

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

ELEMENTARY PROGRAMME:

GRADES 1-3

Proven practices in the education of gifted children are blended with the early development of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Students will begin studies in the traditional core subjects with a thematic approach to learning. Science and mathematics are introduced and integrated into the themes. Data collection and problem solving are initiated at a very early age to ensure the development of student excellence in the fields of mathematics and science. Language competence is further honed through the study of the French language. All children are introduced to the computer lab as an educational resource. Physical and Health Education and the Fine Arts are integrated throughout the curriculum to encourage individual growth and social development. Students are involved in relevant day excursions to supplement the curriculum.

GRADES 4-6

Exemplary teaching practices for gifted children continue to be the basis of The Academy For Gifted Children. Students develop an understanding of individual learning styles and apply this knowledge to their academic development. These formative years foster academic skill consolidation coupled with specific instructions in working independently, organizing time and materials, developing effective study habits and ensuring that each child "strives to excel". The students are exposed to an increased number of specialists in the various disciplines, including English, Mathematics, Science, French, and Global Perspectives. Physical and Health Education and The Arts are integrated throughout the curriculum. Use of the computer integrates the advantages of modern technology with the acquisition and mastery of traditional academic skills. Overnight field trips, special focus events and day excursions continue to supplement the curriculum.

GRADE 7

The academic classes challenge our gifted students and ensure effective preparation for our high school credit programme. Stimulating thematic units provide the vehicle for creative and future problem solving, group interactions, leadership and the enhancement of self-concept. The curriculum empowers the students to practice and refine the skills of a researcher. In preparation for our High School Programme, a strong focus is placed on the importance of excellence in verbal and written expression in both English and French, mathematics and science. To balance the need for a larger peer group with continued support from the core teachers, the class size will not exceed 20.

HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMME—GRADES 8 TO 12

Students at P.A.C.E. begin their exposure to high school credits in grade 8, receiving grade 9 credits in Mathematics, Science and French; the students have had the opportunity to complete the elementary panel in these disciplines during the Transition Year. Students in grades 8-12 assume more responsibility for their own learning and more opportunities for individual choices are provided. Full Ministry of Education guidelines are implemented with continued differentiation for gifted students. We operate on a full rotary schedule and provide for accumulation of a minimum of 30 credits. Students must earn a minimum of 30 credits, including 18 compulsory credits (as well as earning a pass on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and completing a minimum of 40 hours of community service), to gain their Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The major focus is the provision of high-powered learning experiences that exhibit breadth of experience as we prepare our students for post-secondary education. To further enhance “breadth of experience” we encourage and provide leadership and volunteer experiences as well as mentorships and career planning. To provide for a combination of viable class sizes for time-tabling and social interaction, coupled with attention to individual needs, the class size is usually 20 students.

Fully accredited by the Ministry of Education, P.A.C.E. provides the academic environment that empowers a gifted individual to flourish and excel. Smaller classes, bright peers, learning designed specifically for the top 3-5% of the population and teachers with ongoing training in gifted education, make the classes at P.A.C.E. the paradigm in gifted education. Since all the students have extremely high innate abilities, we provide:

- fast-paced classes with activities that focus on problem solving, analysis and higher level thinking, rather than just a regurgitation of facts.
- use of modern technology in computers, media and science.
- humanitarian experiences, mentorships, student government, leadership, etc.
- field studies designed to expose the students to university level work while still in high school (e.g. students, as divers, spend 8 days in the Caribbean studying the coral reef under the tutelage of University staff).
- opportunities for students to design and participate in extra-curricular activities such as robotics, dramatic arts, music, sports (interschool and intramural teams), etc.
- an environment that nurtures the development of strong bonds with peers and staff creating a feeling of "family."

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME FEATURES

To ensure that our students are in an environment that blends the appropriate level of challenge with the acquisition of basic skills, the following practices are employed:

- In mathematics, all students are grouped according to their individual levels of ability and participate in enriching problem-solving activities.
- All students receive a formal grammar and spelling programme to explain and consolidate the “rules” of the English language.
- Word processing is used as a tool for editing and polishing written work to ensure quality and accuracy and Internet access is available to enhance research skills.

- Students participate in a variety of National Mathematics Contests, Robotics, Essay Writing Contests, Reach for the Top, Model UN, The Sears Drama Festival, Improv and so much more.

- Field studies are exciting, educational enhancements which are part of the curriculum. All students are expected to attend them since they are accompanied by an assignment on site and/or follow-up assignment, discussion or evaluation.

P.A.C.E. provides a program that PREPARES its students for university. Our goal is to provide our students with the skills that will ultimately ease their transition to first year, ensuring a greater opportunity for success.

Universities are searching for students who have demonstrated academic excellence plus a profile that indicates depth as an individual. Our students can present the best of both.

The unique nature of the student body at P.A.C.E. allows students to progress to more advanced work at a younger age than what would normally occur in schools having a wide range of student abilities in each class. As a result, few students leave the school over the course of their elementary and secondary education, therefore allowing us the opportunity to maintain a very close tie with each family. Please feel comfortable “asking the question” when you do not understand any facet of the school’s operation.