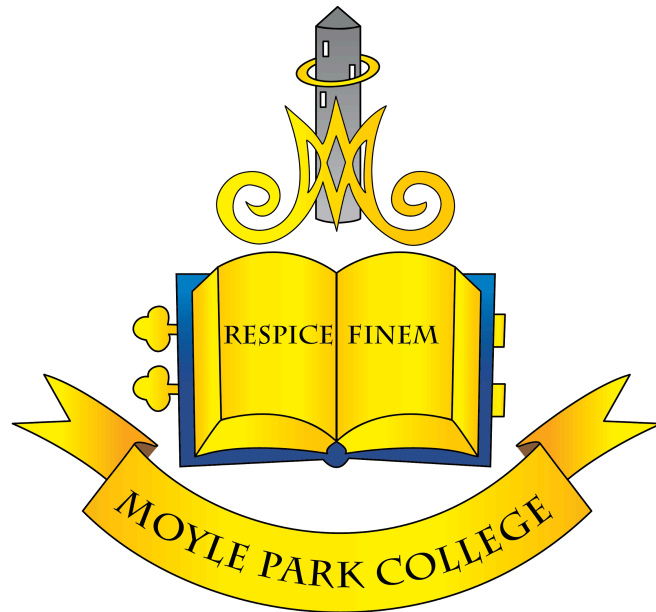


Moyle Park College



Policy for Exceptionally Able Students

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Moyle Park College, Dublin

1. Introduction

This policy aims to support, encourage, and monitor exceptionally able students in Moyle Park College. In MPC, we strive to nurture students' talents, promote a challenging and stimulating environment, and ensure that each individual's potential is maximised. We aim to provide an educational experience that caters to the diverse needs of exceptionally able students while fostering their well-being and personal growth.

2. Definition of Exceptionally Able Students

Exceptionally able students are those whose abilities and aptitudes are significantly beyond the expected level for their age group. This may be in one or more areas, such as:

- **Academic ability:** High performance in subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Languages, or Humanities.
 - Accepted into **Mensa**
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3. Identifying Exceptionally Able Students

Identification of exceptionally able students will be a dynamic and continuous process, based on:

- **Cat IV entrance exam** (top 30 invited to sit Mensa exam in 6th class)
- **Mensa offer of acceptance**
- **Academic performance:** High achievement in formal assessments (standardised tests, class assessments, project work).
- **Teacher observation:** Ongoing observations of students' abilities and intellectual curiosity in the classroom.
- Adding Mensa students to the **AEN register**

Once identified, the students will be placed on a register, which is regularly reviewed and updated.

4. Policy Aims

- **To provide appropriate academic challenge:** To ensure students are continually stimulated in line with their ability, through an enriched and differentiated curriculum that meets their intellectual and creative needs. (e.g. extension tasks, tracking exams)
 - **To support emotional and social well-being:** To offer opportunities for personal growth, resilience-building, and healthy peer interactions. (e.g. regular Mensa meetings/creation of a Mensa google classroom)
 - **To monitor progress regularly:** To track their academic development through both formal and informal means. (i.e. house exams and form teacher input)
 - **To foster a growth mindset:** Encourage students to develop perseverance, creativity, and a love of learning, while also embracing challenges.
 - **To promote extracurricular involvement:** To allow opportunities for engagement in activities that match or stretch students' abilities (i.e. chess club)
 - **To encourage independence and self-directed learning:** To help students take ownership of their learning and set ambitious personal goals.
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5. Curriculum Differentiation

The curriculum for exceptionally able students will be differentiated in the following ways:

- **Enrichment:** Students will have access to additional, more challenging learning materials, projects, and independent research tasks that go beyond the standard curriculum. MPC encourages teachers to use Google Classroom as a tool to create a bank of resources for their students. (e.g. Scholar's Ireland)
 - **Flexible grouping:** Grouping students in a way that provides peer challenges, encourages collaboration, and enhances learning opportunities. This may include grouping across year levels for specific subjects or topics.
 - **Mentoring and partnerships:** Where appropriate, students may be paired with mentors (teachers, senior students, or external experts) to provide additional challenge, guidance, and inspiration.
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6. Enrichment Opportunities

In addition to the regular curriculum, we aim to give students access to a range of enrichment activities designed to stimulate and challenge them:

- **Academic Competitions:** Participation in national and international competitions such as Maths Olympiad, Science fairs, debating, and other academic challenges.
- **Clubs and Societies:** A wide variety of clubs (e.g. chess) to foster creativity and problem-solving.
- **Guest Speakers and Workshops:** Regular sessions with professionals, experts, and visiting scholars who can provide a deeper insight into subjects of interest. (e.g. Learning Hubs), we aim to get guest speakers in termly to speak to our students.

- **Study trips and field experiences:** Visits to museums, galleries, research centres, universities, or industry-related organisations to connect learning with real-world applications. (e.g. Trinity College Dublin visit)
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7. Monitoring and Review of Progress

To ensure that exceptionally able students are being appropriately supported and challenged, their progress will be monitored through:

- **Formal Assessment:** Through house exams (Christmas and Summer/2nd and 5th year tracking/CBAs)
 - **Regular feedback:** Teachers will provide regular feedback on academic performance, class participation, and development of independent learning skills.
 - **Self-assessment:** Encourage students to reflect on their own learning, achievements, and areas for development.
 - **Student Surveys:** Periodically gather feedback from the students themselves on how well they feel challenged, supported, and engaged. (e.g. SWOT analysis)
 - **Focus Groups:** Meet with Exceptionally able students three times throughout the year to discuss learning, goal setting and preparedness for the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert.
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8. Continual Professional Development (CPD) for Staff

To support the exceptional students effectively, staff will receive professional development in:

- **Differentiation techniques:** Training on how to adapt teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of exceptionally able students. (e.g. YC differentiation CPD)
 - **Recognising and supporting gifted learners:** Awareness sessions to deepen understanding of the social, emotional, and cognitive characteristics of gifted students. (e.g. Dr. Fidelma Healy Eames CPD, Lyn Kendell CPD)
 - **Collaboration and planning:** Teachers across subjects will collaborate to ensure consistent challenge and extension opportunities. The use of the shared google drive to promote collaboration. Schemes of work and yearly plans to include AEN students (including Mensa students).
 - **Feedback Forum:** Where subject departments feedback to each other on how they have performed in state exams and how they foster the differing needs of students in their class
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9. Parent and Community Engagement

We believe that the support for exceptionally able students must involve both school and home:

- **Regular communication:** Regular updates between school and parents about the student's progress, enrichment activities, and any concerns. (parental invites to the google classroom)
 - **Workshops and seminars for parents:** Sessions on how parents can support their child's academic and emotional development.
 - **Partnerships with local businesses and organisations:** We will cultivate relationships with universities, research institutions, and companies to provide real-world challenges and mentorship opportunities. (i.e. Business in the Community)
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10. Well-being and Pastoral Care

While academic achievement is important, the well-being of exceptionally able students is equally crucial. The school will ensure that:

- **Support for emotional well-being:** There are designated staff (including Form Tutors, Year Heads and Counsellors) who can provide emotional and psychological support to students who may experience challenges such as perfectionism or social isolation.
 - **Peer support:** We hope that through regular timetabled meetings, workshops etc that students will be encouraged to build relationships with others who have similar interests or talents.
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11. Conclusion

This policy seeks to ensure that exceptionally able students are provided with an environment where their academic and personal growth is maximised. We aim to foster well-rounded, independent, and confident individuals who will thrive both academically and socially.

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in meeting the needs of exceptionally able students.

12. Goals for the future:

- Expand the gifted and talented policy to incorporate the top 30 students in each year.
- **Regular communication:** Regular updates between school and parents about the student's progress, enrichment activities, and any concerns. (e.g. The school App)
- We hope to expand our policy to incorporate some if not all of the following areas of gifted and talented students. Recognising that exceptional ability exists across a range of areas—academic, artistic, creative, athletic, and social

Creative and Artistic ability: Exceptional talent in the arts, including music, drama, and visual arts.

Physical ability: Advanced aptitude in sports or physical activities.

Social/Emotional intelligence: Advanced skills in leadership, empathy, or problem-solving.

This policy is subject to periodic review by the Board of Management