



# Habits for a Successful Personalized Learner!

*A Parent's Handbook*



## INTRODUCING OUR HABITS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PERSONALIZED LEARNER !

Westminster Public Schools (WPS) is committed to help learners develop personal and social *habits* for success at school and as a community member. They help them to improve their skills in organization, managing emotions, teamwork and future thinking, to name a few. In fact, we believe that these *habits* are as important as academic skills.

These *habits* are not ones we created by ourselves. We sought the expert opinions of Drs. Dan Buckley and Anna Hazeldine from the Cambridge Learning Institute who have studied these skills extensively and consider these to be most crucial for learners of all ages to develop while at school and beyond. We agree.

## HOW IS WESTMINSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS IMPLEMENTING THESE HABITS ?

Learners across the district<sup>1</sup> (K - 12) will have the opportunity to develop these *habits* from teachers and other professionals at their schools. Once learners have been able to *consistently* demonstrate these *habits*, according to their teachers, their progress will be recorded at 2 checkpoints annually (winter, spring) in their student *Data Discussions* (elementary) or in their *Individual Career and Academic Plans* (middle- and high school).

Learners will *not* be graded on these habits, nor will they be held as a condition to graduation; instead, they will merely be seen as another indicator for parents, teachers and students to see personal and social growth over time while at WPS.

## HOW CAN I TALK WITH WITH MY STUDENT ABOUT THESE HABITS?

In this guidebook, you will find these *habits* for Elementary-Primary (Levels 0 - 2), Elementary-Intermediate (Levels 3-5), Middle School (Levels 6-8) and High School (Levels 9-12). Please locate the ones that correspond with your child's or student's grade level and have a conversation. Some conversation starters include:

1. Tell me why these *habits* are important in school, in the community or life after high school?
2. Which habits do you think are going to be easy for you? Which ones will be difficult?
3. Of the ones that will be more difficult, how can I help or support you?
4. How do you plan to show your teachers that you're *consistently meeting* these habits?
5. What can you do at home or in the community to sharpen these habits?

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<sup>1</sup> The exceptions will be schools that implement *The Leader In Me*

## Primary Age (Levels K - 2): Habits of a Successful Personalized Learner!

Student Check

Teacher Check

W	S	<b>Self Managers...</b>	W	S
		are Organized (I come to school on time and ready to learn)		
		Go for it! (I complete my work by myself and do my best)		
		Manage Emotions (I use my words to ask for help when sad or upset)		
		Manage Risks (I make sure my work & play spaces are neat and tidy)		

W	S	<b>Effective Participators...</b>	W	S
		Identify Issues (When a friend needs help, I help them find an adult)		
		Find Solutions (I can solve problems, sometimes with adult help)		
		are Persuasive (I can identify a problem or issue at school)		
		are Involved (I ask my teacher to take on leadership opportunities)		

W	S	<b>Team Workers...</b>	W	S
		Take Responsibility (I listen, share, raise my hand and get along with others)		
		Build Team Strengths (I see strengths in peers and give them compliments)		
		Manage Team (I let my friends know when they make a good choice)		
		Evaluate the Team (I can share what went well & not well after an activity)		

W	S	<b>Reflective Learners...</b>	W	S
		Accept Challenges! (I try something new and different without fretting)		
		Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (With practice, I can do better with my work)		
		Invite Feedback (I listen to my teacher to improve my performance)		
		Share Learning (I work well with a partner or in a small group)		

W	S	<b>Future Minded...</b>	W	S
		Responsible (I'm honest and know how to be kind with others)		
		Strive for Personal Mastery (I know what I'm good at and can set goals)		
		Effective Communicators (I use proper tone & language for my age)		
		Flexible and Adaptable (I accept when changes happen even if I don't like it)		

## Intermediate Age (Levels 3-5): Habits of a Successful Personalized Learner!

Student Check

Teacher Check

W		S		<b>Self Managers...</b>				W		S	
				are Organized (I review and record in my data notebook often)							
				Go for it! (I can finish challenging tasks & assignments without giving up)							
				Manage Emotions (I am can restore peace with others after a conflict)							
				Manage Risks (I contribute to the safety & well-being of my classes)							

W		S		<b>Effective Participators...</b>				W		S	
				Identify Issues (I can appropriately react to and address personal injustices)							
				Find Solutions (I can solve problems without always relying on teachers)							
				are Persuasive (I show awareness of issues in my school or community)							
				are Involved (I'm involved by participating in clubs, sports or other activities)							

W		S		<b>Team Workers...</b>				W		S	
				Take Responsibility (I know how to be a good team player without being reminded)							
				Build Upon Team Strengths (I am aware of my team member's needs and feelings)							
				Manage the Team (I encourage each team member to contribute and try their best)							
				Evaluate the Team (I recognize or praise others when they contribute)							

W		S		<b>Reflective Learners...</b>				W		S	
				Accept Challenges (I independently finish tasks I find difficult or unpleasant)							
				Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (I make a plan before starting a big task or project)							
				Invite Feedback (I revise my work after getting feedback from others)							
				Share Learning (I can present a topic of interest to others in small or large group)							

W		S		<b>Future Minded...</b>				W		S	
				Responsible (I am dependable, honest and stay true to my word)							
				Strive for Personal Mastery (I am aware of my strengths and interests)							
				Effective Communicators (I communicate well in tone & delivery)							
				Flexible and Adaptable (I respond to changes respectfully and maturely)							

## Middle School (Levels 6 - 8): Habits of a Successful Personalized Learner!

Student Check

Teacher Check

W		S		<b>Self Managers...</b>				W		S	
				Go for it! (I can complete difficult long-term projects without giving up)							
				Manage Emotions (I show self-control when angry, upset or frustrated)							
				Manage Risks (I take on challenges even if nervous or apprehensive)							
				are Organized (I consistently use a planner or tech device to keep me organized)							

W		S		<b>Effective Participators...</b>				W		S	
				Identify Issues (I can describe how an issue impacts a community)							
				Find Solutions (I independently find solutions to difficult problems)							
				are Persuasive (I can argue respectfully both sides of an issue)							
				are Involved (I can serve as a model for others and lead positively)							

W		S		<b>Team Workers...</b>				W		S	
				Take Responsibility (I can lead a team fairly and effectively)							
				Build Upon Team Strengths (I listen and show empathy to team member needs)							
				Manage the Team (I can manage team tasks, goals and deadlines)							
				Evaluate the Team (I can help team members improve a product)							

W		S		<b>Reflective Learners...</b>				W		S	
				Accept Challenges! (I can describe how I overcame a significant obstacle)							
				Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (I reflect upon my work to make it better next time)							
				Invite Feedback (I invite feedback & constructive criticism from others)							
				Share Learning (I can share ideas to fix problems and address barriers)							

W		S		<b>Future Minded...</b>				W		S	
				Responsible (I can make a plan for my future through my ICAP)							
				Strive for Personal Mastery (I can track progress toward reaching my goals)							
				Effective Communicators (I listen well and represent myself well in public)							
				Flexible and Adaptable (If Plan A doesn't work out, Plan B is a viable option)							

## High School (Levels 9 - 12): Habits of a Successful Personalized Learner!

Student Check

Teacher Check

W		S		<b>Self Managers...</b>		W		S	
				are Organized (I consistently use my device to track projects & deadlines)					
				Go for it! (I strive to complete challenging project despite obstacles)					
				Manage Emotions (I own my actions that create conflict and rectify them)					
				Manage Risks (I can make informed decisions using a cost/benefit analysis)					

W		S		<b>Effective Participators...</b>		W		S	
				Identify Issues (I expand my thinking by listening to unheard viewpoints)					
				Find Solutions (I offer key solutions for addressing complex problems)					
				are Persuasive (I've made a persuasive presentation based on research)					
				are Involved (I contribute by participating/volunteering in my community)					

W		S		<b>Team Workers...</b>		W		S	
				Take Responsibility (I can lead a team to reach its goals by deadline)					
				Build Upon Team Strengths (I know my strengths and those of my team)					
				Manage the Team (I adjust team roles & functions based on strengths)					
				Evaluate the Team (I celebrate team member achievements publicly)					

W		S		<b>Reflective Learners...</b>		W		S	
				Accept Challenges! (I can demonstrate a <i>new</i> skill previously unattainable)					
				Plan-Do-Check-Adjust (I make key adjustments to projects as necessary)					
				Invite Feedback (I regularly ask others for feedback to improve my work)					
				Share Learning (I am a true collaborator with peers when working on a project)					

W		S		<b>Future Minded...</b>		W		S	
				Responsible (I own my mistakes & act responsibly wherever I am)					
				Strive for Personal Mastery (I seek training/experiences to improve my skills)					
				Effective Communicators (I represent myself confidently, kindly and smartly)					
				Flexible and Adaptable (from past errors, I make choices that lead to desired results)					

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### Habits for a Successful Personalized Learner

#### **Why is Westminster Public Schools helping our students develop *Habits for a Successful Personalized Learner*?**

Improving social-emotional skills--or *habits*--help improve the livelihoods for all people and in all circumstances, whether at school, at home, at work, or in the community. In fact, employers not only review an applicant's education/training, but they establish whether an applicant also has the key personal-social attributes necessary to become an effective employee: organizational skills, teamwork, communication, flexibility, problem solving and critical thinking, to name a few. Although one's education/training may get one's "foot in the door," landing the job itself will often come down to the applicant's demonstrated personal-social skills or habits of mind.

#### **My student has *consistently met most/all Habits at his level, but continues to be disciplined for misbehavior. Help me understand.***

Although students may be able to show progress toward consistently meeting these *habits* it is possible that they may make errors of judgment at times that lead them into disciplinary action with the school. Although there is a strong relationship between the two, developing strong *habits* and showing "good behavior" are not often the same thing.

#### **My student is *not* consistently meeting these *Habits*. Should I be concerned?**

Not necessarily. The development of personal-social skills--or *habits*--takes time to demonstrate consistently. He or she is certainly not alone. Be patient and try to avoid showing judgment or disappointment for not having *consistently* demonstrated these habits right away. We're striving for growth. Like any skill, practice makes it automatic.

#### **How is my student being taught these skills or *Habits* in school?**

We feel it is important that these skills are not necessarily taught in isolation; instead we prefer *habit* development to occur authentically within normal classroom routines and instruction. For example, rather than teaching the importance of "team work," we prefer that teachers embed proper "teaming" methods for group projects so that students can naturally use and practice *teamwork* skills necessary to finish a product successfully.

#### **How are we going to be notified of our student's progress on these *Habits*?**

Students will be checked on these *habits* twice per year (winter and spring) and can be shared at parent-student-teacher conferences or other events, like parent-nights.

#### **Are students recognized for having consistently met these *Habits*?**

Yes. At minimum, schools will publicly acknowledge students that earn "silver rings" (i.e., those who are consistently demonstrating having met all habits by each spring).

What ideas do you have to support my student with these *Habits*?

Grade Level	Sample Scenarios: <b>I can help my student...</b>
Levels K-2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● to get <b>organized</b> by having homework completed, having school clothes ready the night before, bathing, eating breakfast, and getting to school on time</li> <li>● better <b>manage emotions</b> by showing calmness and being a good role model for him/her when I am upset, frustrated or angry</li> <li>● by <b>encouraging</b> him/her to get involved in safe activities or clubs or leadership opportunities at school</li> <li>● to be a good <b>team member</b> by encouraging him/her to be friendly with everyone, especially classmates that need a friend</li> <li>● <b>accept challenges</b> that may be difficult and to not quit once started</li> <li>● to <b>strive for personal mastery</b> by showing him/her the importance practicing a skill over and over in order to be good at it</li> </ul>
Levels 3-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● to <b>manage risks</b> at home by choosing activities that are safe with or without supervision</li> <li>● by having him/her explain the <i>data notebook</i> at parent conferences</li> <li>● to <b>find solutions</b> to difficult problems instead of giving them the answer (e.g., “What would you do... and why?”)</li> <li>● to take <b>responsibility</b> for his actions by fixing what was broken</li> <li>● to <b>plan-do-check-adjust</b> by discussing with him/her what can be done to improve a chore or task (e.g., painting a chair, cleaning the garage, etc.)</li> <li>● to <b>effectively communicate</b> by making “I” statements when s/he feels upset or frustrated over something s/he feels is unfair</li> </ul>
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● to get <b>organized</b> by reminding him to place important dates and events into his phone calendar</li> <li>● to get <b>involved</b> by serving as a positive role model in front of younger family members by being kind and considerate</li> <li>● in <b>building upon team strengths</b> by using encouragement and praise for a job well done, no matter how small (e.g., “I’m proud of you for doing...”)</li> <li>● to learn how to <b>invite feedback</b> by giving constructive feedback to them without making it personal or making them feel bad or guilty about themselves</li> <li>● by being <b>responsible</b> in having him/her show his/her ICAP and to explain it</li> <li>● in becoming more <b>flexible and adaptable</b> by helping them problem solve alternative options in case their first option doesn’t work out</li> </ul>
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● to <b>manage risks</b> by having them write down an “advantages/disadvantages” list when s/he is struggling to make an important decision</li> <li>● by having him practice his <b>persuasive</b> school presentation in front of you while showing non-judgment and support</li> <li>● by <b>building strengths</b> by giving a family toast to celebrate a success your student has achieved at school or in the community</li> <li>● by encouraging him/her to take on leadership roles at school and <b>managing teams</b></li> <li>● to <b>share learning</b> by asking him what was learned after learning something difficult or overcoming a big obstacle</li> <li>● by messaging the importance of failure being key for growth and <b>personal mastery</b></li> </ul>