

Script for KS3 Attitude to Learning Video – November 2023

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Hello. Welcome to this short presentation which explains the importance of Attitude to Learning at High Storrs School and why we focus so specifically on learning behaviours in Y7 and Y8.

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Secondary School is a massive step in the lives of young people. Students join us as excited and enthusiastic 10- and 11-year olds and leave us as young adults. In between they will sit GCSEs and possibly A-Levels which will have a massive influence on their futures. There is so much to experience and learn at High Storrs, and although academic success is of course important, there is so much more to being successful than just practicing for tests and exams.

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For this very reason, our focus for learning and progress at KS3 is Attitude to Learning. This approach is probably very different to what students have experienced at primary school, and it is therefore really important that students and families understand what we mean by this. In Y7 and Y8, Attitude to Learning is about developing the skills to enjoy learning, engage with learning and continue learning – to develop the skills required to be a successful student when they reach Y11 and when exams do really count.

As shown here, Attitude to Learning is a journey which starts in Y7 and 8, develops through GCSE and builds further into Y12 and Y13. Attitude to Learning at KS3 is entitled “Building Great Learning Habits” specifically because it is the start of this journey.

Research shows that students with the best approach to school life and Attitude to Learning succeeded most in their GCSEs and beyond. These students are ultimately the most prepared to be successful. But learning habits are hard to build up and cannot be switched on and off – like any other skill, they have to be practiced every day.

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The idea of attitude to learning is based on the work of Professor Guy Claxton and to help students and families understand what it all means, we have broken Attitude to Learning at KS3 down in 5 key strands:

1. **Behaviour for Learning** is not just about sitting still and being quiet! At High Storrs, we want our students to be curious and excited about their learning, ask questions and take a full part in lessons. We want them to act as role models for others in the class and always remain positive and try their best, even when the work is really hard or when there is lots of it! Their behaviour allows them to learn.
2. In terms of **Engagement for Learning** students who are highly engaged are on time for every lesson – they are there and ready to learn! They concentrate during lessons and contribute to class discussions by sharing ideas and listening to others. They do not just sit back and let the lesson happen around them.
3. **Responsibility for Learning** – covers aspects of personal organisation – always having the correct equipment, always bringing the right book, always completing homework on time and always making sure work is the best that it can be – not rushed “just to get it done”. The most successful students take responsibility for themselves, and don’t wait for someone to do it for them. This skill is essential at GCSE and beyond, and students in Y7 and Y8 should start practicing their own organisation as soon as possible.
4. **Feedback for Learning** is critical. Most students will correct or improve work when asked to do so by a teacher – it is something many are used to doing at Primary School. At High Storrs, we want our students to act on feedback even without being directed to do so – they will do it so they can become better at that subject. It is this drive and determination to improve that makes people stand out – no matter what age they are.
5. Finally, to be successful, students must learn to **work independently**. This is vital to start practicing in Y7 – it is a hard skill to master! Doing what you are told will only take you so far. Students with a positive Attitude to Learning will always have their books, will always hand in homework on time, will always try to do that little bit extra to turn a good piece of work into a great piece of work.

As you can see, our expectations for attitude to learning are very high, and not something that a student can just do sometimes – As Aristotle once said “We are what we repeatedly do! Excellence therefore is not an act but a habit”.

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So, in terms of progress and reporting, how does this all work? Attitude to Learning is shared via trackers throughout the year (2 in Y7 and 3 in Y8), alongside an Attitude to Learning area of focus and any barriers to learning your child might have.

There is another video presentation on the school website which explains in more detail the layout and content of our trackers, and how to get the most information from them.

You will notice that we do not give “estimated grades” or “levels” in Y7 or Y8. There has never been a clear link between judging student progress in Y7 against the outcomes that they are expected to achieve 5 years later in their GCSEs.

What is important in Y7 and 8 though is being a confident, enthusiastic, independent learner, which is what Attitude to Learning is all about. Some will develop these skills more quickly than others and some may need more support. But by providing these clear expectations of what we are looking for, it makes it much easier for students to understand what they could and should do to improve their own learning behaviours and that’s vitally important in helping students to develop the skills they need to be successful when they do reach GCSEs and A-Levels later in their school careers.

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When a tracker is published, we would always recommend that students and families sit down to discuss the information that has been shared. The KS3 Attitude to Learning grid shown is available on our website, and students should take time to really think about how they are working in each subject and what they need to do to become a better learner. Teachers will share an Attitude to Learning area of focus on the tracker – this is the area that your child should focus on developing most to improve in that subject area.

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Finally, then, what can Y7 and Y8 students do to improve their Attitude to Learning. Firstly, it is really important that they read each A2L descriptor properly, and really think about what has been shared via trackers. The A2L grade is not important – it is what the descriptor says about a student’s approach to learning that really matters and then the key question is “How can I improve and build on this”. Secondly, student should ask their teachers if they are unsure as to how to improve. Teachers are there to help and we are always delighted to see students really taking responsibility for their own learning.

As always, House teams and SSAs are also available for advice and support. If you do have any questions about attitude to learning, please do get in touch.