



Turner School Gifted and Talented Guidelines



GUIDELINE TITLE:	Turner School Gifted and Talented Guidelines
YEAR OF PUBLICATION:	October 2014
REVIEW DATE	October 2018

Rationale and context statement

Turner School is committed to providing enriching and differentiated learning to meet the learning needs of students with identified gifts and talents. Gifted and talented students come from a variety of backgrounds and exhibit a wide range of personal characteristics that cause their gifts and talents to be expressed in many different ways. Gifted and talented students need special educational planning to support them in developing their potential.

Gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical. Talented students are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance. Giftedness may be found in academic, creative, artistic, social, perceptual and physical learning areas.

Gifted and talented children are encouraged to explore their particular talents through enriched curriculum options. The school strives to ensure the provision of multiple opportunities that cater for the interests, strengths and needs of students. Because of these different needs the school adopts an inclusive model that allows flexibility in the provision of programs.

Provision for gifted and talented students will include planned curriculum differentiation, mentoring and enrichment provided both within the regular classroom and through additional learning opportunities and support. This will be complemented by special interest projects, festivals and other opportunities such as challenges and competitions.

Related documents (Policy/policies to be read in conjunction with)

Gifted and Talented Students (2014) GTS 201402

Education Act (2004)

Guideline statement

1.0 Identification of students

1.1 The identification of gifted and talented student is a diagnostic process that locates and describes their specific or multiple gift(s) and talent(s). At Turner School we do this in a variety of ways depending on age. The process is a collaborative one involving students, parents and teachers, and may include the school's psychologist and other professionals.

1.2 The school uses a variety of identification tools: Teacher checklists for giftedness, self and teacher (and sometimes parent) nominations, observation, work samples and assessment tools. Where required a more formal diagnostic tool may be used.

1.3 The school recognises that some gifted students may not be easily recognised because of other factors masking giftedness such as cultural and social background or a specific learning disability or behavioural issues. The school is mindful with its student population of recognising dual exceptionality (or twice-exceptionality) where gifted students may also present with one or more specific learning difficulties; physical, emotional or behavioural disabilities; or other factors which may impair performance and mask high potential.

1.4 The identification of gifts and talents is done on an ongoing basis.

2.0 Curriculum Design

2.1 In general, curriculum design for gifted learners needs to incorporate provisions for acceleration, integration of content by key ideas, an advanced reading level and the use of higher-order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation). While inclusion of higher-order thinking is important for all students, gifted learners are likely to operate at this level more often. There should also be opportunities for independent learning based on student capacity and interests and advanced products (Van Tassel-Baska, 2003). Many gifted students have well-developed research and independent study skills while others need considerable support in these areas. Achievement is enhanced when tasks are structured, allow for concept acquisition, and enable students to pace themselves (Tomlinson, 1998). Gifted students may prefer independent study but it needs to be structured appropriately (Rogers, 2007), so that deep understanding and self-management skills are acquired (Stedtnitz & Speck, 1986). Gifted students need explicit instruction and scaffolding but not the degree of support and repetition required by less able students. Effective programming designs curriculum to cater for individual differences and differentiates the curriculum to meet learning needs (Tomlinson & McTigue, 2006).

2.2 Social-emotional needs and well-being are also considerations in developing adjustments to cater for gifted and talented students. These needs may include sensitivity, intensity, high expectations of themselves or others, a strong sense of justice, perfectionism, depression or underachievement. Adjustments may be included in a student's Individual Learning Plan.

3.0 Differentiation

3.1 Differentiation is the process by which the learning is changed to cater for the needs of all students. This may include adjustments to the curriculum and learning processes. It involves the modification of outcomes, teaching and learning activities and assessment. In differentiating learning the teacher maintains a sustained focus on the key concepts underpinning the sequence of learning and ensures that learning outcomes, activities and assessment tasks are aligned.

3.2 The differentiation of learning should be planned with consideration to what students already know. In this way the learning can be modified or extended and new learning activities can be substituted to provide the appropriate level of extension or challenge for students.

3.3 All class teachers at Turner School work to differentiate the learning program for students as a part of class work.

4.0 Communication and working with families

4.1 Effective communication between the school and families is crucial in meeting the learning needs of students.

4.2 The school has a nominated Gifted and Talented Liaison Officer who works with staff and families.

4.3 Parents and carers (and if age appropriate students) are involved in the setting of educational programs and plans to cater for the needs of gifted students. This may include the establishment of an Individual Learning Plan (refer below).

4.4 Families are informed if students are involved in any enrichment groups, special mentoring or targeted activities.

4.5 Parents may also need to meet with their child's teacher, the school counsellor, principal or other executive and teaching staff from time to time.

5.0 Whole of school enrichment opportunities

Turner School offers all students opportunities to engage in enrichment opportunities.

5.1 An annual festival alternating each year between an Artist's and Writers' Festival and STEM Festival is held in term 3. These Festivals provide opportunities to engage in authentic, enriched and inspiring learning that fosters inquiry and creativity.

5.2 Classes participate in weekly chess lessons in years 3-6 further developing strategic thinking and school teams compete in regional, territory and national competitions

- 5.3 The school enters teams annually in the Tournament of Minds challenge. Tournament of Minds is a problem solving programme for teams of students requiring students to solve demanding, open-ended challenges in the areas of Applied Technology, Language Literature, Maths Engineering or Social Sciences.
- 5.4 Specialist Arts teachers provide opportunities for students to excel in visual art and music. In addition to our specialist music program, opportunities for performance and extended musicianship are offered through the ACT Education and Training Directorate Instrumental Music Program's Brass Band program for selected children in years 5 and 6 who have been through an audition process, the school choirs and the years three and four recorder ensemble.
- 5.5 In Dance and Drama, students have the opportunity to participate in special performing arts events throughout the year, such as the Wakakirri Dance Story and the North Canberra Schools' Performing Arts Spectacular.
- 5.6 Students with talent in sport are eligible for selection in regional and national representation in a range of sports.
- 5.7 The school runs both a junior school and senior school Student Representative Council and student forums to allow students to engage in governance. The councils meet regularly across the year and work collaboratively with the school and community in representing student 'voice' and in the organisation of school wide projects and events. The councils work to ensure that the students of the school are not only focussed on ensuring student agency within the school community but also on contributing more broadly to their community and their world.
- 5.8 Student leaders work with staff to run a Green Rangers program to support classes with sustainable practices and in a variety of projects in the garden. The Turner School kitchen garden provides opportunity to learn about sustainable practice.

6.0 Enrichment groups

Grouping refers to the careful organisation of gifted students on the basis of need, according to ability or performance, for some or all of the school day. Differences will still be evident and will require appropriate programming and differentiation. Grouping is designed to be flexible and responsive. It can be short-term or long-term depending on the purpose for the grouping and the particular students for whom the grouping is undertaken.

6.1 Turner School does not operate using full-time ability grouping. The school is structured in multi-age classes for years 1-6. Subject ability/achievement groups, across one or more year level, within class differentiated groups (grouping students by topic or subject), task/project specific groups (students working together on a task that matches their ability) and enrichment clusters/groups (students are grouped with others who have interests in the same field) are used at the school. Only if specified within an Individual Learning Plan to meet specific targeted learning goals does the school operate using a withdrawal program (students withdrawn from class to participate in targeted activities that are linked to the classroom curriculum).

6.2 In terms 2 and 3 of each year students in years 1 to 6 have the opportunity through a selection process to participate in weekly enrichment groups in Mathematics and Writing.

7.0 Additional programs and projects

7.1 The school operates using an inquiry approach to learning. This may include class units that aim to assist students in developing a deep understanding of one or two key concepts, and allow students to investigate a concept across a number of learning areas. There is a strong focus on either an area of science, history, geography, health or the environment.

7.2 The provision for students to pursue 'passion projects' allows individual inquiry into areas of interest.

8.0 Mentoring of students

8.1 In some circumstances the school organises for a student to work with a mentor in an area of giftedness. This may be either in the class or in a separate program.

8.2 Working with a mentor is written as an adjustment into an ILP and in consultation with families.

9.0 ILP processes

9.1 For students with identified gifts and talents the school in consultation with families may establish an Individual Learning Plan to articulate learning goals.

9.2 If age appropriate, students are involved in goal setting and establishing learning goals.

9.3 The ILP may identify areas for enrichment in the areas of giftedness and/or identify goals in areas students require support.

10.0 Transitions and pathways

10.1 The school understands the necessity to support some students in transitioning between settings and establishing educational pathways to ensure that their potential is met.

10.2 The school works with families to develop a transition action plan where required as a part of an Individual Learning Plan.