⚙ Guideline

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this guideline is to align with Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) initiatives for differentiation and provide clear direction on how these are implemented at Our Lady of Dolours.

1.2 At Our Lady of Dolours, differentiation is embedded in our teaching and learning framework to ensure every student is known, valued, and supported to achieve success. Through intentional and responsive practices, curriculum content, processes, products, and learning environments are adapted to meet the diverse needs of our learners.

1.3 This guideline also responds to feedback from our most recent NSIT review, which identified the importance of embedding differentiation as a signature practice. It aligns specifically with the following NSIT domains:

- **Domain 3** – A Culture that Promotes Learning
- **Domain 6** – Systematic Curriculum Delivery
- **Domain 7** – Differentiated Teaching and Learning
- **Domain 8** – Effective Pedagogical Practices

1.4 This guideline applies to:

- Classroom teachers
- Support Teacher: Inclusive Education (ST:IE)
- Primary Learning Leader (PLL)
- School officers
- School leadership team

2. Guideline
2.1 Definition

2.1.1 Differentiation is the practice of tailoring instruction to meet individual students' learning needs.

- Teaching may vary in strategies, tasks, assessments, and the level of support or challenge.
- Differentiation is proactive, intentional, and data-informed.

2.2 Principles of Differentiation

2.2.1 The following principles guide differentiation at Our Lady of Dolours:

- All students can learn and achieve high standards.
- Learning is meaningful, relevant, and connected to students' lives.
- Differentiation is embedded, not an add-on.
- Student data (achievement, engagement, wellbeing) informs planning.
- Students benefit from both individualised support and collaborative learning opportunities.

2.3 Differentiation in Practice at OLD

2.3.1 Teachers and support staff differentiate by:

- Setting learning goals tailored to student readiness, interest, and learning profiles.

- Designing tiered tasks and open-ended learning activities.
- Using flexible grouping and varied modes of instruction.
- Providing scaffolded support such as visuals, templates, and sentence starters.
- Offering student choice in content, process, and product.
- Aligning Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) with classroom differentiation.
- Embedding inquiry initiatives such as **Genius Hour** and **Open-Ended Investigations**.

2.4 What Differentiation Looks Like at OLD
2.4.1 Evidence of differentiation includes:
- Students articulating how they are being supported and challenged.
- Classroom teachers and school officers working collaboratively within the same framework.
- Differentiation viewed as integral to teaching practice (NSIT Domain 8).
- Inquiry initiatives providing authentic, student-led engagement.

2.5 Differentiation Strategies
2.5.1 Genius Hour as a Differentiation Strategy
- Students explore a personal interest through inquiry and present findings.
- Builds autonomy, motivation, and engagement.
- Encourages diverse modes of expression (oral, written, visual, digital).
- Supports NSIT Domains 3, 6, 7, 8 and develops General Capabilities.
2.5.2 Open-Ended Investigations as a Differentiation Strategy
- Students respond to open-ended challenges, designing pathways to test solutions.
- Provides multiple entry points at varied readiness levels.
- Promotes critical and creative thinking, persistence, and problem-solving.
- Connects directly to the Australian Curriculum (esp. Science/STEM).

2.6 Differentiation in Unit Planning
2.6.1 Teachers use the Differentiation Table to align instruction with student needs.
- Focuses on curriculum achievement standards.
- Outlines High Potential, Above Expected, At Year Level, and Support levels.
- Records student initials based on assessment data.
- Documents progression pathways for next steps in learning.
2.6.2 The table ensures:
- Students move flexibly between levels through ongoing monitoring.
- Targeted tasks, instruction, and assessment adjustments.
- Consistency in moderation through curriculum-linked evidence.

2.7 Implementation Expectations
2.7.1 All teachers must:
- Embed differentiation in all English units and integrate across learning areas.
- Record evidence of differentiation in planning documentation.
- Document PLP adjustments for students requiring additional support.
- Share and reflect on differentiation strategies during collaborative planning.
- Engage with leadership during Walk and Talks for alignment with the school's Explicit Improvement Agenda (EIA).

2.8 Monitoring and Review
2.8.1 Differentiation practices will be monitored through:
- Semester reviews of the Differentiation Table.
- Professional learning on effective differentiation.
- Feedback from students, teachers, and support staff.
- School-wide tracking aligned with NSIT Domain 6 to inform the EIA.

2.9 Alignment with MTSS
2.9.1 Differentiation at OLD is structured within the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):
- **Tier 1 – Universal Supports**
  - High-quality differentiation for all students.
  - PLPs embedded in everyday teaching.
  - Inquiry initiatives such as Genius Hour used to foster voice, choice, and engagement.
- **Tier 2 – Targeted Supports**
  - Short-term interventions for small groups.
  - Scaffolded learning tasks and targeted teaching.
  - Collaboration with ST:IE, PLL, GC and school officers.
- **Tier 3 – Intensive Supports**
  - Highly individualised supports including QCAA CASE planning.
  - Use of assistive technology and alternative communication methods.
  - Comprehensive data reviews to refine and personalise supports.

Document Control

Guideline title	Model of Differentiation: Supporting Diverse Learners at Our Lady of Dolours
Guideline Approver	Principal
Date issued	25/10/2024
Date review	25/10/2026
Version No.	1