



MacKillop College

Gifted and Talented Policy

Purpose

MacKillop College is a Catholic school in the Josephite tradition. The College is committed to recognising and nurturing the gifts of each student so that they may flourish as learners and contribute positively to their community.

The College supports students with high academic potential by providing appropriate levels of challenge, extension and acceleration within the curriculum.

This policy outlines the identification and provision of learning opportunities for students through the Julian Tenison Woods Program and enhanced academic pathways.

The Julian Tenison Woods Program provides a structured learning environment designed to challenge high achieving students, support the development of advanced academic skills and encourage intellectual curiosity.

Conceptual Framework

The College's approach to supporting students with high academic potential is informed by the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools vision for learning, which emphasises the development of students as flourishing learners (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools, 2021).

MacKillop College also draws on François Gagné's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT 2.0), which distinguishes between natural ability (giftedness) and the development of that ability into high levels of performance (talent) (Gagné, 2008).

In this model, giftedness refers to natural abilities that place a student among the highest performing peers of the same age, typically within the top ten percent. Talent refers to the development of those abilities into high levels of performance through learning and practice.

Research in gifted education highlights the importance of providing students with opportunities to engage in challenging learning, work with intellectual peers and participate in enrichment experiences that extend their capabilities (Reis & Renzulli, 2021).

The College recognises that students may demonstrate high levels of potential across a range of domains including academic learning, the arts, music, performance, leadership, sport and service. The Julian Tenison Woods Program provides a structured academic extension program within the curriculum, while enrichment opportunities across the life of the College support the development of student talents and interests in a variety of fields.

Identification and Entry

Initial identification for the Julian Tenison Woods Program occurs during Grade 6 for entry into Year 7.

Information about the program and the entry process is shared with families during the enrolment process. Families enrolling students at the College are invited to indicate their interest in having their child participate in the program's entry assessment.

Nominated students attend the College to complete PAT Reading and PAT Mathematics assessments under supervised test conditions.

Assessment information considered in the identification process includes:

- NAPLAN results submitted during enrolment
- PAT Reading assessment
- PAT Mathematics assessment

Students are ranked based on their assessment performance and a cohort is selected each year for entry into the program. In confirming placement, the College may also consider a student's readiness for the level of challenge provided by the program and the student's overall learning and wellbeing.

The College recognises that students may demonstrate high academic potential at different stages of their schooling. Opportunities for extension and advanced study are therefore available through a range of pathways across the secondary years.

Participation and Review

Participation in the Julian Tenison Woods Program is reviewed periodically to ensure that the level of academic challenge remains appropriate for each student.

In consultation with students and families, adjustments to a student's participation may be made where it is determined that an alternative learning environment would better support the student's learning or wellbeing.

Where a place becomes available in the program, a Year 7 student may be invited to join based on demonstrated readiness for the level of challenge provided by the program, based on current academic performance and teacher recommendation. Where possible, changes to program placement will occur at the beginning of a semester.

Program Structure – Years 7 and 8

Students selected for the Julian Tenison Woods Program are placed together as a class group for Years 7 and 8.

Students undertake all subjects together during this time, with the exception of Languages and rotational elective subjects in Year 8.

The program allows students to learn alongside intellectual peers while engaging with a curriculum designed to provide appropriate levels of challenge.

The Julian Tenison Woods Program operates across Years 7 and 8. From Year 9, students may continue to pursue academic extension through enhanced subject pathways offered within individual learning areas.

Enhanced Subject Pathways at Year 9

Year 8 students may apply for entry into Enhanced Mathematics and Enhanced English classes for Year 9.

Applications are open to all Year 8 students.

Selection is based on consideration of:

- academic results
- learning behaviours
- NAPLAN data
- performance in the entry assessment

In addition, the Year 9 curriculum includes vertical elective subjects that allow students to explore areas of interest in greater depth and may provide pathways to VCE study in later years.

Year 10 Pathways

Students may apply to undertake Unit 1 and Unit 2 VCE acceleration commencing in Year 10 across a selected range of VCE subjects offered at the College. The students would be expected to complete Unit 3 and 4 of the same subject in Year 11. Continuation into Unit 3 and 4 will be reviewed based on demonstrated achievement and readiness.

Requests to exit the Telescope class

1. It is recommended that students exit the Telescope class at the end of a semester, except if:
 - There are significant mental health concerns
 - There are significant behavioural issues that disrupt the learning of the other students in the class
2. It is recommended that requests to leave the program occur at least one month before the end of a semester
3. It will be highly recommended by the Gifted and Talented Leader that the student remain in the program with the support of the school psychologist or counsellor, however, if it is deemed that there is significant risk to the student's mental health by staying in the program, the student can exit immediately.

Telescope Exiting Procedure

1. Student and/or parent raises concern about student's placement in the Telescope program
2. to the Gifted and Talented leader
3. A meeting is organised with the student, parent, homeroom teacher and Gifted and Talented Leader to discuss the concerns raised
4. Following the meeting:
 - Student to meet with the school psychologist to discuss the concerns
 - If there is a concern about the students' mental health a referral will be made to the school counsellors
 - Parents make a formal request for their child to leave the program
 - A detailed letter/email explaining their reasoning for wanting to leave the program.
5. Gifted and Talented Leader to meet with leadership (a Deputy Principal) and discuss the request, informed by the information from the initial meeting, recommendations from the counsellor/psychologist, and formal letter/form provided by parents
6. Gifted and Talented Leader to inform the student and parent of the decision

Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.

The Deputy Principal Learning and Teaching oversees the implementation of the policy and the development of extension pathways within the curriculum.

The Leader of Gifted and Talented coordinates the identification processes and the operation of the Julian Tenison Woods Program.

Teaching staff support students with high academic potential through differentiated teaching and extension opportunities.

Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure the continued provision of appropriate challenge and

extension for students with high academic potential.

Related Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Student Acceleration and Retention Policy
- Learning Diversity Policy

References

Gagné, F. (2008). Building gifts into talent: Brief overview of the DMGT 2.0.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools. (2021). Flourishing learners: Vision for learning in MACS schools.

Reis, S. M., & Renzulli, J. S. (2021). The Schoolwide Enrichment Model: A how-to guide for talent development.