

COGNITA

A guide to our culture

A guide to the mindsets and behaviours
that build the culture we thrive in.



We've created this guide to help everyone thrive within our culture. It's not a set of rigid rules or a lengthy manual on what culture should or shouldn't be. Instead, it's a resource designed to help you make informed decisions and approach those choices thoughtfully.

You'll find helpful insights and real-life examples that show how you can actively contribute to our culture.

What is culture?

The mindsets, behaviours and ways of working which shape the environment in which we work.

Who manages our culture?

Culture is managed and built by every one of us, every day.

Building a strong culture for an evolving world

We are a diverse community, united by a shared purpose: to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. For our extraordinary community to fulfil that purpose, we draw upon the strength of our culture.

We and our students thrive when we go forward together, progress by facing challenge, anticipate the future, and stay open to new ideas and ways of working.

✿ Why is culture important?

**It nurtures our growth and evolution.
Culture attracts great people, and fosters wellbeing, innovation, and collaboration
—helping us achieve more together.**



Guiding our actions and shaping our culture:

Our Mindsets

Building a thriving culture isn't accidental—it's the result of intentional choices and actions we take every day.

By living through our Mindsets, we don't just shape the way we work—we build a culture that empowers us to drive purpose and create change so we can grow, succeed and make a lasting impact.

✿ How did we shape our four Mindsets and behaviours?

They were crafted by our people—driven by their insights, voices, and vision.

1. We go together

We are stronger together, as one global schools system and operate with our collective goals in mind. We show up for one another, collaborate widely and share generously.

2. We believe we can

We are driven and passionate about what we do. Determined learners, we progress fast by facing challenges and empowering others to do the same. We take ownership of our responsibilities and always believe there is a way.

3. We stay ahead

We embrace change to stay ahead, whilst maintaining high-standards and best practice. We anticipate the future, not afraid to do things differently so that both our students and our business thrive today and tomorrow.

4. We share a growth mindset

We always consider the needs and perspectives of others. We are open to new ideas and ways of working, connecting to wider perspectives wherever possible.

Mindset 1:

We go together

We are stronger together, as one global schools system and operate with our collective goals in mind. We show up for one another, collaborate widely and share generously.

✿ How do we use our Mindset framework?

Each Mindset framework guides key behaviours to build Cognita's target culture, with practical examples showing when we've achieved balance in our actions, gone too far, or not far enough.

Not far enough

We do not engage other teams and therefore, people are unaware of the impact we have on them.

Just right

We help everyone understand how the global purpose and our strategic goals apply to roles / departments.

Too far

We don't make decisions due to worrying about full alignment with our organisational purpose.

We or our colleagues don't speak up when we disagree, even if it could lead to better outcomes.

We share widely and often—generous with our knowledge and keep others informed.

We involve too many people and overshare which undermines our ability to move forward.

We only focus on the goals of our department or school and sidestep the Regional goals.

We come together to engage in healthy debate to decide, then commit together to move on the agreed path.

We debate for too long and potentially, in inappropriate forums.

Mindset 2:

We believe we can

We are driven and passionate about what we do. Determined learners, we progress fast by facing challenges and empowering others to do the same. We take ownership of our responsibilities and always believe there is a way.

Not far enough

We are not clear on our responsibilities which results in confusion and being slow to act.

Just right

We take the responsibility to ensure we are clear on the goals and tasks we are asked to complete.

Too far

We insist there is always a way no matter what leaving teams unable to raise concerns.

We don't ask for help for fear of being judged or others thinking we are not up for the task.

We lean into difficult challenges as an opportunity to progress and learn; we are resourceful and find solutions.

We are overly confident, taking risks without adequately considering the consequences.

We avoid challenges and have low expectations of ourselves, our teams and each other.

We know asking for help and support is a strength and not a weakness.

We cannot make our own decisions and we create a culture of learned helplessness.

Mindset 3:

We stay ahead

We embrace change to stay ahead, whilst maintaining high-standards and best practice. We anticipate the future, not afraid to do things differently, so both our students and our business thrive today and tomorrow.

Not far enough

Standards slip because we cannot articulate or model what high-standards look like.

Just right

We are attentive and committed to high-standards and what best practice looks and feels like.

Too far

High-standards become perfectionism leading to procrastination and being overly critical.

We hold back due to fear of failure or a willingness to step outside of comfort zones.

We are ambitious and push for success, always looking for growth, academically and commercially.

We have too many projects and initiatives leading to unbalanced thinking and doing.

We react to what is immediately in front of us and only see this as important.

We respond to what is needed today but also take the time to consider any long-term unintended consequences.

We spend so much time reflecting that we miss important deadlines and actions.

Mindset 4:

We share a growth mindset

We always consider the needs and perspectives of others. We are open to new ideas and ways of working, connecting to wider perspectives wherever possible.

Not far enough

We are only concerned with our area and work with our immediate teams, failing to build new connections.

Just right

We inspire others with our ideas, our positive attitudes and our ability to continuously learn and improve.

Too far

We create a culture where anything goes leading to lack of performance and/or not being strategy driven.

We take feedback personally and see it only as criticism on our performance.

We relish receiving honest feedback and see it as a chance for the organisation and ourselves to grow.

We become unbalanced with too much feedback starting to undermine confidence and performance.

We listen but rarely action what we've learned from other people's ideas.

We animate good ideas from others and then put them into action because we know this will make us better.

We focus more on recognition and explaining where ideas originate than implementing them.

People choose Cognita to:

Drive purpose, create change

We took the time to listen carefully to colleagues across Cognita, asking why they chose to join us, stay with us, and what they need to thrive. The answer was clear and consistent: the opportunity to **drive purpose and create change**.

These four words not only reflect the powerful, positive impact we create—empowering colleagues, enriching students, and leading our sector into the future—but are shaped by what teams told us they value most in our culture, building on learnings from our Mindsets.

Keep turning the page to learn about the four big reasons why our people enjoy working at Cognita.

1. Create meaningful change every day

2. Learn and develop from new challenges

3. Be part of an extraordinary community

4. Champion progress in education

Big reason 1:

Create meaningful change, every day

We are a diverse collective where each school and individual contributes to our purpose.

Driven and passionate in helping every one of our students thrive. Take ownership and empower others to create meaningful change. This is where what you do makes a powerful difference.

Big reason 2:

Learn and develop from new challenges

We are a fast-paced organisation developing all the time due to our growth mindset.

A place of variety, autonomy and new challenges. With opportunities to connect to wider perspectives that take your career upwards and sideways. Embrace learning, grow and try new things.

Big reason 3:

Be part of an extraordinary community

Ours is a welcoming and supportive community filled with talented, visionary colleagues who show up for one another.

Here we connect to learn from each other across our vast schools system. Join open and collaborative teams with people who go further, because they go together.

Big reason 4:

Champion progress in education

Be part of a culture that is driven to stay ahead.

We are ambitiously open to embracing new perspectives, celebrating and advocating the value of difference.

We are building an inclusive, sustainable future in education through powerful new strategies. Be trusted to drive progress and bring your energy and excitement about what is to come.

A lot to take in?

Continue to build our culture with these prompts

These prompts are here to help you think about how you can build the right culture every day. They're a quick check-in to keep us all evolving.

We go together

Have you considered how your work impacts other teams? Are you keeping them informed when needed?

We believe we can

Do you ask for help when needed, recognising it as a strength rather than a weakness? How can seeking support help you and your team move forward?

We stay ahead

Are you pushing for progress, ambitious for yourself and those around you?

We share a growth mindset

Are you actively connecting with other teams and perspectives to broaden your approach? What recent feedback has helped you grow and develop in your role?

There are so many reasons why a strong culture is important. We're at the beginning, it will grow and evolve as we do. If you're not yet convinced, here is what we know a strong culture unlocks:

Better health and wellbeing

We feel supported, reducing stress and burnout.

Higher engagement and retention

We are motivated to stay and contribute more.

Boosts reputation

We attract great people and build trust in our organisation.

More innovation

We create a safe space for ideas, encouraging creativity and problem-solving.

Stronger collaboration

We have open communication, leading to effective teamwork across our extraordinary community.



**Drive
purpose,
create
change**

COGNITA