



**OUR
LADY'S
SCHOOL**
TERENURE



Gifted & Talented Learners Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on:

Date: 12th June 2023

Signature: Mary White

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

<i>Commenced: June 2023</i>
<i>Date of last Review: 12th June 2023</i>
<i>Review due: June 2024</i>

1. Rationale

Research suggests that Ireland is underachieving in the highest proficiency levels in comparison to other OECD countries. This suggests that higher-achieving students in Ireland are not performing at their potential (McGrath, 2017, p. 68). The aim of this policy is to ensure that gifted and talented students in Our Lady's School are given opportunities and support to reach their full potential. It also seeks to provide a learning environment in which these students can engage with learning opportunities that challenge their thinking and ensure they can make appropriate progress.

2. Identification

Gifted and talented students are those who are achieving or who have the potential to achieve, at a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside our school (NCCA, 2007). Before identifying any student as gifted or talented in a particular area, we aim to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and succeed in that area. This makes the process of identification fair. A gifted or talented student can be identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to the subject area but may include elements of the following:

1. Teacher nomination
2. Year Head nomination
3. Coach/mentor nomination
4. CAT/PPAD-E/standardised testing data (scoring 125 + in subsections)
5. School based assessment
6. Athena assessment results
7. Assessment results outside school
8. External agency/organisation
9. Parental/self nomination

The following areas are considered

1. Intellectual ability
2. Specific academic aptitude or talent
3. Problem solving ability
4. Leadership ability
5. Sports/Performing Arts
6. Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation.
7. Creative and productive thinking
8. Mechanical ingenuity

3. Provisions in place for our Gifted and Talented students

Department subject plans and schemes of work include opportunities of extension for students in each subject area.

We strive to ensure that we:

- Recognise all achievement
- Encourage all students to take ownership of their learning.
- Use an array of assessment tools, including standardised assessments and in-class testing (both formative and summative), to generate comprehensive data relating to student attainment levels.
- Analyse the data generated to track the academic progress of students throughout their school journey.
- Utilise our academic tracking and academic progress booklets (3rd, 5th and 6th years) to provide students with an opportunity to set goals and outline steps to achieve these goals.
- Identify students who need further support to extend their learning.
- Provide students with the opportunity to learn with students of the same ability within the mixed ability classes, e.g. group work
- Provide staff with opportunities to develop differentiating activities through teachmeets and education committee meetings
- Provide the opportunity for all students to get involved in a wide range of extracurricular activities through our extensive extra curricular programme.
- Affirm academic achievement through the merit system, biannual reports and at the end of year ceremony.
- Regularly affirm student's exceptional talents through the merit system, school app, twitter/social media, termly newsletters, the student achievement wall and end of year award ceremonies.

Going forward, the school strives to ensure gifted and talented students have a staff mentor that will support and encourage students to reach their full potential, e.g. making student aware of an encouraging to enter competitions

4. School based activities we offer for Gifted & Talented students

Each subject department will be made aware of Gifted and Talented students within each year group. These students could be chosen as the subject ambassadors. Students are given the opportunity throughout the year to lead on subject specific events. They run specific events within school e.g. Cyber Week, Reading Week, Maths, Seachtain na Gaeilge. In addition, we offer;

- Mentoring with an assigned staff member who will work with the student on a Stretched Learning Plan

- School-based clubs and societies (e.g. Language Club, Book Club, Publication club, Debating)
- Student council meetings weekly
- Enrichment opportunities (Gaisce Award, Law Modules, Latin club)
- Opportunities for performance (School Musical, Concert, Sports events)
- Specialist teaching or coaching (e.g. Mensa Maths, De Bono thinking, Accelerated Reader, BT Young Scientist, Baking Club, Chambor Choir)
- Leadership opportunities (e.g. House Leaders, European Youth Parliament, Prefects)
- Encourage students to apply for programmes on offer outside of school - (UCD Astra Academy, CTYI Talent Search, DCU Early University Entrance)
- Competitions - Irish Maths Olympiad, Generation Euro, Aistritheoirí Óga,
- Applied Maths as an extra option in 5th and 6th year

5. Catering for Gifted and Talented Learners in the Classroom

Some ways teachers can ensure they are catering for gifted and talented learners in the classroom are:

- Compacting - moving through the course quickly on an individual basis
- Planning for tiered learning and offering choice - providing work at entry, advanced and extension level
- Encouraging creative thinking
- Providing additional materials and accelerated rate of learning
- Providing opportunities to work both independently and as part of a group
- Offer the most difficult first - the teacher starts the most difficult questions and students are given the opportunity to complete these to demonstrate mastery. If a student is unable to complete the five most difficult they need to complete the full exercise.
- Pre-test for volunteers - e.g. if students get 90% or higher, they are excused from homework/practise work
- Allowing gifted students to work together where suitable, e.g. group work

6. Review

The efficiency of this policy will be monitored year round through the use of

- In-class and house assessment results
- Termly check-ins with Year Head/Mentor
- Parent-teacher meetings
- Comparison with annual State Examination results

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in consultation with parents, students and teachers every two years.

7. References

Azzam, A. (no date) *Six strategies for challenging gifted learners*, ASCD. Available at: <https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/six-strategies-for-challenging-gifted-learners> (Accessed: November 9, 2022).

ICEP Europe. (2013) *Teaching Gifted and Talented Children. Module 1: Legislation and Patterns of Provision*. ICEP Europe

McGrath, P. (2017). 'DOES EDUCATION IN IRELAND MEET THE NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS?' *The Irish Journal of Education / Iris Eireannach an Oideachais*, 42, 64–87. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26607240>

NCCA (2007) *Exceptionally able students: Draft guidelines for teachers*. Dublin: NCCA.