Gifted Education Policy

Classification
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Implementation Resources
• Gifted Education K-12 Position Paper

1.0 Rationale

'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10

The Gifted Education Policy for systemic Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney is set within the context of the Church's mission to evangelise, and is founded upon the Vision and Mission Statements and the Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools.

Pope Francis in his book 'Education for Choosing Life' refers to education as 'an act of hope'. Faith and the Christian vision of humanity fuel that hope. As partners in Catholic Education, Sydney Catholic Schools are committed to supporting this challenge by Pope Francis to fuel hope in all our students through fostering the attainment of their full human potential.

Our Archbishop's Charter amplifies this challenge in item 2, where our schools are called to:

"Nurture students' love of learning through a Catholic pedagogy that fosters the development of the intellect, moral knowledge, understanding and reasoning in a relational, social and cultural context."

The Archbishop's Charter for Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Sydney, Item 2, July 2011

At a national level, the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young People (2008) provides further impetus by declaring that all young Australians become successful learners, confident, creative, active and informed citizens. It recognises the need to 'provide challenging, and stimulating learning experiences' and promotes 'personalised learning that aims to fulfil the diverse capabilities of each young Australian' (p. 7).

The development of the Australian Curriculum, emerging from the Melbourne Declaration, recognises the need to design learning and teaching programs that cater for the full range of abilities including specific reference to gifted and talented programs.

The Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (2012) sets out a public statement of what constitutes teacher quality. The Standards state that quality teachers know how to structure their lessons to meet the social and intellectual development and characteristics of their students. It recognises the need to differentiate for 'specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities.' (p. 9) Responsive to the needs of gifted students, teachers need to be skilled in providing these learners with a curriculum that is
differentiated in pace, depth and degree of complexity.

This Gifted Education Policy describes the position of Sydney Catholic Schools (SCS) and provides direction for the Archdiocesan system of Catholic schools in addressing the needs of gifted and talented students. It is informed by the elements of effective pedagogy identified in the Gifted Education K-12 Position Paper for Sydney Catholic schools.

This Gifted Education Policy will play an important role in the elevation of teacher and student standards, and the shift from provisions to programs, in gifted education. According to Gagné’s definitions and model (2009) these students represent about ten per cent of the student population in Sydney Catholic Schools. This calls for a differentiated response in every school to the educational needs of these students.

2.0 Guiding Principles

This policy adopts Gagné’s definitions of giftedness and talent as identified in his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (2010, DMGT 2.0).

- Giftedness designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed outstanding natural abilities or aptitudes (called gifts), 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 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 ‘learning peers’ (those who have accumulated a similar amount of learning time from either current or past training) (Gagné, 2010, p. 82).

This policy is founded on the principle that giftedness is present in every culture and socio-economic context and domains. All learners have the right to receive an education that is responsive to their needs and the provision of an appropriate educational program for the gifted is an issue of equity.

2.1 Schools have a responsibility to identify gifted and talented students within their community.

2.2 Gifted learners have diverse learning needs and require adaptations to their education in order to develop their potential.

2.3 Gifted learners may have different academic, creative and social/emotional needs to their age peers. Gifted learners require an educational program that also supports their social and emotional needs.

2.4 Early identification enables early intervention to support optimal development.

2.5 Gifted learners may be twice exceptional—their giftedness may mask their disability or their disability may mask their giftedness.

2.6 The development of gifted students tends to be asynchronous and requires understanding and support in circumstances where emotional and social development does not match cognitive abilities.

2.7 The distinction between giftedness as outstanding potential, and talent as outstanding performance, is important. A student can be gifted without being talented, and requires an educational program responsive to her/his needs to catalyse potential into performance.

2.8 Gifted learners are best placed academically, socially and emotionally when they are with like-ability peers for a significant proportion of their time at school. Principals and school communities have a responsibility to provide a program that is differentiated from the core curriculum for the gifted and talented students in their schools. This will include differentiated curriculum within the classroom and extension, enrichment and accelerative practices as appropriate.

2.9 Assessment and reporting practices for gifted students must follow all of the principles of good assessment practices for all students. Formative and summative assessment are integral to the learning process. Tools such as off-level (also known as above-level) testing, differentiated pre- and post-
performance based assessments, product-based assessment and standardised assessments should be included in assessment practices.

2.10 The educational decisions regarding program options for gifted students is the responsibility of all stakeholders. Parents of gifted students are usually proven to be excellent identifiers. Schools have a responsibility to work in partnership with parents to encourage/support the development of giftedness in other domains.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Responsive to the needs of gifted students, schools have a responsibility to:

3.1.1 adopt the underlying principles of giftedness and talent based on Gagné’s (2010) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0)

3.1.2 identify gifted and talented students within their community using a range of objective and subjective procedures and measures

3.1.3 design differentiated educational programs, aligned to the BOSTES syllabus for the Australian Curriculum and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

3.1.4 support the implementation of school-wide practices of data-informed flexible grouping options

3.1.5 plan, implement, evaluate and make adjustments to accelerative options appropriate to their context

3.1.6 undertake regular evaluations of gifted programs and provisions

3.1.7 engage staff in ongoing high quality professional learning opportunities in gifted education

3.1.8 ensure collaborative and supportive home-school partnerships

3.1.9 celebrate high achievement in all domains

3.2 Responsive to the needs of gifted students, teachers have a responsibility to:

3.2.1 apply the principles of giftedness and talent, based on Gagné’s (2010) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0)

3.2.2 understand the characteristics of gifted and talented students and contribute to the identification processes as outlined in SCS and school guidelines

3.2.3 use data from a range of sources to inform the design of differentiated educational programs, aligned to the BOSTES syllabus for the Australian Curriculum

3.2.4 implement flexible grouping options to support classroom differentiation

3.2.5 implement appropriate accelerative options as needed

3.2.6 understand and respond to the socio-emotional characteristics of gifted students

3.2.7 review and evaluate their educational programs to ensure they are informed by ongoing assessment data

3.2.8 engage in ongoing professional learning opportunities in gifted education

3.2.9 celebrate high achievement in all domains

3.2.10 provide differentiated assessment options to reflect student achievement

3.3 Responsive to the needs of schools, SCS regional offices have a responsibility to:
3.3.1 support the professional learning of schools in gifted education
3.3.2 support the implementation of gifted education programs in schools
3.3.3 support processes of communication among stakeholders in gifted education including schools, other regions and the SCS Teaching and Learning Team
3.3.4 monitor school delivery of curriculum options for gifted students
3.3.5 support and monitor the implementation of this policy in the schools within their region

3.4 Responsive to the needs of regions and schools, the SCS Teaching and Learning Team has a responsibility to:

3.4.1 provide an overarching framework and strategic direction for gifted education across the Archdiocese
3.4.2 support opportunities for professional learning in gifted education
3.4.3 support endeavours to align initiatives and programs in gifted education across the Archdiocese of Sydney
3.4.4 oversee the implementation of this policy across the Archdiocese of Sydney

4.0 Procedures

The implementation of this Policy will be determined within each school’s context and gifted education policy statement. The goals and strategies for gifted education will be documented in the school’s Strategic Improvement Plan.

5.0 Bases of Discretion

It is expected that Principals will use the Policy as the basis for their planning as part of the School Review and Improvement processes. However, the Principal has the discretion to determine the timeline and procedures for the implementation of the Policy throughout the School’s Review and Improvement five year cycle.

6.0 Explanatory Notes and Definitions

This policy adopts Gagné’s definitions of giftedness and talent as identified in his Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (2010, DMGT 2.0) outlined in the Guiding Principles of this policy at 2.0.

7.0 Supporting Documents

7.1 Related policies

7.2 Supporting documents

The Gifted Education Policy is linked to the:

- New Horizons: Inspiring Spirits and Minds, A Strategic Improvement Plan for Sydney Catholic Schools
- School Review and Improvement Framework and its supporting publication

It is integrated with the:

- Gifted Education K-12 Position Paper

7.3 References


8.0 Appendices

Nil

9.0 Classification

9.1 Policy Number: TL201401-1.1

9.2 Version: 1.1

Last modified: December 2015

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to matters contained therein. In so much as any aspect of this policy may appear to be in conflict with another Archdiocesan system or school-based policy, then precedence is to be given to this policy.

9.3 Audience: Public

9.4 Review by: December 2017

9.5 Approved by Leadership Team: 10 April 2014

9.6 Endorsed by SACS Board: 10 December 2014

9.7 Approved by Executive Director of Sydney Catholic Schools: 2 March 2015

9.8 Commencement Date: 6 March 2015