



EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Excellence Program

Year 7 2022

Overview

The St Mary's College (SMC) Excellence Program acknowledges the need for differentiated curriculum and learning opportunities for high-achieving students and provides a positive, challenging, and supportive classroom environment in order to achieve this. The Excellence Program at St Mary's College is designed to cater for the needs of the academically gifted or talented student who demonstrates above average abilities and high levels of task commitment and creativity. Through specialist curriculum, well-practiced teaching expertise, and a developed culture of high expectations, students will be stimulated, challenged and motivated towards even higher levels of achievement. Each year, one class of students is selected to participate in the program which is designed to enhance intellectual potential and development in the Middle Years. Accelerated courses involve a combination of a faster paced curriculum and more complex and abstract material which encourages students to further develop their capacity for higher level thinking.

Program Outline

While the Excellence Program will align with the current curriculum from Years 7 to 9 many new opportunities to extend students will be presented in the core subjects: English, Mathematics and Science. Within the classroom context, students are encouraged in their creative and divergent thinking and take part in complex individual and collaborative problem-solving activities focusing on literacy and numeracy. Extensive extra-curricular opportunities further enhance this experience by continuing to foster creativity and innovation. Students can expect to be challenged and extended across their schooling experience to allow them to reach their potential.

Selection Process

A panel will review the academic data from all enrolment applications. The academic data will include reviewing of NAPLAN results, an aptitude test on July 25 and the student letter of application. The panel will also take into consideration the Grade 5 and 6 reports and any other discussions with the primary schools about the progress of the student. Letters of invitation will be forwarded to the parents of those students selected for the program, and parents and students will need to attend a compulsory information night during Term Four. Positions are awarded at the discretion of the school and the school's decision is final.

At the end of each semester the progress of each student will be reviewed. The academic results and work habits of each student should continue to be worthy of the Excellence Program by maintaining outstanding results and effort in every subject undertaken. Should this not be the case at the end of the academic year, the student will forfeit their place in the program for the following academic year. If spaces become available, additional applications will be taken. All positions are granted or withdrawn at the discretion of the Principal.

Benefits of the Program

"Gifted and talented students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning opportunities drawn from the Australian Curriculum and aligned with their individual learning needs, strengths, interests and goals" (ACARA). Gifted or talented students experience a sense of wellbeing, positive development and engagement when provided with supportive and challenging learning environments and opportunities that are responsive to their individual strengths and interests.

Students in the SMC Excellence Program will experience:

- a differentiated curriculum that is stimulating and motivating
- daily challenge in their specific areas of ability or interest
- learning experiences that reflect a range of learning styles
- opportunities to socialise and learn with peers of like-ability as well as independent work
- opportunities to overcome obstacles and earn success which will impact more positively on their self-esteem.

As part of the Excellence Program, students will have the opportunity to:

- work with dynamic and innovative teachers who have a commitment to the program
- work with like-minded peers and access extension activities that unpack the Australian Curriculum at a more sophisticated level
- participate in a range of academic challenges and competitions e.g. Opti Minds; Readers Cup; Writing Competitions

Student Expectations

Participation in the Excellence Program will require students to meet the high expectations that the College has of all students. The participation in the Excellence Program needs to be considered a privilege and as such a student's contribution to the College community needs to reflect this.

A student in the Excellence Program will be expected to:

- maintain an excellent academic record
- be fully committed to their studies and striving to achieve their best
- actively participate in all classes and is always prepared for all curriculum activities
- be an exemplary role model to other students
- willingly adhere to all College policies, processes and procedures
- be engaged fully in the life of the College through participation in various extra-curricular programs of the College such as the College's religious life, performing arts and sporting opportunities
- seek out opportunities for positions of student leadership within the College as they arise.

Excellence Program Application Process

- Complete the application form.
- Provide copies of your latest two semester school report cards.
- Participate in aptitude testing administered by the College.

Conclusion

For further information in relation to the St Mary's College Excellence Program please contact the Head of Learning & Teaching: Middle School.

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Responsibility for implementation: Excellence Program Committee

Policy status: New

Key stakeholders: Families

Endorsement Body: Senior Leadership Team

Policy Author: Middle Schooling Leader

Date of Review: 2021

Date of Scheduled Review: 2022

The content of this policy can be changed at the College's discretion at any time without notification.