

# High Achieving Class Policy

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## **Rationale:**

Teachers at Parktone do their best to teach a curriculum that all students can learn from. We aim to scaffold learning within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. In any given class the zone of proximal development varies. For numerous and varied reasons, some students consistently demonstrate a mastery beyond the curriculum which is presented to their peers. Parktone teachers differentiate the curriculum as best they can, generally catering for students with a zone proximal development up to 18 months behind and 18 months in front of the year level they teach. Students aged as young as 9 and 10, whose zone of proximal development is not being catered for because their achievement levels are beyond the scope of differentiation, are of an age which is susceptible to being disheartened and disengaged in such circumstances. This can have a detrimental effect on their learning and who they are as a learner. Though recent studies by John Hattie have somewhat controversially declared that reducing class size has little to no effect on learning, the number by which a reduction is made is key to understanding the research. A small reduction in class size of 1 to 5 students typically fits with Hattie's conclusions; however the same research associates a significant reduction in class size as having a significant positive effect on learning. Class sizes of 20 and less are found to be ideal as they allow for a different approach in teaching than otherwise possible for a teacher. Such a class will enable students to achieve an average overall growth of 18 months or more in the space of 12 months.

## **Aims:**

The High Achieving Class aims to cater for students whose zone of proximal development is regularly beyond the scope of differentiation a teacher is able to offer in regular circumstances. The class aims to provide an opportunity to achieve mastery of skills and challenges congruent with their advanced achievement levels.

## **Implementation:**

- A class of around 16 grade 5 and 6 students will form the High Achieving Class each year.
- Selections will be made based on data available at the end of Term 3 as the class needs to be selected so that regular class allocations can be completed in a timely manner in Term 4.
- Grade 4 and 5 teachers will use a range of standardised test results to equitably determine the top 16 students eligible for the class. Tests include Grade 3 NAPLAN, latest Essential Assessments and the latest On Demand Adaptive Tests. The top 30 students will have their results ranked. Students who ranked 17 to 30 will be kept on a waiting list, in that order. Discussions around justification of selection process will not be entertained as the selection is based on equitable facts with no weight given to teacher or parent opinion.
- Enrolment in the class is to be confirmed by parents and if, at the time of enrolment, a parent decides they do not want their child in the High Achieving Class, then the student will be allocated to a regular grade 5 or regular 6 class and the next student on the waiting list will be offered a place.
- Eligible students must complete an enrolment process to indicate appropriate attitude to be an active participant in the class. The attitude of an eligible student who does not wish to be a part of the class may be used to determine overall eligibility for enrolment in the class.

- Throughout the year, student wellbeing, attitude and performance will be continually assessed to determine ongoing suitability of the class. The school in conjunction with the parents may determine reallocation of a student to a regular class is in the best interest of the student or of the High Achieving Class.
- The generalist teachers of the class will be provided with suitable professional development to equip them with evidence-based approaches to working with high achieving students in a small class setting.
- Students within the High Achieving Class will participate in all school based activities, specialist classes, camps etc, in a way that promotes inclusion and appreciation of diversity of learning for all students in the Parktone school community
- The generalist teacher is expected to provide evidence that students in their class achieve average overall growth of 18 months or more in a 12 month period.

**Evaluation:**

Policy to be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review process

This policy was last ratified by School Council in November 2016