

Our Lady of Mercy College

Beaumont,

Dublin 9



Exceptionally Able Student Policy
approved by Board of Management in March 2019

Exceptionally Able Student Policy

1. Mission Statement:

The core value of Our Lady of Mercy College, Beaumont is respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential academically, spiritually and culturally as a member of the school and wider community and in the spirit of the Mercy Ethos.

2. Scope:

We are committed to providing an environment which encourages all students to maximise their potential and this includes students who display any form of exceptional ability.

3. Rationale:

Students are encouraged to aim for excellence in all they do. We in Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning. (*CEIST core value*)

4. Definitions:

An exceptionally able student is one who ranks in the top range of 5-10% in standardised testing of the student population. An exceptionally able student is also 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.

5. Identification of the Exceptionally Able Student:

Everyone in school has a responsibility to recognise and value students' abilities. In the identification of students as exceptionally able in a particular area, we aim to ensure that all students have had the opportunity to learn, develop their potential and succeed in this area. The exceptionally able student is identified using a variety of methods. The specific procedure will vary according to subject area or extra/co-curricular area but will include elements of the following:

- Teacher referral
- Performance
- Standardised testing
- Assessment results
- Peer referral
- Parental/guardian referral
- Identification by a previous teacher, previous school, external agency or organisation
- Self referral.

The school acknowledges that exceptionally able students can be:

- good all-rounders
- high achievers in one area
- of high ability but with low motivation/attainment
- of good verbal ability but poor writing skills
- exceptionally able but with a short attention span
- exceptionally able but with a learning difficulty or disability (a 'twice exceptional' student) which masks their achievements
- exceptionally able with poor social skills
- exceptionally able individually but finds teamwork challenging
- keen to disguise their abilities for a variety of reasons, including peer pressure to underachieve

6. Provision for Exceptionally Able:

In developing programmes of work, staff endeavour to include opportunities for extension and enrichment for all students including exceptionally able students. During subject planning reviews it is ensured that every plan has an Exceptionally Able provision. This should state the identification procedure, what provision is in place and may suggest areas for extension.

7. Record Keeping:

When exceptionally able students have been identified, a record is kept and is available to staff in paper or electronic form. The area of ability is recorded. As with all school records pertaining to their children, parents/guardians are consulted and have access to such a record. These records are reviewed annually at a meeting of the staff concerned.

We aim to:

- maintain an ethos where excellence is identified, celebrated and affirmed
- encourage all students to be independent learners
- recognise and celebrate achievement
- be aware of the effects of ethnicity, bilingualism, gender, religion and social circumstances on learning and high achievement
- provide a wide range of extra and co-curricular activities and clubs
- always provide work at an appropriate level
- provide opportunities for all students to work with like-minded peers.

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.
- There is access to higher tier exam entries.
- Teachers are aware that unnecessary repetition of work is de-motivating for some exceptionally able students and de-motivated students will not always demonstrate potential
- Teachers are aware that exceptionally able students are not always easier to reach than others.

School based provision

This varies according to subject area and is covered using a variety of methods like:

- school based clubs
- school societies/councils
- enrichment opportunities
- opportunities for performance
- specialist teaching
- a mentor programme, where appropriate
- acknowledgement of success on noticeboards/announcements around the school
- awards in class or awards ceremony at the end of the school year
- school extension programme (see appendix).

The school endeavours to link with other providers of opportunities for students with exceptional abilities - local, national and international organisations, competitions, festivals, partnerships with secondary schools, further education institutions, and businesses. Students will be encouraged to fulfil their potential in those areas in which they are exceptionally able without reducing the breadth of their curriculum and personal experience.

8. Personal development:

Class work and work outside the classroom includes a number of opportunities for students to work in small and large groups, which will help develop their personal and social skills. We recognise that teamwork and peer support when discussing ideas or collecting resources helps students to advance their social, personal and emotional development. The school aims to develop all the abilities of students, including their personal and social skills. We aim to create a culture in which students are taught to relate well to each other and where diversity including ability is embraced.

9. Leadership and Management roles:

The principal and senior management are responsible for the overall implementation of the school's exceptionally able policy.

10. Process for review and development:

This policy will be reviewed every three years. During a policy review, we shall ensure that every curriculum area will have a reference to exceptionally able.

Ratified by Board on March 28th 2019