

**Dominican College**  
**Sion Hill**



**Policy for Gifted, Able and**  
**Talented Students**

**May 2011**

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## Section 1 - Context

Dominican College Sion Hill aims to help each student achieve her full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy secure environment. A central theme of the mission statement is to provide a community environment in which each student can develop to her full human potential. Furthermore the school supports the principle of inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with a disability or other special educational needs. Our policy on special needs supports these aims and is written in the context of recent legislation particularly the Education Act 1998, Equal Status Act 2000 and the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004.

The Education Act, 1998 states that its function is:

*“..to make provision in the interests of the common good for the education of every person in the state, including any person with a disability or who has other special educational needs”*

This document is drawn up in the context of this act and to ensure that students with special educational needs are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential in the school.

### **Definition**

(See appendix 1 for DES glossary of terms)

*“Pupils with special educational needs include all those whose disabilities and /or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging. Such pupils have special educational needs arising from their disabilities and / or circumstances and will require educational provision to be made for them.” (Dept of Education and Science)*

### **Terms:**

In these guidelines the term “**gifted**” refers to learners who perform, or who are potentially able to perform, extremely highly in one or more subjects in the statutory school curriculum (other than art and design, music, and P.E.).

The term “**talented**” refer to learners who excel, or who are potentially able to excel, in one or more specific fields such as art, music, P.E., or performing arts.

### **Definitions:**

Those pupils who demonstrate in one or more areas, abilities which place them into the highest achieving 20% of our school population and who would benefit from an effective and planned differentiation programme can be classified as “**able**”.

5 to 10% of our school population may be considered as **“more able”**. These children have been referred to by the DES as **“Gifted and Talented”**.

A small minority, up to 5% of our school population may be considered as **“exceptionally able”**. These children need specific plans to enable their needs to be met. Effective provision may involve writing an Individual Education Plan to clearly identify the areas where the pupils need specific teaching, high expectations, increased differentiation and support.

### **Underachievement:**

Is a discrepancy between a pupil's school performance and some index of her actual ability e.g. a failure in terms of results and/or quality of work maybe an indicator. Underachievers can be difficult to identify and so staff are encouraged to note any evidence of ability and to share their ideas to collectively explore the student's ability.

Dominion College Sion Hill values all children equally and endeavours to ensure that each child has an opportunity to realise her potential in a challenging and supportive environment. Our school will have, at any time, a number of able, talented or gifted students, some who may perform at a level that well exceeds the level of others in their class or that expected of children in their age group. This may be in one or more areas of their learning. Our definition of ability recognises academic and practical performance as well as those who show outstanding artistic, musical and creative talent, physical skills, leadership qualities and the ability to process ideas and information. It also recognises that a child may possess this potential although performance may not reflect this.

## Section 2 – Aims & Objectives

The **aims** of this policy are that clear guidelines are set out for

- ✓ **An agreed, shared definition of the terms “able”, “gifted”, ‘talented’ and “exceptionally able”.**
- ✓ **The identification of talented and gifted students as soon as possible.**
- ✓ **Meeting students needs with a range of appropriate strategies.**
- ✓ **Raising staff awareness of the range of strategies available to them.**
- ✓ **Providing access to a suitably differentiated and challenging curriculum.**
- ✓ **Appointing a Gifted and talented co-ordinator to co-ordinate the above.**

The **objectives** of the policy are:

- To foster a culture of achievement by creating a climate of learning and excellence throughout the school.
- To put an emphasis on creating opportunities for pupils to identify their gifts and talents and for abilities to flourish.
- To promote opportunities for disadvantaged learners.
- To work in close partnership with, and involve, parents/carers to help them promote children’s learning and development.
- To ensure that all who are involved with children are aware of the procedures for identifying their needs, supporting and teaching them
- To work in close partnership, where appropriate, with outside agencies to support the needs and provision for able and talented children.
- Students are assessed in a way or ways appropriate to their individual needs
- Students are monitored and reassessed to establish their changing needs
- Students are provided with all possible support as they need it throughout their time in the school.
- Students are integrated socially in the school community.

## **Section 3 – Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Role of the Board of Management:**

- To approve the policy and ensure its implementation.

### **Role of the principal:**

- To support the procedures of the policy and ensure its effective implementation.
- Prepare data for DES in support of requests for additional resource and personnel to meet the special educational needs of students.

### **Role of Head of the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator:**

- Liaise with class teachers, tutors and year heads,
- Collate the assessment materials and results.
- Work with the teacher to support the student and plan provision.
- Contact parents and keep them informed.
- Work with all parties to decide on strategies to be used to maximise learning and development.
- Review provision on a regular basis.

### **Role of Guidance counsellor:**

- Screen all first year students.
- Organise DATS testing for Transition year students.
- Cognitive Ability testing.

### **Role of the NCCA**

The NCCA is responsible for leading developments in curriculum and assessment and supporting the implementation of changes resulting from this work. It advises the Minister for Education & Science on the curriculum and syllabus requirements of students with a disability or other special educational needs.

## **Section 4 – Identification of Able, Gifted and Talented Students.**

### **Identification of Able, Gifted and talented Students**

*Students will be identified in the following ways*

#### **New Students**

- By parents/guardians who contact the school directly
- Information gleaned from Application Form of new students.
- Information from a written report sent from the student's Primary school to the school by student's parent's/guardians
- Results of entrance assessment administered by the Guidance Counsellor.

#### **Existing students**

- Nominations from teachers and Class Tutors
- Test results/teacher assessments.
- Student's work.
- By parents who contact the Principal, or the Resource teacher

#### ***Students transferring from another school***

- Present and previous professional assessments.

#### **Assessment methods:**

- Teacher observation.
- Benchmark tests and assessment – end of key stage tests.
- Cognitive Abilities Tests.
- In house subject tests and assessments.
- Response to increased challenge.
- Provision of opportunity.
- Response of external agency.

Once identified the class teacher/tutor will work alongside the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator to validate the nomination with assessment data. If agreed that the criteria are met, the child's name is entered in the GAT register and parents/guardians maybe invited to the school to discuss ways in which the child's needs can be met and how they can be supported.

#### **Modes of working:**

- Take steps to identify very able/gifted students within their class as soon as possible.
- Assess/gather data to support the nomination.
- Liaise with Gifted and Talent Co-ordinator and parents/guardians.
- Agree, plan and implement appropriate provision.
- Record strategies to be used.
- Include provision in medium and short term plans, as appropriate.
- Review provision regularly.

## **Section 5 – Provision.**

### **Provision within the school:**

Where a child is more able in one or more areas, they will be supported with high expectations and planning within the classroom and outside to enable them to pursue work at their own level. Teachers should seek to use a variety of techniques and strategies to provide for the more able child.

### **Planning for the more able child:**

- Identifying provision for able students in subject policies and plans.
- Identifying clear stages of development in schemes of work.
- Restructuring class organisation or pupil groupings (setting, acceleration, fast tracking, compacting, early entry).
- Setting differentiated homework.
- Planning a variety of extension and enrichment activities.

### **Challenging the more able student:**

- Opportunities for creative and productive thinking.
- Problem solving and investigation to develop reasoning and thinking skills.

### **Extending and enriching the curriculum.**

- Visiting experts and a range of material and resources.
- Clubs at lunchtime or after school, covering academic as well as other activities.
- Participation in special competitions.
- Consideration of the enrichment activities provided by outside agencies and organisations e.g, DCU

### **Continuity and progression:**

- Information on GAT students is provided on transfer between classes.
- Information on GAT students is provided on transfer between schools.



## **Section 6 – Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation.**

Student achievements will be monitored and evaluated against set individual targets. This process will include:

- Regular observation and recording of progress across the curriculum.
- Encouraging students to assess and review their own performance.
- Valuing out of school achievements.
- Intervention activities to prevent underachievement.

## **Section 7 – Administration.**

### **Section 8 Administration.**

- Ensure there is a staff room notice board for matters of a general nature.
- Create a GAT department plan containing guides to classroom level planning.
- Create IEP with parents and pupils which should include learning and behaviour targets which must be reviewed to ensure they are being met.
- GAT personnel keep a record of the results of all assessments and reassessments conducted.
- Adequate storage of all reports from external professionals and all correspondence from the Department of Education.
- All reports relating to special educational needs of existing and incoming students should be made available to SEN personnel on request.
- GAT personnel maintain a register of all reports from external professionals and devise means of informing relevant personnel of the existence of such files.
- Access to information policy
- All results of tests are kept by learning support teacher and guidance counsellor.
- Psychological reports are kept in Principal's office.
- A copy of each report is kept in a locked filing cabinet in the guidance counsellor's office, to be accessed only by the special needs team.
- All information is managed in accordance with the directive of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act.

## **Section 8 – Continued Professional Development.**

- Regular training for GAT Co-ordinator.
- Appropriate in-service for all staff.
- Involvement in cluster co-ordinator meeting and training initiatives.

## **Section 9– Process for Development and Review.**

- The school has an action plan to support the implementation of this policy with clearly identified monitoring and evaluation opportunities.
- Our commitment to support more able, gifted and talented students.
- This policy and the success of the schools' provision for the more able child will be reviewed annually by the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator and Policy Co-ordinator

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_  
It will be reviewed annually.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson)