



Gifted and Talented Policy

Developed: June 2018

Due for review: 2021

Mission and Commitment

Rosemont is an academically stimulating school with a Catholic ethos that encourages girls to live their faith in the ordinary events of every day.

Christian faith is the reason why each individual girl in Rosemont is respected and valued, whether she is a believer or not. Our educational mission draws life from ideals that are sincerely Catholic; these same ideals are open to people with a wide array of beliefs and backgrounds. This partnership is possible because the Catholic faith is a truly humanising faith: the salvation it offers is a salvation that makes us more genuinely human. St. Josemaría Escrivá wanted people to discover in their Catholic faith a basis for unity and solidarity in working with others to build up an authentically human ecology in the world.

Rosemont provides a simple presentation of Catholic faith and a dynamic sacramental life and chaplaincy. Rosemont also seeks to express and live the Catholic faith in the following ways: through an atmosphere of open intellectual inquiry, a deep respect for personal freedom and emotional development and preparation for future professional life. This emphasis on the connection between personal faith and professional preparation at the service of others is characteristic of what Opus Dei seeks to contribute to the school.

Educational Programme: Our focus on independent thinking underpins our excellent record of academic success, with Rosemont Leaving Certificate students consistently receiving outstanding results qualifying them for entry to Irish universities. Rosemont's long history in educating students to think independently is anchored in the teaching of the humanities. Independent thought is nurtured through class discussion, higher-order questioning, presentations, and debating. The Sciences develop a sense of enquiry delivered in state of the art laboratories, in a highly collaborative, innovative space. Mathematics and business subjects facilitate logical deduction and entrepreneurship. Creative subjects such as Music, Home Economics and Art develop the brain connectivity involved in internally focused thought, empathy and self-awareness. Rosemont's focus on School Self-Evaluation and School Improvement Plan 2016-2020 targets around (i) increasing student understanding the

purpose of homework (ii) promoting active learning using the KWHL method and (iii) peer assessment support all students, including gifted and talented student, in reaching their potential.

Coaching: Rosemont has pioneered coaching in the Irish school system since 1977. Each student has a one-to-one coach who acts as a valuable sounding board when students are setting their own targets and goals in school. Coaches encourage their coachees to make the most of their strengths and talent. Each term parents engage with their daughter's coach to facilitate her progress.

- **Academics and Coaching lead to Education for Life** – intellectual (fostering a growth mind-set and life skills/independent thought), emotional (virtues programme), spiritual (developing a moral code & knowledge of faith in an atmosphere of personal freedom and responsibility), physical (sport and healthy living)

Catholic schools seek to provide students with a learning environment that acknowledges and maximises their individual potential, and promotes their wellbeing and their experience of participation and inclusion.

Highly able students are acknowledged as having particular learning needs requiring enhancement to their educational programs, so that they remain highly engaged and active learners. The aim of this policy is to support teachers in identifying, teaching and assessing gifted students and to support the procedures and planning of future directions for enhancing the education of our gifted and talented young people.

Staff in Rosemont believe that all students are entitled to an education that will enable them to develop to their full potential, be that intellectually, physically, creatively, emotionally, spiritually, morally or socially. Students are entitled to an education based on their needs and the school is committed to providing a sufficiently challenging curriculum for all of them. Rosemont teachers are committed to School Self-Evaluation and to working together as reflective practitioners. A key aspect of this commitment is the identification and nurturing of the abilities of the more able students, and the delivery of stimulating and engaging lessons which will challenge and stretch all learners, including gifted and talented students.

1. Aim

Rosemont is a mixed-ability school which aims to provide an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential, and this includes students who display some form of exceptional ability or talent.

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. 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; and
- Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation.

Those students who demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate extremely high levels of ability, compared to their peers across the entire population, are often referred to by the term 'Exceptionally Able'. The terms 'Gifted and Talented' or 'Exceptionally Able' encompass students who are able across the curriculum as well as those who show talent in one or more specific areas.

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; and
- 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.

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;
- Coach 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 at a Rosemont sample afternoon
- Identification by an external agency or organisation, such as the State Examinations Commission
- Primary school reports
- Self-nomination.

Staff in Rosemont 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 (See Appendix 1) 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.

5. Provision for the Gifted and Talented

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into Subject Plans and Schemes of Work. 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.

Staff in Rosemont aim to:

- Maintain an ethos where it is acceptable to be exceptionally able;

- Use data that has been collected to inform themselves of gifted and talented students
- Encourage all students to be independent learners and to take ownership of learning;
- Recognise achievement;
- Provide a wide 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 societies (e.g. Language Clubs, Book Club; Debating
- Student councils ;
- Enrichment opportunities (Gaisce Award, Iveagh Scholars Programme, Law Modules);
- Opportunities for performance (School Musical and sports events);
- Specialist teaching or coaching (e.g. Mensa Maths, De Bono thinking);
- Leadership opportunities (e.g. European Youth Parliament, Prefects).

Out of School Provision

Rosemont 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);
- Inner-school sports competitions (e.g. netball, tennis and basketball);
- STEM opportunities and courses e.g. STEPS programme, IWish conference

Personal Development

Class work and work outside the classroom will include opportunities for students to participate in small and large groups, which will help develop their personal and social skills; e.g. through social work. We recognise that the way students operate in teams and support each other when discussing ideas or collecting resources and materials, supports their social, personal and emotional development. Rosemont aims to develop all the abilities of students, including their personal and social skills, especially if these are not strengths. We aim to create a climate in which students are taught to relate well to each other and where differences of all kinds, including ability are accepted.

6. Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

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. (see Appendix 2: Classroom Strategies Checklist)
- Develop or acquire resources for use with gifted and talented students

Learning Support teachers

- Deliver content for gifted and talented students
- Oversee the administration of CATS and DATS tests and analysis thereof
- Devise a Personal Pupil Plan for gifted and talented students
- Work with the MT to review the policy
- Train other staff members to work with gifted and talented students

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.
- Coaching – subject teachers when working with coachees will identify and highlight opportunities for gifted and talented students

Heads of Department

- Identify gifted and talented students by a variety of subject-specific methods and by analysing relevant assessment data.
- Audit provision for gifted and talented students
- Develop and implement activities or programmes of work that cater for the needs of gifted and talented students. (see Appendix 2: Classroom Strategies Checklist)
- Develop or acquire resources for use with gifted and talented students

Appendix 1:

General Checklist for Identifying Gifted and Talented Students (Page 1 of 2)

Characteristic. Gifted and Talented students may:	Y/N
Possess extensive general knowledge, often know more than the teacher and find the usual reference books superficial	
Show good insight into cause-effect relationships	
Easily grasp underlying principles and need the minimum of explanation	
Quickly make generalisations and extract the relevant points from complex material	
Have mental speeds faster than physical capabilities and so be often reluctant to write at length	
Prefer to talk rather than write and often talks at speed with fluency and expression	
Be reluctant to practise skills already mastered, finding such practice futile	
Have exceptional curiosity and constantly wants to know why	
Be inventive and original when interested	
Ask searching questions, which tend to be unlike other students’ questions	
Often see the unusual rather than the conventional relationships	
Be able to pose problems and solve ingeniously	
Display intellectual playfulness, fantasise and imagine and be quick to see connections and to manipulate ideas	
Read rapidly and retain what is read and can recall detail	
Listen only to part of the explanation and appear to lack concentration or even interest	

but always know what is going on	
Jump stages in learning and be often frustrated by having to fill in the stages missed	
Leap from concrete examples to abstract rules and general principles	
Have quick absorption and recall of information, seem to need no revision and be impatient with repetition	
Be keen and alert observers, note detail and be quick to see similarities and differences	
See greater significance in a story or film and continue the story	
See problems quickly and take the initiative	

General Checklist for Identifying Gifted and Talented Students (Page 2 of 2)

Have advanced understanding and use of language but sometimes be hesitant as they search for and use the correct word	
Become absorbed for long periods when interested and maybe impatient with interference or abrupt change	
Persists in completing activities when motivated	
Often set very high personal standards – are perfectionists	
More than usually interested in ‘adult’ problems such as important issues in current affairs (local and world), evolution, justice, the universe etc.	
Be concerned to adapt and improve institutions, objects, systems, (e.g. can be particularly critical of school)	
Be philosophical about everyday problems and common sense issues	
Be perceptive in discussion about people’s motives, needs and frailties	
Daydream and seem lost in another world	
Show sensitivity and react strongly to things causing distress or injustice	
Often take a leadership role	
Empathise with others and be very understanding and sympathetic	
Be confident and competent	
Express their own feelings	
Attribute ideas to others	
Be self-effacing	
Reflect on their own performance	
Give inventive responses to open-ended questions	
Have a keen sense of humour in the unusual and be quick to appreciate nuances and hidden meanings	
Appreciate verbal puns, cartoons, jokes and often bizarre humour, satire and irony	
Criticise constructively, even if sometimes argumentatively	
Be unwilling to accept authoritarian pronouncements without critical examination and want to debate and find reasons to justify the why and the wherefore	

Appendix 2:

Classroom Strategies Checklist

Audit	Part of practice	Needs more work
Being aware of school policy and practice for Gifted and Talented students		
Referring to subject policy guidance on working with Gifted and Talented students		
Liaising with subject coordinators where necessary		
Using a variety of forms of differentiation in their teaching		
Planning for the use of higher order learning skills in their teaching		
Considering and planning for different learning styles		
Setting high expectations for the Gifted and Talented students		
Considering early examination entry		
Grouping Gifted and Talented students together for specific subjects or activities		
Pacing lessons to take account of the rapid progress of some Gifted and Talented students		
Giving time for Gifted and Talented students to extend or complete work if they need it		
Moving Gifted and Talented students into another class (of older students) for some or all work, if their needs cannot be met in their normal class		
Setting homework which is challenging for Gifted and Talented students		
Monitoring and recording the progress of Gifted and Talented students		
Undertaking lesson observation which monitor the progress and attainment of Gifted and Talented students		