ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE

THE GLEESON GIFTED EDUCATION PROGRAM

Nurture. Flourish. Soar.

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Gleeson Gifted Education Program:
Nurture. Flourish. Soar.

Vision and Mission

"Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard, then succeed on purpose."
G.K. Nielson

St Patrick's College, Strathfield is committed to identifying, nurturing, developing and enriching our gifted and high potential learners from Years 5 to 12. The College strives to provide opportunities for these students both inside and outside the classroom, inspiring them to deeply explore concepts, develop their ability to think critically and stimulate their creativity. Within our Edmund Rice Education Australia context, this ongoing commitment to gifted and high potential learners seeks to liberate their potential.

The Gleeson Gifted Education Program aims to facilitate an educational environment that caters to the unique potential of gifted and high potential learners.

The College believes that all boys in its care have the right and the ability to learn. We believe that all our students should be provided with access to a rigorous, standards-based curriculum, research-informed instruction, engaging learning opportunities, and differentiated learning relevant to the real world. Individual learning needs, strengths, goals, and interests should form the basis for learning opportunities that are drawn from the Australian Curriculum for our students (Student Diversity, Australian Curriculum).

Why is it called the Gleeson Program?

Our gifted education program is named after the Gleeson family, a prominent, high-achieving family of the St Patrick's College (SPC) community. Old Boy Gerald Gleeson Senior attended SPC from 1938, 11 years after the school opened its doors, and he graduated in 1943.

While at school, Gerald Senior excelled both academically and in sports, playing rugby and cricket. He became a teacher of both Science and Mathematics and eventually moved into public service where, as Secretary of the NSW Premier's Department, he served Barrie Unsworth, Neville Wran, Nick Greiner and Sir Eric Willis. In 1989 Mr Gleeson's distinguished career was recognised when he received the country's highest civic honour, Companian of the Order of Australian (AC). In 1990, the College presented Mr Gleeson with the Luceat Award in recognition of his work in civic, community and Church lifandas his tireless service to the College. Mr Gleeson had one daughter, and four sons who attended St Patrick's College: Gerald Junior, Fabian, Justin and Damian.

Father Gerald Gleeson (1970) is the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Sydney and is currently the Administrator of the Parish of Our Lady of the Sea at Watsons Bay. Father Gleeson was an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Christian Ethics for many years at the Catholic Institute of Sydney and is a board member for Catholic Care Sydney. He holds a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Leuven in Belgium.

Old Boy (1974), The Honourable Justice Fabian Gleeson SC, is a Judge of the Supreme Court of NSW and Court of Appeal. At his swearing-in as a judge in 2013[1], Justice Gleeson's background as a student at St Patrick's College was one of his proud acknowledgements. Justice Gleeson pursued a path of legal excellence in commercial law and was involved in several high-profile cases and inquiries including the James Hardie inquiry and the collapse of HIH insurance. Speaking on behalf of the bar, Attorney General Greg Smith SC said that solicitors noted, in particular, his *'encyclopaedic knowledge of corporate and commercial law.'*

Justice Gleeson is also very proud of his Rugby days. On a visit to the College Junior School in 2021, he shared with the students his well-loved number 8 jersey and recounted his final game on Breen Oval in 1974. It was against an extremely strong and undefeated St Augustine's side and Ted Healy was the Coach[2]. Br Walsh captured the rough and gruelling game in his poem 'Black Sunrise' which was in the Lumen that year. Despite being on the verge of losing, the team showed resilience as Peter Conroy ran away and scored the winning try. Justic, is committed to identifying, nurturing, developing and enriching our gifted and high-potential students at St Patrick's College, Strathfield. He is on record as saying that in his time at St Patrick's College, Strathfield, he was taught there were no shortcuts to hard work.

Justin Gleeson graduated in 1978, the College's Jubilee Year. He was a member of the First XI Cricket team, participated in Drama, was Swimming Champion, Debating Captain, and First XV Captain. He won prizes in English, Modern History, Mathematics and Economics, received the Brewer Prize for Study and Sport, and was not only Dux of the College but Dux of the State. He became a barrister and was appointed the Commonwealth Solicitor General from 2013 to 2016. He is one of Australia's leading senior counsels who regularly appears in the High Court. Justin Gleeson also received the Luceat award in 2013.

Together, Gerald Gleeson Senior and his sons embody the aims of our gifted education program – to acknowledge one's gifts, to work hard, and to "succeed on purpose." These men have truly lived out the SPC motto "*Luceat Lux Vestra".* Through dedication to study, participation in the full life of the College, continuous hard work, and service to the community, the Gleeson family represents the best of what it means to be a graduate of St Patrick's College who "lets his light shine."

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[1] Supreme Court of NSW, Swearing in ceremony, 29 April 2013

[2] St Patrick's College, Strathfield, *Lucerna*, Volume 26, Issue 1, 2021

Definitions

Our work with Gifted and High Potential students at St Patrick's College, Strathfield is informed by Gagne's Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT). The DMGT focuses on achieving high performance through the transformation of outstanding natural abilities into outstanding developed competencies or talents.[3]

Gifted Learners

The College defines gifted students as those whose potential significantly exceeds that of students of the same age in one or more domains: intellectual, creative, social-emotional, and physical, and are identified by formal testing measures.

High Potential Learners

High Potential learners are those whose potential exceeds that of students of the same age in one or more domains and are identified through standardised testing and school-based identification measures.

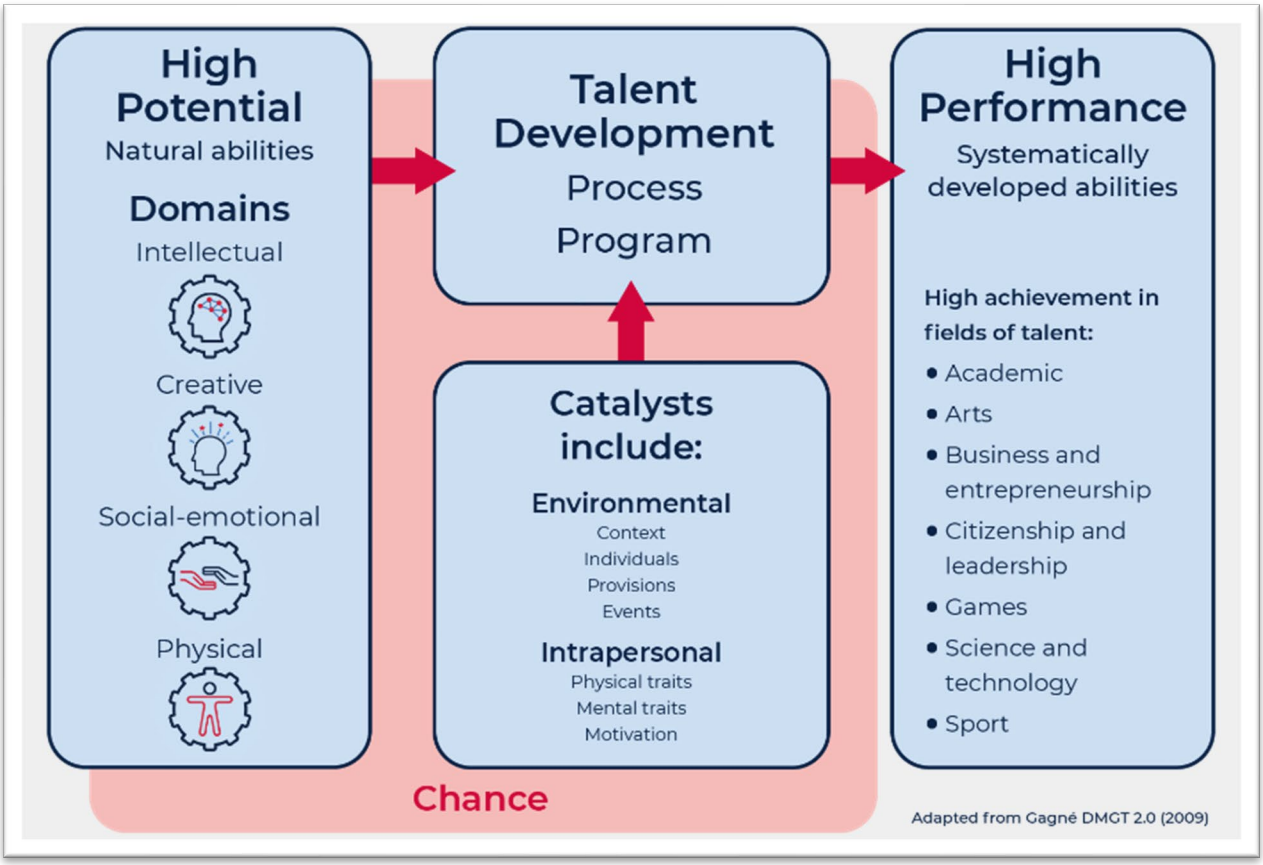

Figure 1 Gagne's Differentiated model of giftedness and talent (DMGT 2.0), NSW Govt

[3] Gagné, F. (2018). Academic talent development: Theory and best practices. In S. I. Pfeiffer, E. Shaunessy-Dedrick, & M. Foley-Nicpon, APA handbook of giftedness and talent (pp. 163 – 183). American Psychological Association. DOI https://ovidsp-dc2-ovid-com.wwwproxy1.library.unsw.edu.au/ovid-new-b/ovidweb.cgi

The Four Key Parts of Gleeson

Extension, Enrichment, Differentiation, and Acceleration

The Framework emphasises four key areas for student provisions and adjustments: Extension, Enrichment, Differentiation, and Acceleration. Each area underscores the importance of granting all students access to a robust, standards-based curriculum, employing research-based instruction methods, offering engaging learning opportunities, and providing differentiated learning tasks that resonate with real-world contexts.

Extension

Extension at St Patrick's College, Strathfield refers to activities that extend thinking and skills within the classroom.

Extension activities are levelled to fit the student. For gifted students, these are challenging, meaning they are not more or busy work but activities that deepen understanding and generate challenge. One of the primary ways we extend our gifted students is through participation in a Gleeson class for one or more subjects.

Gleeson Classes, Years 5 & 6

In the primary school, the College has Gleeson Classes. The Gleeson Classes cater to academically gifted students. The placement of students is reviewed annually. The class enables like-minded students to comfortably explore their promising intellectual achievements and build a safe community. Students learn from specialised teaching strategies and educational materials that are appropriate for the level of their potential.

The topics of work covered in the Gleeson Class are appropriately complex, challenging and engaging. The teachers allow students to work at their own intellectual level, study topics of interest to them and complete tasks that are suited to their ability. Students in a Gleeson Class, along with other students of suitable ability, will have the opportunity to embrace competitions and activities such as Mathematics Competitions, ICAS competitions, and other relevant enrichment opportunities.

Given the correlation between study of music and later academic achievement[4], boys in the primary Gleeson Classes are encouraged to study a musical instrument be a member of a music ensemble or choir for the two years that they are in Years 5 and 6.

If a student is not placed in a Gleeson class in Year 5 or 6, he will still be challenged in class and have opportunities to participate in enrichment activities. It is also important to note that being enrolled in one of our primary school Gleeson Classes does not guarantee that a student will get into a Gleeson Class in secondary school.

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[4] Guhn, M., Emerson, S. D., & Gouzouasis, P. (2020) A population-level analysis of associations between school music participation and academic achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 112*(2), 308–328. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000376

Gleeson Classes, Years 7 -10

St Patrick's College has a selective Gleeson stream in Years 7 to 10 that comprises one to two classes, dependent on the student cohort, where academically gifted boys and those with high potential are grouped with other boys of similar ability. Teachers of these classes use specialised teaching methods and materials.

Using data from internal and external assessments and teacher feedback and recommendations, we place students in subject-based Gleeson Classes relevant to students' unique gifts and talents. For example, the cohort in the Gleeson Mathematics class might not be the same as that in the English class. Similarly, learners with a strength or talent in Music or Visual Arts but not in English can still access an extension class.

In Stage 4, the students in a Gleeson Class participate in separate **English, Mathematics** and **Core** classes. The Stage 4 Core comprises Religious Education, Science, History, Geography, PDHPE and in Year 8, Languages.

There will also be a Gleeson Class for Gifted and HIP students in **Visual Arts** and **Music.** Students selected in the Gleeson Music Class in Years 7 and 8 will be expected to continue their study of a musical instrument and continue their membership of a music ensemble or choir for the two years of Stage 4.

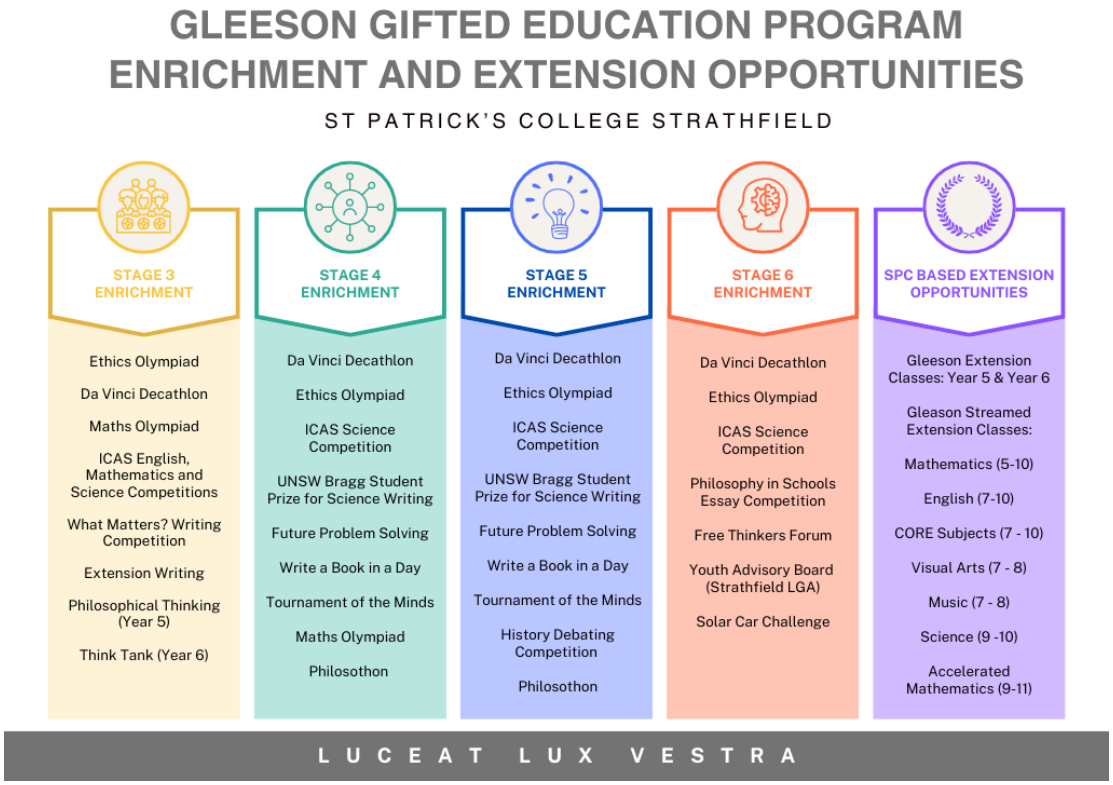
In Stage 5, the students in a Gleeson Class participate in separate **English, Mathematics, Science** and **Core** classes. Some students may be identified as suitable for Mathematics Acceleration and compact all of Stage 5 Mathematics in Year 9.

Stage 5 students will choose two 200-hour electives that are mixed ability. Year 9 Mathematics Accelerants will only choose one 200-hour elective and study Mathematics for an extra six hours across a two-week cycle.

In Stage 6, Gleeson students are expected to choose subjects that meet their skills, aptitudes and interests. English and Mathematics are offered at Advanced, Extension 1 and Extension 2 levels. There are also extension classes available in History, Italian (with Italian Continuers) and Music (with Music 2).

Enrichment

Enrichment at St Patrick's College, Strathfield includes three interrelated components: excursions and incursions, interest groups, and participation in pilot programs. Student participation in interest and needs-based enrichment approaches will be based on the interests of the student and will be identified through the student conferencing process.



Differentiation

Differentiation at St Patrick's College, Strathfield is *'an approach to curriculum and instruction that systematically takes student differences into account in designing opportunities for each student to engage with information and ideas and to develop essential skills'* [5](Jarvis and Tomlinson, 2009).

Differentiation refers to deliberate adjustments to meet the specific learning needs of high potential and gifted students and is to be used in all classroom settings. The main goal of differentiation is to maximise each student's capacity to succeed or even surpass their own learning goals or those of the class level.[6]

Differentiation, or adjustments to the curriculum, caters for differences between gifted students and same age peers. Gifted students need differentiation because they:

- learn at faster rates
- find, solve and act on problems more readily
- manipulate abstract ideas and make connections to an advanced degree.

[5] Tomlinson, Carol & Jarvis, Jane. (2009) *Making curriculum work for all students through responsive planning and instruction* in Joseph S. Renzulli, E. Jean Gubbins, Kristin S. McMillen, Rebecca D. Eckert, Catherine A. Little, ed. Systems and Models for Developing Programs for the Gifted and Talented. 2nd ed. Connecticut, USA: Creative Learning Press, pp. 599-628.

[6] Tomlinson, C. A., & Moon, T. (2012). Differentiation and classroom assessment. In J. H. McMillan SAGE Handbook of Research on Classroom Assessment (pp. 415 – 430). Sage publications. DOI: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unsw/detail.action?docID=1207749

Gifted students require high-level content and deeper conceptual understanding to be challenged within their learning environment.[7] Teachers will consider the individual needs of the gifted and talented students in their classes to encourage high achievement, originality, problem-solving, higher-order thinking skills and creativity. 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 across all classroom contexts to best cater to gifted and high-potential students.

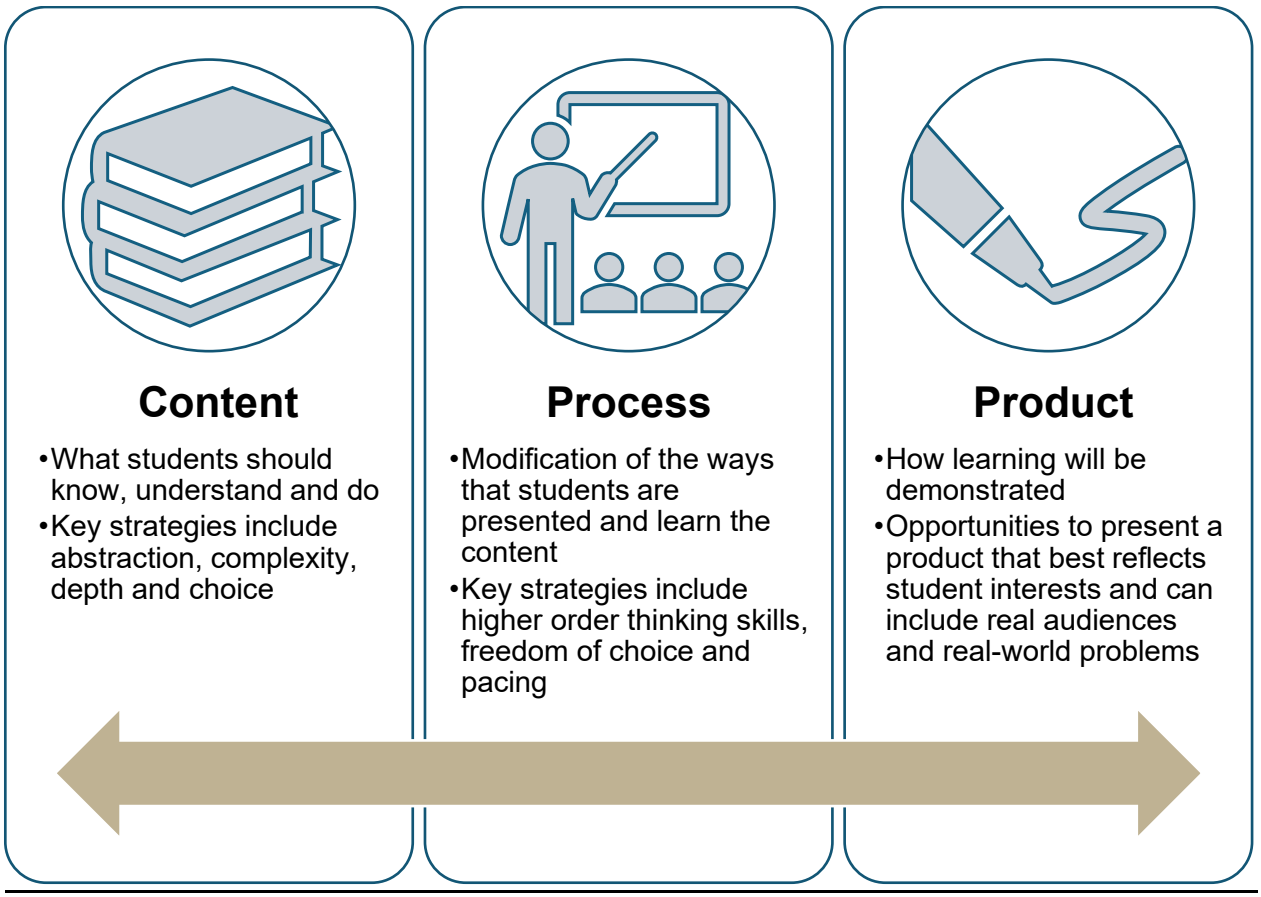


Figure 2 Differentiation of Curriculum for Gifted Students using the Maker Model (1982)

Within the relevant teaching programs, differentiation for gifted students can incorporate some of the following strategies:

- various ability grouping strategies
- curriculum compacting
- accelerated progression
- extension activities within and across classes

[7] Beasley, J.G., Briggs, C. and Pennington, L. (2017). Bridging the Gap 10 Years Later: A Tool and Technique to Analyze and Evaluate Advanced Academic Curricular Units. Gifted Child Today, 40(1), 48 -58, DOI 10.1177/1076217516675902

- 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
- access to mentors with specific expertise.
- problem-based learning tasks
- engaging with real audiences

Acceleration

Acceleration at St Patrick's College, Strathfield involves the individual subject acceleration that may be used with students in areas of strength or passion if students exhibit the ability to undertake tasks one or more years beyond their current enrolled year level.

Acceleration is an educational intervention that moves students through an educational program at a faster rate than usual or younger than typical age (Salkind, 2008)[8]. Acceleration involves matching the level, complexity and pace of curriculum with the readiness and motivation of the student and will assist in ensuring gifted learners become "confident…successful lifelong learners" (Council of Australian Governments Education Council, 2019)[9]. It is vital to ensure that acceleration, of whatever type, is something that the student desires.

Acceleration is currently offered in Italian, Music and Mathematics. Other opportunities may be offered if aligned with St Patrick's College Gifted and Talented Procedures 2025.

[8] Salkind, N. J. (2008). *Acceleration*. In N. J. Salkind (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of educational psychology (Vol. 1, pp. 4-8): Sage.

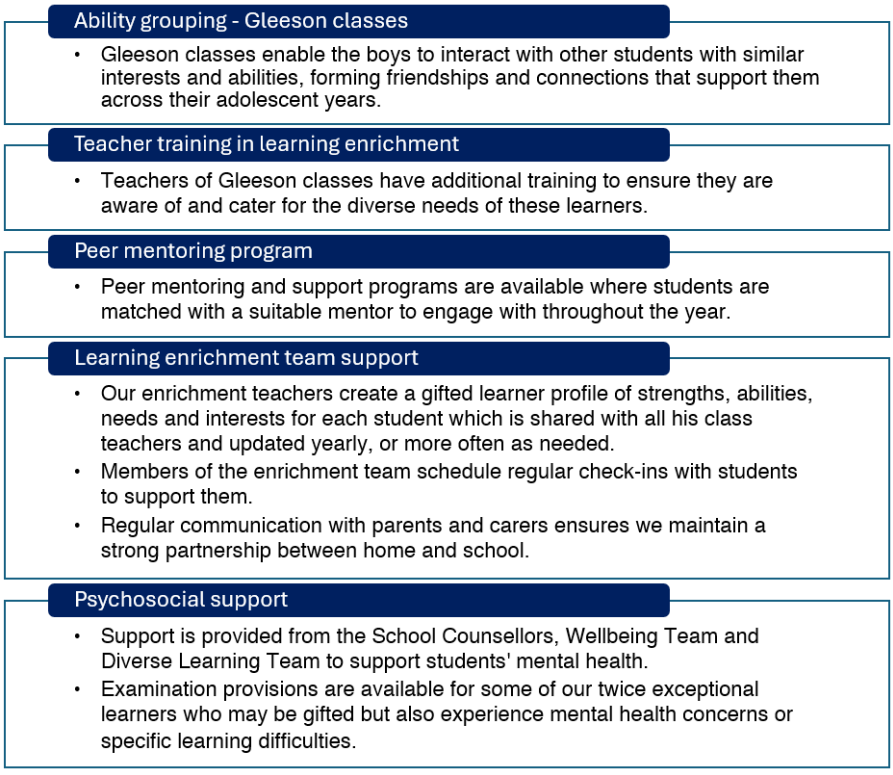
[9] Council of Australian Governments Education Council. (2019). Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Government. Retrieved from http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/National_Declaration_on_the_Educational_Goals_for_Young_Australians.pdf.

Supporting the Wellbeing of Gifted and High Potential Learners

Gifted learners have unique wellbeing needs that require careful attention to ensure their overall development and happiness. Some gifted learners have intellectual abilities far beyond their emotional and social skill development. Some notable traits include asynchrony, emotional sensitivity, perfectionism, and a strong need for self-actualisation which can often lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety.[10] [11]

Gifted learners benefit from a holistic approach to schooling, nurturing the whole student. The Gleeson Program is a part of the larger fabric of the school. We respect the individual differences of our students, but also equip them with the social and emotional learning they need to be a positive contributor to our community and the wider world. Through their participation and commitment to the wider activities of the school, including service learning and co-curricular activities, our students develop and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, understand and show empathy for others, establish and maintain respectful relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The following aspects of our program support the social and emotional wellbeing of our students:



[10] Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation (2019). Revisiting Gifted Education. NSW Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.cese.nsw.gov.au/publications-filter/revisiting-gifted-education.

[11] Hebert, T. (2010). Understanding the social and emotional lives of gifted students. Sourcebooks. DOI: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unsw/detail.action?docID=675883

Freeman, J. (2018). Chapter 14: The emotional development of the Gifted and Talented. In Wallace, B., Sisk, D., & Senior, J. (Eds.). (2018). The sage handbook of gifted and talented education. SAGE Publications, Limited. DOI: https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unsw/detail.action?docID=5599582

Methods of Identification

Gifted and High Potential Learners are found in all educational contexts. As a College, St Patrick's recognises that certain factors may inhibit the expression of giftedness. This may include the deliberate masking of giftedness for social acceptance, the need for intervention strategies to enable their giftedness to be identified and realised, or that parents or caregivers may be reluctant to acknowledge or may be unaware that their child is gifted. We will inevitably not know who all of our gifted learners are on entry to the College, but will continue to use a range of approaches to identify gifted and high potential students.

As a result of this, the identification process must be part of a school and community-wide identification program, such that:

- multiple criteria be used
- a mix of subjective and objective strategies be employed
- IQ tests be used in the context of other indicators and measures
- the expectation be avoided that students will perform equally well on all measures
- the underachieving, the exceptionally gifted, twice exceptional or from minority populations are not overlooked.

As a result of this, a variety of identification methods will be selected based on the age/stage and the domain of the ability to be assessed. These include:

- academic assessment testing (upon entry, Year 6, Year 8 and Year 10)
- IQ tests and other culturally appropriate measures of ability
- nomination by parent/caregiver, peer, self and teacher
- off-level testing[12]
- evaluation of student responses to a range of classroom activities
- standardised tests of creative ability
- behavioural checklists
- interviews
- academic achievement
- observation and anecdotal evidence

The College Counsellors contribute to the support and identification of gifted students by providing counselling at the request of the student/parents/caregivers or the school, advocating for the student, conducting student development programs and facilitating professional development for staff.

At St Patrick's College, Strathfield, we are proud of our work to support and challenge all our learners. Should you have any further questions or specific concerns, please contact the College to speak to our Director of Learning and Innovation, Head of Diverse Learning or Learning Enrichment Coordinator.

[12] Testing at a level designed for older students

Luceat Lux Vestra