

GIFTED AND TALENTED

Written: 2014

Next Review: 2017

RATIONALE:

Our vision is that St Joseph's Catholic Primary School seeks to provide a welcoming environment wherein the development of each person and the education offered reflects gospel values.

As stated in the *Catholic Education Commission of WA Handbook for Catholic Schools (1996)*, Catholic schools have a responsibility to educate all students to their full potential.

The Bishops' Mandate Letter 2009-2015 states '*...the starting point for all curriculum decisions will be the students themselves and their individual needs*'.
(Mandate Letter, 66) '*...students with particular needs should be given all the support and the encouragement resources allow*'. (Mandate Letter, 71)

Therefore, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School aims to achieve educational equity and high quality outcomes for all gifted and talented students, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds; and to ensure that these students are extended, enriched and/or accelerated throughout their schooling as far as resources allow.

In light of these statements, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has addressed these guidelines by establishing a whole school Gifted and Talented Policy.

The purpose of this policy is to maximise the educational outcomes of schooling for Gifted and Talented students, support families of Gifted and Talented students in their decision making and provide staff with documented support for their actions.

DEFINITIONS:

For the purpose of this policy and subsequent practices, Gifted and Talented shall be based on Gagne's (2002) definition. It differentiates between natural abilities (gifts or aptitudes) and systematically developed skills (talents).

Therefore, giftedness can be defined as '*the potential to perform at a level significantly beyond what may be expected from one's age peers in any area of human ability*'.

It is important to note that a student may be gifted in any one of the cognitive, creative, socio-affective or sensory-motor domains, or several, or in all, or in an area not categorised by domains.' (Gagne, 2002, p 60-74)

Talent, then, is *'an achievement beyond what might be expected from age peers in fields such as arts, technology, sports and social action. Therefore, a student can be gifted without being talented.'* (Gagne, 2002, p.60 -74)

The key to this definition is that it distinguishes between outstanding potential (giftedness) and outstanding performance (talent). In differentiating between potential and performance, this view of giftedness acknowledges the occurrence of students who may be gifted underachievers. These students may possess outstanding potential, but this potential may not be translated into outstanding performance.

PRINCIPLES:

1. A range of approaches, strategies and learning opportunities in supporting Gifted and Talented students is essential.
2. Schools have the responsibility of evaluating and implementing the most appropriate mainstream classroom procedures and strategies that will maximise the learning opportunities for Gifted and Talented students.
3. Learning opportunities should facilitate the development of higher order thinking skills and higher levels of thinking should be required of Gifted and Talented Students.
4. Where possible, community partnerships should be built into programs for Gifted and Talented Students.
5. Early identification of students with high academic potential is desired.
6. There should be provision of appropriate intervention and/or ongoing management of academically Gifted and Talented students to facilitate achievement of potential.
7. Provision of professional learning for teachers, parents and school community is essential.
8. It is necessary for ongoing and effective case-management of all students who are identified as academically Gifted and Talented.

EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School acknowledges that different forms and levels of intervention and accommodation are required to effectively support Gifted and Talented students. We also recognise that students may have the potential to achieve but lack the necessary skills, and that individual provision needs to be made in order to provide every opportunity for Gifted and Talented students to demonstrate their potential.

Methods of appropriate educational provision for Gifted and Talented Students include:

- Enrichment – activities that add greater breadth to curriculum content in class and/or withdrawal activities that allow students to explore areas of study or interest in more depth.
- Acceleration within the classroom – allows students to move through content at a faster rate.

- Year Level Acceleration – a very small number of high ability students may need acceleration beyond their current year level.

The decision making process where acceleration is to be considered will be as follows:

Planning meeting: Principal, GAT Coordinator, Non Government Schools Psychologist, current teacher and receiving teacher meet to complete the IOWA Acceleration Scale and discuss options.

Decision Making Meeting: Principal, GAT Coordinator and parents discuss options.

Acceleration options that may be put into place:

- Subject acceleration in one or more subjects
- Whole grade acceleration

Where whole grade acceleration is deemed to be the best option it should be planned to take advantage of natural transition points where possible, particularly the beginning of a school year. Consideration will be given to mid year acceleration followed by end of year progression, as an alternative to whole grade acceleration at the beginning of a school year.

All cases of accelerated progression should be arranged on a trial basis of ten weeks. The student should be aware that if the trial period is not a success, they will return to the original grade placement. It is important that in such a circumstance the student should not be made to feel that they have failed. In all cases the acceleration should be reviewed at mid term and again at the end of the term. The review should include the Principal, GAT Coordinator, class teacher, parent and child and both positives and negatives should be considered at this point. Any changes or adjustments that need to be made will be recorded in the child's Curriculum Adjustment Plan.

In keeping with Catholic Education Policy no child is to be accelerated until they reach the compulsory education period, that is Year One.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION

Effective educational provision for Gifted and Talented students depends on appropriate and accurate identification. In order for identification to be effective a variety of methods should be employed including:

- Psychometric testing.
- Standardised testing
- GAT Co-ordinator
- Teacher nomination
- Parent nomination
- School performance data

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

Assessment involves acquiring and interpreting information and making judgements about students and their learning. Assessment for identifying gifted students should:

- Be systematic across the school
- Provide for early identification
- Ensure that as many areas as possible of giftedness are identified
- Be ongoing and dynamic
- Allow for opportunities for gifted students to emerge
- Be inclusive of parent/guardian information.

PROGRESS MONITORING

Monitoring is a series of assessments done over a period of time, which can be used to describe student learning. Monitoring also allows for:

- Tracking and reporting of the identified Gifted and Talented student's learning and the regular review of educational provisions.
- Placement of an individual student within a program for Gifted and Talented Students needs to be monitored through the use of Curriculum Adjustment Plan's (CAP'S) which identifies their needs and goals. This includes the monitoring of students across intellectual, social and emotional domains.

SPECIFIC PROVISION

The role of teachers in every year group includes:

- Reading and acting upon student information, including general files and information provided by the GAT Coordinator.
- Participate in Case Management meetings and act upon Case Management Plans including the implementation of teaching strategies and Curriculum Adjustment Plans (CAP) as outlined.
- Plan, write, implement and evaluate Curriculum Adjustment Plans for all students who require a CAP, as identified by the GAT Coordinator and provide a copy to the Coordinator. CAP's are written for students located in the 98th percentile and above.
- Forward all documentation to the GAT Coordinator, so that confidential and pertinent information can be filed and acted upon appropriately.
- Differentiate, modify and accommodate within the classroom, in order to enable all students to reach their academic potential.

The role of the GAT Coordinator is multifaceted and covers the following major areas of responsibility:

- Identification of students, including recommending external referrals, individual, group and cohort testing and assessment, collection and collation of existing data, responding to teacher, parent and student referrals.
- Case management of students, including direct intervention with individual students and small groups, keeping ongoing records of student and parent contact, tracking student progress and support needs, monitoring the writing and implementation and evaluation of Case Management Plans involving parents, teachers and external professionals.
- Support of teaching staff, including provision of professional learning to staff, assistance to write, implement and evaluate Curriculum Adjustment Plans and the dissemination of pertinent policy information.

- Education of school community including dissemination of gifted program information to parents, students and school community.

RESOURCES

Assouline, S et al. (2003) *Iowa acceleration scale, 2nd edition manual: A guide for whole grade acceleration K-8*. Scotsdale: Great Potential Press.

Gagne, F (2002) *Transforming gifts into talents: The DMGT as a developmental theory*. In Colangelo, N & Davis, G (Eds) *Handbook of Gifted Education* (p 60 -74), Boston: Allyn & Bacon.