MULLUMBIMBY HIGH SCHOOL

Gifted and Talented Policy
Rationale

This policy is based on the Policy and Implementation Strategies for the Education of Gifted and Talented Students (NSW Department of Education 2006).

Mullumbimby High School provides a curriculum which is relevant, challenging and prepares students to meet the challenges of our ever changing world. The curriculum we provide for gifted and talented students develops their ability to be independent, reflective and self-directed learners who are creative, innovative, critical thinkers, and problem solvers.

Aims

Mullumbimby High School aims to support all students towards personal excellence and to achieve high quality educational outcomes for all our GAT students. We recognise the value of extensive identification practices and acknowledge that gifted and talented students may be underachieving or may have physical, emotional or learning disabilities. We further acknowledge that gifted and talented students can be found in all communities, regardless of ethnicity, cultural or socio-economic background.

Definition of giftedness and talent

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.

Identification

We recognise that students may have various abilities and gifts including intellectual, creative, leadership, social and physical skills.

At Mullumbimby High School, the executive and staff are aware of the many impediments that may hinder the recognition of giftedness and the development of talent. These include:

- Intrapersonal factors such as lack of motivation, low self-esteem, poor health, disability and learning and language difficulties.
- 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, intrain-personal difficulties and inappropriate teaching and learning practices.
- Being a student from Non-English Speaking Background, conduct-disordered student or a student disadvantaged by gender inequity.

The Identification Process at Mullumbimby: (see appendix A, B, C)

- 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.

Mullumbimby High School employs a wide range of identification methods such as:

- Teacher nomination based on summative and formative assessment data and a range of classroom activities.
- Nominations by parent, self or counsellor.
- IQ tests and other culturally appropriate measures of ability.
- Standardised tests including the Selective High School Test.
- School class placement data collected from testing (NAPLAN)
- Observational and anecdotal evidence
- Interviews
- Academic grades
- Assessment of responses to challenging competitions
- Identification procedures will focus in all new enrollments 7 – 10 and concentrated on each Year 7 cohort.
Procedures

Year 7 students:

- DP will send information on the Summit program at Mullumbimby to primary school and parents / caregivers. This will include a parent nomination form which will be submitted as part of the application.
- The Senior Executive team will evaluate the applications and conduct interviews
- The Senior Executive team will collated the data from the application process to form the Summit class
- A letter to parent / Caregiver will be sent written notification of their child’s inclusion in the Summit class. This letter will be sent at the end of Week 2, Term 3 of the previous year.
- The Summit class will be monitored each term to ensure correct placement and appropriate behaviour.

Year 8 Students:

- English and Maths will be blocked. For the rest of the curriculum structure, classes would be formed collaboratively by HTs Science, HSIE, PDHPE, TAS and CAPA (preferred option) There will be a high achieving class in year 8
- If English or Maths cannot be blocked then all HTs will collaborate in the formation of the classes.

All New Enrolments

- Identification at initial enrolment interview by enrolment officer. Parents and students to complete nomination form if appropriate.
- DP will negotiate with HTs regarding appropriate class placement.

ALL GAT Students

- Learning profiles will be published and made available for staff on the intranet.
- DPs will ensure that identified student names are distributed to each faculty via executive meetings and published in the Deputy Desk.
- A review of student in the GAT program will be conducted by the GAT Team after the half-yearly and yearly assessment periods. This review will include an evaluation of student performance, application and attitude from reports and teacher observation. Parent interviews will be conducted by DP/ HT Welfare/ Year Advisers
- Programs to support students ‘at risk’ will be implemented as needed eg individual monitoring.

Acceleration of students

Acceleration is possible under the NSW BOS guidelines (see Assessment Certification and Examination [ACE] manual) and is widespread across the State. Acceleration may occur in any year, but at all times occurs in accordance with the BOS guidelines and current State gifted education policy statements (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006). Acceleration may occur in individual subjects or as a whole grade skip.
At Mullumbimby High School students possessing superior skills, keen interest and abilities needing further challenge may be considered for acceleration. The only goal is to cater better for the needs, interests and abilities of students who are gifted within existing curriculum arrangements. This may involve students completing courses for Stage 5, Preliminary Certificate or HSC in advance of their chronological cohort.

The process for acceleration is as follows.

1. A case is made to the Principal, by a head teacher, teacher or parent/caregiver for a student to be accelerated in a given subject area(s). The case for acceleration is explored and its implications discussed with the person making the request, prior to students being invited to consider this possibility.

2. The student is explicitly made aware of the implications and must be very interested and committed to acceleration, understanding its implications.

3. If not already involved, relevant head teachers are consulted and their views (and views of their respective staff) of the student’s suitability, academic abilities, commitment and persistence are considered before any move towards acceleration is contemplated.

4. Parent/caregiver consent and appreciation of the inherent implications of acceleration are required. The impact on timetabling of courses for accelerated students and subject clashes given GAT student involvement (e.g. Advanced Mathematics or completing a preliminary course which may be locked into a line for two years) would be explained and agreed on given the possibility of potential subject clashes later. The future implications are outlined. This includes potential timetabling clashes, elective ‘squeeze’ and safety-net provisions for unexpected or poor performance. Parents/caregivers are informed that a final decision will be made once other checks have been made.

5. Final senior executive approval is required.

6. Parents/caregivers and students are informed and commit to an annual review of the placement. Names are published and an explanation about the student placement is made to staff. Annual review interviews with parents and students are essential so that current and future implications are addressed and understood by all parties. This is particularly so with transition points into senior courses, where careers interviews or subject selection or university admission information is critical.

7. Accelerated students will be mentored by a member of the Gifted and Talented team.

**GAT – staff professional learning**

Staff must feel comfortable with what they teach and need to be equipped with sufficient knowledge to do so. Staff professional learning funds support the GAT projects. Suggestions, ideas and proposed course attendance by teachers can be discussed with the Deputy Principals. This includes training courses on gifted education specifically, other instructional and technology courses. Staff are expected to share all relevant professional learning with the GAT Team.

Emphasis on whole-school staff inclusion in the GAT program is essential to provide an understanding of its content, demands and merits. Staff development days and professional learning special interest meetings are other avenues through which staff awareness and understanding will be developed.

Differentiating the curriculum in all classrooms is a continual and particular emphasis at Mullumbimby High School.

**Organisational issues:**

Management of gifted and talented programs in the school:

- GAT Programs are overseen by DP (CM)
Mullumbimby High School

- Individual programs are coordinated by members of the GAT Team. GAT Team will share responsibility for the management of the GAT programs.
- GAT Team consists of DP, teachers of the Summit class and other interested HTs and teachers. GAT Team will meet on a regular basis.
- Curriculum Head Teachers are responsible for the implementation of this policy in their faculty and for ensuring that suitable programs, reflecting GAT projects, are developed.

Provision

The GAT program at Mullumbimby High School will consist of a number of projects as outlined on the following pages. These projects will ensure the needs of GAT students are being met through the provision of:

- Within class programs and strategies
- Differentiated curriculum
- Teaching/learning activities
- Grouping/practices
- Contracts/independent projects
- Specialist activities
- Mentor activities
- Collaboration with outside agencies
G&T Program Focuses

We will have a number of students in Years 7 & 8 who are Gifted and Talented students. The school will endeavour to meet their needs and particularly, to ensure that they are provided with opportunity to develop their talent or their area of giftedness.

**Focus Area 1: Years 7 & 8**

**Year 7**
- We develop 1 true ‘top’ class in year 7 (Summit). The summit class will be for English, Mathematics, Science, HSIE, PDHPE, LOTE and Music. There will be a different arrangement for D&T and VA. This will allow teachers to develop and implement G&T projects.

**Year 8**
- English and Maths will be blocked. For the rest of the curriculum structure, classes would be formed collaboratively by HTs Science, HSIE, PDHPE, TAS and CAPA (preferred option). There will be a high achieving class in year 8.
- If English or Maths cannot be blocked then all HTs will collaborate in the formation of the classes.

**Presentation work**

Parents/caregivers will be sent a letter to explain the nature of the presentation afternoon at the end of Semester 1 and 2. They are also sent an invitation to the afternoon mid-way through the semester. The parent presentation afternoon occurs in week 10 in terms 2 and week 8 in term 4.

A schedule of presentations is arranged and the Drama room is used for this purpose.

The actual event/roles are:
- Role 1: letters of invitation to the GAT parents/caregivers, return slips, number
- Role 2: venue booking, setting up of chairs, projectors, posters, journal display tables, work displays, etc.
- Role 3: purchase and organisation of light afternoon tea
- Role 4: rehearsal of project presentations (on the day but in the early morning)
- Role 5: hosts of the afternoon – meeting/greeting/introducing projects, arranging for principal’s introduction etc.

**Focus Area 2: Curriculum Differentiation Project – Professional Development**

GAT Students have special needs and various abilities and gifts including intellectual, creative, leadership, social and physical skills. The top classes in Year 7 would be made up of truly ‘Gifted’ students as well as students who are high achievers.

Specialised programs and units of work that encourage high achievement, originality, problem solving, higher-order thinking skills and creativity need to be provided.

- These programs should employ grouping strategies, extension activities, enrichment, open-ended activities and assignments, individual research and investigation, opportunities for peer tutoring and assessment.
Head Teachers would need to allocate ‘sensitively’ for these classes in order to ensure that their learning needs were being met. Teachers allocated would need to be able to:

1. Encourage sustained and disciplined inquiry focusing on concepts connected to their experience.
2. Incorporate elements of Quality Teaching such as Intellectual quality, Significance and a Quality Learning Environment through a student-centred approach.
3. Compress and compact the curriculum where appropriate
4. Encourage independence and risk taking.
5. Provide curriculum that is open-ended and promotes higher-order thinking and creativity
6. Use group work to allow scope for leadership, co-operative decision making and student-initiated perspectives
7. Create a social environment that is accepting
8. Incorporate extension activities involving the deepening of a student’s knowledge, understanding and skills.
9. Involve community members with specific expertise as mentors where appropriate.

Each KLA will be supported in order to develop suitable programs for these classes.
The teachers of yr 7 Summit form a Gifted and Talented Team and meet on a regular basis. They would use this time to plan curriculum, discuss issues as they arise, develop projects incorporating ICT focus etc. The teachers of the top year 8 classes are also invited to join.

Focus Area 3: Community Mentoring Project

This project would be made available to the Gifted and Talented students in Years 7 & 8 in Term 2 onwards. This part of the program would be conducted on a nomination/individual basis and managed in part with the help of the Careers’ Advisor and Librarian.

In Term 2 it will involve members of the community (Parents, Professionals etc) coming into the school as guest speakers. This would be developed into a mentoring project later in Term 3 & 4 with students being linked up with a community member to complete a project which they develop.

All GAT students in Year 7 & 8, however, could be involved in community and University organised projects which cater for their needs. These could include:

G&T Program for Years 9 & 10

Students in years 9 and 10 identified as gifted and talented, will generally be accelerated if all guidelines are met. Students who are accelerated will be included in the mentoring program and supported by the DP and the GAT team.

Negotiated Work Project for individuals or small groups

This program will allow GAT students and small groups to work on a project which they will negotiate with their teacher in any subject. The project will be particularly useful in classes where there are only a few GAT students. It will provide them with the opportunity to engage in a topic in a more meaningful way and relevant for them. The project can run between 2 – 5 weeks and students will go to their library instead of timetabled periods for that subject. It will not affect any other subjects for which the student is enrolled.

Implementation:

- Class teachers will negotiate the project with the student or group. The project should be engaging and activities developed in such a way that it will encourage high achievement, originality, problem solving, higher-order thinking skills and creativity. The project should be related to one of the GAT
domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social or physical and should particularly focus on the area of giftedness or talent the student possesses.

- A Negotiated Student Project pro-forma should be completed for the Librarian and a copy given to DP. Attached to this should also be a copy of the project.
- The Librarian will manage the student and indicate starting and finishing periods, timetabled periods etc.
- The Librarian will maintain a register of student attendance so that students can sign on and off.
- Class teachers will assess the project. This assessment should be included in course assessment data for reporting purposes.
- Class teachers may wish to ask students to present their project to the class or other small group to share ideas and gain peer feedback. This would also provide a leadership opportunity for the GAT student/s.

G&T Extra-curricular activities all Years

Clubs and faculty programs are encouraged to foster the development of talented students (e.g. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO] interest groups, subject specific competitions, Justice Museum and Powerhouse Museum visits, movies, Archibald Prize, Tournament of the Minds, astronomy nights, history competitions, drama competitions, chess club, debating and public speaking).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Activities please list and identify which year group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Debating, Public Speaking Competition, Lions Youth of the Year, Various writing comps inc. ICAS. Writers festival excursion, mentoring for gifted writers through NRWC. Drama and poetry Performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>Rio Tinto Big Science Competition (all years), Science And Engineering Challenge (9+10), Titration Competition (Yr 12), Famous Scientist Finals (yr 7 ), Technology Challenge Final (YR 8). Suss Forums and Environmental Initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Geography Competition, History Competition, RSL local history initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSIE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDHPE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Ed</td>
<td>Modification and support through lesson plans for students with special needs and areas of giftedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mullumbimby High School

Mullumbimby High School Gifted and Talented Program  Appendix A

Teacher Nomination Form

Student Name: __________________________________ Year: ________
Teacher Name: _______________________________ Date: ________

Circle each behaviour you observe in the classroom or playground.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Positive Behaviours</th>
<th>Negative Behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Highly curious</td>
<td>• asks lots of questions • is inquisitive • remembers details</td>
<td>• asks inappropriate questions • poor group participant • easily diverted from task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Abstract thinker</td>
<td>• makes generalisations • tests out ideas</td>
<td>• questions others • questions authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flexible thinker</td>
<td>• employs variety of strategies to work something out</td>
<td>• manipulates people and situations by using a variety of strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clever use of humour</td>
<td>• enjoys ‘adult’ humour • gets teachers’ jokes!</td>
<td>• uses humour at the expense of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Superior vocabulary</td>
<td>• heightened involvement in discussions • enjoys adult-like discussions</td>
<td>• may be bossy or overbearing when working with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Advanced reading</td>
<td>• reads widely • advanced vocabulary and comprehension</td>
<td>• reads constantly • neglects peer interaction and work – prefers to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Retention of knowledge; fast learner</td>
<td>• moves beyond core content and skills quickly • detailed recall of facts</td>
<td>• rushes work, then disrupts others • monopolises class discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Long attention span</td>
<td>• concentrates and focuses on an area of interest for a long period of time</td>
<td>• easily distracted unless the task is an area of passion or interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Independent</td>
<td>• self-directed • focused on task in research or study</td>
<td>• reduced involvement in discussion or group work • uncooperative in a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. High level of responsibility and commitment</td>
<td>• sets attainable goals • learns to accept own limitations • tolerant of peers in a group</td>
<td>• self-critical • perfectionist when completing tasks • sets unrealistic expectations for other group members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Strong feelings and opinions</td>
<td>• listens to others • shows concern and interest • considers others’ points of view • aware of others’ feelings</td>
<td>• speaks out and lacks tact • over-reacts to others’ comments and reactions • confrontational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Strong sense of justice</td>
<td>• empathises with those less fortunate • wants to ‘save the world’ • stands up for other children whom</td>
<td>• argues the rules in game e.g. handball • frustration when others don’t play exactly by rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Positive Behaviours</td>
<td>Negative Behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>they think have been poorly treated</td>
<td>• asks older children or adults to solve issues seen as ‘unfair’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Original and creative</td>
<td>• comes up with ideas ‘out of the box’</td>
<td>• unaccepting of status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• sees problems as a whole</td>
<td>• absent-minded or daydreamer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• connects thoughts and feelings</td>
<td>• asks unrelated questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• disorganised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. High energy level</td>
<td>• wide variety of interests</td>
<td>• often difficult to live with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• organises time well</td>
<td>• may appear hyperactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• high level of individualised learning</td>
<td>• easily bored so seeks out new things to explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Immersion learner</td>
<td>• wants to know everything about a topic</td>
<td>• focuses on topics of interest to them, at the expense of classroom work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• becomes an expert on a topic by reading widely or talking to people</td>
<td>• shows off knowledge to prove others wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Merrick &amp; Targett, 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Scoring the checklist**

How many positive behaviours are being displayed? ________

How many negative behaviours are being displayed? ________

Have you highlighted behaviours in more than 6 different behaviour boxes   YES/NO

Of which behaviours are you observing more   POSITIVE/NEGATIVE

**Conclusions**


**Tick your recommendation**

☐ Should definitely be considered for the gifted and talented program (displays behaviours in 10+ characteristics)

☐ Should be considered for the gifted and talented program and further discussion required (displays behaviours in 6-8 characteristics)

☐ I can’t place my finger on it but there is something interesting about this student

☐ Current class is appropriate for this student
Mullumbimby High School Gifted and Talented Program

Self Nomination Form

Name: ___________________________ Year: _____

Circle the subjects that you wish to be nominated for:
Mathematics  English  Science  History  Geography

Please answer the following questions. You do not have to complete all questions, only those that apply to you:

• If you were given the chance to meet anyone in the past or present, who would you like to meet and why?

__________________________________________________________________________

• What is your favourite subject? Do you enjoying using computers, designing and making things?

__________________________________________________________________________

• What do you enjoy about this subject/s?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

• What do you like to read? e.g. books, magazines, fiction, and non-fiction

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

• Do you like using computers? What things do you like to do on the computer?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
• Do you like making things? Are you good at coming up with your own ideas?

• About how many books or magazines would you read each week?

• When you are not at school, what do you do?

• What sorts of things interest you? Do you know a lot about certain things? What are they?
Nomination by parent or caregiver

Student’s name: ______________________________________________ Year: _________________

Person completing the form: ____________________ Relationship to student: ________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>Some of the time</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recalls facts easily</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses himself/herself fluently</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is always asking questions</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an avid reader</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinks logically</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has long attention span</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is an independent learner</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a sense of humour</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tends to lead/initiate activities</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixes with older children and adults</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is concerned about world issues</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds unusual uses for things</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is curious</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excels at sport</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musically or artistically adept</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How many books and magazines would your child voluntarily read in a month?

_____________________________________________________________________

Does your child have any unusual interests? If so, what are they?

_____________________________________________________________________

What types of television programs does your child like to watch?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________
Does your child have an interest in music? If so, what is he/she learning and what level has been attained?

_________________________________________________________________________________

In what activities does your child participate outside school hours? To what level?

_________________________________________________________________________________

What hobbies and interests does your child have?

_________________________________________________________________________________

Would you consider that your child has a particular problem or need that may affect his or her learning?

_________________________________________________________________________________

Please add any other information, skills, aptitudes, you may feel relevant to your child’s education.

_________________________________________________________________________________