



## **Independent and Co-educational School**

# **High Learning Potential (Gifted and Talented) Policy (SJ405)**

Registered Charity No: 1086829

Date of Issue: June 18

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Owner: Director of Studies / Writer: HoD Learning Support

## **DEAN CLOSE ST JOHN'S SCHOOL**

### **High Learning Potential Policy**

Dean Close St John's is committed to maximising the potential of all our pupils. This includes our high learning potential (HLP) pupils whom we recognise have particular needs if they are to achieve success, both academically and socially and emotionally. Our policy of maximising the potential of our high learning potential pupils is understood and supported at all levels in the school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as pupils and parents. It fits in well with our school aims, particularly:

- Every pupils is stretched with a wealth of opportunities, both inside and outside the classroom.
- We aim to inspire children to reach their full academic, social and emotional potential in a safe, caring and supportive setting.

### **Aims**

Through this policy, we aim to make sure that:

- we recognise the different needs of our high learning potential pupils including those who are achieving highly, who coast; are underachieving; have special educational needs, which may be hidden or masked by their ability; those from disadvantaged backgrounds; and those from ethnic minorities
- every high learning potential pupil receives an appropriate education to meet their needs
- we provide appropriate opportunities to firstly identify, and then stretch and challenge the skills and talents of our high learning potential pupils
- we recognise the social and emotional needs of our high learning potential pupils and support them as part of our policy. These could include poor risk taking skills and perfectionism
- we have a school environment which positively supports our high learning potential pupils, actively encouraging questioning and challenge as well as creativity and developing higher order thinking skills.

### **Our Definition of High Learning Potential**

We recognise that there are many different definitions of high learning potential. At Dean Close St John's, we use the following definition:

- children who are (significantly) exceeding expectations for their year group academically
- children who have talents in art, music, drama and related areas which are (significantly) above expectations for their age
- Children who have the potential to achieve above expectations, but who, for whatever reason, are not demonstrating this.

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As a school, we have decided to adopt the terminology high learning potential rather than gifted and talented or more able in recognition that it is important that support is given if these - and all children - are to reach their full potential. We are also conscious of pupils who have dual or multiple exceptionality (DME) eg high learning potential and a learning need/s such as dyslexia.

### **How We Identify These Children**

We identify our high learning potential pupils in two broad ways:

i) By identifying those children who fall into our stated definition of high learning potential pupils

We do this in the following ways:

- through ability tests. We use Cognitive Ability Tests for pupils in Years 5-8. Pupils with a standardised age score of over 120 (100 being average) are included. 120 equates to 90th percentile of pupils while 130 equates to 98th percentile. We recognise that these children may have very different needs.
- through progress tests (e.g. Star Reading, Star Maths, Progress Test English, Progress Test Maths and Progress Test Science)
- through tracking data
- by nomination by class teachers as a result of demonstration in the classroom or observation of their work
- through information provided from home about an out of school activity (e.g. music grades or sporting achievement)

ii) Through what we provide for all children to develop their skills and talents

We recognise that some children will not be the obvious candidates as part of our high learning potential policy but that when they are challenged and enthused in an appropriate way their talents and areas of strength are more likely to become apparent.

We recognise that children who are identified as high learning potential may not be achieving highly in every subject and our policy makes allowances for this to ensure that they are supported in their areas of need and stretched and challenged in their areas of strength or potential.

### **Providing Appropriate Feedback to Parents and Carers**

It is important that parents and carers are kept informed about their child's area(s) of strength and talent. This is done in the following ways:

- through a meeting, should they request it, at each parents' meeting with the (lead teacher for high learning potential / appropriate subject teacher)
- by holding a meeting at least once a year with all parents of the children in the year or school in the high learning potential cohort. The purpose of this meeting is:
  - to outline how the school identifies our high learning potential pupils

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- what we are doing to challenge and support them
  - at this stage, it is often useful to outline with parents what they can do at home to support their child.
- by having an open door policy with the HLP Co ordinator/ Director of Studies to discuss any issues that might arise.

We believe that involving parents and carers and having a positive working relationship between school and home is extremely important if the child is to maximise his or her potential.

### **What We Provide for our High Learning Potential Pupils**

Whilst every pupil will benefit from many of these strategies, it is proven that they are essential for high learning potential pupils.

Our provision includes:

- differentiated and advanced content within and across topic / subject areas
- regular opportunities for depth and breadth in subjects
- tasks and questioning to promote higher order thinking skills
- opportunities for practice that is based on rich and sophisticated problem solving and is not simply 'more of the same'
- opportunities for collaboration of our high learning potential pupils within class, across year groups and among schools
- opportunities to develop creative and critical thinking skills
- opportunities to question concepts to extend understanding, including following teacher feedback
- opportunities for pupils to develop self-regulation skills
- extra-curricular subject masterclasses (Science Scholarship Club, Shadowing the CILIP Carnegie Awards)
- extra-curricular opportunities in sport (eg clubs, competitions, coaching opportunities with specialists from Dean Close), Music (eg orchestra and St John's Chamber Winds), Art (Scholars Art Club) and Drama (LAMDA and Drama club).
- opportunities for external trips to develop talent (eg Junior Language Challenge, Maths Challenges, Art workshops).
- visitors (eg Academic Enrichment Evenings, speakers in assembly)
- mentoring and pastoral support opportunities to develop communication skills and social skills through project work or through presenting aspects of their work or interests to other students or teachers
- school membership to Potential Plus, the charity that supports high learning potential children and their families. This provides information and resources for staff; associate membership for parents and allows school to make parents aware of opportunities beyond school to support gifted and talented children.

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### **Specific Guidance Related to High Learning Potential Pupils**

Acceleration (moving ahead one or more years in one or more subjects) will be evaluated by the Head, Director of Studies, in consultation with the staff on a case by case basis in positive consultation with parents and carers.

Issues we take into account include:

- the abilities and potential of the child
- the social and emotional maturity of the child
- the physical maturity and coordination of the child
- the ability of the child to cope well with older children without feeling isolated.

### **Structuring our High Learning Potential Policy**

We believe it is important to coordinate our High Learning Potential policy and we do this as follows:

**Head** - The Head reports to the trustees on all matters academic termly, including provision for high learning potential pupils.

**Lead Trustee** – The lead trustee will meet with the Director of Studies at least on an annual basis to evaluate the school's policy and provision.

**Director of Studies** – The Director of Studies is responsible for overseeing the high learning potential strategy, including:

- developing and monitoring our high learning potential policy and provision
- keeping a register of all high learning potential pupils and the specific support they are given
- interviewing all high learning potential pupils (or ensuring it is done) at least once a year
- liaising with parents and carers of high learning potential pupils
- monitoring the impact of the high learning potential policy
- suggesting appropriate training for teachers and other relevant school staff keeping up-to-date with good practice in the area of (more able) developing and participating in local and/or online networks of Lead Teachers (for More Able) Subject-specific
- Training a High Learning Potential Co-ordinator

**Teachers**– Individual teachers are responsible for the following:

- keeping up to date with talent development within the subject
- understanding and implementing the need for challenge for high learning potential pupils
- keeping a subject specific register of high learning potential pupils
- implementing subject specific initiatives to maximise the potential of all pupils including those identified as high learning potential.

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## Appendix

Although all high learning potential pupils are different, it is worth considering these definitions. All three groups of pupils could have high learning potential.

### A High Achiever...

Remembers the answers.  
Is interested.  
Is attentive.  
Generates advanced ideas.

Works hard to achieve.  
Answer the questions in detail.  
Performs at the top of the group.  
Responds with interest and opinions.

Learns with ease.  
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.  
Comprehends at a high level.

Enjoys the company of age peers.

Understands complex, abstract humour.  
humour. Grasps the meaning.  
Completes assignments on time.

Is receptive.  
Is accurate and complete.  
Enjoys school often.  
Absorbs information.  
Is a technician with expertise in a field.  
Memorizes well.  
Is highly alert and observant.  
Is pleased with own learning.  
Gets As.

Is able.

### A Gifted Learner...

Poses unforeseen questions.  
Is curious.  
Is selectively mentally engaged.  
Generates complex, abstract ideas.

Knows without working hard.  
Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.  
Is beyond the group.  
Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.  
Already knows.  
Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.  
Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.

Prefers the company of intellectual peers.

Creates complex, abstract humour.  
Infers and connects concepts.  
Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.

Is intense.  
Is original and continually developing.  
Enjoys self-directed learning.  
Manipulates information.  
Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field.  
Guesses and infers well.  
Anticipates and relates observations.  
Is self-critical.  
May not be motivated by grades.  
Is intellectual.

### A Creative Thinker...

Sees exceptions.  
Wonders.

Daydreams; may seem off task.  
Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.  
Plays with ideas and concepts.  
Injects new possibilities.  
Is in own group.

Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.

Questions: What if...

Questions the need for mastery.

Overflows with ideas--many of which will never be developed.

Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.

Relishes wild, off-the-wall

Makes mental leaps: Aha!

Initiates more projects that will ever be completed.

Is independent and unconventional.

Is original and continually developing.

Enjoys creating.

Improvises.

Is an inventor and idea generator.

Creates and brainstorms well.

Is intuitive.

Is never finished with possibilities.

May not be motivated by grades.

Is idiosyncratic.