

## **Gifted and Talented Policy**

At St John Bosco College we believe that, as part of our commitment to the development of the whole person, we have a responsibility to cater for individual differences and actively encourage all students to achieve their potential. We therefore acknowledge that our gifted and talented students should be both recognised and catered for appropriately.

When using the terms 'giftedness' and 'talent' we have adopted Professor Francoys Gagne's definitions as:-

*Giftedness designates the possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers. TALENT designates the outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers who are or have been active in that field.*  
(Gagné, 2009)

Two Gifted and Talented Programs currently exist at St John Bosco College to enable students with a special gift or talent the opportunity to attain their full potential. These are the Newman Program (for Year 7 and 8 students) and the Gifted Opportunities and Accelerated Learning (G.O.A.L.) Program (for Years 9-10 students). Both Programs differentiate the curriculum so as to stimulate the interests and abilities of the gifted and/or talented students who are selected. They aim to create a challenging learning environment that encourages students to engage their abilities to the greatest possible extent, promote creativity and higher cognitive skills, and prevent student under-achievement.

### **IDENTIFICATION**

Identification begins before the student commences schooling at the College in the form of an interview, parent nomination, and formal testing. Identification of gifted and talented students is then carried out within each subject area as soon as possible and regularly updated. This identification involves a range of both measures (formal and informal) and people, including subject coordinators, teachers, parents and students (peer and/or self). No single formal/informal measurement or nomination is a determining factor and students may qualify for the Program in more than one talent area.

The following is a list of some common characteristics used to identify gifted students. However, it is not an exhaustive list and only includes the more positive attributes:

- is an avid reader
- has avid interest in science or literature
- needs little outside control - applies self discipline
- is creative in new ideas, seeing associations, pursuing innovations
- has the capacity to look into things and be puzzled
- reveals originality in oral and written expression
- displays a willingness to accept complexity
- has the capacity to use knowledge and information other than to memorise
- shows superior judgement in evaluating things
- is a good guesser
- learns rapidly, easily and efficiently
- uses a large number of words easily and accurately
- asks many questions of a provocative nature
- has a power of abstraction, conceptualisation and synthesis
- has an interest in cause-effect relations
- is persistent

(Note: no gifted child will show all the traits listed. For more information go to <http://www.nswagtc.org.au/>)

As not all gifted students exhibit these characteristics, identification procedures include a range of subjective and objective measures. This is an acknowledgement that the student's ethnicity, cultural and language background, family and/or socio-economic background may result in diverse academic and social-emotional needs which must be addressed appropriately. A range of identification measures can determine if a student is underachieving, and a discrepancy between ability and performance may be an indicator that the student is twice exceptional (2e).

Individual plans will be put into place for students who are both gifted and have a disability. These may include a modified curriculum that addresses the diverse academic, psychological, affective and/or physical needs of the student, as well as consulting with experts in the field of that disability. The College believes that all students have a right to achieve their potential and that "a school must work to lessen or remove negative personal and environmental catalysts which may be hampering the gifted student's progress towards talent."

(GERRIC, 2006. Gifted Education K-12 Position Paper).

## **PROVISIONS**

As gifted and talented students and needs are diverse, St John Bosco College offers a variety of provisions including differentiated curriculum, contracts/independent projects, mentors, competitions, grade skipping or subject-based acceleration (viable for a select few only), and enrichment and extension courses. Such withdrawal courses, which generally present work at least two years above the student's chronological age, enable students to work and interact with like ability peers. Interaction with like ability peers is a key aspect of the Newman Class. Regardless of the type of provision to cater to the asynchronous and individual needs of the gifted students, the aim is to develop problem solving, independent learning, creative thought and higher order thinking skills.

Compacting the curriculum and grouping are significant provisions both within the Newman Class and GOAL Program to aid differentiation. The curriculum is differentiated in terms of the content, process, product and environment to maximise challenge and higher order thinking. Students can be grouped according to ability, interest and/or Kanevsky's Brilliant Behaviours, while also allowing for individual students to work on personal interest projects.

Activities beyond the College are also seen as important whether they include interacting with other gifted students or authentic learning that involves real life problems and audiences. Academic challenges, competitions and programs such as the GERRIC program at the University of NSW and Learning Labs at the University of Wollongong are also actively encouraged.

## **CELEBRATION**

To nurture the motivation, achievement and self-efficacy of its gifted students, the College celebrates their achievements in a variety of ways including the College merit system, the College Newsletter, College Assemblies, the Awards Evening and the Newman Symposium. Each of these methods is an opportunity to celebrate the gifted students' achievements, regardless of the domain of these achievements.