

HEARTS AT WORK



Why Happy Teachers Create Great Schools

*A Resource Book for Principals, Leadership Teams, and Teachers on
Fostering Teacher Wellbeing, Strengthening Morale,
and Developing Schools of Excellence*



**CHAPTER ALIGNED REFLECTIONS, ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENTS,
PULSE SURVEYS AND MORE FOR PRINCIPALS, LEADERSHIP TEAMS,
TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

CHAPTER 4

Principal Leadership Styles and Their Effect on Morale

Chapter Summary

Principal leadership style directly shapes how teachers feel at work. Inspiring, servant-minded leaders build trust and long-term commitment. Too much control lowers morale; too little direction creates confusion. Context matters—great leaders adapt rather than cling to one style. When leadership feels human, morale strengthens and schools thrive.

Activity for Principals

“Context Scan” (Individual or Leadership Team)

- Assess staff experience, change pressure, and morale levels.
- Decide which leadership style fits the current phase.
- Revisit this scan every term.

Chapter-end Activity

Principal Leadership Styles and Their Effect on Morale

Step 1: Reflect (10 minutes)

- Which leadership style defines me most right now?
- Which one does my school actually need?

Step 2: Act (20 minutes)

- Identify two behaviours to start and one to stop.
- Share your intention with senior staff for accountability.

Step 3: Review (End of Term)

- Ask teachers: “What leadership behaviour helped you most?”
- Adjust for the next cycle.

School Self-Assessment Tool:

Foundations of Effective Principal – Teacher Relationships

Purpose:

To help school leaders assess how well trust, communication, empathy, collaboration, and conflict management are experienced by teachers—and to translate insights into action.

How To Use This Tool

- Complete individually or with the leadership team
- Use teacher feedback if possible (survey or focus group)
- Be honest—this is for growth, not judgment

Rating Scale

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 = Rarely true; | 2 = Sometimes true; |
| 3 = Mostly true; | 4 = Consistently true |

Section A: Trust & Psychological Safety

Statement	1	2	3	4
Teachers feel safe expressing concerns to leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mistakes are treated as learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership follows through on commitments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers trust leadership intentions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection:

What behaviours from leadership most influence trust in this school?

Section B: Open & Honest Communication

Statement	1	2	3	4
Communication from leadership is clear and timely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers understand the why behind decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers have channels to share feedback safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meetings allow genuine dialogue, not just updates	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection:

Where does communication breakdown most often?

Section C: Active Listening & Empathy

Statement	1	2	3	4
Leaders listen without interrupting or rushing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers feel emotionally understood by leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leaders ask open-ended questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concerns are acknowledged before solutions are offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection:

When teachers speak, do they feel heard—or handled?

Section D: Respect & Collaboration

Statement	1	2	3	4
Respectful behaviour is modelled by leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diverse viewpoints are encouraged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teachers collaborate regularly and meaningfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Efforts and contributions are acknowledged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection:

What daily behaviours reinforce or weaken respect in the school?

Section E: Conflict Resolution & Mediation

Statement	1	2	3	4
Conflicts are addressed early	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leaders remain calm and neutral during conflicts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Focus is on solutions, not blame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Clear norms exist for resolving disagreements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reflection:

How safe do teachers feel during disagreements?

Scoring & Interpretation

- 16–20 per section: Strong foundation – sustain and refine
- 11–15: Developing – needs intentional leadership focus
- Below 10: Risk area – likely affecting morale and trust

Identify one lowest-scoring section as your leadership priority this term.

Action Planning Template (Aligned to Chapter Activities)

Priority Area:

One Leadership Behaviour to START:

One Behaviour to STOP:

One Routine to Build Trust (weekly):

How We Will Review Progress (after 6 weeks):

Chapter-Aligned School Activity

"Trust in Action Cycle"

Week 1–2: Conduct self-assessment

Week 3–6: Implement 1–2 leadership changes

Week 7: Ask teachers one question:

"What helped you feel more heard and respected recently?"

Use responses to recalibrate leadership practice.