



# Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate

## Interest and Motivation

Interest can be viewed as a set of interactions a student has with various ideas, events or subject-matter (Krapp, 1999). It can be state-specific, that is situational or external to a person, or a disposition reflecting the enduring interests of an individual. Motivation entails the various thoughts and feelings that underlie our behaviours (Broussard & Garrison, 2004). It can be intrinsic, which involves the enjoyment of school learning and an orientation to achieving mastery (Gottfried, 1990), or extrinsic, oriented to receiving praise or tangible rewards. Research has been shown that interest is closely related to intrinsic forms of motivation (Weber, 2003).



### Why is it important?

- Interest evokes intrinsic motivation which, thereby, prompts one to pursue and engage in activities related to that interest (O’Keefe et al., 2017).
- By capturing attention and engaging students in academic subjects, interest can have a positive effect on cognitive functioning and academic performance (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000).
- Motivation in childhood predicts motivation in later stages of life (Broussard & Garrison, 2004; Gottfried, 1990).
- Teachers’ classroom practices can affect student interest and motivation (Guthrie et al., 2000).

## In Practice

Schools can promote student interest and motivation by focusing on novel approaches to learning that tap into student interests and passions.



### What can schools do?

School leaders can facilitate student interest by:

- Encouraging teaching staff to find ways to spark student interest and engagement, including visuals, hands-on activities and other novel approaches to learning.
- Ensuring that educators personalise the learning context for students by aligning individual interests with class lessons.
- Advocating for problem-based approaches to learning wherein students solve real-life problems meant to generate genuine curiosity and, consequently, interest.
- Promoting interventions that guide students to make connections between classroom teachings and real-world applications.

Schools can further this work by introducing professional development opportunities that support educators to incorporate interest theory in the classroom (Harackiewicz et al., 2016).



### In the Classroom

Teachers can boost student interest and motivation by:

- Demonstrating genuine enthusiasm for the topic or subject area being taught and, where appropriate, injecting humour into lessons.
- Choosing engaging texts, resources and activities that may spark student curiosity.
- Offering choice within lessons to give a sense of autonomy, enhance perceptions of control and boost student interest.
- Adopting future-oriented approaches to learning by associating curricular content to student's short and long-term goals.
- Connecting classroom teachings to situations that may resonate with students in meaningful ways (e.g., relevant social or cultural contexts)
- Providing optimal challenges that remain within reach of a student's current abilities.

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