

GIFTED AND TALENTED POLICY AT ST SIMON PETER CPS

RATIONALE

All students need to be given the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. It is a teacher's responsibility to teach children according to their ability, as much as is practical and the school's responsibility to support the teacher in this endeavour. Teachers at SSP are asked to cater for diverse abilities within their classrooms using strategies that include extension, remediation and different paced learning programs depending on the individual student's needs.

It is critical that children who have been identified as Gifted be given appropriate opportunity, stimulation and experiences to develop their potential.

DEFINITION

SSP recognises a broad definition of giftedness, which embraces and encourages excellence in all forms of intellectual, academic and creative endeavour.

Giftedness is the potential to perform at a level considerably superior to one's age peers in one or more domains of ability.

Talent is defined as significantly superior achievement or performance in one or more fields of human performance.

Level of Giftedness	IQ score (old test) (WISC-III, WPPSI-R, SB-4,)	IQ score (new test) (WISC-IV, WPPSI-III) source: Assessment of Children	IQ score (new test) (SB-5) source: Ruf Estimates of Levels of Giftedness
gifted or moderately gifted	130 -145 (132-148 SB-4)	130-138	120-129
highly gifted	145 -160 (148-164 SB-4)	138-145	131-144
exceptionally gifted	160 -180 (SB L-M only)	145-152	145-160
profoundly gifted	above 180 (SB L-M only)	152-160	161-175+

Level	IQ Range	Prevalence
Moderately Gifted	130 - 144	1:44 - 1:1,000
Highly Gifted	145 - 159	1:1,000 - 1:10,000
Exceptionally Gifted	160 - 179	1:10,000 - 1:1 million
Profoundly Gifted	180+	Fewer than 1:1 million

This policy acknowledges that...

1. All children (including those identified as Gifted) need to be provided with learning experiences tailored to their needs.
2. Gifted children need a curriculum, which provides a flexibility of structures and strategies.
3. Gifted children may be deeply motivated, unmotivated, divergent or convergent in their thinking and may show their abilities in a variety of ways.
4. Gifted children have needs that change because their talents are not static.
5. Gifted children exhibit a wide range of abilities and interests.
6. Gifted children may have particular learning requirements and need to be nurtured to ensure their potential is fully developed.
7. Children eligible for selection in the program at SSP are those who excel or have the potential to excel in general or specific ability areas.
8. Gifted children may underachieve in mainstream classroom, despite being identified as gifted. Superior performance and dedication to task are not always displayed by these children.
9. Underachievement in gifted children may manifest itself by behaviours such as poor work habits, lack of effort, low self esteem. (For further information refer to the TAGS manual)
10. Children may demonstrate different skills and abilities at home and school. School staff need to make judgements based on what a child demonstrates at school while recognising that, for a variety of reasons, a child may not be showing their true ability.

The Gifted and Talented Program.

The Gifted and Talented program at SSP is two fold in its approach.

1. Mainstream classroom

Classroom teachers are asked to offer learning opportunities to children that are commensurate with the abilities of the children in their class.

2. Withdrawal classes

These classes are offered as a complementary program to the one run in the mainstream classroom. Children leave their normal classroom and join selected children from other classes to work with the Gifted and Talented teacher on the development of skills and knowledge not normally dealt with in their classroom. Kindergarten to Year 3 is referred to as the SPARKLES program and Years 4 – 7 , the SPARKS program.

MAINSTREAM CLASSES

Each classroom teacher at SSP is asked to offer children learning experiences that are appropriate for their demonstrated level of development. Teachers use Progress Maps to level a child's performance in each of the nine curriculum areas. Children in any classroom will be working at a variety of levels in a curriculum area and school reports are written using these levels.

Where a child has progressed significantly further and faster than the majority of their peers and the level of achievement when compared to the Progress Maps is significantly higher, a form of acceleration may be considered.

Acceleration is a set of administrative strategies that enable educators to cater efficiently and effectively for the diversity of cognitive development, needs and competencies of gifted and talented students. (Van Tassel-Baska, 1992a) They allow students to “progress through an educational program at rates faster or at ages younger than normal”. (Pressey 1949, in Southern & Jones, 1991). Acceleration is designed to allow a student to progress through core content of a school program at a natural rate, rather than being restricted by artificially imposed annual steps of progression.

Forms of Acceleration

- Ability grouping children are grouped homogeneously in order to better cater to their academic needs.
- Cross setting ability groups within a year level for certain subjects–different teachers working with specific ability groups.
- Curriculum Compacting providing a curriculum that has been modified or streamlined to allow students to move through at a quicker pace.
- Curriculum Differentiation creating different pathways, so that students of different abilities, interests and learning modes, experience equally appropriate ways of learning.

- Grade Skipping where a child does not complete the normal twelve months in a class with their age peers. (See appendix 3 for more details.)
- Early entrance to Kindergarten or Pre-Primary is not normally allowed or recommended. (These are not compulsory years of education in this State.) Should there be exceptional circumstances relating to a child's advanced level of development, the Principal has to make a submission to the Director of Catholic Education seeking permission to alter the normal year level for that child. Such an application would only be made after consultation with parents, class teacher, the Gifted and Talented teacher at SSP as well as the collection of relevant data demonstrating the exceptional level of the child's development.

WITHDRAWAL CLASSES

The SPARKLES and SPARKS program will endeavour to provide for those children who are identified as having high intellectual potential by offering as many of the following as is practical both in the mainstream classroom and in the withdrawal classes:

- An environment that is stimulating and motivating for their individual needs.
- Encouragement to develop intrinsic motivation to learn.
- The resources needed to allow them to learn about topics that interest them.
- The confidence to become risk takers and problem solvers.
- Learning experiences commensurate with their potential and interest.
- Positive experiences in regard to their learning abilities.
- Relevant and meaningful learning experiences in and out of the classroom.
- Social and emotional support.
- Encouragement to accept self and one's own ability.

SPARKS YR 4 – 7

The component of the program referred to as SPARKS is for children in Yrs 4 – 7 who have been identified as Gifted and Talented. Gifted students come from a variety of backgrounds. Therefore a system of identification that draws on a comprehensive range of appropriate information sources is required. (Bright Futures. Ed Dept of Victoria)

Data will be collected from the following sources.

1. Nominations from parents, teachers and peers.
2. Records of school results, anecdotal records and student products.
3. Checklists such as those used in the TAGS file
4. Standardised tests – TOLA 4 & 6. Standard Progressive matrices
5. Student commitment to learning and a desire to be part of this group.
6. Psychological testing

All Year 4s will be tested early in Term 1 using the TOLA 4 (Test Of Learning Abilities) and the SPM (Ravens Standard Progressive Matrices). Those children who score a stanine 8 or 9 on both tests will be invited into the SPARKS withdrawal program. The results remain valid over the following years and therefore the children will remain part of the withdrawal program until Yr 7. Children who don't perform on these tests, but have an IQ of 130 (or equivalent) or more, will be accepted into the program as well, on the understanding that they must constructively work towards achieving the goals of the program.

Children are not normally asked to leave the program. If it is felt that SPARKS is not appropriate for the child's education, discussion will take place between G&T coordinator, Principal and parents to make a decision that best suits the child concerned.

Re-testing is not the norm, but if it is felt that there were extenuating circumstances on the day of testing, or that for some reason the results do not appear valid, re-testing may take place.

New children to Yr 4, 5, 6 and 7 will be tested if there is evidence to support the need for testing. This will be done in negotiation with the class teacher, parents, SPARKS coordinator and Principal.

SPARKLES – K – 3

AIMS of the SPARKLES program is to provide

- A supplementary program for the learning environment of the classroom.
- An environment that is stimulating and motivating for their individual needs.
- Intellectual stimulation, not necessarily formal reading and writing
- Encouragement to develop intrinsic motivation to learn.
- The resources needed to allow them to learn about topics that interest them
- The confidence to become risk takers and problem solvers.
- Learning experiences commensurate with their potential and interest.
- Positive experiences in regard to their learning abilities.
- Relevant and meaningful learning experiences in and out of the classroom
- Social and emotional support.
- The opportunity for like minded children to mix together.
- Support for parents, classroom teachers and specific children

Identification of children for the SPARKLES program

Children will be nominated by their classroom teachers and parents based on their individual needs at the time. It is important to note that these needs may change as the child progresses through school and the child may not require the same support in later years, whereas another child may.

The decision as to whether a child will be offered a place in the SPARKLES program will be based on a child's advanced development in relation to:

- Readiness to complete the tasks involved in the topic for the term.
- Prior learning experiences

- Social and emotional maturity
- Confidence to be able to work within a group in a different location.
- Appropriate understanding of the behaviour required for withdrawal classes.
- The ability to concentrate for an extended period.
- The ability to work to some extent independently.
- The willingness to learn new skills and knowledge.

Parents may be asked to complete the checklist for more able children from the TAGS file and psychological testing may be discussed as a way of assisting the school in the provision of the most suitable curriculum.

YEAR 2 AND 3

Children in Yr 2 and Yr 3 will normally be selected for the program on a semester basis. Decisions will be made by the classroom teachers in consultation with the previous teachers, the G & T coordinator and the parents. Up to ten children from each level may be selected. The following semester another ten may be selected.

If a child is selected in one semester he/she will rarely be selected for the next semester (in the same year.) This allows more children to benefit from the program. However, if a child has been selected in one year they are eligible for selection again the following year.

If necessary, a child may attend the withdrawal classes all year but this decision will be made on an individual basis in consultation with the class teacher, G & T coordinator, Principal and parents. (See Appendix 2 for more details.)

KINDY, PRE PRIMARY and YEAR 1

Selection for the withdrawal program will be done by the classroom teacher and will commence in term 2. Selection will be made in consultation with the previous teacher and the G&T coordinator and parents. Up to ten children per year level may attend for the term.

If a child is selected in one term he/she will rarely be selected for the next term so that we are able to offer this opportunity to a broad range of children who meet the selection criteria. However, if a child has been selected in one year they are eligible for selection again the following year.

If necessary, a child may attend the withdrawal classes all year but this decision will be made on an individual basis in consultation with the class teacher, G & T coordinator, Principal and parents. (See Appendix 2 for more details)

Conclusion.

SSP endeavours to work closely with all children who have significant academic ability. This is a complex challenge and the approaches described in the Policy endeavour to give all identified children the opportunity to develop their potential. It is important to recognise that decisions relating to the provision of the most appropriate curriculum have to be made within the limits of class size, school budget, teacher workloads and the often varying opinions of those involved in determining what may be best for a child. Education is a life long process and working slowly but thoroughly is the best way forward. The Principal will endeavour to work closely with all parties when coming to a final decision about what is best for a particular child.

Appendix 3

GRADE SKIPPING

Children who have been identified as highly gifted, exceptionally gifted or profoundly gifted will be considered for grade skipping, if the following criteria have been met.

- The student has a minimum IQ of 130 WISC IV or equivalent.
- The student is able to demonstrate academic skills above the average of the year level he/she wishes to enter, on a consistent basis. This will be ascertained by completion of :
 - a) off level testing i.e. UNSW Competitions, year level assessments
 - b) standardised testing i.e. S.A. Spelling, Neale Reading Analysis, PAT Maths
- The student is happy and enthusiastic about making the transition.
- Scores between 60 – 80 points on the IOWA Acceleration Scale.
- Parents sign an agreement “Conditions of a Trial Grade Skip”.
- The student successfully completes a trial period in the new year level.

NB – all of the above criteria must be met, before a grade skip will be considered.

Process of Decision making

1. Parents, teacher or G&T coordinator initiates discussion about a possible grade skip.
2. Collection of above mentioned data upon which to base the decision to accelerate.
3. Meeting with principal, parents, current teacher, G&T coordinator, school counsellor/ psychologist to discuss matters linked to grade skipping
4. Decision made by the above mentioned group:
 - A) Not to grade skip – plan suitable work in current class.
 - B) To begin a trial for the proposed grade skip.
5. G & T coordinator will inform current and receiving teachers of the decision to trial a grade skip and arrange necessary support and professional development for the receiving teacher.
6. Meeting with parents and receiving teacher to discuss routines etc of the new class will be arranged.
7. G&T coordinator will discuss the grade skip with the child’s current class and receiving classmates focussing on the feelings of the child and how the other children can help. This is to ensure all children understand what is happening.
8. Counselling for the child concerned will be set up with G&T coordinator.
9. The trial period in new class will begin. And there will be constant monitoring of the child by parents, teacher and G&T coordinator during the trial.
10. A meeting to review trial and to make definite decision about the grade skip will be set up by the G&T teacher in keeping with the time line for the trial.
11. The grade skip will be made permanent or child is returned to age peers – being careful to ensure that this is not perceived as a failure by those involved.

Points for discussion with parents and teachers prior to a trial grade skip..

- Ideally, the grade skip should take place at natural transition points, such as the beginning of the school year or mid year. (The trial period takes place prior to a permanent move. i.e. if the child is looking to grade skip at the beginning of the next year, the trial should take place in the last 6 – 8 weeks of the year. If a permanent move was desirable at the beginning of Semester 2, the trial period should take place in the last 6 – 8 weeks of Term 2.)
- Everyone should understand that there is an initial trial period and if that is unsuccessful that it is not perceived as a failure.
- The expectations of all involved are reasonable and understood by all.
- Parents will need to be involved in the transition and counselling at home as well as helping to bridge any gaps in learning.
- Good communication is needed between the receiving teacher and the parents.
- Issues with siblings will need to be discussed.
- The child will still require extension. The grade skipped child will always need careful monitoring and on going support.
- Social aspects for the grade skipped child in later years need to be discussed.
- Consideration for competitive sporting activities in later years.
- The student's physical size or sensory disability should not prohibit consideration for a grade skip.
- There may be some school activities which necessitate the child participating at age appropriate levels. (eg Sporting Carnivals)

Points for discussion with the teacher prior to a trial grade skip

- Teachers should not confuse the absence of close age peer relationships with social maturity. Social or emotional difficulties may have been caused by inappropriately low grade placement.
- Receiving teacher to be aware that there may be gaps in the student's learning and allowances need to be made for this.
- The trial period timetable needs to be adhered to, as much as is practical, with parents, G&T coordinator to be kept informed.
- The receiving teacher will receive as much support as possible and where necessary and available will receive professional development in the area of Gifted Education
- Seating arrangements. Throughout the trial period the child involved will require a permanent seat.
- Social network.
- Discuss the trial with the class and parents.

Trial Period

The trial period for the grade skip will be a six to eight week process. The student concerned will spend time in the receiving class according to the following timetable.

Week 1 8.40am – 10.50am

Week 2 & 3 8.40am – 12.45pm

Week 4, 5, & 6 Full time.

The G & T coordinator will write up the timetable for the student concerned and copies will be given to the parents and relevant teachers.

Changes to the trial timetable will need to be discussed with G & T coordinator, Principal, parents and teachers.

Parents will be asked to sign to agree to the conditions of the trial period, before it will begin. (See Appendix 4 for the details)

Appendix 2

Criteria for remaining in SPARKLES for the whole year

Children will demonstrate a significant number of the following:

- Significantly above average skills and/or knowledge in the mainstream classroom.
- Ability to cope with extra withdrawal time from the mainstream classroom.
- Good work ethic.
- Ability to work independently.

Criteria for attending a higher level within the withdrawal component

Children will demonstrate a significant number of the following>

- Working well above the learning area targets in the mainstream classroom.
- Able to cope with workload in mainstream classroom as well as withdrawal class.
- Good work ethic.
- Ability to work independently.
- Demonstrate the achievement of a significant number of IOWA ratings.
- Have an IQ of 140 WISC IV or equivalent.

The Principal will be responsible for making the final decision about class placements having received all relevant information from teachers and parents. This decision will be final remembering the constraints of numbers, resources and the fact that this withdrawal is only supplementary to what is offered in the mainstream classroom.

Appendix 4

Conditions of a Trial Grade Skip at St Simon Peter CPS

The following conditions need to be agreed to by parents who wish to have their child placed on a grade skip trial period.

Student's Name _____

Receiving class _____

1. A timetable for transition will be established after a decision to grade skip is made by the Principal.
2. The timetable of transition is flexible and may change. The school will endeavour to inform parents if and when changes will occur, but please note some changes are out of our control or are unforeseeable.
3. The teachers involved in the transition will discuss and decide on actual times that are suitable for both classes. These times will be given to the parents.
4. This is a trial period and as such is not a definite indication that a permanent grade skip will occur. A return to age appropriate class will not be deemed a failure but a decision that best suits the student involved.
5. Before a permanent grade skip can be considered, the child involved will need to demonstrate the ability to work at a level commensurate with the above average group in the year level they are to be accelerated into. (With reference to the IOWA scale of Acceleration.)
6. Before permanent grade skip can be considered the student concerned will have to show that they are emotionally and behaviourally ready for such an acceleration. (With reference to the IOWA scale of Acceleration.)
7. If the student involved is in kindergarten or pre primary, official permission to move out of the age appropriate Year level will have to be received from the Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia. The Principal makes this application.
8. Specialist subjects such as Art, Sport, Italian and Music will be taken in the class that the child is attending at the time of these lessons.
9. Parents will be informed of any areas of strength or concern regarding academic performance and behaviour once a week by the accepting teacher. At this meeting (or through email/telephone contact) the parents can share any concerns they have regarding the trial grade skip.
10. If the agreed transition timetable needs to be adapted this will be done in consultation with the G&T coordinator, both classroom teachers and the parents.
11. A meeting after approximately 6 weeks of the trial period will take place with the classroom teachers, Principal, G&T coordinator and the parents to make final decisions.

We agree to the above conditions regarding a trial grade skip for our child.

Father's signature

Mother's signature

G&T Coordinator signature

Date:

Appendix 1.

Young Gifted Children Teacher Nomination Form

Record the name of your student. Use a highlighter to show each behaviour you observe in the classroom or playground.

Name of Student: _____ Age: _____

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Characteristics of Young Gifted Children	Behaviours
Unusual alertness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">intense concentration and interest in interactions and objects.long attention span.
Advanced play behaviour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">interest in games with rules may develop at an earlier age than usual.able to play games which require strategy earlier than peers
Exceptional memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to recall information in great detail. Often tells stories to the teacher with a immense amount of detail.
Early reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">usually untaughtoften able to read on entry to school
Rapid pace of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">appear to acquire knowledge effortlesslyable to generalise the knowledge to new situations in unexpected ways
Asks lots of questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">probing and reflective questions
Early development of classifying and investigating skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">organises things by classifying into groupsinvestigates how things work and wonders 'what will happen if'
Exceptional mathematical ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">has the capacity to grasp abstract mathematical concepts at unusually early ages.
Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">has an imaginary friendcreative and inventive storyteller
Early speech	<ul style="list-style-type: none">love of rich vocabulary, larger than expected vocabulary compared with age peerscapacity to create complex sentences
Early social interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">early awareness of the individuality of othersintense concern for other children who

	are hurt
Feelings of frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> frustrated if motor coordination lags behind their intellectual development such as pencil grip. The child may be resistant to writing or drawing.
Heightened sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> early capacity to empathise with feelings of others
Social and emotional maturity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emotionally more like older children and may seek them out as friends may be isolated from same-age peers because of his or her more mature interests and perceptions
Early awareness of difference from others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> norm-references to other children from an early age, may deliberately begin making mistakes to be like other children.

Adapted from Gross, 2004 by Caroline Merrick 2004

Scoring the Checklist

Have you highlighted more than 5 different behaviour boxes? YES/NO

How many characteristics (in the first column) are being displayed? _____

Conclusions:
