, and moral elements into the teaching of academic subjects. A pupil's views on moral issues, their presentation of work, ability to work as a team member, ability to overcome shyness and defend a point of view in class discussions, are all examples of aspects, which may be identified and regarded as part of the total learning achieved. Admittedly such elements have always been present in classwork as Pring (1984) points out;

"Schools have always been concerned with personal and social development. Teachers give moral instructions and advice. Pupils explore personal and moral issues through literature. Teachers show care for children/s welfare beyond their teaching duties."

However, the profile of these pastoral dimensions of the curriculum is being raised considerably by virtue of the demands not only for their formal identification, but also for their assessment as integral parts of the overall learning package.

Personal Development

The Pastoral curriculum provides learning experiences which relate to the child's welfare and contribute to their personal and social development. In the case of Years 8-12 the Form teacher has a tutor period, in which Personal Development is taught. It gives the child the opportunity to acquire concepts, learn facts, practice skills and develop attitudes which will:

- Promote all round development of the person
- Empower pupils to become effective learners
- Help them become responsible adults.

In recent years the Personal Development programme has become more formalised. The college while still following its traditional approach regarding the coverage of topics in all years such as drugs, friendship, relationships, study skills, values and beliefs etc. now incorporates programmes developed by the EA Northern Region and 'In Sync'. The college ensures that at all times the content of the materials they use reflects and supports its ethos, pastoral care policy and programme of study.

Additional Needs Provision

Provision for pupils with Additional Needs is carried out throughout the school, but a specially designed Support Unit has been set up providing all day access to teaching and learning support. This unit operates in close co-operation with outside agencies including outreach support and Psychological Services from the Education Boards in our area.

On entry in Year 8, pupils are assessed according to the Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs, using a range of sources. Pupils with Special Needs are allocated to smaller classes for all subjects to assist with differentiated work. All subject departments are informed of pupil needs and are advised on how to develop action plans.

The support for pupils with needs is provided using up to date computer technology. Literacy, numeracy and subject based skills are taught through the use of ICT.

All pupils with literacy difficulties make use of this ICT driven approach to improve basic skills such as reading, writing and its presentation, talking and listening. Since they are more confident working from their own experiences emphasis is placed on using these in the development of the basic skills. Other very specific software is sometimes used for more individual problems / programmes such as spellings were the pupil can work independently but seek support if necessary.

To reinforce reading development, some pupils participate in a paired reading scheme. Parents are encouraged to monitor and access their child's reading and record their views.

The Support Unit provides a range of help for those pupils who may be having temporary difficulties in a particular area of the curriculum, such as pupils who are faced with assignment work for exam purposes and still have Special Needs, or the pupils faced with emotional difficulties.

One of the main objectives of the support is that pupils will be able to build up their skill base, self esteem and develop the necessary strategies to overcome any difficulties through independent learning.

Good Relationships ---- The Key to High Quality Pastoral Care

Sound Teacher – Pupil relationships are the bedrock, on which the social, emotional, personal and moral aspects of a pupil's overall development will flourish. It is through the establishment of relationships of this kind, against a background of teacher care and support, that a school creates an ethos, in which pupil self-confidence and self-acceptance flourish. In this way, the child's progress towards social, emotional, personal and moral maturity is likely to be enhanced. Consequently, this school, through the quality of care and support, which it will afford its pupils, will place relationship-building at the very heart of its Pastoral Care provision. Opportunities will be sought both in formal and informal school settings to initiate and nurture sound and durable bonds between teachers and pupils.

In order to create an ethos, which is conducive to the development of sound teacher-pupil relationships this school's Code of Discipline will adopt a very positive approach by laying great emphasis on a system of praise and rewards. It is to be hoped that, this system, as well as facilitating the development of good teacher-pupil relationships will also encourage pupils to behave well and to develop self-discipline.

Within the classroom situation, the role of each subject teacher will be to use praise and encouragement, to enhance pupil self-esteem and to motivate class members to perform well both in their academic work and overall behaviour.

However, in any school, there will always be situations, where certain pupils will fail to respond to a positive system of praise and rewards. In these cases, sanctions will have to be put into operation. Sanctions will include reprimands, imposition of extra work, contact with parents/guardians either by phone or by standard letter, detention by subject teacher, official school detention, and the sending home of a pupil with a request that their parents should visit the school to discuss the situation with the Form Teacher/Year Teacher. In extreme cases a pupil may be suspended and this process if implemented will be in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. In these circumstances the Head of Junior/Senior School along with the Year Head will be involved in the interview with the parents/guardians.

Despite the fact, however, that they are available and will be involved as required, it is to be hoped that the need for these sanctions will be minimised by the prominence which will be given to our system of praise and rewards throughout all facets of school life. In this way we would hope that the ongoing process of developing good teacher-pupil relationships can be sustained and enhanced.

Recognition of Good Pupil Behaviour and Progress

Here in Edmund Rice College we believe that our pupils thrive from the encouragement offered by their teachers, and this is reinforced at year group assemblies where individual pupils receive certificates for achievement in academic and non-academic areas of school life.

A number of awards will be made in the course of the year, to encourage good behaviour and practice, both inside and outside class.

Pupil of the Month

A monthly certificate 'The Exemplary Conduct Award' will be presented each month at year assemblies to the best overall pupil in each Form Group. Pupil performance will be assessed for this award under the headings of; attendance, punctuality, uniform/appearance, conduct and presentation of homework. The Form teacher's role of routine monitoring pupil attendance, punctuality and observance of uniform rules will be crucial in the assessment process. Efforts will also be made to acknowledge and reward pupils who have shown a marked improvement in these categories of performance.

Merit Award System

The College currently operates an effective merit system for junior school pupils. Its purpose is to identify and reward the vast majority of pupils. Students are offered the opportunity to gain a bronze, silver and gold award during the school year. These awards are given as a result of not only academic achievements, but also reflect a pupil's good behaviour. We have found that this system is an excellent way of not only boasting a pupil's self esteem, but it also boasts the moral and team spirit of the year group as a whole.

Subject Awards

Certificates are given to students throughout the year by subject teachers recognising effort, achievement and attitude in their own specialised areas. These awards are presented at school assemblies.

Award Scheme

The Edmund Rice Award scheme was set up in 1994 in conjunction with other activities commemorating the 150 anniversary of the death of Edmund Rice, the founder of the Christian Brothers and Presentation Brothers. The awards scheme provides the opportunity for young people to respond to the needs in their communities, in the spirit of Edmund Rice.

The scheme combines voluntary work and reflection on work in the light of gospel values and the life of Edmund Rice. It recognises the work done by the pupils and is non-competitive. At the end of the school year, schools come together in regional venues and give a presentation on their learning experiences. It operates in all Christian Brothers post-primary schools. The aim of the award is to encourage pupils and teachers to keep the spirit of Edmund Rice alive today.

The importance of Vigilance

In today's world, our young people are faced with many problems and issues which can affect what happens to them both in and out of school. Vigilance therefore is crucial if we are to identify those students who face such difficulties, and to provide them with the necessary support and tools needed to cope on a daily basis.

Through the Pastoral system, the school employs a number of strategies to constantly monitor and assist students. These strategies involve:

- Staff supervision on corridors and within school boundaries on a daily basis.
- Staff supervision on school transport when pupils are returning home.
- Senior staff present throughout school at break and lunch time.
- Ancillary staff presence throughout set times during school day.
- Regular classroom visits by SLT.
- Staff training to promote vigilance and awareness.

In addition, the school also has in place a number of services which compliment the work that goes on in this important area. These will now be discussed in our counselling section of the Pastoral Policy document.

Counselling Services

A Counselling system, in which pupils are encouraged to confront problems and to work out solutions for themselves, has been set up in the school.

The counselling system has been set up in response to the inevitable existence in any school population of pupils with problems of a more serious nature. When a Form Teacher believes that a member of his/her form group has a serious problem, which is likely to demand a considerable amount of time and attention he/she (the Form Teacher) may then pass the pupil on to the counselling team through contact with Head of Pastoral or Assistant Head of Pastoral. This team is made up of a number of teachers who have volunteered to give up more of their non contact time to help deal with more intractable pupil problems. However, the main core of the team is built around the designated teachers within the college i.e. P McMeekin, G. Davey, C Deery and A.M. Ritchie

External Counselling Services

Outside agencies now play an increasingly important role in the life of our students. Three of the most important agency roles are summarised as follows:

1. Familyworks:

When a student has been identified with a problem which needs professional counselling, Familyworks is given a referral.

Familyworks is one of Northern Ireland's leading voluntary organisation for the provision of youth counselling. The organisation's independent schools counselling service has been operating since 1993 and with Edmund Rice College since 2007. A professional counsellor works with referred students one day per week. Numerous issues are tackled; these include anger management, self harm, substance abuse, bereavement, and depression and family issues. Familyworks has proven to be an important addition to the college's counselling provision, and this is reflected in the number of referrals handled by the school counsellors. An excellent working relationship has been established between the College and Familyworks Counselling.

2. Newtownabbey Education Guidance Centre

Edmund Rice College has been working closely with Newtownabbey Educational Guidance Centre since the late 1990's. The purpose of the Centre is to offer support to students within the College who have displayed behavioural issues. Direct one-to-one counselling takes place linked with personalised education plans. Before any student is contacted however an Educational Psychologist report is needed recommending intervention along with identified concerns.

3. Education Authority (North Eastern Region) Youth work Project.

Vanessa Tweed is Edmund Rice College's Area Youth Co-ordinator. The EA Youth Work project has been involved with the College since 2002. The project offers numerous projects linked with the students' personal development e.g. alcohol awareness programmes, internet use, substance abuse talks etc. She also works closely with the Learning for Life and Work Co-ordinator organising talks and seminars for senior school pupils.

One of the main aims of the Form Teacher Mentoring programme is to build sound teacher-pupil relationships. It is our belief that each child should be encouraged to develop a strong bond with one significant adult in the school. In this way it is hoped to enhance the pupil's

self-confidence and self esteem, which in turn should increase the likelihood of them being prepared to talk frankly about any problems, which they may be experiencing at any given time.

The strength of the basic counselling network is that it is proactive in nature, seeking as it does, to identify at the earliest stages any potential problems.

Outside agencies as already indicated, continue to play an ever increasing role in the colleges counselling system. Social Service meetings are regularly attended by appropriate members of staff as are meetings with the Educational Welfare and Educational Psychological services. Representatives from the Newtownabbey Guidance Centre/Behaviour Support Service and EA North Eastern Region Youth Service also meet with students on a weekly basis throughout the school year. Other outside agencies such as the PSNI also regularly visit the school.

Careers Education and Guidance

The Careers Programme in Edmund Rice College enables the students to acquire the skills, attitudes and abilities they will need to chart their path through life with confidence and to be effective in a variety of adult roles. Specific career decisions are being delayed much longer partly because a large number of our students choose to remain in full-time education beyond the compulsory leaving age.

The pupils need to be given opportunities to develop the skills of career decision making, not only at transition points up to the age of nineteen, but also in the context of changing circumstances throughout life.

These circumstances might include:

- Identifying, evaluating and deciding on employment options.
- Considering courses of further education, higher education or training.
- Evaluating professional development possibilities when in employment.
- Weighing up the pros and cons of further/higher education or the world of work.

At Edmund Rice College we strive to help the students realise their full potential. They will get to know their strengths, interests, values, attitudes, hopes and aspirations.

There is an established careers team who work closely with the students at the different decision making times.

There is a Careers Awareness Week in October for the whole school. We have many visitors to the school to offer advice and guidance on career paths.

During this week we invite past pupils and local stakeholders to connect with the pupils and share experiences.

Junior School

Careers education is offered through the Learning for Life and Work and Personal Development programmes. As Year 10 pupils approach their Option choices for GCSE, specific advice is offered to pupils and also to parents either at the option meetings or at subsequent appointments. We currently run an Information Evening for Year 10 students and their parents where they have the opportunity to meet the GCSE teachers and Careers advisers.

Middle School

Mrs Woods organises the programme for Year 11 pupils covering topics like decision making skills, changing work patterns, job groups and levels and begins the process of accessing careers information. They are formally introduced to the Careers Library resources including software programmes for Pathfinder, JED and Odyssey etc. They also

have their own Personal Career Plan and Career Record file. Career Planning exercises organised by Sentinus are also part of the Year 11 programme. Towards the end of Year 11, pupils set about arranging their Work Experience Programme, which takes place in early September of their Year 12 at school.

In Year 12 the group works with the Careers Advisors from the Careers Service N.I. for the first time and go through an inventory procedure to determine their interests and suitability for certain careers. Guidance is offered by the Careers service and individual interviews arranged.

Senior School

Pupils in Year 13/14 are invited to attend a variety of events including Careers week in the school, Engineering Seminars, UCAS conventions.

Year 13 students also have the opportunity to go out on a Work Experience Week. This is an optional week at Easter however placements happen sporadically throughout senior school to suit employers and to gain last minute necessary experience. In years 13 & 14 all students take part in an Interview Skills Training Day and a business Insight Day. These days are held in conjunction with Bank of Ireland and the local Business community.

Year 14 students will attend Open Days in various Universities and Colleges of Further Education. They will complete their UCAS applications and obtain information on student Finance, loans etc. They will be made aware of the opportunities that exist in further education and the world of work through interviews, discussions and talks.

UCAS workshops are organised throughout the first term to give the students an opportunity to seek advice and help with the completion of the form.

Each Year 14 is interviewed by Mrs Woods to ascertain their potential career plans and to discuss alternatives.

Bank of Ireland visits the Year 14 to discuss their finances, student loans, maintenance grants etc., when the pupils are applying for funds.

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm; and they must be given proper care by those looking after them. When adults or organisations make decisions that affect children, they must always think first what would be best for the child.

Extract from United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)

The welfare of the pupils in our care is paramount. The pastoral care dimension of the College has been praised in our General Inspection reports and the Edmund Rice College Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is designed to help protect all pupils from harm.

When abuse is suspected or when a pupil makes an allegation that he is suffering or has suffered abuse, this College has a statutory obligation, under the Children (N.I.) Order 1995, to make a referral to the social services of the local Health and Social Services Trust, or to the Police.

The designated teacher for child protection is Mr P. McMeekin and the Deputy designated teachers are Mrs G. Davey, Miss C Deery and Mrs AM Ritchie. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching have been made fully aware of the procedures to be followed.

Each year all staff members led by the Head of Pastoral Care and Assistant Head of Pastoral Care review the schools Child Protection procedures to ensure they are aware of all issues regarding duties and legislation.

Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures

If a parent/ guardian has concerns or complaints about his or her own child or another pupil's safety they may take the following action.

Parent/guardian is concerned about their child's/other pupil's safety.



May contact the Head of Year or Form Teacher



If still concerned, contact the College's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.



If still concerned, contact the Principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.

To conclude, the schools Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is based on our primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of our pupils. This responsibility will be addressed through our Pastoral Care policy, which seeks to build sound teacher-pupil relationships thereby providing a supportive, caring and safe environment, in which pupils can develop and thrive.

In order to ensure a safe learning environment for our pupils, they must be protected from abuse or the risk of abuse. All staff at Edmund Rice College are committed to this imperative, accepting as they do, that the pupils' welfare is, at all times paramount.

Taking abuse to have four main forms – sexual, physical, emotional as well as neglect, all staff will be required to look for outward indicators of same, to act on suspicions, and to follow the guidelines as laid down in our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Through effective pastoral care, the vigilance of our staff and their faithful adherence to the guidelines as laid down in our Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, therefore we would hope to create a safe, caring environment, in which productive learning will take place.

Anti-Bullying procedures

Schools have a significant role to play in the emotional and personal development of its pupils and this policy aims to help Edmund Rice College:

- Recognise bullying.
- Develop an anti-bullying culture consistent with its positive ethos, pastoral care policy and whole-school policy on good behaviour and.
- Develop a specific anti-bullying policy to support it.

The policy will also offer help in dealing with bullying firmly and positively when it happens, with an eye to preventing it happening again.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

Forms of Bullying

- Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil.
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or their family.
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil.
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.

The School's View

Edmund Rice College is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. Bullying incident sheet to be completed.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to appropriate form teacher or Mr McMeekin if the form teacher is not available. Copy of incident sheet to be recorded, filed and a copy given to Mr McMeekin.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.
- Report the matter to appropriate Form Teacher or Mr McMeekin if the Form Teacher is not available.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to appropriate Form Teacher or Mr McMeekin if Form Teacher not available and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, eradicate bullying.

Drugs Policy

Edmund Rice College is committed to providing a drugs free environment and appropriate drugs education programme for all its pupils.

Overall Aim of the Drugs Education Programme

To promote positive attitudes to personal health and develop skills to enable young people to live a drug free lifestyle in a drug orientated culture.

An Overview of Drugs Education

In Edmund Rice College drugs education is taught as part of a health education programme, to develop a positive healthy lifestyle.

Drugs education is taught in a cross-curricular manner throughout the five years, with the PD programme providing the main backbone and major contributions being made by Science, Physical Education and Religious Education. Other subjects include small units relevant to drugs in their programmes of study. This work will be supplemented by invited guest speakers talking to the students about the subject of drugs.

The school is committed to helping pupils develop attitudes and social skills that will help them resist pressures and avoid influences which might lead to drug misuse. Opportunities for drug use inside school boundaries are minimized through close vigilance by staff both inside and outside the school building.

School Procedure

- (i) The Principal is the person responsible for all arrangements and information regarding all suspected, identified or rumoured cases of drug misuse in school.
- (ii) The Senior Management Team, including the Head of Pastoral Care will assist him in this. The Designated Teacher is Mr McMeekin, Deputy Designated Teachers are; Mrs Davey (Assistant Head of Pastoral), Mrs Ritchie and Miss Deery (SENCo).
- (iii) Where it is established that pupils have been in possession of illegal drugs, within the confines of the school, they will be immediately suspended for five days while the incident is investigated.

Expulsion may follow such incidents.

Pupils are not allowed to be in possession of any materials that give off intoxicating vapours. It is hoped that the measures pursued in Edmund Rice College, with regard to drugs, will prevent any experimenting with these substances and makes the school a safe environment for all.

Opportunities for reinforcement of the Pastoral Dimension

It was stated at the outset of this Policy document that opportunities would be sought in all possible settings both formal and informal, to nurture sound Teacher-Pupil relationships. Apart from those areas already mentioned where it will be possible to develop such relationships, namely the Counselling system, PD lessons, the system of Praise and Rewards within the Code of Behaviour, the whole-school approach to Pastoral Provision, there remain certain other Teacher-Pupil interfaces where an opportunity for relationship building is afforded. Examples of these are as follows:

Induction

The school starts the task of relationship building long before our new intake leaves the Primary school. The Primary school pupils visit our school on a number of occasions before officially starting in August/September. During the month of June for example an information day is held, when parents/guardians and pupils come to the school to find out about important details such as transport details, uniforms, lunch arrangements etc. On the first day of term in the New Year, parents/guardians and pupils are invited to a Mass and information meeting. These arrangements are all carried out so that when the pupils arrive at our school, the foundations for sound teacher-pupil relationships have been laid.

Informal and Extra-Curricular Links

Informal Teacher-pupil contacts, which take place before, during and after school, afford excellent opportunities for relationship building. Teachers supervising the Breakfast and Homework Clubs, corridors, canteen, and various extra-curricular activities can get to know well those pupils with whom they come into contact. This is particularly the case since these scenarios are outside the more rigid environment of the classroom.

Range of Pastoral Activities

The students in Edmund Rice College are supervised from their arrival until they leave the school. This supervision includes extra-curricular activities such as the Breakfast Club, which begins at 7.45 am, through to working in the Homework Club and after school sporting activities.

The extra-curricular activities are varied, ranging from sporting experiences through to library and homework support. The school also offers a range of projects through the Extended Schools Programme. The variety of activities is aimed not only at supporting our pupils but also at encouraging the use of the school as a valued community resource.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Edmund Rice College recognises the importance of monitoring and self-evaluation in all aspects of its work. As part of the self-evaluation process in Pastoral Care, the Principal and SLT always consider at least one area in any school year to examine and evaluate. Child Protection is reviewed on a yearly basis with the focus on training procedures and the policy document.

Anti-bullying procedures are also regularly monitored with questionnaires again being used to determine how effectively our system is operating. The Principal, working closely with SLT discuss the information collated and then through the Head of Pastoral Care proceeds to implement any changes which may be deemed necessary. It should be noted that in relation to the findings from questionnaires it is accepted that some responses may be perception and are not necessarily an accurate comment on provision. However, perceptions are also important and any negativity is addressed as part of the continuous improvement process.

Both formal and informal consultation with those directly and indirectly involved in the pastoral provision does take place. Form Teachers are also encouraged to give their impressions of any aspect of the Pastoral system. The various Pastoral roles and structures are regularly scrutinised to ensure that they prove effective for all possible eventualities. Where amendments or revisions are perceived as being necessary, these are carried out.

To facilitate the monitoring process, each Year Head will hold regular meetings with his/her Form Teachers. The Head of Pastoral Care will receive the minutes of these meetings. Arranged meetings between Year Heads and the Head of Pastoral Care also afford another opportunity for review, evaluation and co-ordination of the school's Pastoral provision.

In this way it is hoped to ensure that the Pastoral Systems within the school achieve their aims and objectives.

Summary

This policy document has set out to identify the Pastoral contribution, which this school intends to make in its overall education provision.

The school recognises that the quality of Pastoral Care influences the ethos and tone of the whole school. We recognise that a strong Pastoral Care structure helps create an atmosphere in which its young people feel secure and valued. It also helps to inform and reassure parents that their children are being educated in a safe and caring atmosphere.

In this policy document we have outlined the structures in place to achieve such objectives. It should be stressed however that the school constantly monitors its performance in this important area. We realise that monitoring and evaluating performance, and striving for improvements is a constant process involving all the key contributors. By working with all stakeholders we can only move forward.

We also realise that we live in an ever changing world where views and perceptions change rapidly. Thus the school needs to be able to accept change whilst at the same time not move away from the principles upon which its foundations are built.

To conclude this policy document's intention is to illustrate the various strategies used to ensure that every pupil in Edmund Rice College has the opportunity in a safe environment to reach their potential in every area of their life, and is equipped with the skills to cope with the outside world.