



WAKEFIELD GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL

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VALIDITY – Policies should be accessed via FireFly to ensure the current version is used.

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| V1.00 | May 2024 | New policy written |

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WGHS Academically More Able Policy

1. Aims and Rationale

WGHS is committed to providing an environment, which encourages all students to maximise their achievement, including students who have exceptional abilities. We find the following definition helpful as we identify the most able of our students.

"Gifted students are those whose potential is distinctly above average in one or more of the following domains of human ability: intellectual, creative, social and physical. Talented students are those whose skills are distinctly above average in one or more areas of human performance."

We aim to have an inclusive approach, to encourage all able students to fulfill their potential within mixed classroom settings. This involves a range of opportunities, both in the classroom and beyond. This further enhances 'basic' standards of attitude to learning, tracking, monitoring and interventions in order to improve academic outcomes for pupils of all abilities, in support of our School Values; Together, Empowered, Aware.

The school will promote stimulating and challenging experiences through a broad balanced curriculum that also offers quality learning activities that focus on the particular needs and talents of the students. We also appreciate that students will make progress at different times of their school career, therefore we allow opportunities for students to join our programs at various points.

This policy is an integral part of WGHS's broader development of maximum inclusion of educational opportunity for all students. It states our commitment to providing an environment in which all students are encouraged to reach their potential.

We endorse the NACE (National Association for Able Children in Education) mission statement "provide for pupils with high abilities whilst enabling all pupils to flourish."

Our aims are to:

- Ensure that we recognise and support the needs of all our students.
- Enable students to develop to their full potential.
- Offer students opportunities to generate their own learning.
- Ensure that we challenge and extend the students through appropriate learning opportunities.
- Encourage students to think and work independently.

2. Definitions

National Guidelines define More Able and Talented (MAT) pupils as those pupils 'who achieve, or have the ability to achieve, at a level significantly higher than the average for their year group.'

Having potential in itself is not enough to guarantee success; the school has a vital role to play in encouraging students to challenge themselves and achieve excellence. Therefore, at WGHS we define "gifted" as "having exceptional potential" and "talented" as "demonstrating exceptional performance", not distinguishing between purely academic subjects and performing subjects.

3. Identification

In our Junior Section (JS) a range of methods for identification are used to identify the most able learners:

- Teachers' professional judgment- formative assessment and observations
- Subject specific criteria for identifying the most able learners
- Summative assessments- PIRA and PUMA assessments that show standardised scores.
- Pupil classroom performance
- Liaison with all feeder school

We are committed to identifying and meeting the needs of these students as early as possible in order to enable them to achieve their best.

The initial identification of students in the SS comes from the Entrance Exam in Year 6, with the top performing students being offered an academic Scholarship. This can be further added to at the start of KS3 through a high MidYIS test. There is liaison with our KS2 colleagues as well to discuss those students coming through to Year 7.

Exceptionally able students are identified through teacher-judgment based on an analysis of various sources of information including:

- Departmental subject-based criteria
- MidYIS/ALIS testing (115 as a base at MIDYIS)
- Assessment results will be used both for identification but also monitoring purposes
- Data from previous schools

Identification may also come through other internal monitoring systems, parental nomination or student self-nomination.

It is worth remembering that exceptionally able students can be:

- Good all-rounders
- High achievers in one area only
- Of high ability but with low motivation
- Very able but with a short attention span
- Of good verbal ability but poor writing skills
- Very able but with poor social skills
- Keen to disguise their abilities

The Academic Scholars are those whose score in the Y7 entrance exam places them in the top 10 of the cohort.

Sixth Form Scholars - are identified by subject exam and general paper, or 8 or more 8s or more at GCSE. Additionally, there are scholars for PE, art, textiles and music.

The scholarship program is available to all students to participate in, though it is obligatory for academic scholars.

4. Provision for the exceptionally able in the classroom

Opportunities for extension and enrichment should be built into all teaching in order to provide work which challenges the most able. Teachers should encourage exceptionally able students to attempt more challenging activities, which will involve higher order thinking skills, or approach open-ended tasks in an original and innovative way. Teachers should also encourage those who are very able in their subjects to take their ability seriously and to try out some form of enrichment activity (see below), where the student's subject interest is also significant.

We are aware that able students need to be challenged (tactfully) beyond the content of the tasks suitable for most students. Equally, we are mindful that unnecessary repetition of work is de-motivating for many students, but especially for the very able.

The enhancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software enables staff to identify gaps in student knowledge, provide targeted feedback, and offer personalised support. With AI-powered tools like chatbots, educators can extend assistance beyond the classroom, helping students stay engaged and motivated. Through the effective use of AI software such as Sparx and Atom Learning, teachers can provide challenges for all pupils commensurate with their abilities.

Reading lists for further study/interest will be provided by Heads of Departments (HoDs) and magazine subscriptions may create further opportunities for the students.

5. Teaching & Learning Strategies

These are some of the strategies we use in our classrooms to cater for our most able. We recognise and embrace that many of these strategies will enhance the learning environment for all our pupils.

Higher order Questioning - is required to develop critical and creative thinking. Examples include: Why does anything exist at all? What would you change in the story?

Higher order questions present the learner with no easy option or single 'neat' answer. It offers a challenge with regard to thinking that is as difficult as the pupils' ability and enthusiasm will allow. The implementation of 'Walkthrus' by Tom Sherrington and Oliver Caviglioli are embedded in our lessons with question types such as think-pair-share, cold calling and say it again better.

Socratic questioning - to extend thinking and question for depth of response. Examples include Is that the only way? How did we arrive at that conclusion?

Desirable difficulties to stretch our more able learners include A03 Analysis and evaluation activities.

Fermi problem solving questions are also used e.g. how many jelly babies would fill Wembley stadium?

Task led - Pupils could start tasks or independent work sooner than other pupils. The type of task set may differ to other pupils to ensure the challenge is pitched at the appropriate level. For example, these tasks could be open ended challenges, puzzles, reasoning and problem solving tasks or tasks that require pupils to use another perspective. Extension tasks are readily available in all lessons.

6. Enrichment beyond the classroom

Opportunities for extension and enrichment beyond the classroom exist in great number at WGHS. Although often self-selecting, able students should be encouraged to take advantage of the plethora of extra-curricular activities. Enrichment opportunities may involve:

- Public opportunities for music, drama and sporting success
- School clubs e.g. subject clubs, chess, debating, art, bridge, drama
- QED/EDGE (Enrichment and Development activities afternoon)
- National schemes/competitions/festivals
- Exchanges and trips
- Oxford/Cambridge University visit for students identified in KS4

Specific longer-term extension/ enrichment activities may also include some of the following:

- Visiting academic speakers, sports or arts personalities
- Attendance at a university lecture
- Extended writing (on scientific, literary geographical or historical topics)
- Research opportunities
- Wider reading
- Subject-specific publications (New scientist etc.)
- Shared able-group work
- Advanced textbooks
- Subject specific enrichment courses
- Competitions / publications
- EPQ and HPQ

Scholars programme for 23-24

The scholars programme is an integral part of the academic provision for Academic Scholars but is also available to any Wakefield Girls' student looking for extra stretch and challenge. It currently has three parts:

Lecture programme

- EPQ students, any staff, Yr 13 and Yr 12 scholars prepare a 10 minute presentation and then offer a Q and A session
- Scholars from years 7 -11 have to attend three during the year.

Competitions

- Scholars must enter three [competitions](#) or events during the school year E.g. Matilda Awards, Crest awards, Photography competition, Essay competition

Sixth Form Scholars

- Have to complete an EPQ, the finance course, CSLA award, an online learning course or will be doing 4 A levels
- Be involved with mentoring scholars in key stage 3 and 4

Summer Project

- Have to complete a mini HPQ type project to be completed by October half term
- Mentoring will be by 6th Forms Scholars

7. Coordination and monitoring

From September 2024, identification and monitoring will be carried out by the more able champions in each department. This could form part of a Performance Development target

for interested members of staff. It would also allow for meetings in this area to be carried out more efficiently. The More able champion reports to the SLT through the Head of Professional Excellence.

Identification as 'academically more able and talented' is visible to staff on the School's Information Management System (SIMS).

The list will be a flexible document with students being added/taken off throughout their time at school. The expansion of enrichment and extension activities is encouraged, both departmentally and school-wide.

The transition between our Junior Section and Senior Section students is managed in Year 6 when information and data sharing occurs between key staff from the Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 teams.

Further evidence is provided by the entrance exam which Year 6 students are invited to sit if they would like to try for an academic scholarship.

8. Oxford & Cambridge and other competitive courses

We realise that for many of our most able students an application for either Oxford or Cambridge is a goal they have been harbouring for a number of years. As a result there is a clear route for these students to follow in Year 12 and 13, with general assistance as well as subject specific guidance. We are fortunate to have both teachers as well as current and former pupils who advise and guide the students through the opportunities open to them at Oxford & Cambridge.

The program at sixth form enables them to make the best choice of course and college initially, as well as assistance in their personal statement and interview practice. We also recognise that a number of courses are competitive whatever the learning institution e.g. Medicine, and run a programme to support these applications. Wherever possible and practical, we work closely with Queen Elizabeth Grammar School.

9. Monitoring and review

The governor with responsibility for the GP Committee monitors the school provision for able and talented pupils. The governor will work with the school's able and talented coordinator in support of the school's efforts to help these pupils to reach their full potential.

The Heads of Departments and Subject Leads, alongside the more able champions, will collect samples of work from the higher achievers in order to demonstrate the standards that they are achieving. These examples inform the process of maintaining the more able register.

This policy is reviewed in line with the WGSF policy review cycle.