

# What is the Chugach Way?

## "What is an In-Charge Learner?" by Kass Friend

At Chugach Optional, students are encouraged to take an active role in their education. Throughout the day students have many opportunities to make decisions that will help them become self-directed as well as a productive member of a team. At each grade level, teachers work with the students to improve their decision making skills, manage projects over time, evaluate their own work, ask thoughtful questions and seek answers. All of these learning experiences are key components to becoming an in-charge learner.

When students show success at making good decisions and can reflect on their role as a learner, they are given more responsibility for their own education. As students move to a new family group, what it means to be an in-charge learner is redefined.

Primary students collaboratively wrote the following: In-charge learners care about themselves, their family, their school their community and their world.

In-charge learners:

- Work quietly at their tables
- Listen to directions
- Take care of materials at school
- Make good choices even if the teacher isn't looking
- Use inside voices
- Raise their hands to talk
- Listen when someone else is talking
- Do the 4 B's...be kind, be safe, be productive, be responsible

Fifth and Sixth grade students describe an in-charge learner as:

An in-charge learner is a person who is not afraid to learn! An in-charge learner will listen to directions, listen to the teacher, listen to the group. They will think of others, while also doing their work. An in-charge learner will get their work done on time and make it neat. An in-charge learner will always respect everyone in their class and treat each other nicely.

As our students mature, more responsibility is handed to individuals ready for the challenge of making decisions about how they learn best, with whom they can work well, and how information is shared with others. In-charge learners reflect on their own learning and realize they have the ability to make positive changes in their lives and in the world.