# Dominican College Sion Hill

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# Gifted and Talented Policy

January 2018

To be reviewed in 2019

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**Section 1 General**

**Aims**

*Dominican College Sion Hill aims to help each student reach her full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment.*

We are committed to providing an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential and this clearly includes students who display some form of exceptional ability.

**Definitions**

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004, does not explicitly refer to the needs of exceptionally able students. No single agreed international definition of ‘exceptionally able’ exists. A range of terms is used interchangeably in the literature and includes ‘gifted’, ‘talented’, ‘exceptionally able’ and ‘exceptional’.

For the purposes of this policy, the definition of exceptionally able is that given by the NCCA Guidelines on Teaching Gifted and Talented Students (NCCA, 2007). An exceptionally able student is one who is in the top range of 5-10% of the student population. An exceptionally able student is one who has  the capacity for or demonstrates high levels of performance in an academic area or within a domain-specific ability in a non-academic area, including:

* Visual and performing arts and sports
* Leadership ability
* Creative and productive thinking
* Mechanical ingenuity
* Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation.

 **Section 2 Identification of Exceptionally Able Students**

Before identifying any student as exceptionally able in a particular area, we aim to ensure that all students have had the opportunity to learn and succeed in this area. This makes the process of identification fair. An exceptionally able student should be identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to subject area but will include elements of the following:

* Teacher referral
* Assessment results
* Cognitive Ability Testing Data (Students with percentiles of 95 and over)
* Peer referral
* Parental/guardian referral
* Identification by a previous teacher, previous  school, external agency or organisation
* Self referral

It is worth remembering that exceptionally able students can be:

* good all-rounders
* high achievers in one area
* of high ability but with low motivation
* of good verbal ability but poor writing skills
* exceptionally able but with a short attention span
* exceptionally able but with a learning difficulty  or disability which masks their achievements
* exceptionally able with poor social skills
* keen to disguise their abilities. (Eyre,1993)  Everyone in school has a responsibility to recognise and value students’ abilities. We are aware that:
* unnecessary repetition of work is de-motivating  and de-motivated students will not always  demonstrate potential
* there is sometimes peer pressure to  underachieve
* exceptionally able students are not always  easier to reach than other students.

**Record Keeping**

A record is kept of all students who have been identified as exceptionally able which is available to staff in paper or electronic form. The area  of ability is recorded with reference to which aspect(s) the student has exceptional abilities  in. As with all school records pertaining to their children, parents/guardians are consulted and have access to such a record. These records are reviewed twice a year at a meeting of the staff concerned. If a student is not reaching his or her full potential, or has achieved the set targets, new arrangements and where necessary new targets will be set.

**Section 3 Provision for Exceptionally Able Students**

Opportunities for extension and enrichment  are built into all our schemes of work. During policy review in *month/year* we shall ensure that every curriculum area will have a reference to exceptionally able. This should state what the identification procedure will be and what provision is in place. We aim to:

* maintain an ethos where it is acceptable to  be bright
* encourage all students to be independent  learners
* recognise achievement
* be aware of the effects of ethnicity, bilingualism,  gender, religion and social circumstances on  learning and high achievement
* provide a wide range of extra-curricular  activities and clubs
* always provide work at an appropriate level
* provide opportunities for all students to work  with like minded peers.

**Types of Provision**

*Mentor System*

Each student identified as falling into the exceptionally able category (GAT) will be assigned a staff mentor. This mentor may or may not teach the student. The mentor role can include:

* Maintaining the Individual Record Sheet (GAT)
* Monitoring student participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
* Looking at academic ratios and attendance
* Meeting with subject teachers to track progress
* Reviewing term reports
* Trying to facilitate vertical mixing of classes where possible (with prior consent of Parents and Principal) Referring students to Centre for Talented Youth in DCU where appropriate Encouraging participation in appropriate University Outreach Event

*Classroom differentiation*

* Teachers have high expectations.
* Tasks are designed to take account of levels of  existing knowledge, skills and understanding.
* There are planned extension opportunities or  open-ended tasks.
* There is access to higher tier exam entries.

*School based provision*

This varies according to subject area and is covered using a variety of methods like:- school based clubs - school societies/councils  - enrichment opportunities - opportunities for performance - specialist teaching

The school endeavors to link with other providers of opportunities for students with exceptional abilities - local, national and international organisations, competitions, festivals, partnerships with secondary schools further education institutions, and, businesses. Students will be encouraged to fulfill their potential in those areas in which they are exceptionally able without reducing the breadth of their curriculum and personal experience.

*Personal development*

Class work and work outside the classroom includes a number of opportunities for students to work in small and large groups, which will help develop their personal and social skills. We recognise the way that students work in teams and support each other when discussing ideas or collecting resources and materials supports their social, personal and emotional development. Some exceptionally able students find working in teams easy; others show excellent social and leadership skills but others find ‘team work’ more difficult.

The school aims to develop all the abilities of students, including their personal and social skills, especially if these are not strengths. We aim to create a climate in which students are taught to relate well to each other and where differences of all kinds, including ability, are accepted.

**Section 4 Leadership and Management Roles**

The principal and senior management are responsible overall for the implementation of the exceptionally able policy.

**Section 5 Review**

This policy will be reviewed in 2019.

**Section 6 References**

NCCA (2007) Exceptionally Able Students, Draft Guidelines for Teachers, National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

<https://www.ncca.ie/media/1974/exceptionally_able_students_draft_guidelines_for_teachers.pdf>

EPSEN (2004) Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act, 2004

**Section 7 Appendix**

A1: Individual GAT Record Sheet

**Dominican College, Sion Hill, Individual Record Sheet (GAT)**

|  |
| --- |
| Student Name: |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Date** | **Staff** | **Comment** |
| File started |  |  |  |
| Review 1 |  |  |  |
| Review 2 |  |  |  |
| Review 3 |  |  |  |

**Recent assessment / NPR scores**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | V | NV | Q | S |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

**Academic ratios**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | AR value |  | Date | AR value |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Areas of Ability (Please Highlight)**A: General Intellectual Ability or Talent B: Specific Academic Aptitude or TalentC: Visual and Performing Arts and SportsD: Leadership abilityE: Creative and Productive ThinkingF: Mechanical IngenuityG: Special Abilities in Empathy, Understanding and Negotiation |
| Details of specific abilities |
| Extra curricular / co curricular participation |
| Actions to be taken |
| Outcomes with date |
| Monitoring arrangements |
| Provision |
| Additional support |
| Extension work |
| Grouping |
| Out of school enrichment activity |

|  |
| --- |
| Copy to (please tick when done)VSWare:Tutor:GuidanceCo-ordinator: Parent/guardian:Principal: |