Gifted and Talented Policy and Implementation

Rationale:
Muirfield High School caters for the full range of academic abilities whilst recognising that some students have special needs that must be met. We aim to identify gifted and talented students and to maximise their learning outcomes. The nurturing of GATS is of great value to both the individual and their community/society.

Definitions
Gagnés (2003) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) has been adopted in the revised DET policy. This model provides research-based definitions of giftedness and talent that have a logical connection to identification and curriculum programs.

- **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.

An important feature of the DMGT is that there is a distinction between giftedness and talent. Giftedness becomes talent as a result of training and practice. A gifted person will not become talented without application.

Aims
The Muirfield GAT Policy focuses on:

- School culture and ethos - recognising and celebrating success.
- Identification of GAT students - improved understanding of giftedness/talent and the identification process.
- Meeting the special needs of GAT students - through grouping strategies, curriculum differentiation and other options, encouragement of independent thinking, extra-curricular activities, exposure to competitions mentoring and self-esteem development.
- Professional development opportunities - equipping all staff with the skills and resources to be able to cater for the special needs of GAT students.
- Parental awareness - engaging parents/caregivers in all aspects of the process.

Identification
The process for the identification of gifted and talented students must:

- be dynamic and continuous;
- be school wide;
- be inclusive;
- enable input from the full range of stakeholders;
- allow for identification at any stage of the student's development;
- allow for the highly talented to emerge from the larger talented group; and
- ensure that the identification of students from disadvantaged and culturally diverse groups is not overlooked.

No single method of identification is appropriate for any gifted student. Multiple criteria should be used and as much information should be gathered as resources will allow. This will identify a wide range of students. Further discussion can be found at:
Identification measures fall into two basic categories: subjective and objective measures.

**Subjective (qualitative) measures** allow judgements to be made on the basis of structured observations of the student. These include teacher, parent and student self-nomination, along with anecdotal records contributed by previous teachers and the child’s family.

**Objective (quantitative) measures** include standardised performance tests (e.g. NAPLAN) and off-level testing.

Effective identification will provide:
- evidence of both students’ ability (potential) and their current level of performance;
- pointers to underachievement, including information about the environmental and other factors, which may be influencing a student’s current performance; and
- information that initiates appropriate curriculum and programs.

### Strategies

#### 1. Grouping

1. Targeted enrichment classes in Year 7 and Year 8, taught by faculty selected staff members (See below for allocation process)
2. Targeted classes in Years 9 and 10 in English, Mathematics and Science
3. HSC Extension classes in Mathematics, English and History

#### 2. Curriculum Differentiation

Curriculum Enrichment (differentiation) is the most accessible way that our school can cater for the individual differences amongst all students, not just our GAT students. All faculties will develop and offer differentiated programs that cater for the effective teaching of our students, including those identified as gifted or talented. Units of work are enriched to cater for differing levels of ability. One or more models may be used to adapt the complexity of the content, process or products that children will engage with. (e.g. Bloom’s Taxonomy)

To encourage high achievement, originality, problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills and creativity, teachers will consider the individual needs of the gifted and talented students in their classes. Teachers will assess students’ knowledge and skills to provide challenges and learning options appropriate for their development.

Teachers may use a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Programs can be implemented that incorporate:
- Various grouping strategies
- Extension activities within and across classes
- Enrichment
- Contract work, with students negotiating the components of the contract
- Open-ended questions, activities and assignments
- Online learning
- Hypothesis testing and problem solving
- Individual research and investigation
- Opportunities for peer tutoring and assessment

Staff are encouraged to read and work through Module 5: Curriculum Differentiation from the DET G&T Support Package, available online at:

3. Special programs
Muirfield provides a myriad of opportunities for students to enrich and extend their school experience. Areas where student involvement is possible/current or has been recently noted include:

- Public speaking/Debating
- Peer Tutoring
- Primary Partnership – eg tutoring Year 1 students in reading
- Peer Support Leadership
- DERmentors – IT and laptop support for staff and students
- Student Representative Council
- ICAS & Australian schools competitions
- Choir
- Regional and State Drama and Music Camps
- Regional Drama, Dance and Music Festivals
- Concert Band
- Royal Easter Show Ag Team
- Representative sport
- Athletics/Swimming/Cross Country carnivals
- Rock Eisteddfod
- Theatre Sports teams
- Premiers Volunteer Program
- Premiers Reading Program
- Drawing Club
- Farm Team

4. Acceleration
GAT students have cognitive and emotional abilities that allow them to learn at a faster rate than their age peers. Acceleration is designed to allow a student to progress through the core content of a school program at a natural rate, rather than be restricted by artificially imposed steps of progression. The Board of Studies (BOS) has provided "Guidelines for accelerated progression" (revised 2000) http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/index.html.

Student capacity for acceleration will be assessed using many of the same methods used in the identification process. At Muirfield students may be accelerated in the class with modification of the curriculum by the class teacher or by subject, such as with early commencement of Stage 6 courses.

Where it is felt that the acceleration of some students is appropriate, teachers and Head Teachers should approach the Gifted and Talented Team to explore this possibility. It is critical that the implications of acceleration are closely explored from a school and systems viewpoint before any discussion with students or parents.

Evaluation
The School Improvement Team and the Gifted and Talented Team will undertake reviews of the school's G&T approaches to refine and develop.
**Year 7/8 enrichment class**
There will be one Year 7 enrichment class which caters for students who are talented in literacy and numeracy. The other classes will be mixed ability with a wide range of student skills and talents. The principal will determine the number of classes based upon anticipated enrolments and historical data.

The Class Formation Team, consisting of the Deputy Principal and Year Adviser of the in-coming Year 7, and the Gifted and Talented Coordinator will allocate students to the enrichment class. The principal has the delegated authority to determine the final make up of classes.

**Selection of students - process:**
The identification of students will be achieved through some of the following:

- Academic and welfare data collected from primary schools
- Placement test completed on Orientation Day
- Student portfolio

1. After student enrolments are confirmed, the principal will write to all parents inviting nomination of their child for the enrichment class. If parents wish to proceed, they will need to submit a portfolio including NAPLAN results, Year 6 Semester 1 report, a Year 6 writing piece by the student and responses by the parent and student. Applications will need to be submitted by the end of term 3.
2. The Deputy and Year Adviser will also ask primary schools for nominations of students they believe would be appropriately placed in an enrichment class when they collect data at the end of term 3.
3. All students will undertake a placement test on Orientation Day which will include questions on reading, mathematics and problem solving. The results from this test will also be taken into consideration for placement. This test will include items for Higher Ability Selection.
4. Parents will be notified if their child has been successful for the targeted enrichment class by mail the week after Orientation Day.

The Class Formation Team will be responsible for setting and marking the test and organising test supervision and distribution.

**Review**
Placement in all classes, including the enrichment class, will be reviewed at the end of each semester. Students may be placed into the enrichment class from the mixed ability classes. Multiple criteria will be used to ensure ongoing appropriate placement including recommendations from Year 7 teachers, professional deliberations of staff who are familiar with the student (eg commitment to learning and motivation as an independent learner) and assessment task results.

Students will be interviewed by the Year Adviser and Deputy Principal prior to any movement. Parents will be notified in writing of any changes.

There is no application process or entrance examination for enrolment into the Year 8 enrichment class.