مدرستنا الثانوية الإنجليزية ، الشارقة - بنات
Our Own English High School, Sharjah-Girls

# POLICY ON GIFTED AND TALENTED

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Compiled by: SLT & SMT

**Approved by: Ms. Asma Gilani, Principal & CEO**

P. O. Box 2676
SHARJAH - U.A.E.
Our Own English High School, Sharjah

**1. VISION**

Our vision is to cultivate a dynamic learning environment where high-potential learners are identified, nurtured, and empowered to become innovators, leaders, and lifelong learners.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

At Our Own English High School, Sharjah – Girls (OOS), we believe every child is unique and deserves opportunities to realize their full potential in a stimulating and supportive environment. Among our student population, there will always be a number of learners who demonstrate high levels of ability or talent across academic and non-academic domains.

These students may significantly exceed age-related expectations in specific areas such as academics, music, arts, sports, leadership, or creativity. We are committed to identifying such students early and providing them with the challenge and support necessary to thrive.

Research consistently highlights that targeted provision for gifted and talented learners can elevate the achievement of all students. We therefore place a strong emphasis on inclusive excellence, celebrating and nurturing outstanding potential wherever it is found.

Our working definition of ability includes academic excellence, practical aptitude, artistic and musical flair, physical prowess, leadership capabilities, and creative innovation. We also acknowledge that some students may possess untapped potential not yet reflected in their performance.

We recognize that giftedness occurs across all cultures, linguistic backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses. Identification strategies will remain inclusive and equitable, particularly to avoid underrepresentation of diverse learners and to support twice-exceptional students.

**3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

This policy aims to establish a consistent and equitable approach to the identification, support of gifted, talented, and exceptionally able students.

- Students are identified through holistic process including CAT4 data, standardized cognitive and academic assessments, school-based evidence, and professional judgement.
- Identification ensures a fair, robust, and comprehensive understanding of students' strengths and potential.
- Appropriate stretch and challenges are provided within the classroom to meet individual learning needs and promote high levels of achievement.
- Teaching is differentiated to ensure depth, complexity, and accelerated progress where appropriate.
- Enrichment opportunities are offered through innovative projects, partnerships with industry and higher education providers, Centers of Excellence, and participation in competitions.
- Students are provided with opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop excellence in their areas of strength.
- Student progress and achievement within the GEMS Genius Program are regularly tracked and monitored.
- Outcomes, including destinations of leavers, are reviewed to evaluate the impact of provision.
- Student well-being is prioritized, recognizing that gifted and talented learners may have additional academic, social, or emotional needs.

- Appropriate support is provided to ensure students are fully supported and able to thrive.
- Stretch and challenge are carefully balanced with students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
- The school ensures that high expectations are maintained without compromising student well-being or overall development.

**4. DEFINITIONS**

- Giftedness refers to a student who demonstrates untrained and spontaneously expressed exceptional natural ability in one or more domains of human ability, including intellectual, creative, social, physical, or other capacities. Staff must recognize that gifted students may still under achieve despite exceptional potential.
- Talent refers to a student who has transformed giftedness into exceptional performance, consistently demonstrating high levels of competence in their specific domain of ability.
  The school recognizes that all gifted students have the potential to be highly able, although not all highly able students are gifted.
- Students identified within the GEMS Genius Program include those who demonstrate gifts, talents, or high performance, defined as pupils recognized within the top five percent in a given area based on evidence of exceptional potential or sustained performance.

**5. IDENTIFICATION:**

The identification process is ongoing, multi-faceted, and inclusive. No single method is used in isolation.

**Identification Criteria:**

| Section | Policy content |
|---|---|
| **A. Key principles of Identification** | • Giftedness may not always be visible and can be influenced by cultural, linguistic, gender, socioeconomic, or learning factors.<br>• Identification is continuous and forms the first stage of the wider provision pathway.<br>• Multiple sources of evidence are required to ensure fairness, equity, and accuracy.<br>• Both academic and non-academic domains must be considered.<br>• All decisions must be moderated using professional judgment alongside assessment data. |
| **B. Methods of Identification** | • Classroom observations<br>• Parent interviews and discussions<br>• Gifted and Talented screening checklists<br>• Student interest surveys, self-reports and interviews<br>• Standardized attainment tests<br>• Cognitive ability assessments (e.g., CAT4, psychologist- administered tests)<br>• Curriculum-based assessment data<br>• Evidence of extracurricular achievements (non-academic talents) |
| **C. Identification Domains** | • General intellectual ability<br>• Specific academic aptitude |

| Section | Policy content |
|---|---|
| | • Leadership and interpersonal skills<br>• Visual and performing arts<br>• Sports and athletic ability<br>• Technical abilities (e.g., coding, spatial reasoning, and technology) |
| **D. Key considerations in Identification** | • Differentiation: Curriculum supports varied ability levels and learning styles.<br>• Pace: Faster progression and reduced repetition for gifted learners.<br>• Assessment: Ongoing assessment and pre-assessment to guide learning pathways.<br>• Grouping: Flexible grouping for collaboration and extension.<br>• Level of Work: Complex, abstract, and concept-based learning tasks.<br>• Enrichment: Extension, acceleration, and external engagement opportunities. |
| **E. CAT4 (Academic Identification Tool)** | • CAT4 is used as a key cognitive measure for students aged 6+.<br>• Must not be used in isolation.<br>• Must be combined with teacher judgment and curriculum evidence.<br>• Benchmarks: ≥130 (one battery) or ≥125 (mean score).<br>• GEMS Genius Register: 3%–10% of the student population.<br>• CAT4 profile variability must be considered when planning support. |
| **F. Curriculum -based assessment** | • Identifies sustained high performance in the school curriculum<br>• Must be clearly documented and agreed by the school.<br>• Students may be included even if CAT-4 thresholds are not met.<br>• Decisions must be moderated using multiple evidence sources. |
| **G. Professional Judgement** | • Essential for moderating all identification decisions.<br>• Particularly important in Early Years and borderline cases.<br>• Considers wellbeing, language, engagement, and contextual barriers.<br>• Identifies potential not yet reflected in data.<br>• Ensures fairness for all learners. |
| **H. Non – Academic Gifted & Talented** | • Includes arts, sports, leadership, and technical talents.<br>• Requires multiple evidence sources (home, school, external).<br>• Parents and families are key contributors.<br>• Students must receive enrichment and recognition.<br>• Development pathways must be provided. |
| **Summary Table** | • **Principle:** Holistic, fair, ongoing identification using multiple evidence sources.<br>• **Tools used:** Observations, CAT4, assessments, interviews, surveys, curriculum data.<br>• **Domains:** Academic, intellectual, leadership, arts, sports, technical skills.<br>• **Key considerations:** Differentiation, pace, assessment, grouping, enrichment. |

| Section | Policy content |
|---|---|
| | • **CAT4 Use:** Supporting tool only (130+ battery / 125+ mean).<br>• **Curriculum evidence:** Sustained high performers<br>• **Professional judgement:** Ensures moderation and contextual understanding.<br>• **Non-academic talent:** External + parental evidence<br>• **Register guidance:** 3%–10% of student population. |

**IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST:**

A detailed teacher checklist is available to help identify characteristics of G&T learners. It includes cognitive, behavioral, and emotional indicators such as:

- Rapid learning and retention
- Advanced reasoning and problem-solving
- Intellectual curiosity and creativity
- High personal standards and motivation
- Sensitivity to social issues and empathy
- Leadership and initiative

**G&T Characteristics Checklist**

**A. Academic Characteristics**

| Domain | Characteristics of High Potential Learners |
|---|---|
| **Cognitive Ability** | Demonstrates understanding beyond age-related expectations; learns new concepts rapidly; makes connections across subjects; shows strong reasoning and analytical thinking; asks higher-order and insightful questions. |
| **Academic Achievement** | Consistently high attainment or rapid progress; produces work of depth, accuracy, and complexity; performs above curriculum expectations; and applies knowledge effectively in unfamiliar contexts. |
| **Thinking & problem solving** | Thinks critically and independently; uses original problem-solving strategies, synthesizes information effectively; transfers learning across contexts; and engages with abstract concepts. |
| **Learning Pace & Independence** | Learns quickly with minimal repetition; works independently; shows resilience with challenging tasks; and demonstrates focus and persistence. |

**B. Non – Academic characteristics**

| Domain | Characteristics of High Potential Learners |
|---|---|
| **Creativity & Innovation** | Produces original and imaginative ideas; demonstrates creative thinking across tasks; engages strongly with open-ended challenges; and shows innovation in expression and problem-solving. |
| **Leadership & social skills** | Demonstrates leadership or influence; shows empathy, fairness and responsibility; contributes effectively in group work; and displays strong social awareness. |
| **Learning behaviors & Motivation** | Highly motivated and engaged; shows perseverance and resilience; sets high personal standards; demonstrates curiosity and initiative. |
| **Arts, sports & Technical Ability** | Shows strong aptitude or talent in arts, sports, design, coding, or technical areas; and demonstrates rapid skill development and consistent performance. |

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| **Emotional & Intellectual Traits** | Shows intellectual curiosity; may demonstrate perfectionism or self-critical thinking; prefers independent or advanced engagement; and shows sensitivity to ideas and issues. |

**6. INDIVIDUALIZED CHALLENGE PLAN (ICP)**

- Once a student is identified as part of the GEMS Genius Program, the school creates an Individualized Challenge Plan, ICP, in collaboration with the students, staff who work closely with them, and their family.
- The school ensures that the ICP includes a clear description of the student's identified strengths.
- Staff document any potential barriers to learning that may affect the student's progress.
- The ICP includes specific individual targets linked directly to the students' areas of high potential, talent, or high performance.
- The school defines strategies, subject adaptations, or actions that will extend learning, promote challenge, and support continued progress.
- ICP documents are reviewed at least twice annually to evaluate progress and adjust targets or strategies as needed.
- The school ensures that all staff who work with the students have full access to the ICP and understand their responsibilities in implementing the identified strategies and adaptations.

**Implementation and Monitoring:**

- ICPs are initiated by the GEMS Genius lead in collaboration with the class/subject teacher, counselor, and supervisor.
- They are personalized, time-bound, and tracked for impact
- Learning plans are documented, with term-wise review and progress tracking.
- Students on ICPs are regularly monitored for well-being, academic progress, and sustained motivation.
- Adjustments are made based on student feedback, achievement data, and teacher observations.

The ICP ensures that exceptionally able learners are supported not only to meet but to exceed their potential, while maintaining a balance of academic rigor and holistic growth.

**7. PROVISION**

| Section | Key Policy Points (Concise) |
|---|---|
| **1. Individualized Challenge Plan (ICP)** | • ICP created for each identified student with student, staff, and parents.<br>• Includes strengths, barriers to learning, and clear targets.<br>• Defines strategies for stretch, challenge, and progress.<br>• Reviewed at least twice annually.<br>• Accessible to all relevant staff for consistent implementation. |
| **2. Classroom Stretch & Challenge** | • Core provision delivered through daily, adaptive teaching.<br>• Stretch and challenge embedded based on student strengths.<br>• Learning is enriched, creative, and appropriately challenging.<br>• TLAG/RLAG strategies used to support differentiation.<br>• Teaching promotes higher-order thinking, independence, and creativity. |
| **3. Classroom Strategies** | • Assessment + teacher judgment used to pitch learning appropriately.<br>• Challenge introduced from the start of lessons (Do Now / Stretch It).<br>• Focus is on independent, complex application tasks.<br>• Use of structured discussion, questioning, and peer dialogue.<br>• Students engage in reflection and self-assessment.<br>• Adaptive teaching ensures continuous challenge and support. |

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| | • Questioning is used to deepen reasoning and thinking. |
| **4. Enrichment Opportunities** | • Regular enrichment beyond classroom learning.<br>• Partnerships with industry, HE providers, Centers of Excellence.<br>• Opportunities include competitions, workshops, clubs, trips, and events.<br>• GEMS Genius enrichment calendar (GEMS for Life) supports planning. |

**8. RESPONSIBILITIES**

**GEMS GENIUS LEAD AND COUNSELORS:**

- Lead strategic development and implementation of G&T policy
- Ensure rigorous, inclusive identification processes
- Maintain updated G&T Register & Monitor list
- Coordinate ICPs and provide guidance to staff
- Monitor impact and oversee regular reviews
- Conduct parent meetings and workshops
- Provide professional development for staff
- Ensure G&T is included in SEF and SDP

**Faculty Members:**

- Plan and deliver differentiated instruction
- Integrate G&T strategies into planning
- Monitor and document progress
- Nominate potential G&T learners

**9. CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION:**

Information about G&T students is shared during internal transitions and when students move to new schools. This ensures continuity of provision and targeted support.

**10. MONITORING, ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Student outcomes are regularly tracked and reviewed using:

- Performance against personalized targets
- Teacher assessments and formative feedback
- Student self-assessments and reflections
- Participation in enrichment activities and competitions
- Data tracking of identified students versus peers

**Impact Indicators:**

- Annual identification percentages
- Progress data of G&T vs. non-G&T students
- Participation in high-level enrichment and competitions
- Stakeholder (student/parent/teacher) feedback

**11. REVIEW AND POLICY EVALUATION**

This policy is a dynamic document that reflects the school's ongoing commitment to the identification and support of gifted and talented learners. To ensure it remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with current educational best practices, the policy will be:

- **Reviewed annually** by the Gems Genius Lead in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team.
- **Updated as needed** to reflect feedback from staff, students, parents, and external educational developments.
- **Evaluated** through regular monitoring of the impact of provision, student achievement data, and engagement in enrichment opportunities.
- **Informed by evidence**, including progress tracking, teacher and parent feedback, outcomes of student assessments, and participation in competitions or special programs.

The review will assess:

- The effectiveness of identification procedures
- The quality and impact of classroom differentiation and enrichment programs
- Professional development needs of staff
- Parental involvement and communication strategies
- Students' academic and personal growth

Any revisions or enhancements made to this policy will be disseminated to all staff and stakeholders and reflected in school documents including the **School Development Plan (SDP)** and **Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)**.

This policy reflects Our Own English High School, Sharjah Girls' unwavering dedication to creating an inclusive, high-performing educational environment where every child is encouraged and empowered to excel.