



St Francis of Assisi
PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

EXTENSION & ENRICHMENT POLICY- Reach for the Stars



Rationale

Definition - Gifted

Gifted students are those whose cognitive development is at a higher level and have the potential to exhibit superior performance and ability.

Definition - Talented

Talented students are those with the potential to exhibit superior performance in one or more domains.

St. Francis of Assisi School endeavours to create an atmosphere where, Students identified as gifted or talented are given the opportunity to advance their abilities, interests and strengths.

Students identified as gifted or talented are provided with learning experiences that strive to meet their learning needs.

Aims

The Reach for the Stars: Extension and Challenge Program at St Francis of Assisi aims to:

- provide a range of opportunities for our high achieving students.
- apply a range of learning and teaching strategies for inclusion in programs for the range of high achieving students.
- encourage high achieving students to involve themselves in programs within the wider context of the School to realise their potential.
- provide opportunities for staff development for catering for the diverse needs of students.

The programs listed in the policy focus on:

- social interaction with like minded peers.
- intellectual rigor and challenge.
- pursuit of excellence.
- development of higher order process skills.
- in-depth investigations of real problems.
- open-ended activities which encourage choice and negotiation.
- opportunities to interact with practising experts.
- students working at their own pace.
- self/peer evaluation and reflection of performance.

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Implementation

The Reach for the Stars Extension and Challenge Program at St Francis of Assisi provides students with opportunities to participate in a variety of academic-based programs in which they have particular strengths. Students use a variety of skills such as creative and critical thinking, communication and collaboration to solve mathematical and scientific problems, design products, debate contemporary issues, develop public speaking and become authors with the opportunity to publish a creative text. Each term, 20 children from year 5 and 20 children from year 6 will participate in an extension and challenge based program. The program will operate for 1½ hours per fortnight over eight weeks per term and are taken by an experienced specialist teacher.

Selection Process

Nominations may come from teachers or appropriately qualified professionals at the school. Teachers will use student assessment data and consult with the school's learning and teaching leadership team to identify and select high achieving students. As with students requiring learning support (intervention), students nominated for the Reach for the Stars Challenge and Extension program may require further testing in specific areas. Prior to placement, the school's Student Support Leaders will usually undertake a screening process if required.

Programs

The International Competitions and Assessments for Schools (ICAS)

is an independent, skills-based assessment program which recognises and rewards student achievement. ICAS is unique, being the most comprehensive generally available suite of academic assessments for primary and secondary school students.. The assessments comprise eight Digital Technologies tests, eleven English tests, eleven Mathstests, eleven Science tests, six Spelling tests and ten Writing tests.

Tournament of Minds

Tournament of Minds is a problem-solving program for teams of students who are required to solve demanding, open-ended challenges from one of the following disciplines:

- Applied Technology (Animation)
- Language Literature
- Maths Engineering
- Social Sciences

Each year, St Francis of Assisi will enter teams consisting of Year 5 and 6 students. A team (seven students) will be required to work together on a long term challenge for six weeks without assistance from teachers, parents or peers. They will be encouraged to explore possibilities and experiment with ideas as they endeavour to produce their best possible solution. They will develop a creative and original way to communicate this solution to others, working within predefined parameters such as limited materials, complex challenge criteria and the deadline of Tournament Day.

Students will present the product of their ideas – their challenge solution – to a panel of judges and an audience on Tournament Day. They will have ten minutes in which to present and must do so within a 3 x 3 metre performance area.

The teams must also participate in an unseen 'spontaneous challenge' on Tournament Day. This Challenge requires rapid interchange of ideas, the ability to think creatively and well developed group cooperation skills.

GateWays

GateWays is an independent organisation offering challenging, enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. It is their aim to provide opportunities for children of 'like-minds' to participate in programs that will challenge them intellectually and help develop their individual talents. THE GATEWAYS TEAM CHALLENGE: extends children's leadership and problem-solving abilities through a series of original, creative and exciting activities in four areas.

The GATEWAYS Challenge is a team based program that:

- Stresses teamwork, not individual prowess
- Provides all participants with an opportunity for leadership
- Is structured to help students learn to work together for a common goal or outcome
- Practices the fundamental skills necessary for competent performance
- Gives satisfaction from the activities themselves as well as the outcome
- Emphasises having fun with learning

EngQuest

EngQuest, an initiative of [Engineers Australia](#), it provides an exciting way for students to participate in free, fun and educational engineering activities involving Science, Technology and Mathematics. The website offers curriculum-appropriate engineering projects covering a range of topics including solar cookers, water wheels and humanitarian engineering. Every project includes easy to read instructions, background information (*for teachers and students*) and lesson ideas with activity sheets. There are projects and resources suitable for high achieving students with a passion in this area. There is also plenty of interactive educational fun that the students are certain to enjoy in the student section of the site.

Debating Association Of Victoria

The DAV is a non-profit association which exists to promote debate. It is the peak debating body in Victoria and runs large competitions for adults and for schools across Victoria. It provides training and resources for debaters, teachers and adjudicators. Students have the opportunity to compete in with students from our school and beyond in the area of public speaking.

Maths Olympiad

The main aims of the Maths Olympiad Program include:

- Introduce students to important mathematical concepts
- Teach major strategies and develop flexibility for problem solving
- Foster creativity and ingenuity and strengthen intuition
- Stimulate enthusiasm and enjoyment of mathematics
- Provide for the satisfaction, joy and thrill of meeting challenges

Future Problem Solving Program Australia

The program challenges students to apply their minds to some of the significant issues facing the world of today and the future, equipping them with the vision, skills and tools to design and promote positive futures for the society in which they live.

- helps young people to learn how to think, not what to think.
- challenges young people to use their imagination in applying research and advanced thinking strategies to the resolution of issues.
- offers flexible, cross-disciplinary curriculum activities available to students at all levels of primary and secondary school. It is directly relevant to the Australian Curriculum across all learning areas and General Capabilities (especially critical and creative thinking).
- offers a variety of year-long learning options founded in inquiry learning that can be configured to meet the individual needs of schools and students in all parts of Australia. All of these alternatives encourage creativity amidst teamwork, systematic and critical thought, and the development of a lateral outlook on real-world situations at local, regional and global scales.
- is relevant to motivated young people.
- is a proven program in developing the attributes of leadership and social responsibility within young people.

Write 4 Fun

Write 4 Fun understands that sometimes we need to educate our children beyond the boundaries of the classroom, and open their minds to their own creativity and thoughts. Independent competitions such as this have proven to be extremely successful and popular with the students. Not only do they improve their writing ability, the students are also in the running to win some great prizes, and could even have the opportunity of seeing their story in print in one of our beautifully presented, professional publications. Producing these editions is a rewarding experience especially when we hear from our young authors. The excitement and pride in their voice more than makes up for the many hours involved in putting these projects together.