

C1

Hold High Standards

THE EVERYONE SUCCEEDS FRAMEWORK

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

Playbook

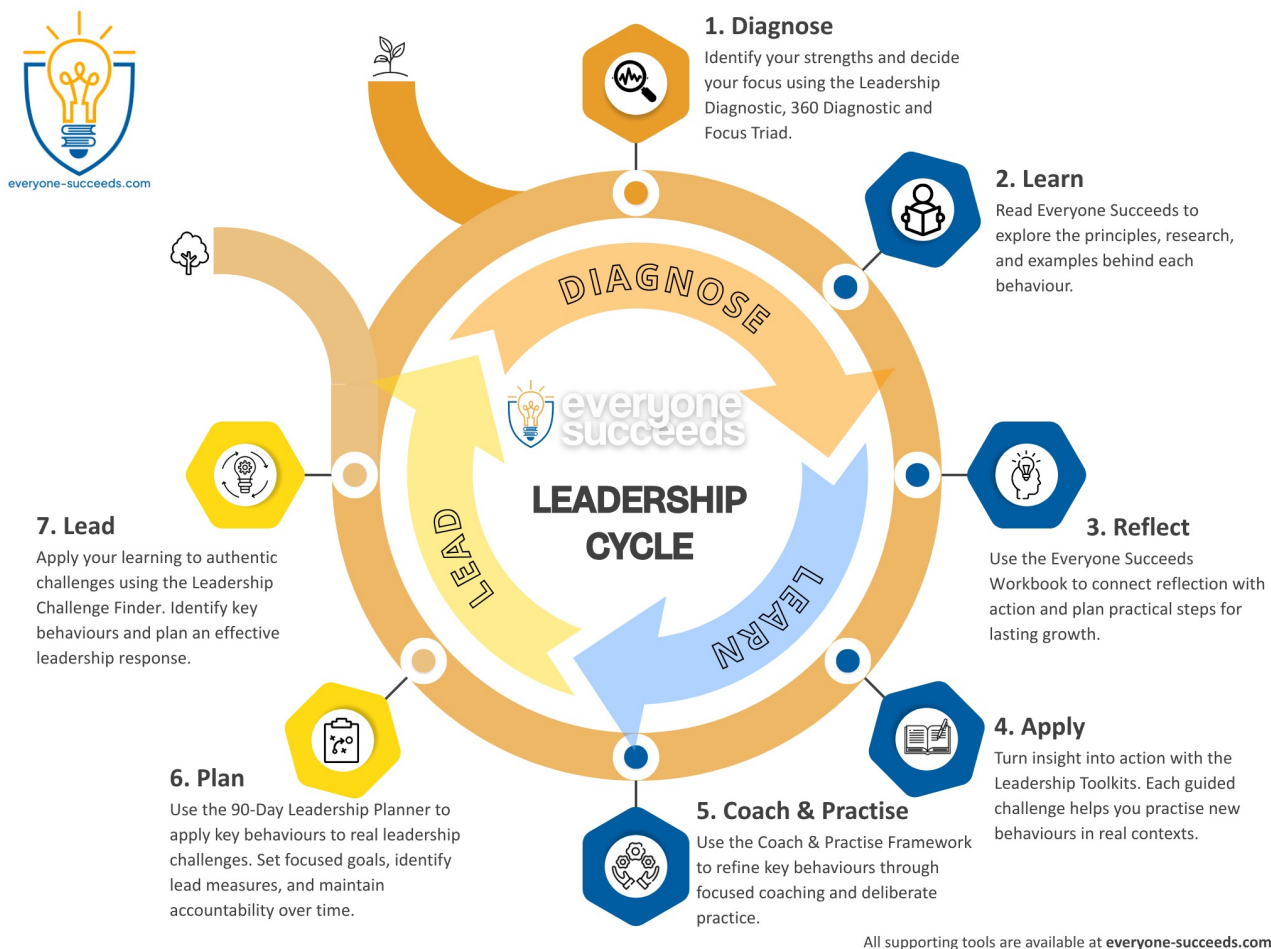


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Introduction

This playbook is designed to help you apply C1 Hold High Standards in your own leadership context.

The Everyone Succeeds Leadership Cycle provides a repeatable process for developing leadership behaviours. This playbook will guide you through each of the highlighted stages, taking you from understanding the behaviour to applying it confidently in your own leadership practice. Every Everyone Succeeds playbook follows the Leadership Cycle, taking leaders from understanding to implementation.



Begin by reading the relevant chapter from Everyone Succeeds and completing the corresponding workbook activities. You will then use the toolkit to identify an area for improvement, plan your actions, rehearse how you will apply the behaviour in practice and create a 90-day implementation plan.

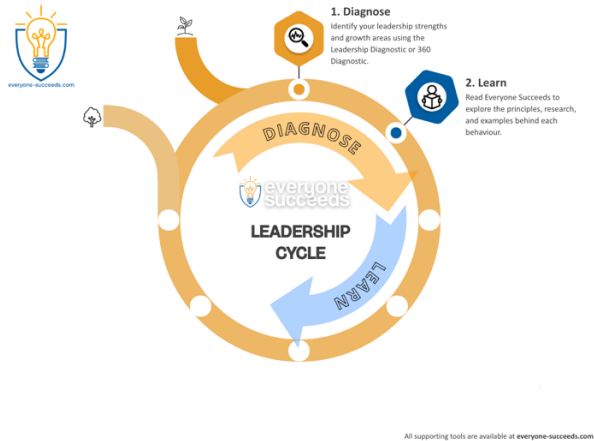
Completed role-based examples are also available to show how Hold High Standards can be applied across a range of leadership roles and authentic leadership challenges.

By the end of this playbook you will have:

- ✓ clarified the standard and what good looks like
- ✓ examined the evidence and identified the gap
- ✓ chosen how the standard will be strengthened
- ✓ rehearsed an important leadership conversation
- ✓ created a 90-day implementation plan

The aim is simple: to help you leave with a clear plan and a specific action that you will implement in practice.

2. Learn - Book



Read Everyone Succeeds pages 103-105

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Hold high standards

Lieutenant General David Morrison, Chief of the Australian Army, said to those who served with him, "No standard you walk past is the standard you accept". He then went on to say "that goes for all of us, but especially for those who 'have a leadership role'". Holding high standards is more than just enforcing rules; it's a powerful practice that shapes a school's ethos. When leaders maintain consistent expectations, they instill pride and responsibility in every member of the school community. Highly effective leaders can set high standards and elevate school culture and student behaviour.

When you observe an effective school leader walking around their school, you will see them constantly scanning: they will spot any student not in immaculate uniform, a stray pencil on the floor, graffiti or a tatty wall display. Once seen, it will be dealt with there and then: it is not somebody else's job. If you walk past it, it becomes something you are willing to accept in your school and eventually else will accept it. When issues are spotted, a student will be challenged, lifted, picked up and placed in the bin, graffiti reported to the facilities team and tatty wall displays highlighted to the appropriate member of staff. By addressing these details, leaders reinforce that high standards are essential and create a culture where

excellence is expected and upheld. These leaders are genuinely offended by mediocrity.

A headteacher once commented, "Sometimes I believe the students think that I am the guy whose job it is to remind them to look their shirts up". While this was clearly said in jest, it does highlight the importance of leading from the top down. If something is important to leaders, then it has a greater chance of being important to the entire staff and student body.

It is possible to highlight the issues you are looking for. Some leaders walk around the school carrying a litter picker. This is a very visible sign that having a litter-free school is important to them. Disney World's managers all carry litter pickers when walking around their parks. This highlights what employees are told during their orientation: the first rule is "The create happiness", but the second is "Everyone picks up rubbish". For schools, a visible commitment to cleanliness reinforces that the school environment is respected and well-maintained, setting a positive example for students. This approach shows that leaders set the tone for what behaviours are prioritised, creating a ripple effect that influences students and staff alike.

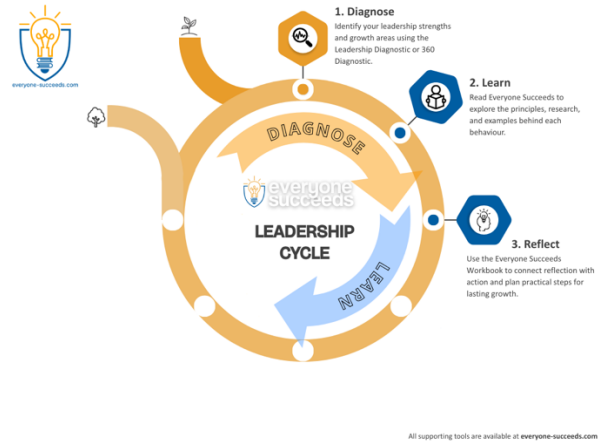
This can be aligned with the thoughts regarding the broken windows theory. In this theory, if a window in a building is broken and left unrepaired, it will lead to the rest of the windows being broken over time. The unrepaired broken window signals to the community that no one cares; therefore, breaking more windows doesn't matter. In your school, if you pick up on small infractions, such as littering and untidy shifts, students will realise that you do care and will modify their behaviour. Applying the broken windows theory in schools demonstrates that by addressing small infractions, leaders discourage larger issues and reinforce a respectful, orderly environment.

In the book *Leading the Small Staff* (2008), David Whetton describes Amisul Academy. He writes that a favourite slogan at the school is "The Small the Small Staff" and that is the opposite philosophy of most primary schools, where teachers and administrators are advised to "stick their battles". The success at Amisul Academy suggests that by focusing on small details, other schools can cultivate an environment where every action and behaviour is held to a high standard.

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3. Reflect - Workbook



Complete Everyone Succeeds Workbook pages 66-67

C1

Hold high standards

Definition
Effective leaders hold high standards by enforcing rules and enforcing excellence in every detail. They understand that what they ignore becomes acceptable, and they take responsibility for maintaining the school's values in both actions and expectations.

Why it matters
The standards a leader walks past become the standards everyone else accepts. By addressing even the smallest issues, such as untidy shifts, their message is clear: there is no room for mediocrity. This message builds pride, respect, and a culture of achievement across the school.

What it looks like in action

Steps to implement
Holding every detail at all times is an ideal, but it is not always realistic. Focus on the most visible and impactful details first.

Define standards	Monitor reality	Reinforce regularly	Address broken consistency	Create a culture of ownership
Agree with staff on what you expect and communicate it clearly.	Consistently demonstrate your commitment through small actions.	Use walkabouts, spot checks, and feedback to ensure consistency.	Don't allow or tolerate the inconsistency.	Encourage all staff to question what they see.

Scenarios where it's been effective

- Reinforcing a behaviour policy where most staff enforce uniform and conduct standards consistently.
- Leaders taking the lead for classroom environments by reporting the smallest and expected issues.
- Reporting attendance and punctuality by showing that small mistakes are non-negotiable.

Watch out for...
• Inconsistency: If standards are only applied to some, the culture will erode.

Remember rightly: Avoid a positive tone, get high expectations with care and encouragement.

Reflective questions

- 1 Do I act on small issues, or walk past them?
- 2 Are my actions aligned with the standards I expect from others?
- 3 Do staff and students understand why these standards matter?

Actions

For personal growth

- Make "seeing the small stuff" a habit – set reminders on what you notice.
- Use symbols (e.g., litter picker, clipboard) to reinforce priorities.
- Reflect weekly: what did I walk past that I should have addressed?
- Study the broken windows theory and apply it to your leadership lens.

Job supports others

- Set clear expectations for your team about enforcing standards.
- Lead your walkabouts and model what good looks like.
- Praise those who uphold high standards, share their impact.
- Encourage peer accountability—challenge leaders to hold each other to account.
- Celebrate examples of how attention to small things led to big improvements.

LEADERSHIP CYCLE

1. Diagnose
Identify your leadership strengths and growth areas using the Leadership Diagnostic or 360 Diagnostic.

2. Learn
Read Everyone Succeeds to explore the principles, research, and examples behind each behaviour.

3. Reflect
Use the Everyone Succeeds Workbook to connect reflection with action and plan practical steps for lasting growth.

4. Apply
Turn insight into action with the Leadership Toolkit. Each guided challenge helps you practise new behaviours in real contexts.

Everyone Succeeds

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Holding high standards requires leaders to define what good looks like, identify where standards are slipping and take action to address any drift.

What are you trying to improve?
Identify one specific area where stronger standards would lead to improvement, for example, homework completion, corridor conduct, presentation of work, lesson transitions, attendance, punctuality.
What is the standard?
What is the precise, observable expectation you want everyone to meet? Avoid vague statements such as “students show respect” or “staff have high expectations”, for example, students begin work within 30 seconds, homework is completed by at least 95% of students, all books contain the date and title.

Confront the brutal facts	
What evidence do you have about current performance? Focus on evidence rather than assumptions, for example, learning walks, student voice, attendance data, behaviour logs, homework completion data, work scrutiny.	
Evidence	What does it tell me?
Identify the gap	
What is the difference between the standard and reality?	

Identify the main issue		
This behaviour can be difficult for different reasons. More than one factor may be involved, but identifying the main barrier will help you choose the most useful response. What is preventing high standards from being understood, accepted and upheld? ☐ Clarity: The standard or what strong practice looks like is not defined clearly. ☐ Capability: People understand the standard but lack the knowledge, confidence or skill to meet it. ☐ Commitment: People can meet the standard but do not yet believe it is necessary, worthwhile or fair. ☐ Consistency: Leaders apply, model or reinforce the standard unevenly. ☐ Systems: Workload, processes or resources make the standard difficult to achieve consistently. ☐ Relationships: Trust, credibility or concerns about fairness are weakening the response to high standards.		
Determine your actions		
Consider what actions would most effectively address the issue you have identified, for example: • Clarity: Define, model or exemplify the standard. • Capability: Train, coach or support people to meet the standard. • Commitment: Explain why the standard matters and build ownership. • Consistency: Increase follow-up and reduce drift. • Systems: Simplify or improve the processes supporting the standard. • Relationships: Build trust, credibility or accountability.		
Action	Who	Review date

5. Coach and Practise



The table below contains practical actions, coaching questions and practice activities designed to help you implement this behaviour effectively.

- **Action Steps:** Practical actions that leaders can take when implementing this behaviour.
- **Key Questions:** Questions designed to deepen thinking, challenge assumptions and refine implementation.
- **Practice:** Structured opportunities to rehearse the behaviour before using it in a real situation.

Action Steps	Key Questions	Practice
Define what high standards look like.	What does excellent look like for this routine, behaviour, or piece of work?	Clarify the standard A routine is being interpreted differently by different people. Script a concise explanation that describes what meeting the standard should look and sound like, why it matters and what you want people to do consistently.
Make standards visible.	How can you make these expectations impossible to miss?	Reset the standard A student or colleague falls slightly below an agreed expectation. Script how you will describe what you have noticed, restate the standard calmly and give them an immediate opportunity to put it right.
Model and reinforce consistently.	What does your behaviour teach others about what matters?	Address inconsistency A colleague is applying an agreed expectation differently from the rest of the team. Script a private conversation in which you share the evidence, invite their perspective, clarify what is non-negotiable and agree any support or follow-up required.
Recognise and celebrate adherence.	How will you highlight when standards are met?	Recognise the standard A student, colleague or team is consistently modelling the agreed standard. Script a brief message that names the specific behaviour, explains its effect and reinforces why it should become normal practice.

The final stage of Coach & Practise is to rehearse how you will apply this behaviour in your own context. Use the following pages to prepare, practise and refine a specific leadership action before putting it into practice.

C1 Practice Script and Feedback

What is the specific scenario you are preparing for?

What exactly are you trying to achieve?

What will you say or do? Write the exact words or actions.

Premortem: If this fails, what is the most likely reason? What will you do in response?

C1 Updated Practice Script

Feedback: What feedback did you receive?

What will you say or do? Write the exact words or actions.

Implementation Intention: Commit to when you will deliver this script.

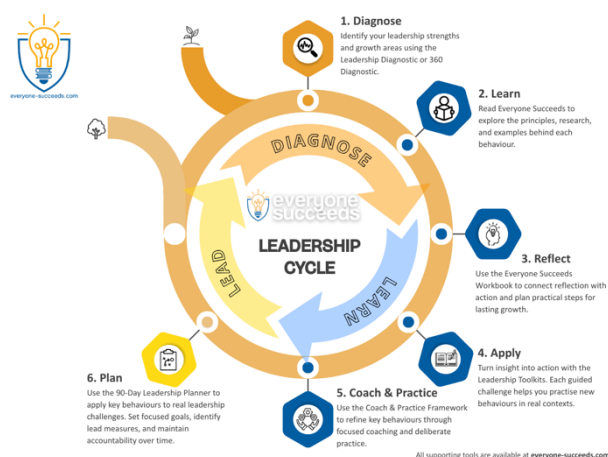
What will you do?

When?

Where?

With whom?

6. Plan – 90 Day Leadership Planner



The purpose of the planner is to turn insight into measurable progress over the next 90 days.

Key Results and Lead Measures

Key Results	Lead Measures
The measurable outcomes that will tell you whether you have achieved your goal (S5 Establish Collective Goals).	The indicators you will monitor that are predictive of success and within your control to influence (S8 Find the Lead Measures).

Progress Tracker

	Key Actions	Evidence of Impact	Reflections / Adjustments
30 Days			

60 Days			
90 Days			
Next Steps			