



***Enhanced Learning
Educational Services***
“the study skills specialist”

MASTERING MIDDLE SCHOOL



The middle years of school are when you focus on honing the skills you have developed so far in order to ensure you achieve your personal academic best and to ensure you are prepared for the rigour of senior studies.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.

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1. IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

For many students a change occurs in middle school that can impact dramatically on their future. When students start secondary school, they are usually very positive and optimistic about school. Then things can start to get harder, a bit more challenging, maybe they get a bad mark and become discouraged, or maybe their friends start to influence their attitude. Some middle school students are able to overcome these challenges, while others let it affect their attitude and application to school.

Take the time to determine reasons to put in effort into your schoolwork.

Tick which of the following reasons might be motivating for you:

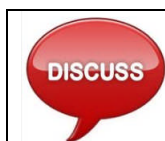
- To achieve the best mark you are capable of at school.
- To give you lots of options for what subjects you can choose in the senior years.
- To give you lots of options of what you can choose to do when you leave school.
- To have a personal sense of satisfaction about doing your best.
- To show your gratitude to your parents for giving you an education.
- To avoid getting in trouble from your teachers.
- To avoid getting in trouble from your parents.
- To avoid getting a detention or other negative consequences from not working.
- To avoid disappointing your parents.
- So you don't feel bad about wasting your parent's time and money giving you an education.



We often talk about 'carrot' and 'stick' people. If you want a donkey to move forward, you can either lead it forward with a carrot (a reward) or whack it with a stick (punishment).

Some students are motivated by working towards rewards, positive consequences of doing the right thing, while others are motivated to avoid negative consequences. Which do you think you are?

Understanding what motivates you and what affects your attitude can make it easier for you to make positive changes.



a. What things could you do or try to cultivate a more positive attitude towards school and your schoolwork?

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2. CREATE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The relationships you have with the people in your life can have a big impact on how successful you are at school and how well you cope with the stress and pressures of school. There are things you can do to foster more positive relationships with the adults around you. You may like to tick which of the following you already do.

TEACHERS:

Techniques to foster positive relationships with teachers include:

- Keeping your tone and language respectful at all times.
- Not raising your voice in anger.
- If you have a problem with a teacher, raising it with them before or after class instead of in front of all of your classmates.
- Trying your best and showing you are prepared to have a go in their subject.
- Asking questions (it shows your teacher you are interested).
- Behaving appropriately during lessons and following instructions.


You may not like every teacher or every subject. You may find some teachers harder to work with than others. But one of the life skills you want to work on developing is learning how to look past personal differences or personal preferences and say 'I have to work with this person, so what is the best way I can do this so I get positive outcomes' – and the more you do it the better you will get at it!



PARENTS:

Techniques to foster positive relationships with parents include:

- Communicating regularly with your parents about all aspects of school life.
- Tell your parents when you are feeling stressed or anxious about school.
- Let your parents know what you would like them to do (or not do) to help you cope better with school. Maybe write it down if you feel that is a clearer way to explain your thinking.
- Understand and accept that your parents want what is best for you, and that you doing well at school is important to them. It is their job to encourage, support and motivate you to put your best efforts into your schoolwork so you have options in life when you finish school.

	<p><i>b. What could you do to improve your relationships with your teachers? Are there any teachers in particular? What about your relationship with your parents?</i></p>
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