

SILVER TREE STEINER SCHOOL



Gifted and Talented Policy

2015

This policy applies to: The Administrator and teaching staff.

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GIFTED & TALENTED POLICY

The Silver Tree Steiner School (STSS) will provide support for gifted and talented students to achieve their best possible learning outcomes.

A student's giftedness is not always apparent in regular curriculum areas and not always demonstrated in appropriate ways. While gifted students exhibit some common traits, no two gifted students possess the same characteristics.

It is important that students with exceptional potential are supported during their early childhood and middle childhood phases so that the development of specific gifts and talents continues as the students make their educational transition into secondary school.

It is also important that the abilities of gifted and talented students be accepted, valued and fostered by teachers, parents, peers and the community.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Equal Opportunity Act 1984
- School Education Act 1999
- School Education Regulations 2000

OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education Preferences Committee: The Education of Gifted Children, October 2001

DEFINITIONS

Gifted

The possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain.

Talented

Outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity. Talent emerges from ability as a consequence of the student's learning experience.

References Committee: The Education of Gifted Children, October 2001

BACKGROUND

Gifted and talented students are represented in all socio-economic and cultural groups and are part of the population of almost all schools. For varied reasons many of these students are at risk of not achieving to their full potential. For example:

- student abilities are not fostered through appropriate educational provision;
- identified students do not achieve to their potential due to physical, emotional, motivational and social factors or specific learning difficulties;
- some students are not identified; and
- gifts and talents may be masked by cultural or other background factors.

Giftedness can be viewed in multiple ways and children may be gifted in one or several ability domains.

The characteristics of what is defined as gifted and talented can be applied to approximately the top 10% of the student population. These children would be considered mildly to highly gifted. Those students who fall into the top 2.5% or above, are more likely to require specific individual planning to enable them to achieve to their potential and may be more likely to require acceleration in one or more subject areas.

PROCEDURES

Identification

The Administrator will plan and implement strategies to identify gifted and talented students.

Early identification is important, as is intervention. The identification processes for gifted and talented students should:

- Be inclusive, so that gifted and talented students are not educationally disadvantaged on the basis of racial, cultural or socio-economic background, physical or sensory disability, geographic location or gender.
- Be flexible and continuous to allow for the recognition of gifts and talents which may emerge or be recognisable at any stage of a student's education.
- Utilise information from a variety of sources, including classroom teacher observation and assessment, as well as knowledge obtained from other people (for example, parents and peers).
- Help the teacher identify a student's intellectual strengths, artistic or linguistic talents, and social and emotional needs which will form the basis for educational provision.
- Direct the quality of the teaching and learning environment to enable the outstanding abilities of students to emerge and be recognised.

Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

Not all gifted children will display all of these characteristics but it is a good indicator that a child is gifted if they display some of these characteristics.

Cognitive characteristics

- The ability to ask reflective and probing, sometimes provocative, questions
- The capacity to see and create patterns and relationships in their field of special ability
- Can be deeply absorbed
- Unusually fast rate of learning
- Reasons at a level more usually found in a student some years older
- Extremely well developed memory
- Dislike of slow-paced work
- Many gifted students have a preference for independent work
- It is unusual for a gifted student to have only one area of high ability

Social-emotional characteristics

- The need to develop their gifts and talents and feel pride in academic achievements may be at variance with the need to be accepted by classmates
- Emotional intensity
- Unusual ability to empathise with the feelings of other students or adults
- Unusually well developed sense of justice and fairness
- Unusually mature sense of humour
- Often prefer the company of older students

- Develop a strong attachment to one or two close friends rather than more casual relationships with a larger group
- Students with multiple talents may have difficulty deciding on a career
- Can exhibit perfectionist tendencies

The identification of students who may be gifted is a process of collecting and comparing information from various sources and developing a profile of each student in order to determine what strategies are appropriate for each individual. Information from any of the following sources may be used:

- Independent psychometric assessment (eg. WISPSI, WISC, WYATT)
- Standardised tests of achievement (eg. Neale, TORCH, WALNA, Wood & Lowther)
- Standardised tests of potential (eg. NFER-Nelson, MYATT)
- Information from previous schools
- Teacher nomination (through use of checklists)
- Peer or self nomination (through use of nomination forms)
- Parent information (through use of parent checklists upon school entry)
- Off-level testing (for candidates for acceleration or early-entry)

NB. No one source of information in isolation will be considered proof of giftedness. Conversely, STSS also recognises that some students, while undoubtedly showing evidence of giftedness, may not be suitable for all types of provision due to the presence of dual exceptionality or other social-emotional issues.

Dual Exceptionality

Students who have a learning difficulty or disability and are also gifted. There are processes in the school that aim to identify and cater for students who may have learning difficulties, disabilities or other social-emotional difficulties [refer to policy on Disability Discrimination Act, Learning Support or equivalent].

Provision

The Administrator will verify that teachers provide the necessary teaching and learning adjustments for identified gifted and talented students to achieve optimal education outcomes.

The provision of necessary teaching or learning adjustments occur in the following ways:

- School-based - schools and teachers provide a challenging and extended curriculum to enable the gifts and talents of students to emerge, be recognised and be developed.
- Supplementary - the most gifted and talented students to interact with their gifted and talented peers in specific curriculum fields on a part-time basis.

Monitoring

The Administrator and Teachers will monitor the identification processes and the effectiveness of provision to verify that the educational needs of gifted and talented students are being met.

USEFULL WEBSITES

Australian Gifted Association http://www.aegt.net.au/online_learning.htm

Australian Mathematics Trust <http://www.amt.edu.au/default.htm>

Cogito (Great resource for ideas and international competitions) <https://cogito.cty.jhu.edu>

GATCA <http://www.gatcawa.org/index.php> (Gifted & Talented Children’s Association of WA)

GERRIC <http://gerric.arts.unsw.edu.au/for-gifted-students> (Gifted Education, Research & Resource Centre for Gifted Students)

WA Dept of Education (Gifted & Talented)

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/curriculum-support/giftedandtalented/detcms/navigation/for-teachers/?oid=MultiPartArticle-id-11050880>

REFERENCES

AISWA – Gifted and Talented Policy & Procedures

Available: <https://www.ais.wa.edu.au/index.cfm?view=member&partof=114&fID=151>

Department of Education – Gifted and Talented Guidelines

Available: <http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/web-references/gifted-and-talented-guidelines.en?oid=SiteProxy-id-3766865>

Department of Education – Gifted and Talented Policy

Available: <http://det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/navigation/school-management/gifted-and-talented/?oid=Category-id-3457123>