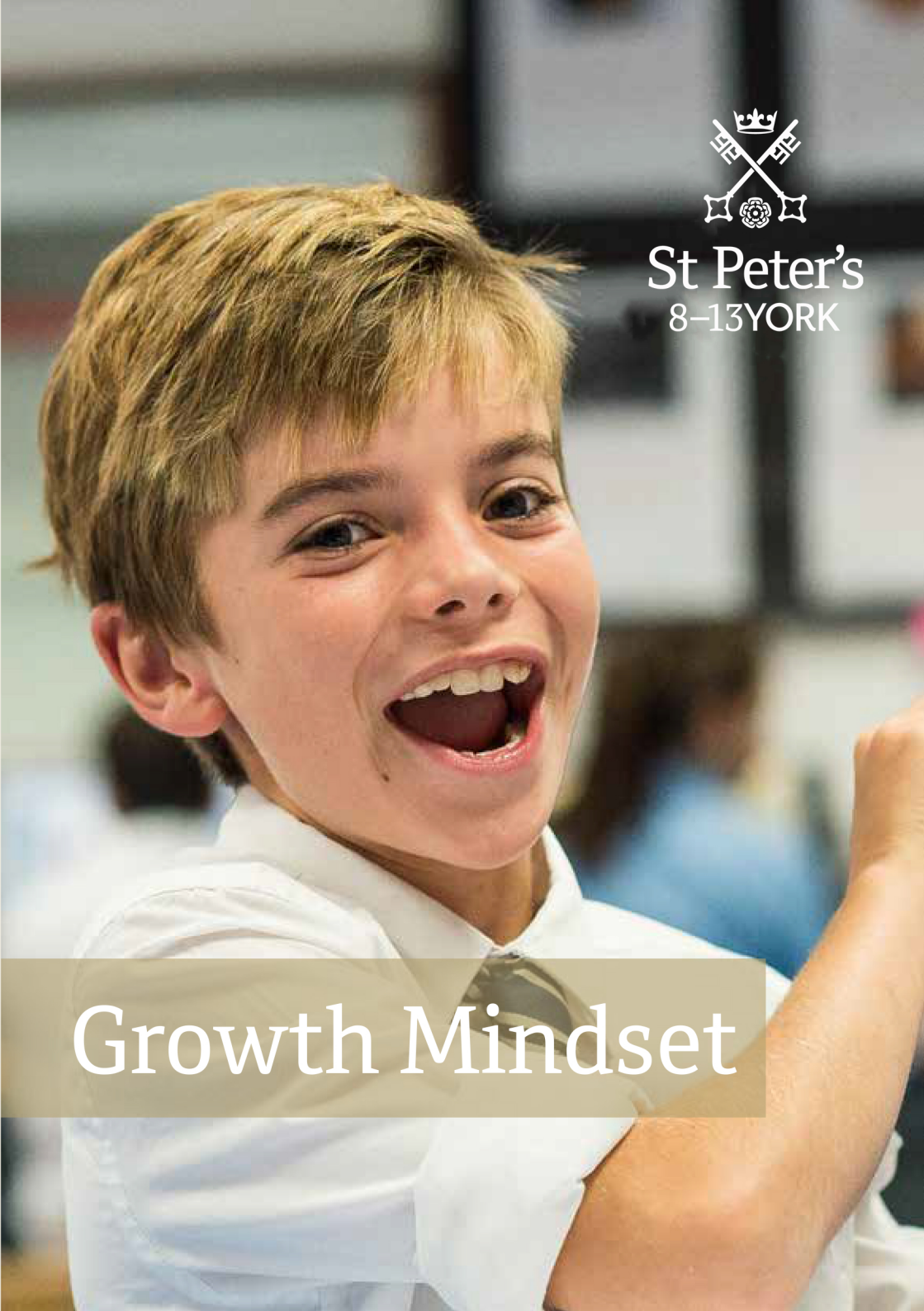




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Growth Mindset

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There are two ways of looking at the world

A.



B.



The headlines of growth mindset are very simple: if you try hard and learn from your mistakes, you will make progress. That's growth mindset in a nutshell. It sounds so obvious you would think that every educator, every parent and every human being would be able to work this out for themselves without decades of educational research and, of course, you're right: it's common sense.

So what is revolutionary about growth mindset? Don't we all inherently understand and agree with the logic and the theory?

Well, we may agree wholeheartedly with the headlines but the truth is that our language and our behaviour can accidentally reinforce the **opposite** of growth mindset in our children or those we educate: a fixed mindset.

For Example:

Have you ever asked your child if they came top in something, or asked them where they came in the class or group? Have you ever offered rewards for reaching a set goal? Have you ever told your child how brilliant they are for finishing something quickly or with little effort?

All of these questions suggest or reinforce to a child that what matters to you, the most important influence in their lives, is making things look easy and beating others. Children who hear language like this have extremely fragile self-esteem because they are worried that at any moment someone could do better than them, or a task could be too difficult for them to complete. If their self-esteem is closely tied with looking clever without effort, school may become a pretty threatening place.



Some pupils will give up, others will play up, because if it's obvious they aren't trying then no-one can say they can't, they can only say they won't. Others will just try to hide and hope they are never asked a question or put in a situation where there is any chance of failure. It makes no difference how high achieving children are, anyone can suffer from a fixed mindset. Anyone can be constantly worried about being 'found out' by their peers, their teachers or their parents, which will inhibit their learning.

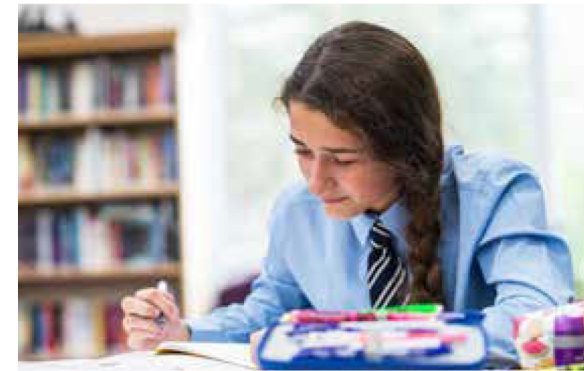
So, growth mindset tells us that if we try hard and learn from our mistakes, we will make good progress. If we, as parents and teachers use language that reinforces the idea that success can be measured by how many others a child beats in a test or how quickly and easily they can reach a successful outcome, those children will never be comfortable with failure, which is an important part of the learning process.

Being brave enough to take a risk, to try something that is not guaranteed to succeed, to fail, to pick yourself up again, to learn lessons from the failure and to try again with new knowledge and understanding are character traits we at St Peter's consider to be vital for a happy and successful person to develop in order to live in our rapidly changing world.

This belief in certain traits is where our eight learning habits come from. They are a tangible way for us to teach and develop growth mindset strategies to the pupils.

The children will be taught how the habits can be employed in different subjects to advance their learning during their time with us. It would be great if you could seek opportunities at home to develop these habits as well.

For example, do you ever let your children see you struggling with something? They need to see that in real life there are setbacks and difficulties to overcome. They need to understand that adults make mistakes and they need to see how we learn from these mistakes, rather than hiding from them or ignoring them. There are lots of celebrity examples of famous failures to show this online but how much more powerful a message would it be for a child to learn it first-hand from people they are close to?



Although the theory behind growth mindset is one we can hopefully all agree with, the tricky thing is talking the talk.

If there's one thing you take away from what you've read then please let it be: think before you praise your child. Are you praising the process or the result? If you praise the process you are encouraging a growth mindset and nurturing a child who will be more likely to believe that effort leads to success. If you praise the result, you're encouraging a fixed mindset and nurturing a belief that you are only a success as long as you keep winning.

It's the difference between:

'I'm so proud of how hard you worked to get that done.'
Growth mindset.

And:

'I'm so proud of you – you're so clever to have done that.'
Fixed mindset.

Our 8 Habits of Learning

1. Collaboration

- I am good at seeking a consensus.
- I keep the group focused on the task at hand.
- I find a useful role in the group.
- I can play different roles depending on the needs of the group.
- I help make sure everyone knows what they are doing.
- I accept a share of responsibility if things go wrong.

2. Creativity

- I can take an idea and build on it.
- I try new methods and techniques.
- I think outside the box.
- I present my ideas in various ways, using different mediums.
- I use skills / knowledge across different subject areas.
- I have the courage to run with my own ideas.

3. Curiosity

- I show an interest in topics outside my normal areas of interest / my comfort zone.
- I am interested in the interests of others.
- I know where to seek additional information.
- I look for answers beyond the obvious.
- I ask thoughtful questions.
- I know there is always more to find out.

4. Embracing Challenge

- I push myself.
- I stick at things, even when they're hard.
- I don't mind getting things wrong; I can learn from the experience.
- I understand the journey matters as much as reaching my destination.
- I know I can always improve.
- I am happy to step outside my comfort zone.
- I look forward to the next task.

5. Empathy

- I can imagine how others are feeling.
- I learn from other people's perspectives.
- I respond sensitively to other people.
- I listen to others and hear what they say.
- I respect that other people may have different opinions to me.
- I give positive and constructive feedback.

6. Flexible Thinking

- I share my ideas with others.
- I am interested in the differing opinions of others.
- I am able to rethink my position if new evidence is presented to me.
- I know that sometimes my ideas will need development or refinement.
- I reflect before coming to a decision.
- I have opinions which may differ from my friends' opinions.

7. Initiative

- I am responsible for my own learning.
- I know when to ask for help and when to help myself.
- I try to be well organised.
- I listen carefully.
- I apply skills and knowledge learned to new situations.
- I pay attention to what is happening around me.
- I use common sense.

8. Perseverance

- I set high goals for myself.
- I do not give up.
- I take on-board good and constructive feedback.
- I know there is always a Plan B (or C, or D).
- I am adaptable.
- I think on my feet and change direction if I reach a dead end.
- I will not label myself and will not allow others to label me.