

## BORRISOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



## GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS' POLICY



**etb**

Bord Oideachais agus  
Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann  
*Tipperary Education and  
Training Board*

## 1. Context

Borrisokane Community College aims to help each student achieve their full potential academically, 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 their full human potential. Furthermore, the school supports the principle of inclusiveness, particularly with reference to the enrolment of children with additional needs.

Our policy on special needs supports these aims and is written in the context of relevant legislation and Circulars.

## 2. Definitions

Gifted and talented students are those who are achieving or who have the potential to achieve, at a level substantially beyond the rest of their peer group inside our school. A reasonable working definition which is accepted world-wide in educational and psychological circles is that a child who shows exceptional ability in one or more areas such as mathematical, verbal, spatial awareness, musical, or artistic ability may be considered gifted. The term 'gifted' tends to be reserved for those with an IQ greater than 130, i.e., the top 2% of the population. (SESS 2004). A talent, however, is often an ability that has become a highly developed skill through practice (DCU.ie2020). This may be in one or more of the following areas:

- General intellectual ability or talent
- Specific academic aptitude or talent
- Visual and performing arts and sports
- Leadership ability
- Creative and productive thinking
- Problem solving ability
- Mechanical ingenuity
- Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation.

For the purpose of this policy 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.), along with those who have scored above the standard age score of 120 in standardised testing, (those in the superior and very superior range).

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.

### **Twice exceptional children**

Twice exceptional students are students who have been identified as gifted but also present with some sort of disability or additional learning need. Children can be gifted when they also have a learning difficulty or physical disabilities, vision, hearing or speech impairments, autism spectrum disorder or emotional disabilities.

The most common forms of dual exceptionality are gifted students with Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Asperger's Syndrome. Instances of visual and auditory disability may also occur.

### 3. Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

In comparison with their peers, when engaged in their area of expertise, gifted and talented students will tend to:

- Show a passion for particular subjects or areas of interest and seek to pursue them
- Master the rules of a domain easily and transfer their insights to new problems
- Analyse their own behaviour and hence use a greater range of learning strategies than others (self-regulation)
- Make connections between past and present learning
- Demonstrate intellectual curiosity
- Show intellectual maturity and enjoy engaging in depth with subject material
- Actively and enthusiastically engage in debate and discussion on a particular subject
- Produce original and creative responses to common problems

In addition, gifted and talented students may develop particular characteristics as they progress through the school, such as:

- A tendency to question rules and authority
- A well-developed sense of humour; and
- Growing self-determination, stamina and powers of concentration.

#### **Aims and 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

#### 4. Identification of the Gifted and Talented

Before identifying any student as gifted or talented in a particular area, we aim to ensure all students have had the opportunity to learn and succeed in that area. This makes the process of identification fair. A gifted or talented student can be identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to the subject area but may include elements of the following:

- Teacher nomination
- Year Head nomination
- Mentor nomination
- Assessment results within school
- Assessment results outside school
- CATS and DATS testing
- Reports carried out by Educational Psychologists
- Peer nomination
- Parental nomination
- Identification by a previous teacher or school
- Identification by a primary school
- Identification by an external agency or organisation, such as the State Examinations Commission
- Primary school reports
- Self-nomination

Staff in Borrisokane Community College have a responsibility to recognise and value students' abilities. Everyone in the school community is encouraged to be involved in identifying the gifted and talented, including teachers, parents and fellow students; and appropriate ways should be used to acquire their nominations. There is a range of checklists available that suggest generic characteristics of gifted and talented learners.

It is worth remembering that gifted and talented students can be:

- Good all-rounders
- High achievers in one area
- Of high ability but low motivation
- Of good verbal ability but of poor writing skills
- Very able but short attention span
- Very able but with a learning difficulty or disability which masks their achievements
- Very able with poor social skills; and/or
- Keen to disguise their abilities.

##### **Assessment methods:**

- Teacher observation
- Classroom Based Assessments
- Cognitive Abilities Tests. Cat 4 / DATS
- Reading and Maths testing NGRT/PTM
- In house subject tests and assessments
- Response to increased challenge

Once identified the class teacher/mentor will work alongside the Gifted and Talented Coordinator. 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
- Agree, plan and implement appropriate provision
- Set up Student Support File

## **5. Provision for the Gifted and Talented**

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into Subject Plans.

Curriculum planning areas refer specifically to the gifted and talented. Subject departments plans should also state what identification procedures they use and what provision is in place.

*In Borrisokane Community College we aim to:*

- Use data that has been collected to inform us of gifted and talented students
- Encourage all students to be independent learners and to take ownership of learning
- Recognise achievement
- Provide a range of extra-curricular activities and clubs
- Always provide work at an appropriate level; and
- Provide opportunities for all students to work with like-minded peers
- Use SSE opportunities to ensure that their classroom practice continues to provide for gifted and talented students

### **Classroom Differentiation**

- Teachers have high expectations.
- Tasks are designed to take account of the levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding
- There are planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks; and
- There is access to higher tier exam entries

### **School-Based Provision**

This will vary according to the subject area and will be covered using a variety of methods:

- School-based clubs and (e.g., Language Clubs, Book Club; Debating etc)
- Student councils
- Enrichment opportunities (Gaisce Award)
- Opportunities for performance (School Musical and sports events)
- Leadership opportunities (e.g., European Youth Parliament, Prefects)

### **Out of School Provision**

Borrisokane Community College will explore and develop community links to provide opportunities for gifted and talented students to develop. Students will be encouraged to fulfil their potential in those areas which they are gifted or talented without reducing the breadth of their curriculum and personal experience.

For example:

- Work experience
- Participation in the DCU Centre for Talented Youth summer and year-long programmes
- Participation in the DCU Centre for Talented Youth Early University Programme during Transition Year
- Participation in the Maths and Science Olympiad
- Competitions (e.g., Debating, Young Scientists)
- Inter-school sports competitions (hurling, football, camogie, soccer, basketball etc)
- STEM opportunities and courses

## 6. Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

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

- To approve the policy and ensure its implementation.

### **Role of Management Team:**

- Work with colleagues to promote learning opportunities for the gifted and talented
- Decide on an agreed target and action plan for inclusion in the School Improvement Plan
- Disseminate opportunities for gifted and talented students (e.g., Open University and online courses; summer schools; competitions and challenges; and leadership opportunities)
- Audit and evaluate provision for gifted and talented students
- Identify gifted and talented students by a variety of subject-specific methods and by analysing relevant assessment data
- Develop and implement activities or programmes of work that cater for the needs of gifted and talented students
- Develop or acquire resources for use with gifted and talented students

### **Role of The Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator:**

- Liaise with class teachers, mentors 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 and SEN Team:**

- Deliver content for gifted and talented students
- Oversee the administration of CATS and DATS tests and analysis thereof
- Devise a Student Support File for gifted and talented students

### **Role of Subject Teachers:**

- Identify gifted and talented students by a variety of subject-specific methods

Subject teachers will monitor programmes of work to ensure that they are appropriate for gifted and talented students. This will include looking for:

- Curriculum differentiation – providing different learning activities for students who have different learning needs, needs that go beyond that of others in the class

- Enrichment – learning that is outside of the core learning which most students will undertake
- Extension – enabling students to move through the curriculum at a faster rate than normal. It can mean ‘acceleration’ or skipping sections to allow students to move further ahead. It can also mean ‘compacting’ the curriculum so that it is denser and more complex. It should give opportunities for students to work in depth, and to work at the students’ individual rate
- Acceleration of students – into groups beyond their age-group, when appropriate
- Competitions – though not exclusively for the gifted and talented, they can activate and strengthen feeling for a particular subject and help develop subject-relevant skills

#### **Role of Subject Departments**

- Identify gifted and talented students by a variety of subject-specific methods and by analysing relevant assessment data
- Develop and implement activities or programmes of work that cater for the needs of gifted and talented students
- Develop or acquire resources for use with gifted and talented students

#### **Administration**

- Create a GAT department plan containing guides to classroom level planning
- Create Student Support File 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 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 AEN 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 information is managed in accordance with the directive of both the Freedom of Information and Data Protection Act

#### **Continued Professional Development**

- Regular training for GAT Co-ordinator
- Appropriate in-service for all staff

This policy was adopted by Tipperary ETB and noted by Borrisokane Community College Board of Management on **June 24<sup>th</sup> 2021** and will be due for review during the school year 2024/2025.