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GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS
(To be read in conjunction with ACT DET Policy)

This policy aims to cater for members of the Garran Primary School community who have gifts and talents that must be acknowledged and catered for in order for the learning outcomes of these students to be optimised.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Garran Primary School acknowledges that some members of our learning community have gifts and talents that must be catered for in order for the learning outcomes of these students to be optimised.

1.2 The school also acknowledges its responsibility to:

- identify gifted and talented students so that provision can be made for a range of learning opportunities
- provide a variety of teaching strategies that will meet the needs of gifted and talented students
- decide when any form of accelerated progression is appropriate to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of individual gifted and talented students in Years 1-6
- recognise the rights of those with parental/guardian responsibilities to be fully informed and participate in all decisions relating to their child’s education
- provide staff development opportunities in the education of gifted and talented students
- provide accelerated learning classes from Years 1 – 6 for those students who demonstrate gifts and talents

2. RATIONALE

2.1 Students at Garran Primary school must be recognised as having unique educational needs and be catered for in order that their learning outcomes are optimised. This policy sets out the responsibilities and procedures for the provision of gifted and talented education in respect of:

- identification
- grouping – full time setting, streaming, withdrawal programs
- differentiation of the curriculum - extension, enrichment and curriculum compacting
- acceleration
- early entry

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Giftedness refers to a student’s outstanding ability in one or more domains e.g. intellectual, creative, socioemotional or sensorimotor (Gagne 2007). Feldhusen (1993) identifies five levels of giftedness: mild, moderate, high, exceptional and profound.

3.2 Talent refers to outstanding performance in one or more fields within these domains e.g. writing, mathematics, science and technology, sculpture, athletics, languages. Talent emerges from giftedness as a consequence of the student’s learning experiences.
3.3 **Curriculum differentiation** provides a planned and documented curriculum that is adapted to take into account the needs and abilities of groups of students with particular educational needs. Curriculum differentiation results in slight to major modification of the curriculum, at the school or the classroom level, through adjustments to content, processes, products and learning environment. Curriculum differentiation for gifted and talented students will include enrichment and extension activities.

3.4 **Enrichment** (broadening) is a curriculum differentiation strategy applied where the student's learning pace is faster than that of their cohort. The student's learning is broadened by additional individual enquiry that goes beyond what is expected of the class in terms of level and degree of abstraction, but is related to the content area.

3.5 **Extension** (deepening) is a curriculum differentiation strategy in which additional tasks such as projects or research questions are given to the gifted and talented students in specific areas so that their knowledge and understanding is extended or deepened.

3.6 **Curriculum compacting** is a form of curriculum differentiation where a student's program, is compacted by removing any content or processes where mastery is demonstrated.

3.7 **Acceleration** is a placement process in which a student is placed with an age cohort ahead of his or her chronological age or school year in one subject, several subjects or across the whole learning year. Such progression should be professionally assessed and regularly monitored, as the student's intellectual, social and emotional adjustments also need careful and ongoing evaluation.

3.8 **Early Entry** refers to eligibility for early enrolment to preschool or kindergarten for gifted and talented students. Early entry is a placement process, not an educational program. Early entry students are presented with a developmentally appropriate and differentiated curriculum.

3.9 **Grouping** is the placing of gifted and talented students either in a dedicated class or a group within a class to more easily provide appropriately differentiated curriculum, learning opportunities, intellectual endeavours and social opportunities. Grouping models catering for the needs of gifted and talented students at Garran include one or a combination of the following:

- Accelerated Learning Program – full time class for students identified as suitable
- regrouping by achievement for subject instruction (ability grouping)
- withdrawal programs for students gifted and talented in a specific area
- regular supplementary workshops, classes or sessions independent of the school timetable

4. **IDENTIFICATION**

4.1 Garran Primary School uses a wide range of identification methods to ensure that all gifted students are identified and will inform all members of the school community of the processes involved. Gifted students may be difficult to identify. They may be:

- students from non-English speaking backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- students disadvantaged by gender
- socioeconomically disadvantaged students
- students with specific learning disabilities
- students with behavioural problems

4.2 The identification process will:

- be school wide
- be systematic
- be dynamic and ongoing
- be justifiable
• provide for early identification
• ensure that identification of students from disadvantaged and minority populations are not overlooked
• provide opportunities for the gifted students to emerge

4.3 The school recognises that certain factors may inhibit the expression of giftedness or talents. Such factors may include:
• students may actively disguise their giftedness and talents to seek peer acceptance and thereby avoid identification
• students may actively disguise their giftedness and talents to avoid appearing different
• students may lack motivation to achieve in routine school-oriented tasks
• students belonging to those identified groups may need intervention programs to enable their giftedness to be realised as a talent

4.4 While identification procedures will be reviewed on a regular basis, current identification procedures at Garran Primary School include:
• counsellor-administered individual IQ tests
• standardised student assessments to establish cognitive ability. To be administered annually to applicants and nominated students wishing to enter the Accelerated Learning Program
• school records
• anecdotal records
• teacher nominations
• parent nominations
• identification checklists

4.5 A panel consisting of the Principal or Deputy Principal, the teachers of the Accelerated Learning Program, present and/or past class teachers, and other relevant teachers e.g. ESL, determines placement in the full time program (Accelerated Learning Program).

4.6 In addition, all teachers are encouraged to use appropriate teaching and learning strategies to develop originality, problem-solving and higher order thinking skills and to motivate students to meet their full potential. Teaching and learning strategies may include:
• giving opportunities for students to initiate discussion and to think creatively
• guiding students through a range of problem-solving processes
• posing open-ended questions, activities and assignments
• using group work to allow scope for leadership, co-operative decision making and student-initiated perspectives
• making use of contract work, with students negotiating the contract components
• encouraging students to become involved in individual research
• involving community members with specific expertise as mentors
• introducing individualised or group enrichment/extension programs
• providing opportunities for leadership in school-wide activities

See attached flow chart for identification procedures.

5 PROVISIONS

5.1 At Garran Primary School provision for gifted and talented students includes:
• grouping together gifted students of the same or different ages with others who have similar abilities, aptitudes and interests in a full-time class (Accelerated Learning Program Years 1-6)
• grouping together gifted students of the same or different ages with others who have particular abilities, aptitudes and interests in subject based part-time classes,
• opportunities to work with other schools in the district, for enrichment or acceleration programs
• extension and enrichment of the curriculum
• accelerating students who achieve curriculum outcomes more quickly than their peers through curriculum acceleration or partial or full-time grade skipping after consultation with student, teachers and parents/guardians
• linking individual students with school or community members with expertise in particular areas as mentors

5.2 The curriculum for gifted students will be academically rigorous, intellectually stimulating and sufficiently flexible to meet their educational, social and emotional needs.

5.3 Garran Primary School will offer full time gifted and talented classes for students in Years 1-6. These classes (Accelerated Learning Program) are an academic program to cater for students displaying gifts and talents in Literacy and Numeracy.

5.4 Students displaying aptitude for particular subjects will be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and competitions such as:

• Maths Olympiad
• Maths Challenge
• ICAS competitions
• Tournament of Minds

5.5 At Garran Primary School chronological age will not determine suitability for early entry. The school will ensure that an appropriate educational program is available if this type of placement is warranted.

5.6 Specific criteria will guide student placement for early entry to preschool or primary school (adapted from Feldhuson, JF, Proctor, TB & Black, KN, 1986) The school principal will use these guidelines when determining suitability for early entry into kindergarten. Before consulting with the District Director:

• early entry applicants should demonstrate abilities that are well above age-specific developmental norms
• judgement about the student's social, emotional and intellectual maturity must include input from the student's parents on the appropriate departmental checklist and should include input from other sources such as the local gifted and talented support groups, teachers, school counsellors or independent psychologists (Note: some gifted students may have social or emotional problems because they lack a compatible intellectual peer group. Teachers must not confuse the absence of close age peer relationships with social maturity. Early entry may alleviate such problems.)
• ideally, early enrolment should occur at natural transition points, such as the beginning of the school year. However, placement at other times may be desirable so that the student's previous teacher(s) and the new teacher(s) may more easily discuss the best way to help the student to make a smooth transition
• a student's physical size or physical or sensory disability should not prohibit early entry to school
• advanced placement should be reviewed after one term in a meeting of those involved in the original placement
5.7 Specific criteria will guide a student placement for accelerated progression (adapted from Feldhuson, JF, Proctor, TB & Black, KN, 1986) The principal will use these guidelines in determining a student’s ability for accelerated progression:

- when a student is being considered for accelerated progression, the school should carry out a comprehensive psychological evaluation of intellectual functioning, academic skills and socioemotional adjustment. A school counsellor or a registered psychologist should undertake this
- academically, the student should demonstrate levels of skill that are well above the average of the class she or he would be going into
- evaluation of the student’s emotional maturity must include input from the student’s parents and the school counsellor or psychologist (Note: gifted students are sometimes rejected by their peers. Teachers should not confuse the absence of close age peer relationships with social immaturity. Social or emotional difficulties may have been caused by inappropriately low-grade placement. In such cases, the problem may be alleviated by accelerated progression. Failure to advance a highly gifted student may result in poor study habits, apathy, lack of motivation, poor adjustment and underachievement)
- ideally, accelerated progression should occur at natural transition points, such as the beginning of the school year. However, placement at other times may be desirable so that the student’s previous teacher and the receiving teacher may more easily confer about the best way to help the student to make a smooth transition.
- a student’s physical size or physical or sensory disability should not prohibit early entry to school
- the accelerated progression should be reviewed regularly. This could take place, for example, after one term in a meeting of those involved with the original decision to accelerate

6. POLICY RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1 Parents or caregivers are encouraged to:

- support their child to pursue excellence, develop mastery and become an independent learner
- provide a supportive learning environment at home that complements the school curriculum
- liaise with teachers, principals and other members of the school’s decision-making team to identify the student’s giftedness and ensure the student has appropriate and ongoing educational opportunities

6.2 Teachers have the responsibility for nominating students for identification as gifted, matching the program to meet the needs of the students and providing appropriately differentiated curriculum.

6.3 School Councillors/and or psychologists have responsibility to assist the school principal, as part of a team, with the identification, planning and support for gifted and talented students.