



St. Finians Community College – Policy for Gifted, Talented and Exceptionally Able Students

Contents

Section 1 – Context.

Section 2 – Aims and Objectives.

Section 3 – Roles and Responsibilities.

Section 4 – Identification of Able, gifted and talented students.

Section 5 - Provision.

Section 6 – Monitoring, Assessment and Evaluation.

Section 7 – Administration

Section 8 – Continuing professional development

Section 9 - Process for development and review

Section 1 – Context

St. Finian's Community College is a co-educational, non-denominational school under the aegis of the Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB).

The school is committed to 'being a caring, learning community where each person is valued and accorded respect and dignity.' We provide a calm, friendly, disciplined and safe environment and a broad, diverse curriculum to promote the development of the whole person. This enables each person to develop his/her full potential by fostering a positive self image, a sense of responsibility and personal integrity. The school also promotes respect for the rights and beliefs of others and encourages all to be tolerant, caring and responsible members of society.

The school aims to help each student achieve their full potential academically, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially in a happy, secure environment. Furthermore, the school supports the principle of inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of students with a disability and/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

“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:

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 can be classified as “able”.

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

A small minority, up to 2% of students may be considered as “exceptionally able”. These students 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 their 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.

St. Finian's Community College values all students equally and endeavours to ensure that each pupil has an opportunity to realise their potential in a challenging and supportive environment.

Our school may 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 students 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 student 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” students.
- 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.
- Informing all staff of the talented and gifted students in their class groups.

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/guardians to help them promote student learning and development.
- To ensure that all who are involved with students 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 students.
- 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 the Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator:

- Liaise with class teachers, tutors and year heads.
- Collate the assessment materials and results.
- Contact parents and keep them informed.

Role of Guidance Counsellors:

- Screen all first year students.
- Organise DATs testing for Third 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 Forms of new students.
- Information from a written report sent from the student's Primary school to the school by student's parents/guardians
- Results of entrance assessment administered by the Guidance Counsellors.

Existing students

- Nominations from teachers and Class Tutors.
- Test results/teacher assessments.
- Student's work.
- By parents/guardians 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 – Christmas and Summer tests and reports.
- Cognitive Abilities Tests.
- In house subject tests and assessments.
- Response to increased challenge.
- Provision of opportunity.
- Response of external agency.

Modes of working:

- Take steps to identify very able/gifted students within their class as soon as possible.
- Assess/gather data to support the student.

- Liaise with Gifted and Talent Co-ordinator and parents/guardians.
- Agree, plan and implement appropriate provision.
- Record strategies to be used.

Section 5 – Provision

Provision within the school:

Where a pupil 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 student.

Planning for the more able student:

- Identifying provision for able students in subject policies and plans.
- 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 e.g. All Ireland Linguistics Olympiad (AILO), Mathletes.
- Consideration of the enrichment activities provided by outside agencies and organisations e.g. DCU.

Continuity and progression:

- Information on gifted and talented students is provided on transfer between classes.
- Information on gifted and talented 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

- Ensure there is a staff room notice board for matters of a general nature.
- With adequate resources, create IEP with parents and pupils, which should include learning and behaviour.
- Adequate storage of all reports from external professionals and all correspondence from the Department of Education.
- Access to information policy.
- All results of tests are kept by learning support teacher and guidance counsellor.
- Psychological reports are kept in SEN Co-ordinator'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 the gifted and talented student Co-ordinator.
- Appropriate in-service for all staff.
- Involvement in training initiatives and activities.

Section 9– Process for Development and Review.

- 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.