**Slide 1**

Hello. Welcome to this short presentation in which I will explain Attitude to Learning at High Storrs School for KS5 students, and also explain why focussing on Attitude to Learning is so important for success in Year 12, Year 13 and beyond.

**Slide 2**

Academic success is vitally important to us at High Storrs, but our school ethos reflects our desire not only to help students succeed in exams, but also to help young people grow and develop in all aspects of their education. As our ethos states, “We are here to learn, succeed and thrive”.

Of critical importance in any student’s development is their attitude to learning – how they approach tasks and challenges and, even more importantly, how they learn and develop each week to become better and better at their chosen subjects. It absolutely clear that students with great learning behaviours do well and it is crucial to further develop these behaviours and build good habits from the outset. As Aristotle once stated “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act, but a habit”.

The purpose of Attitude to Learning at High Storrs is to help students develop the learning habits and behaviours they need to succeed not only in Y12 and Y13, but beyond 6th form into adult life.

**Slide 3**

Some of you watching this video will already be familiar with the concept of Attitude to Learning, especially if your child was with us in Year 11. For those students and families who have joined High Storrs in Y12, how we use Attitude to Learning may be slightly different to what you have experienced previously. It is not simply a measure of “outstanding” organisation or “Good” behaviour – it is a series of characteristics that we can all work to develop to become well rounded and independent learners.

High Storrs use of Attitude to Learning is based on the work of Professor Guy Claxton, and focuses on the skills and attributes students must develop to be successful. As shown here, Attitude to Learning is a journey which starts in Y7, continues through GCSE and builds further into Y12 and Y13. Regardless of their academic ability, our most successful students are those who really master their own attitude to learning. Students who are more confident of their own learning ability learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable and ultimately, they do better in their tests and external examinations.

**Slide 4**

But what actually do we mean by Attitude to Learning. To make this rather complex phrase easier to understand, we have broken it down in 5 key strands for Y12 and Y13 students:

1. **Engagement in Lessons** – for A-Level students, this does not simply mean sitting up straight, listening carefully and not being distracted. Engagement means engaging fully and proactively taking part in lessons, contributing to discussions by responding to other students, sharing thoughts on wider reading or news reports and ultimately to work independently to challenge and discuss the topics being taught in class. Students are able not only to learn from others, but also to teach and challenge others through their ideas. This takes confidence and a broad and balanced subject knowledge gained from wider reading and research, but is something that all students can start to practice and develop from day one.
2. **Organisation, planning and revision** – possibly a more obvious strand for A-Level students preparing for exams, this refers to being responsible for all aspects of learning and revision. It requires working to consolidate knowledge and review and revise work (without being guided by the teacher, and not just because there is a test coming up!) It also involves using a wide variety of methods to organise work, including setting (and sticking to) medium- and long-term goals – setting a target for success now and then planning out how to get there … and actually doing it. And this comes from self-motivation … not from being told to do so by teachers or parents.
3. **Independent Learning** – the most successful A-Level students are not limited to what is taught in class, or listed in an exam specification. Independence refers to being intellectually curious, and having a desire to find out even more about your subject, to broaden and deepen your own understanding. This could be through newspaper or internet articles, or documentaries on TV. Not only are students keen to learn more about their subjects, this knowledge, beyond the curriculum, starts to become apparent in their work. This is something that makes a massive difference to success in A-Levels. It provides a deeper understanding of the concepts within the A-Level course, and allows students to examine and explain ideas with more detail and accuracy.
4. **Response to Feedback** – often students will correct or reflect on work when directed by a teacher. Students with a positive attitude to learning will start to do this consistently and automatically, carefully considering teacher feedback in order to apply it and therefore make each piece of work better than the one before ***without being told***. Exam success is not an accident. It has to be prepared for and built up to over a period of time. Very few students can instinctively write the perfect essay or perform the perfect dance, but constant review and thinking about how to make each essay or performance slightly better will ultimately lead to students producing their highest quality of work. But this takes time – it does not happen overnight!
5. **Resilience and Commitment** – this applies not only in lessons but to school life as a whole. The students with the highest attitude to learning fully commit to their time at High Storrs, acting as role models for others, always being on time and showing their positive attitude in their day to day interactions with other students and staff. A-Levels are hard, and there is plenty of hard work and revision required. Resilience and the skills required to always be ready for the next challenge are something that we all need, now just in school but in adult life.

As you can see, our expectations for attitude to learning are very high, and not something that a student can switch on and off – We are what we repeatedly do!

**Slide 5**

So practically, how does this work. How can a student see or understand their attitude to learning and what their teacher expects of them? This slide shows an example of Y12 Tracker 1 and Tracker 2 (shared with students and families in September and November of Y12). You will notice that there are no target grades or estimated grades on this tracker. This is a deliberate choice. After 3 weeks of school (when your child may only have joined High Storrs on 1st September), it would be very difficult accurately judge if a student is on track to achieve a Grade A, or a Grade B. Even by November, although students will have completed essays, or class assessments, they still will have not covered enough of the course to accurately measure their progress towards a final grade. What is evident straight away however, is a student’s attitude to learning – are they meeting the challenges in the 5 strands of attitude to learning? Are they actively looking for ways to extend their learning and become better and better at their subject, without simply replying on their teacher for help? Trackers are a good indicator of attitude to learning in different subjects, and teachers will always be willing to share steps and strategies for students to move on and up in their approach to work.

**Slide 6**

When a tracker is published, we would always recommend that students and families sit down to discuss the information that has been shared. The attitude to Learning grid shown is available on the HSS 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. It is at this point that some students show they really do not understand attitude to learning at all. Mistakenly, they will think “Because I did well in that test, my teacher has given me a good Attitude to Learning score”. This is entirely wrong and totally backwards. Actually it is “Because I have a strong attitude to learning, I read widely, I engage in class, I listen to and discuss topics with my classmates, because I review my notes, and I apply feedback, because I have planned my work to make sure I am preparing to the best of my ability … that is the REASON I got a good mark in my test”. There is a clear connection between those students who are on or above target in each subject, and those students who are really working to the very best of their ability to improve every day. Success at A-Level (and life) is not luck, but practice every day. Excellence is not an act, but a habit.

**Slide 7**

Towards the end of last year, I asked a group of Y13 students who were about to sit their A-Levels what they really thought of Attitude to Learning. They all agreed that attitude to learning was vital for their success. All of them agreed on the same point – that by the end of Y13, when the pressure of exams is really on … they can see that Attitude to Learning is the most important part of their preparation, and the descriptors discussed previously are exactly what students need to do to succeed. They all said however, that they wish they had really read the A2L descriptors properly at the start of Y12, and started working that way much sooner. It was only at the end of Y13, looking back, they realised that this is what a successful A-Level student looks like.

Finally, therefore, a few tips on where and how students can find help and advice on how to improve their Attitude to Learning. It is important that they a really read each 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 as always, the key question is “How can I improve this”.

Teachers will always be on hand to offer advice and guidance as will the 6th form team if required.

If you do have any questions about attitude to learning, please do get in touch.