

SCOIL EOIN BAISTE CAILÍNÍ NAOIDH

EXCEPTIONALLY ABLE STUDENTS POLICY

Aims

We at Scoil Eoin Baisde Cailíní Naoidh are committed to providing an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential and this clearly includes students who display some form of exceptional ability. As we are an infant school and children are learning and developing skills at an early stage we endeavour to provide a wide experience for the children to help them to reach their full potential.

Definitions

An exceptionally able student is one who is in the top range of 5-10% of the student population. An exceptionally able student is one who has the capacity for or demonstrates high levels of performance in an academic area or within a domain-specific ability in a non-academic area, including:

- Visual and performing arts and sports
- Leadership ability
- Creative and productive thinking
- Mechanical ingenuity
- Special abilities in empathy, understanding and negotiation

Identification of the Exceptionally Able Students

Before identifying any student as exceptionally able in a particular area, we can ensure that all students have had the opportunity to learn and succeed in this area. This makes the process of identification fair. An exceptionally able student should be identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to the subject area but will include elements of the following:

- Teacher referral
- Assessment results
- Peer referral
- Parental/ guardian referral (See Appendix 1 Parents checklist)
- Identification by a previous teacher, previous school, external agency organisation
- Self-referral

It is worth remembering that exceptionally able students can be:

- Good all-rounders.
- High achievers in one area.
- Of high ability but with low motivation.
- Of good verbal ability but of poor writing skills.
- Exceptionally able but with short attention span.
- Exceptionally able but with a learning difficulty or disability which masks their achievements.
- Exceptionally able with poor social skills.
- Keen to disguise their abilities (Eyre 1993).

Everyone in school has a responsibility to recognise and value students' abilities. We are aware that:

- Unnecessary repetition of work is de-motivating and de-motivated students will not always demonstrate potential.
- There is sometimes peer pressure to under-achieve.
- Exceptionally able students are not always easier to reach than other students.

Record-Keeping

Class teachers will keep a record of exceptionally able children within their class. These records will be reviewed regularly.

Provision for the Exceptionally Able

Opportunities for extension and enrichment are built into all our schemes of work and plans discussed during the co-operative planning meetings which are held on a monthly basis. During policy review we shall ensure that every curriculum area will have a reference to exceptionally able. This should state what the identification procedure will be and what provision is in place. We aim to:

- Maintain an ethos where it is acceptable to be bright.
- Encourage all students to be independent learners.
- Recognise achievement.
- Be aware of the effects ethnicity bilingualism, gender, religion and social circumstances on learning and high achievement.
- Encourage a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs.
- Always provide work at an appropriate level.
- Provide opportunities for all students to work with like-minded peers.
- Project station with computer and internet access will be set up in Tír na nÓg.

Types of Provision

Classroom Differentiation

- Teachers have high expectations.
- Tasks are designed to take account of levels of existing knowledge, skills and understanding.
- There are planned extension opportunities or open-ended tasks.

School-Based Provision

This varies according to availability and may include a variety of methods like:

- Enrichment opportunities
- Specialist teaching/in-class learning support

The school endeavours to link with other providers of opportunities for students to work in small and large groups, which will help develop their personal and social skills. We recognise the way that students work in teams and support each other when discussing ideas or collecting resources and materials supports their social, personal and emotional development. Some exceptionally able students find working in teams easy; others show excellent social and leadership skills but others find “team work” more difficult.

The school 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.

Leadership and Management Roles

The Principal and Learning Support Teacher are responsible for the implementation of the Exceptionally Able Policy.

Process for Review and Development

This Policy will be reviewed annually. Next review will be held in October 2017.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 18 October 2016

Appendix 1

Questionnaire for Parents

1. What does your child do really well?

2. What single achievement do you think your child is proudest of?

3. What sort of people does your child most like to be with?

4. What does your child most enjoy about school?

5. What aspect of schoolwork does your child most enjoy?

6. What does your child most like doing at home?

7. What seems most important to your child at this time in her life?

8. Is there anything else which might help us identify your child's particular gifts and talents?