



Saint Stephen's College

THE OPTIMA PROGRAM SPORT

A young woman with blonde hair, smiling, wearing a dark blue and orange cheerleader uniform with 'GA' on the front. She is in a gymnasium with yellow and blue bleachers in the background. Other cheerleaders are visible in the background.

THE OPTIMA PROGRAM

At Saint Stephen's College we strive to promote engagement and challenge each child's individual potential in relation to intellectual, creative, social-emotional and physical domains.

We aim to support every student to achieve their educational potential, through talent development opportunities and differentiated teaching and learning practices to ensure that their specific learning and wellbeing needs are met.

At Saint Stephen's College, a multifaceted approach is taken for accommodating the needs of High Potential and Gifted (HPG) students. HPG students have unique social, emotional, and learning needs, which should be recognised, valued and catered for appropriately. Saint Stephen's is committed to meeting the needs of this unique group of students through The Optima Program.

The Optima Program framework is based on the theories of Gagne and recognises the four domains of High Potential and Giftedness: Intellectual, Creative, Social-Emotional and Physical.

What is the Optima Program?

The Optima Program offers students the chance to work in learning situations which are structured for highly motivated and gifted students with above average ability, who are willing to work in a challenging environment within their domain/s of potential or giftedness. The Optima programs gather together students who have demonstrated both ability and a willingness to participate actively in College life. Students will demonstrate their ability to work both independently and in productive partnerships.

How does a student gain entry to the Optima Program?

Consistent with the Saint Stephen's College High Potential and Gifted Policy, a transparent and ethical process using multiple criteria and tools appropriate to the College community will be used to identify students for the program.

Specific Skills

Successful Academic and Social-Emotional Optima students are characterised by high levels of aptitudes and skills, evidence of which include:

- Above average results in key areas
- An inquiring approach and independent, autonomous learning skills
- Being a reader by choice
- Expressing ideas and information confidently and creatively in a variety of communication modes
- Interest in gaining in-depth knowledge and understanding of their strengths
- NAPLAN and academic competition results
- Showing thoughtful consideration of own learning.

Monitoring of Optima Students

The progress of participants in the Optima Program is reviewed regularly. Students who demonstrate through their results and overall readiness that they would benefit from placement in an Optima Program may be offered a place during their learning experience at Saint Stephen's College. Students in Optima are expected to maintain a commitment to participation in extra curricular activities and the overall life of the College.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE OPTIMA PROGRAM AT SAINT STEPHEN'S COLLEGE

Differentiation

Optima students will be identified in their specific area of high potential or giftedness. These students will be catered for through an accelerated or broadened curriculum. We have an inquiry-based focus to learning, which supports differentiation in the classroom. Optima students will be identified to staff within their class and provided with appropriate data to allow them to make informed learning pathways for these students.

Grouping and Extension

At times, Optima students will be taken out of the normal classroom setting and grouped with students of similar ability and focus to undertake challenging and educationally appropriate programs to meet their specific needs.

School, State, Nationwide and Global Competitions

Optima students are encouraged to participate in a range of competitions within their High Potential or Gifted domains.

Acceleration within the Current Class - Curriculum Compacting

Allows students to remain in the same class but accelerate through the normal curriculum, allowing them to advance in the relevant subject area.

Subject Acceleration

A developmentally appropriate placement of students ahead of their chronological age or their chronological peers in one or more subjects or by one or more whole years of learning, if the timetable can accommodate it.

IEP (Individual Learning Plan)

A learning plan tailored to highly gifted students developed through consultation with all stakeholders.

Talent Workshops

Specialised workshops for identified students in specialist areas (BRAINways) clinics.

Enrichment

Embedded programs that provide opportunities to enhance, extend and enrich students' education through programs run outside the regular classroom.

Mentors

Where appropriate, students may be paired with a mentor to assist their potential and cope with unique needs.

Partnership with External Agencies

Identified students are linked to university partnerships for enhanced learning and progressive pathways.

Independent Study

High Potential and Gifted students often achieve greater success and higher levels of engagement using independent study. This can be facilitated through the iCentre where students can be supervised.

Differentiated Homework

Homework can be tailored to meet the needs of Optima students, without increasing the burden of homework quantity.

CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTERNAL PROVISION

Optima Sporting Programs

Saint Stephen's College has four Optima Sporting Programs. Our Basketball, Cricket, Soccer and Netball programs have been selected to meet the needs of our high performing students. At the College, we use a Long-Term Player Development Model and structure our sporting programs around this model to help our student athletes develop and achieve short and long term goals.

The Optima Sporting Programs are available for students in Years 4 to 12. The purpose of the program is to develop the overall athletic ability of each child whilst focusing on their specific sport. Students in each program have one compulsory speed and agility session, one compulsory strength and conditioning session and one compulsory field session in their chosen sport. Each session is tailored for students needs and abilities by our expert staff.

Students in the programs will also be exposed to nutrition in sport, high performance training, recovery and injury prevention and management through various experiences.

The programs' goals are to have students achieving individual success through selection in representative teams as well as team success through APS sport and other school-based competitions.





Head of Basketball

Our Head of Basketball is Adam Tyrus. Adam is a current teacher of the College who teaches in the Health and Physical Education department. Adam's basketball playing and coaching background is outstanding. Adam has played in the QSL for various teams and was head coach of the North Gold Coast Seahawks QSL team. Adam is an old scholar whose passion as both a student and staff is second to none.



Head of Cricket

The Head of Cricket is our current Director of Sport, Ryan Soars. Ryan's playing and coaching background is extensive, coaching school representative teams and most recently as a club coach of the Coomera Hope-Island Cricket Club. Ryan is also an old scholar who takes great pride in seeing the cricket legacy of the College continue.



Head of Netball

The Head of Netball is a new member to the College community. Rebecca Lombardo brings a wealth of knowledge and experience. Widely sought after across the Gold Coast for her coaching ability we are very excited to have her working with our students. Rebecca was an outstanding player reaching a high level before turning to coaching. Rebecca has volunteered her time for numerous years with our club teams and we can't wait to see what she can do with our talented netballers.



Head of Soccer

Our Head of Soccer is former International Soccer player Scott McDonald. Apart from the incredible achievement of representing his country, Scott has played in many major soccer leagues including the Scottish Premier League and A-League. Scott has now turned his hand to coaching where he is currently the coach of the Gold Coast Knights. Scott is a current parent of the College who is invested in the long-term future of the College.



HIGH POTENTIAL AND GIFTED EDUCATION FLOWCHART

Nomination

Teacher, parent/guardian or student notifies the Principal of a potentially High Potential or Gifted student as outlined in the related College documentation.

Assessment for Identification

Evidence is collected to accurately identify the gifts and talents of students using measures that may include but not limited to:

- Teacher or parents/guardian checklists
- Psychological assessments
- Self-identification
- Interviews
- Other relevant information
- Coaches, Tutors recommendation
- Anecdotal evidence
- Student work
- Curriculum-based assessment and reporting
- Education history
- Medical History

Validation

Principal or principal's delegate determines High Potential or Gifted status of student, based on the evidence provided.

Identified as High Potential or Gifted.

Placement and/or Modification Recommendation

Principal or Principal's delegate consults with parents/guardians, psychologist, teachers, and other professionals as necessary to determine the one or more key elements that will best meet the needs of the student.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) are developed when:

- the case management process recommends the development of an IEP
- a student undergoes subject or whole-grade acceleration
- a student is identified as having dual exceptionalities
- a parent or guardian requests an IEP for an identified student

Evaluation

Regular and ongoing evidence-based review of student progress, strategies and provisions.

Transition

The College implements a transition process through the transition phases of Year 6 to year 7 and Year 9 to Year 10 that acknowledges and supports the high potential or gifted student as the student progresses through their schooling.



Saint Stephen's College

CRICOS Provider Number 01938G
ABN 31 071 134 024
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