

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) About ERST

1. What is the Edmund Rice Schools Trust?
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3. Who makes up the Edmund Rice Schools Trust office?
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8. What is the Charter?
9. Should the Charter guide all decisions made by the Board of Management?
10. How should the Charter relate to the school's mission statement?
11. What is the Edmund Rice Schools Trust's position on students of different faiths?
12. What is the Edmund Rice Schools Trust's position of the teaching of Religious Education and students opting out of RE class?
13. In what ways does the Edmund Rice Schools Trust support schools?
14. Are CBS schools now known as Edmund Rice School Trust schools? Did this change require a change of name?
15. What does the Edmund Rice Schools Trust logo mean?
16. What is the role of the Board of Management and the Edmund Rice Schools Trust with regard to the Admission Policy?
17. How do I apply for admission to an Edmund Rice Schools Trust school for my child?
18. My child has been refused admission to an Edmund Rice Schools Trust school. Can I appeal the Board of Management's decision to the Edmund Rice Schools Trust?

Suggested Responses - not all have responses

1. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust is an educational lay trust, established in 2008, with responsibility for the 97 former Christian Brother schools in the Republic of Ireland. It is a company, with charitable status, whose business is conducted by Members, Directors and an Executive team. The primary objective of the Trust is to ensure and foster the advancement of education and to further the aims and purposes of Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition, in colleges, schools and other educational projects in Ireland, owned or operated by the Company, in accordance with the religion and education philosophy of the Company, as stated in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter.
2. The Members are the Trustees of the Company and hold the assets in Trust for the provision of Education in the Edmund Rice Tradition for current and future generations. The Directors are the Trustees of the schools and are responsible for setting the strategy of the Company. The Executive Team are responsible for the day to day operations of the Trust and the provision of Trustee services to the schools. A list of Edmund Rice Schools Trust Members, Directors and Executive can be found here [***link to list of Members/Directors/Executive***].
3. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Office is made up of The Chief Executive; The Senior Management Team, Schools Support Services Team and the Administration Team. A list of the Executive and their roles can be found here [***link to list of Executive***].
4. The role of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Office is to act as the Executive of the Trust in carrying out the day to day trustee roles and function.
5. The main objective of The Edmund Rice Schools Trust as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association is to ensure and foster the advancement of education and to further the aims and purposes of Catholic education in the Edmund Rice tradition in colleges, schools and other educational projects in Ireland owned or operated by the Company (The Trust) in accordance with the religion and education philosophy of the Company as stated in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter.
6. Communication with our schools is conducted directly through the Executive. Some examples of our direct communications are: regular correspondence (letters / emails), updating of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust website, our publications, Síol and Eolaí, phone calls, school visits, Cluster Meetings, Principal and Deputy Principal Inductions and of course our annual Principals' and RE Conferences.
7. Yes - The Edmund Rice Schools Trust has 37 primary schools throughout the country.
8. It is the religious and educational philosophy of the schools in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. It is what the Education Act 1998 terms 'the

characteristic spirit' of the school as determined by the Trustees. It expresses the tradition, heritage, core characteristics and values which characterise the school and which the school seeks to uphold. It is a challenge to every school. It is aspirational. Each school seeks to uphold the Charter and make it real in the school community. It is the norm against which each school community measures its mission, performance and priorities. It contains the 5 KEY Elements of an Edmund Rice School. Each individual school might have additional elements. It states the Vision and Mission of Edmund Rice Schools and proclaims the catholic values that the schools uphold. It inspires the school partners in their commitment to Catholic education. It encourages a commitment to national and international networking on behalf of the poor and less fortunate in the world.

9. The Charter is defined by the Education Act 1998 as 'the characteristic spirit' of the school as determined by the Trustees. It expresses the tradition, heritage, core characteristics and values which characterise the school and which the school seeks to uphold. Each school seeks to uphold the Charter and make it real in the school community. It is the norm against which each school community measures its mission, performance and priorities. With this in mind the Charter should be at the Heart of every decision made by the Board. It should be open and present at every Board meeting for reference and reflection when facing challenging decisions.

The Vision, Mission and Key Elements of an Edmund Rice Schools Trust school, as set out in the Charter, will be implemented by the Board of Management and subscribed to by the entire school community in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Education Act (1998).

10. A school's Mission Statement is a unique expression of how that particular school aspires to live out the Mission and Vision and the Key Elements as stated in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Charter.
11. The Edmund Rice School is an inclusive school. Admission to the school will be in accordance with the stated Admissions Policy of the school. Before enrolment, students and parents will be made aware of the ethos, philosophy and practices of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust school and will be in a position to decide if the values of the school are compatible with their own beliefs.
12. In Edmund Rice schools Religious Education should be at the heart of the curriculum. The subject should be allocated the correct minimum requirement (in secondary schools this is three periods per week on the timetable and at the very least, the provision of qualified and specialist teachers to teach Religious Education. Within schools an equitable financial amount should be available for development work in RE. Religious Education should ensure that students are exposed to a broad

range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. It has a particular role to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no religious traditions. However, Edmund Rice schools are entitled to teach the syllabus through the lens of our own religious tradition. The presence of other religious traditions in the Religious Education class is an ideal opportunity for peer teaching. All parents should be aware that their son or daughter will be experiencing the values and ethos of the school in the day to day running of the school, not just in RE class. Some parents, however, do have concerns and may wish to withdraw their child from RE class, as is their constitutional right. A student cannot be required to receive religious education against the wishes of the student's parents or against his or her own wishes once they turn 18 years of age. However, withdrawal from religion class needs to be negotiated with school management and will hopefully be addressed during an enrolment meeting. Withdrawing students from RE class presents the school with considerable logistical and supervision dilemmas. In cases such as this, a school should make it clear that responsibility for supervision of the student at such times lies with the parent. This is because it may not be practically possible for the school to provide for such alternate supervision of their son or daughter within the Department of Education's staff allocation to the school.

13. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust sources Trustee nominees and Chairpersons for its 96 Boards of Management. All secondary Boards of Management personnel are appointed by the Trust. The Trust engages in training, ongoing advice and support for Principals and Boards in relation on Ethos, Governance, Finance and Property matters that relate to the legal and supportive role of the Trust. Induction training for newly appointed Principals and Deputy Principals is provided on an annual basis. Ongoing support for the network is provided through cluster meetings of Principals, Deputy Principals, Principals' Annual Conference, Religious Education Teachers' Conference and a variety of focus groups in response to ongoing needs. The Trust advocates on behalf of schools that are embarking on changes of school status and amalgamations. The Trust negotiates on behalf of schools with the DES, other Trusts, Religious Congregations and Diocesan Education Offices when necessary. The Trust supports Students' Councils through training and networking. ERST also has representation on national and regional bodies along with other Trustees such as the Limerick Federation of Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools. ERST provides support for Boards of Management during the interview process for the appointment of new Principals and Deputy Principals at second level and Principals at Primary Level. The Trust is represented during the pre-evaluation and post-evaluation meetings with the Board during a Whole School Evaluation

14. All of our schools are part of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Network. We fully appreciate that for historical and local reasons it may neither be possible, nor advisable, to change the name of the schools. We would like however, to see when a school is referenced to, or promoting itself, that it adds the following wording “a member of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust” at the end of the school name. If any Edmund Rice Schools Trust school is publishing any material, we would like them to use the Edmund Rice School Trust logo also [[link to Logo](#)]. The most important thing however, is that every school in the Edmund Rice Schools Trust Network is a living example of the values of Edmund Rice and those espoused in our Charter [[link to Charter](#)]
15. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust Visual Identity/Logo is designed to communicate our confidence and professionalism, valuing where we have come from and where we are going. It is a confident, professional logo that reflects our values and aspirations. Making reference to the rich heritage of the Trust, this carefully researched, highly memorable and unique visual stamp draws on the expressive, early Irish alphabet of Ogham. Treating our visual identity in a much more graphic, stylised way, the ancient system of marks, while still alluding to the organisation's connections to the past and to Irish culture, are decidedly contemporary, forming an instantly recognisable brand marque. Moreover, they spell out the letters 'ERST', providing us with a logo that is original and relevant. Consideration has been given to the choice of colours in terms of both aesthetics and legibility, as well as to the treatment of the type, which conveys the Trust's name in both Irish and English. The typeface, Walbaum, was created in the early 19th century, around the time the first Christian Brothers schools were opening.
16. It is the responsibility of a school's Board of Management to draft their school's Admissions Policy and to ensure it is implemented correctly. The Board of Management should also ensure that it is regularly updated taking into account any legislative changes or Department of Education and Skills guidelines. The Edmund Rice Schools Trust, as Patron, has a role in agreeing to the publication of its schools' Admissions Policies pursuant to Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998.
17. You must apply directly to your chosen school for admission. A list of Edmund Rice Schools Trust primary and secondary schools can be found here [[link to list of schools](#)]. Every school is obliged, by law, to publish an Admissions Policy which explains in a clear manner how the school allocates places. As a first step, you should check the school's website to get a copy of the Admissions Policy. If the policy is not available online, contact the school office directly for further details. It is advisable to inform yourself on the admissions procedure relevant to a given school well in advance of the relevant admission date. In the event that there are too many applicants for the number of places available, the Admissions

Policy should set out clearly the criteria the Board of Management will use to allocate places. Most schools update their Admissions Policy annually.

18.No, the Edmund Rice Schools Trust does not offer this facility. All decisions relating to the admission of students to Edmund Rice Schools Trust schools rests with our schools' Boards of Management. If your child has been refused admission to an Edmund Rice Schools Trust school, you should first consult the school's Admissions Policy and the section dealing with appeals. It is often the case that a school Board of Management will hear appeals on admissions decisions in the first instance. It is open to parents / guardians to use this appeals process. Alternatively, parents / guardians (or students who have reached 18 years of age) can appeal a Board of Management's decision on admission directly to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills. This is known as a Section 29 appeal. Such an appeal process is also available to parents / guardians / students who are have reached 18 years of age in relation to Board of Management decisions on expulsion or suspensions where the cumulative period of suspension would amount to 20 school days.