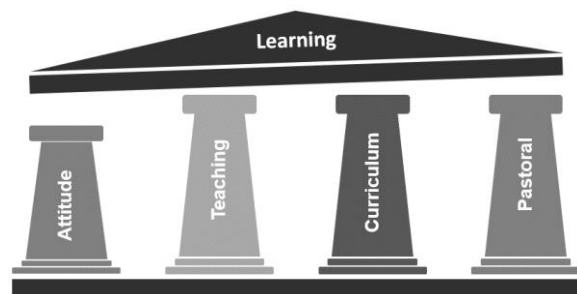


ATTITUDE TO LEARNING – A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS (2022-23)

Why is learning attitude important?

High-quality teaching, a well-planned curriculum and excellent pastoral support are three of the pillars that support successful learning. A fourth, equally important pillar is the attitude that students bring to the classroom and to their studying at home. ‘Attitude to Learning’ is the term we use at Icknield to describe the motivation, behaviours and habits that students need for their learning and attainment to be adequately supported, and for their outcomes to be the best.



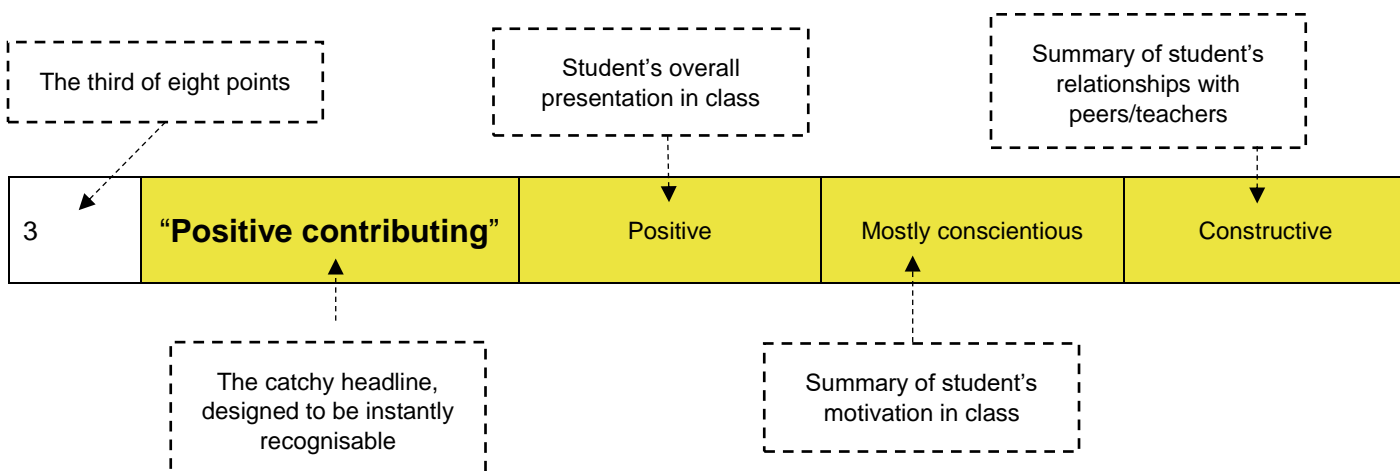
Where students do not develop appropriate motivation, behaviours and learning habits – no matter how effective the teaching, planned curriculum and pastoral support – their learning can never be secure.

From this academic year, we will be talking about Attitude to Learning in a different way. We want to provide students and parents with more useful information, and to provide it more frequently. We want students to be able to look at the information they receive and immediately understand how to take meaningful steps forward. And we want them to be rewarded quickly for making positive changes.

What are the changes?

The existing four-point system is being replaced with an eight-point scale. Each new scale point will have (a) a number, (b) a colour, (c) a ‘headline’, and (d) three words or very short phrases, describing the student’s presentation in class, her/his/their motivation, and her/his/their relationships with teachers and peers. In creating the ‘headlines’, we have tried to use words that are memorable and recognisable. We want students and parents to read them and say “I recognise that kind of attitude” even before looking at the additional descriptive words.

Here’s an example with some explanatory text:



Attitude to Learning judgements in each timetabled subject will be communicated to students and parents five times a year, at the start of Terms 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. We hope that this system and the eight-point scale laid out on the next page will change the way students and parents understand their next steps:

	It should be harder to say:	It should be easier to say:
Student	“I don’t know what to do” “Nothing I do makes a difference”	“If I do x, y, z then I can improve my Attitude to Learning score”
Parent or Carer	“I don’t know how to support my child to improve”	“It’s clear that my child’s top targets right now are ...”

	HEADLINE	OVERALL PRESENTATION	MOTIVATION IN CLASS	RELATIONSHIPS
1	“Committing to above-and-beyond”	Passionate	Highly focused	Inspiring
2	“Motivated self-starting”	Notably enthusiastic	Diligent	Dependable
3	“Positive contributing”	Positive	Mostly conscientious	Constructive
4	“Often reliable completing”	Often engaged	Often hard-working	Often helpful
5	“Nudge-dependent working”	Variable	Inconsistent	Dependent
6	“More braking than accelerating”	Disengaged	Unreliable	Unresponsive
7	“Unhelpful energy-taking”	Apathetic	Lethargic	Obstructive
8	“Confronting disrupting”	Antagonistic	Inert	Disturbing

Some questions and answers

“Will teachers be able to distinguish accurately between these eight scale-points?”

Yes. We have tested this system several times, so we know it’s possible to make reliable judgements using an eight-point scale. We found that we were able to use most of the scale-points with most of our classes, which suggests that, in real life, the full range of descriptions will be employed across the school, providing more useful, more detailed information to students and parents.

“So, it’s possible that you’ll be describing my child’s attitude as ‘unhelpful energy-taking’?”

Yes, it’s possible. Most of our students have really good learning attitudes, but where attitudes aren’t as good as they should be, we think everyone needs to talk honestly about that. We think there’s a trade-off between diplomacy, on the one hand, and honesty and usefulness, on the other. The headlines are deliberately designed to grab your attention and be memorable, but aren’t intended to offend.

“And how about SEN students? My child might not look engaged in the way that other children do.”

We will make sure that we distinguish between behaviours and habits that stem from a special educational need those that stem from a poor learning attitude. For example, a child identified with ODD won’t necessarily be deemed ‘obstructive’. If your child is on the SEN register, your reviewer will discuss her/his/their Attitude to Learning profile at your scheduled review meetings.

“Is this mainly about describing attitudes rather than changing them?”

Not at all. Knowing how to move up the scale is very much a key part of the purpose of discussing learning attitudes in this way. Students looking at their currently awarded level and comparing it with the next level up should gain a very clear view of what they need to do differently in each subject area.