

Bonhoeffer Program

The Year 7 Bonhoeffer Program was established in 2019 in order to best meet the needs of students with high academic potential who are transitioning into high school. In recognition of the unique opportunity for reinvention that beginning high school poses, entry into the program is intentionally based on academic potential, as opposed to performance or achievement. By focusing on potential, it is envisaged that students who are underachieving (as a result of, for example, perfectionism, motivation or twice-exceptionality) will be given a chance to shine along with those who are already exhibiting exceptional academic performance.

Good curriculum and instruction for all learners is a cornerstone of all teaching and learning at St Peters. All students need content that is relevant, meaningful and purposeful in classrooms that are respectful and responsive to their needs. All students in Year 7 work through the Australian Curriculum achievement standards in all curriculum areas. Bonhoeffer students sit the same assessments as other Year 7 students to ensure transparency and consistency. Students are not advantaged or disadvantaged with regards to College academic awards.

Students with high academic potential generally grasp new concepts quickly and easily and therefore will, at times, require a more rapid instructional pace. However, at other times, these same students may require a slower pace of instruction so that they can delve into concepts more deeply and process concepts more abstractly. Teachers of the Bonhoeffer class understand and appreciate the distinctive needs of these learners and adapt the pace and depth of learning appropriately.

Highly able students often achieve good results with relative ease and can experience distinctive challenges when exposed to the increased rigors of the high school experience. Highly able students with perfectionistic tendencies, or those who have never before had to strive to achieve can be particularly vulnerable. Teachers of the Bonhoeffer class guide students to work with like-minded peers to develop a growth mindset incorporating appropriate risk taking, persistence and resilience, time management and study skills.

The 2020 Bonhoeffer class will form one of the ten Year 7 classes and the College acknowledges that not all students with high potential will be placed in this class, nor will it be appropriate for all students. Some students will have their needs better met as part of a cluster group in a mainstream class. The Gifted and Talented Coordinator will work with identified students and their teachers across all of Year 7, not just the Bonhoeffer class.

Inclusion in the 2020 Year 7 Bonhoeffer class does not guarantee participation in future academic extension classes offered in Year 8 or beyond. Inclusion in these Year 8-10 classes is based on academic performance, as opposed to the Year 7 Bonhoeffer class which is based on academic potential. Therefore, students who have not been part of the Bonhoeffer class, but meet the academic performance criteria will be given equal opportunities to participate in academic extension classes in Years 8-10.

Identification criteria for 2020 has been based on standardised tests of potential (EduTest &/or AGAT). Where possible, this has been supported by other forms of data and observation.

All students have the right to fulfil their learning potential. It is vitally important that those students with high academic potential fulfil theirs, in order that they can contribute back to society through the creation of new knowledge, new products and problem solving for the good of all.



Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 – 1945) was a German pastor, theologian, scholar and anti-Nazi dissident. He dared to be different, to think deeply and to stand up for his beliefs, despite the danger that this may cause him. His life was spent in service to God and others. Bonhoeffer's statue is one of the ten modern martyrs at Westminster Abbey.