



PARRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL

Gifted and Talented Policy

Giftedness refers to potential distinctly beyond the average for a student's age and encompasses a broad range of abilities in the intellectual, creative, socio-emotional and physical domains. Talent denotes achievement distinctly beyond the average for a student's age as a result of application to training and practice. This policy, written in 2009 and updated in 2012, uses the definitions in the NSW DET policy documents (2004).

Parramatta High School is a partially selective high school which caters for both selective and non-selective students. Parramatta High enrolls students on the basis of a bi-modal model of selective and mainstream students. 60 selective students will be enrolled in each of Years 7 to 12, starting with Year 7 in 2010. PHS aims to develop effective and equitable identification procedures for gifted and talented students, and to maximise their learning outcomes through developmentally appropriate programs.

Ways we will do this are by:

- Identifying gifted and talented (GAT) students in many domains and fields of talent through a school-wide, culturally fair and inclusive process using multiple criteria. GAT students are found in all communities regardless of ethnic, cultural or socio-economic characteristics. The gifted population includes students who are underachieving and who have disabilities.
- Fostering collaborative home-school partnerships to support GAT students.
- Monitoring and evaluating programs for GAT students, and providing a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the needs of students. Teachers will use a variety of teaching strategies to provide teaching and learning initiatives and opportunities within and beyond the classroom that encourage and support opportunities for gifted and talented students.
- Supporting teachers' professional learning in the area of gifted and talented education.

This policy applies to all staff and students in the school community of Parramatta High School. It will be implemented using the procedures set out in the Parramatta High GAT procedures document which follows. The procedures document outlines the following:

1. Selective classes
2. Parent responsibility
3. Identification of GAT students
4. Teaching strategies to achieve a differentiated curriculum
5. Enrichment and extension opportunities
6. Monitoring and evaluation of student performance
7. Role of the GAT committee
8. Management of the Parramatta High School GAT policy
9. References and support documents.



PARRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL

Gifted and Talented Procedures

1. Selective classes

A. Enrolment

Students are placed in the selective classes based on academic merit. In year 7 students are placed by the Selective Schools Unit based on the results of the Selective High Schools placement test. In years 8 to 11 students apply directly to the school and the PHS enrolment policy is followed.

B. Organisation of students in selective classes

Stage 4: Selective students will remain in discrete groups for all subjects in Stage 4. Students coming into Year 7 will be placed in two ungraded core classes based on their scores in the Selective Schools Test, with appropriate gender considerations. Selective students in Year 8 will remain in two classes for the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography. The composition of these classes may vary between subjects, and will be based on academic performance in Year 7 and gender composition. Year 8 Language classes will be based on a Language choice (French or Indonesian). In both Year 7 and 8, the two classes will be divided into 3 class groups to pursue practical subjects where the class size requirement is less than 30 (such as Design and Technology).

Stage 5: Selective students will remain in discrete groups in Years 9 and 10 for the core subjects of English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, and PDHPE. The structure of the two classes will vary from subject to subject to meet the specific needs of the students in each of the subjects. Students will have the opportunity to elect to complete courses in two elective subjects. The selective students will be grouped together where possible but elective classes may include mainstream students.

Stage 6: Students will be placed in classes based on their academic attainment in Year 10. Selective students will be grouped together where possible but classes may include mainstream students. English is the only compulsory subject in Years 11 and 12.

C. Year group cohesion

Participation in all other school activities is based on whole Year cohorts and no distinction is made between selective and mainstream students. Vertical Roll groups are organised across whole Year cohorts.

There may be a level of opposition to gifted programs from parents, teachers or students. Care should be taken in naming extension programs and labelling students. The school climate should value and encourage the expression of gifts and talents and engender positive attitudes to provision of homogenous groups and classes within the school. Isolation of gifted persons by others in their immediate environment may occur and should be regarded as a form of bullying.

2. Parent responsibility

Parramatta High School will endeavour to ensure that parents/guardians are fully informed of their responsibilities and are encouraged to participate in all decisions relating to their child's education.

3. Identification of GAT students in mainstream classes

PHS recognises that students may have various abilities and gifts including intellectual, creative, leadership, social and physical skills. Every teacher is responsible for identifying gifted students in their classes and referring newly identified students to the Gifted and Talented (GAT) Committee (see Appendix A).

At PHS teachers are aware of the many impediments that may hinder the recognition of giftedness and the development of talent. These include:

- intrapersonal factors such as a lack of motivation, low self-esteem, poor health, learning and language difficulties, and disability.
- environmental factors such as socio-economic background, beliefs about giftedness and talent, interpersonal relationships, events such as death and divorce, teacher expectations, teaching practices and types of learning activities
- the role played by cultural expectations
- underachievement as a result of socio-emotional issues, inadequate identification procedures, desire for peer acceptance, intra-personal difficulties and inappropriate teaching and learning practices
- being a student from a Non-English Speaking Background, conduct-disordered student or a student disadvantaged by gender inequity.

The identification process at PHS:

- is school-wide, culturally fair and inclusive
- ensures that all domains of giftedness and fields of talent are identified
- is linked to a differentiated curriculum
- uses multiple criteria to allow for early identification of GAT students
- ensures that parents/caregivers are fully informed of their responsibilities to participate in all decisions relating to their child's education

PHS employs a wide range of identification methods such as:

- teacher evaluation of student responses to a range of classroom activities
- nomination by parent, peer, self or teacher (see Appendix B)
- assessment of responses to challenging competitions
- off-level testing
- standardised tests including the Selective High Schools Test
- IQ tests and other culturally appropriate measures of ability
- behavioural checklists, observations and anecdotal evidence
- interviews
- academic grades.

The school counsellor conducts psychometric assessment, provides counselling and may act as an advocate for the student.

4. Teaching strategies to achieve a differentiated curriculum

Teachers at PHS will employ processes that collaboratively develop Teaching and Learning programs to support gifted and talented students. These programs will utilise appropriate complexity and challenge in their teaching and learning strategies to encourage intellectual rigour, deep understanding, high achievement, originality, problem solving, higher order thinking skills and creativity.

Class-focused Teaching and Learning strategies may include:

- Using the Quality Teaching framework to inform classroom programs;
- Differentiating the curriculum through extension programs which may include pre-testing, extending content or outcomes, compacting curriculum or telescoping curriculum;
- Giving opportunities for students to initiate discussion and 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, cooperative decision making and student-initiated perspectives;
- Allowing students choice and decision-making in the scope of their learning by making use of contract work, with students negotiating the contract components or topics for individual research;
- Involving community members with specific expertise as mentors;
- Encouraging leadership in school-wide programs and activities;
- Some gifted students may need support or special services to remediate an area of weakness or disability.

Whole-school strategies to improve learning outcomes for gifted students may include:

- *Grouping/Clustering*: This may involve bringing together gifted students of the same or different ages with others who have similar abilities, aptitudes and interests. Apart from the selective classes, the school may form its own full-time or part-time classes, or join with other schools in the district, for extension or acceleration programs.
- *Acceleration*: Students who achieve curriculum outcomes more quickly than their peers may be accelerated, through curriculum compaction, content acceleration, subject acceleration or grade-skipping. The school principal is responsible for determining the application of accelerated progression to meet the educational, social and emotional needs of individual GAT students. (see Appendix C)
- *Gifted and Talented Workshops*. These bring together the experiences of students, teachers, parents and community members.
- *Mentor programs*: to link individual students who have advanced knowledge and interests in a particular area with school or community members who have expertise in that area.
- *Enrichment programs*: The provision of experiences beyond the normal curriculum, but at the same level of difficulty, designed to provide opportunities for students to discover and explore.
- *Extension programs*: The provision of opportunities beyond the normal curriculum, but at a higher level of difficulty, designed to provide opportunities for students to discover, explore and extend gifts and talents. Selective classes are examples of extension programs.

5. Enrichment and extension opportunities

There are numerous opportunities for students to be involved and they may include:

- English, poetry, debating and public speaking competitions
- Extensive performing arts opportunities at numerous school and community activities
- Games and Chess Clubs
- Geography competitions
- History competitions and role playing forums
- Language competitions including the Arabic Quiz
- Leadership opportunities such as Prefect Leadership Seminars, SRC Social Justice, Project Pink (Girls' Leadership development), Peer Reading tutoring, Values Education Forums, etc
- Mathematics competitions and challenges
- Overseas study tour of Malaysia
- Programs linked with Global Citizens Initiative, SRC, Lachlan Macquarie College e.g. Gifted and Talented Days, Tall Poppies
- Representative Sport
- School Choir, stage band, string ensemble and various rock and pop ensembles
- Science competitions e.g. Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer, Rio Tinto Competition
- Student Welfare – Peer mediation and peer support leadership
- Technology Club
- Tournament of Minds (problem solving and drama)
- Trivia Challenge

6. Monitoring and evaluation of student performance

It is important that student outcomes are tracked and follow-up on performance changes, both positive and negative, be done quickly and appropriately (see Appendix D)

7. Role of GAT committee

The GAT committee consists of teacher representatives from all KLAs. It is responsible for

- monitoring and evaluating programs for GAT students
- promoting opportunities for all GAT students
- maintaining links with selective schools and other partially selective schools
- making recommendations to the Principal about acceleration of students
- creating opportunities to support the cohesiveness of each year cohort
- informing all members of the school's community about the processes involved
- utilising multiple sources of data to ensure that all gifted students are identified
- supporting teachers to develop individualised programs for highly talented students when appropriate
- supporting teacher professional learning in the pedagogy that underpins gifted education

8. Management of this policy

Procedures for gifted and talented policy are developed and monitored by the GAT Committee. The Head Teacher Teaching & Learning coordinates this group.

9. References and support documents

The Parramatta High School GAT policy and procedures support the policy and procedures set out by the NSW Department of Education. Further information about the NSW DET policy NSW may be found in the following documents:

Department of Education and Training, NSW. (revised 2004) *Policy for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students*, at <https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/curriculum/schools/gats/PD20040051.shtml>

Department of Education and Training, NSW (revised 2004) *Policy and implementation strategies for the education of gifted and talented students*, at <http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/gats/index.htm>

Board of Studies NSW (2000) *Guidelines for Accelerated Progression*, at http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/accelerated_guide.pdf

Please also consider

Extension programs for comprehensive high schools

The revised policy (described above) is the foundation for the establishment of gifted and talented academic extension programs in all local comprehensive high schools and semi-selective schools (for identified mainstream gifted and talented students)

The document [*What are the options? Extension programs for gifted and talented students in comprehensive schools: A discussion paper*](#) (pdf 908kb) has been developed to support this initiative. This document can be accessed from the Policy - Support packages web page.

Appendix A

Parramatta High School

Teacher Nomination / Referral Form

Gifted and Talented Committee (Learning Support)

Student's Name: _____ Class: _____

Teacher's Name: _____ Faculty: _____

Campus: _____ Date: _____

1. What observations have you made with regard to behaviour, learning or performance that have alerted you to this student?

2. Particular talents or talent areas of the child: (please tick those that have been noted)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematical | <input type="checkbox"/> Dramatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanities | <input type="checkbox"/> Languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> Interpersonal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | <input type="checkbox"/> Musical | <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving | <input type="checkbox"/> Creative thought | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical skill | |

3. Which of the following behaviours have you observed in the student?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced vocabulary | <input type="checkbox"/> Highly imaginative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transfers knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Always questioning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well-developed sense of humour | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent learner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has behavioural difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk taker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leader, takes control | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislikes repetition and practice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concerned about world issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Perfectionist / Self critical |

- Superior reasoning and retention of concepts when interested
- Vast repertoire of factual knowledge
- Easily distracted in class
- Indifferent and negative attitude towards school
- Underachieving
- Resists teacher efforts to motivate and discipline
- Vast gap between qualitative level of oral and written work
- Detailed knowledge and expertise in areas of specific interest
- Lacks motivation
- Self directed/ prefers to work independently
- Always questioning
- Evidences low self-esteem / may be withdrawn or aggressive in the classroom.

4. What strategies have you used prior to this referral? Please tick appropriate box or boxes:

- Differentiated curriculum
- Modified assessments
- Interviewed students
- Contacted parents
- Discussed student behaviour / performance with other appropriate teachers
- Other (please specify) _____

5. Suggested course of action – to be managed by school GAT committee:

- Parent contact
- Counsellor intervention
- Consultation with year advisor / head teacher
- Welfare meeting
- Teacher / student consultation
- Other (please specify) _____

6. Other information relevant to this referral (where necessary)

Please forward this referral to the co-ordinator of the GAT committee.

Appendix B

Parramatta High

Student Gifted and Talented Profile Sheet

Name: _____ Class: _____

Person completing this profile: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Please tick the most appropriate box. Not all boxes need to be ticked

F = Frequently

S = Sometimes

R = Rarely

Characteristic	Positive Classroom Behaviours	F	S	R
Heightened levels of curiosity and a wide variety of interests	Asks questions Investigates ideas Remembers things in great detail Demonstrates vast repertoire of factual knowledge			
Long attention span	Remains focused on higher-order tasks			
Ability to handle abstract ideas	Makes generalisations and tests their validity. Is aware of consequences of his/her choices; highly imaginative/creative			
Flexibility in thinking	Solves problems using a wide variety of strategies A risk taker			
Alert and subtle sense of humour	Uses humorous speech Tells 'funny' stories Understands 'adult' humour			
Superior vocabulary and verbal ability	Participates in class discussions using advanced/sophisticated vocabulary Conducts 'adult' conversations			
Advanced reading ability	Reads widely with high levels of comprehension Understands complex and abstract concepts			
Fast learner	Learns core content and skills quickly			
Excellent retention of knowledge	Accurate recall of facts, details and events Dislikes repetition Superior reasoning and retention of knowledge			

Characteristic	Positive Classroom Behaviours	F	S	R
Independent worker	Develops research and study skills Uses multiple resources Self-directed/ learns independently			
High level of personal responsibility and commitment	Sets realistic goals Tolerant of others An active and positive team member			
Strong feelings and opinions	Tolerant of other opinions and feelings Develops listening skills Concerned with morals, ethics and world issues			
Preference for unusual, original and creative responses	Asks curious questions, is a high achiever, participates in individual study programs Highly imaginative and creative			
A high energy level	Learns to use time to structure activities, learns to work individually			
Leadership	Takes control Seeks opportunities for responsibility			
Emotional characteristics	Perfectionist (self critical) Low self-esteem May be withdrawn or aggressive			

Comment (This could include interests and achievements):

(Adapted from Gross, M. U. M. Sleep, B. & Pretorius, M. (1999). *Gifted students in secondary schools: Differentiating the curriculum*. Sydney: University of New South Wales, GERRIC [Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre])

Please forward this profile sheet with a referral to the co-ordinator of the GAT committee.

APPENDIX C

Acceleration of students

- This is a placement procedure, not an educational program. The Principal has the final responsibility for deciding when any form of accelerated progression is appropriate for individual gifted and talented students to meet that student's educational, social and emotional needs. The Principal will be guided by the recommendations from the NSW DET Gifted and Talented policy and implementation procedures (revised, 2004) and the Guidelines for Accelerated progression from the NSW Board of Studies (revised 2000) 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 socio-emotional adjustment. This should be undertaken by a school counsellor or a registered psychologist, and should include input from the student's parents and teachers. Teachers should not confuse the absence of close age peer relationships with social immaturity. Gifted students are sometimes rejected by their classmates. 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.
- Academically, the student should demonstrate levels of skill that are well above the average of the class she or he would be going into.
- 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 accelerated progression.
- Negative attitudes towards accelerated placement may cause difficulties and thus attitudes of all people involved in the placement need to be investigated before a decision is made.
- The accelerated progression should be reviewed regularly. This could take place, for example, after one term by a meeting of those involved in the original decision to accelerate.

Appendix D

Standard Evaluation Form

Teacher: _____ Course / Class: _____

In an attempt to monitor the progress of students in the selective group, we would ask teachers to complete and comment on the students you currently teach. Please return ASAP to the coordinator of the GAT committee.

1= Below average, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Above average, 4= Outstanding

Student Name	Attitude to course work	Completion of class and home work	Quality of work completed	Assessment of performance	Coping with course demands	Extra-curricular involvement	Leadership qualities	Comment (where appropriate)

