

Who Am I? A Year 10 Belonging Programme

A full academic year of structured PSHE and tutor-time lessons designed to help Year 10 students explore identity, build relationships, develop emotional wellbeing, discover purpose, and leave a lasting legacy — so that every young person feels seen, safe, and ready to flourish.

YEAR 10 · FULL ACADEMIC YEAR · 36 LESSONS



The Idea Behind This Programme

Attendance is an outcome.

Young people who feel seen, safe, respected, included, purposeful, and hopeful are far more likely to show up, engage, and flourish. This programme places belonging at the heart of everything — because without it, attendance strategies address only the symptom, never the cause.

Belonging is the foundation.

This is not a traditional PSHE programme. It is a carefully sequenced, year-long journey that builds on itself term by term. Students begin by asking *Who am I?* and end by asking *What will I leave behind?* Every lesson connects to a larger story about what it means to grow up well.

Designed with the potential to become a flagship model for schools nationally through the National Attendance Portal, this programme reflects both the urgency and the optimism of the moment.

Programme Overview: Six Units Across the Year

1

Who Am I?

Identity, strengths, habits, and belonging. Autumn Term 1.

2

Relationships

Friendships, conflict, kindness, and respect. Autumn Term 2.

3

Digital Lives

Online identity, comparison culture, and screen time. Spring Term 1.

4

Emotional Wellbeing

Stress, anxiety, resilience, and support. Spring Term 2.

5

Purpose

Success, future self, skills, and pathways. Summer Term 1.

6

Legacy

Community, leadership, and the promise to self. Summer Term 2.



AUTUMN TERM 1

Unit 1: Who Am I?

Six lessons exploring identity, belonging, strengths, attendance, habits, and personal reflection. Students begin the year by looking inward — understanding who they are before they can understand where they're going.

The Person Behind the School Uniform

We spend so much of school life performing — performing for teachers, for peers, for expectations. This lesson invites students to step back from the performance and ask a quieter, more honest question:

Who are you when nobody is asking you to perform?

Students begin by writing their own answer — freely, without judgment. To prompt reflection, offer a bank of words they can connect with or push back against.

Funny

Someone who makes others smile — even when they don't mean to.

Loyal

Someone who shows up for people — quietly and consistently.

Creative

Someone who sees things differently, solves problems in their own way.

Quiet

Someone whose depth isn't always visible, but whose presence matters.

Kind

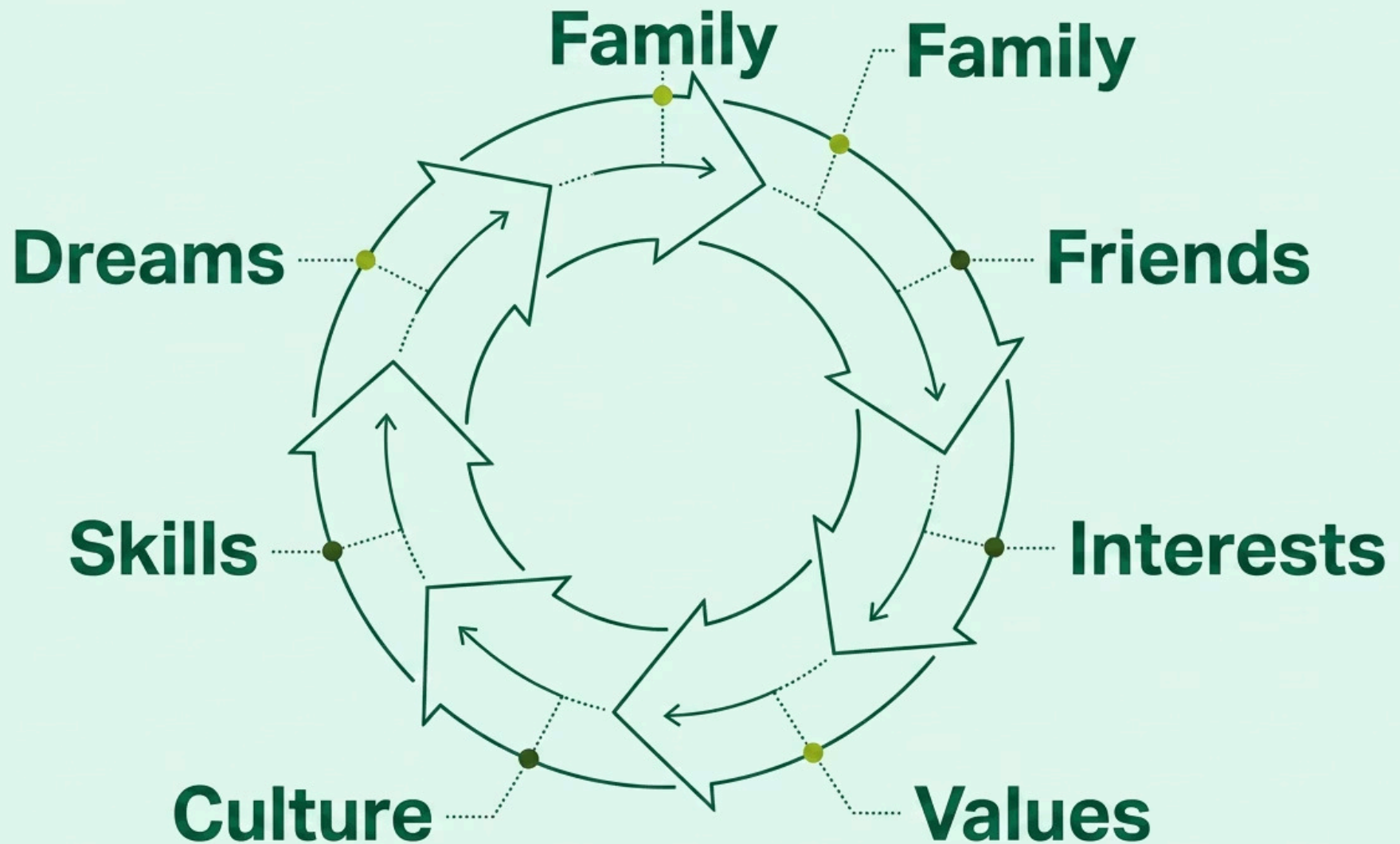
Someone who notices others and acts with genuine warmth.

Determined

Someone who keeps going even when it's hard.

The Identity Wheel

The main activity for Lesson 1 is the **Identity Wheel** — a powerful visual tool that helps students map the different dimensions of who they are. Identity is never just one thing; it is layered, contextual, and always evolving. The wheel invites students to name those layers with honesty and curiosity.



After completing the wheel, students finish a sentence that they will carry with them throughout the year: **"The world needs more of my..."** — a powerful first act of self-belief.

Understanding Belonging

What Does Belonging Feel Like?

Before students can understand where they belong, they need to understand what belonging actually feels like in the body and in the mind. This lesson opens with a class discussion where students generate their own language around belonging — drawing on real, lived experience rather than abstract definitions.

Common words that emerge include: **comfortable, accepted, safe, happy, relaxed**. Teachers are encouraged to build on these, exploring how belonging can feel differently in different spaces — at home, with friends, in school, in teams or clubs.

Two Circles Activity

Students draw two overlapping or separate circles and label them: **Places I belong** and **Places I don't belong**. Within each circle, they name specific environments, groups, or situations.

The crucial element is the emotional layer: after placing each space, students annotate how they feel in that space — and why. This builds emotional literacy and begins to surface which conditions make belonging possible. Class discussion should focus on what those conditions have in common.

 Learning Objectives: Define belonging and understand why it matters for wellbeing, motivation, and school life.

My Personal Strengths

Students often find it far easier to name what they struggle with than what they are genuinely good at. This lesson challenges that tendency by asking students to complete a structured **strengths profile** — identifying the qualities they bring to the world, not just the academic results on a page.



Leadership

The ability to guide, inspire, or take responsibility — whether in formal roles or simply by setting the tone in a group.



Creativity

Thinking beyond the obvious. Generating ideas, finding new approaches, and seeing possibility where others see a blank page.



Teamwork

Knowing how to contribute, listen, compromise, and support others toward a shared goal.



Empathy

The capacity to understand and share the feelings of others — a skill that underpins every meaningful relationship.



Organisation

Managing time, tasks, and priorities effectively — a strength that quietly powers success.



Curiosity

A love of questions, learning, and discovery. The strength that keeps growing long after school ends.

Students identify **5 strengths** they genuinely recognise in themselves, and **2 areas for development** — framed not as weaknesses, but as the next chapter of growth.

Why Showing Up Matters

Attendance data and percentages rarely move young people. What does move them is understanding — in human, personal terms — what they actually gain from being in school, and what quietly slips away when they are not. This lesson shifts the conversation from compliance to meaning.

What School Actually Provides

- **Routine** — A structure that gives shape and rhythm to the day, particularly important for mental health and focus.
- **Relationships** — The friendships, mentors, and trusted adults that form the social foundation of adolescent life.
- **Opportunities** — The clubs, trips, conversations, and experiences that don't appear on any timetable but shape who you become.
- **Qualifications** — The formal achievements that open doors and keep options alive.
- **Confidence** — Built incrementally, day by day, through challenge, support, and belonging.

The Reflection Question

The lesson's central question is deliberately open and a little uncomfortable: "**What do we lose when we stop showing up?**"

This is not a question about targets or percentages. It is a question about relationships that go uncultivated, routines that fragment, confidence that erodes, and moments that cannot be retrieved. Students should be invited to answer honestly and without judgment — the goal is insight, not guilt.

- ❏ This lesson works best as a facilitated class discussion, with the teacher listening more than talking. Students will often surprise you with the depth of their answers.

Small Habits, Big Outcomes

Research in behavioural science is clear: it is not large, dramatic changes that transform lives — it is small, consistent behaviours repeated daily. This lesson introduces students to the concept of **habit stacking**: attaching a new desired habit to something they already do automatically, making it easier to maintain over time.

Students design their own **Personal Habit Blueprint** across five key areas of life:



Sleep

A consistent bedtime. Screens off 30 minutes before sleep. A short wind-down routine that signals to the body it is time to rest. Sleep is the single most powerful recovery tool available to a teenager.



Organisation

Packing a bag the night before. Checking a planner each morning. Small acts of preparation that reduce morning anxiety and create a sense of control.



Hydration

Keeping a water bottle visible. Drinking a glass of water first thing each morning. Hydration affects concentration, mood, and energy in ways students often underestimate.



Exercise

A short walk, a stretch, or a few minutes of movement each day. Not a training regime — just the daily habit of moving the body intentionally.



Homework

A fixed time and fixed place. A routine that makes starting easier. The habit of beginning is usually harder than the work itself — good routines solve that problem.

Reflection Week: Belonging Check-In

At the end of every unit, students pause to reflect — not just on what they have learned, but on how they are actually feeling. This first reflection uses a simple but powerful belonging check-in that will be revisited throughout the year, allowing students to track changes in their own sense of connectedness over time.

Students rate each statement out of 10, then reflect privately on what the scores are telling them:

1–10

I feel connected

To my school, my class, my tutor group, or at least one person within it.

1–10

I have trusted adults

At least one adult in school I would feel comfortable going to if something was wrong.

1–10

I have good friends

People who are genuinely kind to me and who I feel safe being around.

1–10

I feel positive

About being in school, about the week ahead, and about myself in general.

- ✓ **Teacher note:** These check-ins are not assessments. They are invitations to self-awareness. Students should not be asked to share scores unless they choose to. Your role is to notice, to be present, and to follow up quietly with any student whose responses concern you.



AUTUMN TERM 2

Unit 2: Relationships

Six lessons exploring the friendships and connections that shape us — healthy and unhealthy dynamics, the skill of respectful disagreement, the power of everyday kindness, and the courage it takes to connect.

Building Your Tribe

The friendships we choose — and the ones we stay in — shape our mental health, our self-image, and our sense of the world. This lesson invites students to look honestly at the relationships around them, using the language of **green flags** and **red flags** to distinguish between friendships that lift and those that drain.

● Green Flags: What Healthy Friendships Look Like

- **Supportive** — They celebrate your wins and show up during your losses. They want good things for you.
- **Honest** — They tell you the truth kindly. They don't just say what you want to hear.
- **Reliable** — They follow through. You can count on them when it matters.

Green-flag friendships leave you feeling energised, accepted, and more like yourself — not less.

● Red Flags: Patterns Worth Noticing

- **Manipulation** — When someone uses guilt, pressure, or fear to get what they want from you.
- **Humiliation** — When put-downs are disguised as jokes, and your discomfort is dismissed as oversensitivity.
- **Isolation** — When a friendship gradually pulls you away from everyone else, creating dependency.

Red flags don't always mean ending a friendship immediately — but they always mean paying attention. Awareness is the first step.

Conflict Happens

Conflict is a normal, inevitable part of every relationship. The goal is not to avoid it — it is to navigate it well. This lesson teaches students a concrete framework for disagreeing respectfully, staying connected to the other person, and solving problems without leaving damage behind.

1

STOP

Before reacting, pause. Take a breath. Give yourself a moment to move out of the emotional brain and into the thinking brain. Reactions made in the heat of the moment often make things worse.

2

THINK

What do I actually want from this situation? What is the other person probably feeling? Am I dealing with the issue, or am I dealing with a pattern?

3

LISTEN

Active listening means listening to understand, not to respond. Make eye contact. Don't interrupt. Reflect back what you've heard before offering your own view.

4

RESPOND

Now you can speak — clearly, calmly, and with honesty. Use "I" statements. Focus on the behaviour, not the person. Work toward a solution, not a victory.

 The STOP–THINK–LISTEN–RESPOND framework can be displayed permanently in tutor rooms as a visual reminder. Students who internalise it in Year 10 will carry it into adult life.

The Power of Kindness

Research consistently shows that performing acts of kindness is as beneficial for the giver as for the recipient — boosting mood, reducing anxiety, and deepening a sense of connection. This lesson issues a whole-year-group challenge: **100 acts of kindness across Year 10**, collectively recorded and celebrated.

The acts themselves are deliberately ordinary. The point is not grandeur — it is consistency. Kindness as a daily practice, not a special occasion.



Hold the door

For anyone behind you. Without checking whether they're worth it.



Compliment sincerely

Notice something genuinely good in someone and say it out loud. Specific beats vague every time.



Welcome someone

Make eye contact with the person who is standing alone. Say their name. Move up. Make room.

Respect in Action

Respect is one of those words that gets used so frequently in school settings that it can lose its meaning. This lesson reclaims it — asking students to define what respect actually looks and feels like for *them*, across three specific areas of school life.

Language

The words we choose — in corridors, classrooms, and online — either create safety or erode it. Students explore which phrases feel respectful and which, even when intended as jokes, carry a sting. This includes the language we use about ourselves as much as about others.

Staff Interactions

Mutual respect between students and staff is not automatic — it is built through consistency, fairness, and genuine attention. Students are invited to name what staff do that makes them feel respected, and to consider how their own behaviour contributes to the quality of those interactions.

Peer Interactions

How we treat each other in front of others matters enormously during adolescence, when social status feels like survival. This section looks at the difference between teasing that connects and teasing that excludes, and what it means to stand up for someone without drama.

Being Brave Socially

Social courage is rarely talked about, but for many teenagers it is one of the most significant challenges of daily life. This lesson names the fear honestly and offers practical strategies for moving through it — not eliminating it, but acting in spite of it.

The Challenge of Joining In

Whether it is entering a room where a conversation is already happening, joining a lunch table, or contributing to a group discussion in class — the social moments that feel small to some can feel enormous to others. This lesson normalises that experience.

Students explore the specific fears that hold them back: fear of rejection, fear of saying the wrong thing, fear of being noticed, fear of not being interesting enough. Naming the fear reduces its power.

Practical Strategies for Confidence

- **Start with curiosity** — Ask a question rather than waiting to be impressive. People love to talk about themselves.
- **Use their name** — The single most underrated social skill. It signals attention and warmth.
- **Small steps, not giant leaps** — Social confidence is built through accumulation, not transformation. Each small brave act adds to the total.
- **Reframe rejection** — A group that doesn't make space for you is not the right group. Their reaction is information, not verdict.

Reflection Week: My Relationship Toolkit

The culminating activity for Unit 2 invites students to synthesise what they have learned across the six lessons into a personal **Relationship Toolkit** — a thoughtful, individual document they can return to throughout the year and beyond.

My Green Flags

The qualities I now actively look for in friendships and relationships.
What I know I need from the people around me.

My Conflict Strategy

How I will handle disagreement in a way I am proud of — including what I do before I speak and how I listen.

My Kindness Commitment

Three specific kindness habits I am going to practise consistently between now and the end of term.

My Social Brave Goal

One social situation I am going to try to approach differently — one small act of courage before the next reflection week.

- ✔ Toolkits can be kept in form files, stuck into planners, or displayed on classroom walls — creating a visible, ongoing commitment that the community can witness and support.



SPRING TERM 1

Unit 3: Digital Lives

Six lessons exploring what it means to grow up online — including who controls your attention, how social media distorts reality, the long shadow of a digital footprint, the science of phones and sleep, and how to take back control of your own time and mind.

My Online Identity

The first question of this lesson is deliberately provocative: "**Who controls your attention?**" For many students, the honest answer — social media algorithms, app designers, notification systems — comes as a surprise. This lesson helps students understand that their digital experience is not neutral. It has been engineered, by adults with commercial interests, to keep them engaged as long as possible.

The Attention Economy

Every minute a student spends on a platform is a minute that generates advertising revenue. Platforms are not designed to make users feel good — they are designed to keep users scrolling.

Understanding this shifts the relationship from passive consumption to informed choice.

Students review their own screen-time data — often for the first time. The numbers are frequently surprising, and the conversation that follows is usually one of the most honest of the year.

Online vs. Offline Self

Students explore the gap between who they are online and who they are offline. This is not about judging either version — it is about building self-awareness. Questions to explore:

- Does your online self reflect you accurately, or is it a curated performance?
- What do you share, and what do you hide?
- How do you feel after 20 minutes on social media? Before you checked, and after?
- Whose voice is loudest in your online world — and did you choose that?

Comparison Culture

Social comparison is not new — human beings have always measured themselves against others. What is new is the scale, the speed, and the one-sidedness of social media comparison. Students are comparing their *whole selves* against other people's *highlight reels* — and losing, every time.

The central activity for this lesson is the creation of **Expectation vs. Reality** posters — visual artefacts that make the gap between curated online life and actual lived experience vivid and concrete.

What Social Media Shows

The perfect holiday. The flawless skin. The body at its best angle. The friendship group laughing effortlessly. The exam result celebrated loudly. The bedroom that looks like a magazine shoot. The life that seems effortless.

What Social Media Hides

The 47 photos taken to get that one shot. The argument that happened five minutes earlier. The anxiety behind the confident caption. The filter that changed the skin. The relationship that looked perfect online and ended offline. The exam that came after months of doubt.

The goal is not cynicism — it is perspective. Students who understand the constructed nature of social media are better equipped to use it without being used by it.

Digital Footprints

Everything posted online leaves a trace. Even when deleted, screenshots exist. Even when private, privacy settings change. This lesson makes the concept of a **digital footprint** real and personal — moving from abstract awareness to genuine understanding of consequence.

Online Reputation

Your digital footprint is increasingly the first thing people find when they search for you. Employers, university admissions teams, colleagues, and even new friends may encounter your online history before they meet you in person. The question to ask is not "Can I delete it?" but "Am I comfortable with anyone seeing this, ever?"

Future Employers

Research consistently shows that employers search candidates online. Posts made at age 14 have cost people jobs at age 24. This is not about fear — it is about making conscious, considered choices about what you put into the world, and why.

Consequences Beyond the Screen

Online behaviour has offline consequences — for relationships, for mental health, for reputation, and in serious cases, for legal standing. Students explore real examples (anonymised) of how digital choices have affected real young people, and what they would have done differently.

Phones, Sleep, and Mental Health

The science here is unambiguous, and students deserve to know it. This lesson presents the evidence clearly and invitingly — not as a lecture, but as a collaborative exploration of something that is directly affecting how they feel every day.

The Links Are Real

Research published across multiple peer-reviewed journals links heavy smartphone use before bedtime directly to:

- **Sleep deprivation** — The blue light emitted by screens suppresses melatonin production, delaying the body's natural sleep signal by up to 90 minutes.
- **Increased anxiety** — Late-night social media use exposes the brain to emotionally activating content at precisely the time it most needs to deactivate.
- **Reduced concentration** — Even mild sleep deprivation (losing 60–90 minutes per night) has measurable effects on memory, attention, and academic performance.

What Students Can Do

This is not about banning phones — it is about building informed habits. Students explore:

- The difference between *noticing* you're on your phone and *choosing* to be on your phone.
- The concept of a digital wind-down — 30 minutes before sleep with no screens.
- Charging phones outside the bedroom as a structural, rather than willpower-dependent, solution.
- What to replace screen time with: reading, journalling, stretching, or simply doing nothing.

 Students who understand the neuroscience behind sleep are far more motivated to change behaviour than those who are simply told to put their phones down.

Taking Back Control

Having spent three lessons building awareness of digital risks, this lesson turns toward agency. Students are not passive victims of technology — they are capable of making intentional choices. The task here is to design a **Personal Digital Boundaries** plan that is realistic, specific, and genuinely theirs.



Time Limits

Setting specific daily limits for apps that consume most of their time — not by willpower alone, but by using the built-in screen-time tools on their devices. Specificity matters: "less phone" never works. "No Instagram after 9pm" does.



Notification Boundaries

Turning off non-essential notifications removes the constant interruption cycle that fragments attention throughout the school day. Students identify which notifications are genuinely important and which are simply habit-triggers.



Phone-Free Zones

Designating specific times and spaces — the bedroom, the dinner table, the first 30 minutes of the morning — as phone-free. Physical separation is more effective than intention alone.



Curating the Feed

Actively unfollowing accounts that consistently make them feel worse about themselves. Following accounts that genuinely inform, inspire, or entertain. The feed is not fixed — it is chosen.

Reflection Week: The 48-Hour Digital Reset

The reflection activity for Unit 3 is experiential rather than written: a voluntary **48-hour digital reset challenge**, in which students significantly reduce or eliminate recreational screen time for a weekend. This is not a punishment — it is an experiment in noticing what fills the space when screens are removed.

What Students Are Invited to Notice

- What do I reach for my phone to avoid?
- What feelings come up when I'm not distracted?
- What do I actually enjoy when boredom forces me to find out?
- How do I feel at the end of the 48 hours, compared to the beginning?

Students keep a brief journal during the reset and share reflections — as much or as little as they choose — in the following lesson.

The Debrief

The conversation after the challenge is often one of the richest of the year. Common reflections include:

- Surprise at how quickly boredom turned into creativity or calm.
- Awareness of how habitual, rather than deliberate, most phone use actually is.
- A renewed appreciation for real-world connection and activity.
- An honest recognition that they didn't miss as much as they feared.

- ❏ The challenge is voluntary. Some students will not complete it. The conversation is valuable regardless — even students who didn't manage the full 48 hours will have learned something about their relationship with their devices.

SPRING TERM 2

Unit 4: Emotional Wellbeing

Six lessons exploring the emotional landscape of adolescence — understanding feelings, managing stress, identifying anxiety, building resilience, and knowing how to ask for help. This is the unit that often matters most to students who are quietly struggling.



Understanding Emotions

Many young people experience emotions without having the language to name or understand them — and without language, it is very difficult to regulate, communicate, or seek support. This lesson begins the process of building a rich emotional vocabulary that students can carry with them throughout their lives.

Emotional Vocabulary

Moving beyond "fine", "good", "sad", and "stressed" to a more nuanced palette: frustrated, overwhelmed, apprehensive, deflated, hopeful, melancholy, content, irritable. Precision in naming feelings is the first step toward managing them. Students build a personal emotional vocabulary list.

Understanding Triggers

A trigger is any situation, person, or environment that reliably activates a strong emotional response. Understanding your own triggers — rather than being controlled by them — is a fundamental emotional intelligence skill. Students map their personal triggers honestly and without judgement.

Emotional Responses

Students explore the range of responses available when an emotion is triggered — from habitual reactions (snapping, withdrawing, deflecting) to more intentional responses (pausing, naming, communicating, seeking support). The gap between stimulus and response is where emotional intelligence lives.

Stress Is Normal

Stress has been unfairly demonised. In the right doses, stress is functional — it motivates action, sharpens focus, and signals that something matters to us. The problem is not stress itself, but *chronic, unmanaged* stress. This lesson teaches students to distinguish between the two, and to respond to each appropriately.

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Stress

Healthy stress (eustress) is short-term, manageable, and purposeful. It gets you through a presentation, motivates you before an exam, and energises you for something that matters.

Unhealthy stress is prolonged, disproportionate, and depleting. It disrupts sleep, affects relationships, and creates a sense of being permanently overwhelmed — even by ordinary tasks.

The key question is not "Am I stressed?" but "Is this stress serving me, or is it costing me?"

Practical Stress Management Activities

Students learn and practise three evidence-based strategies for managing stress in the moment:

- **Breathing** — Box breathing (4 seconds in, 4 hold, 4 out, 4 hold) activates the parasympathetic nervous system and physiologically reduces stress within minutes. Students practise together.
- **Walking** — Physical movement — even a short 10-minute walk — reduces cortisol levels and breaks the ruminative thought cycle. Simply leaving a space can shift a state.
- **Journalling** — Writing down worries externalises them, making them less overwhelming and more manageable. Students do a brief, unstructured journalling exercise in class.

Anxiety and Overthinking

Anxiety is among the most common mental health challenges facing young people in the UK today. For many students in this room, this lesson will be the first time anyone has put a name to what they regularly experience. The goal is not to pathologise normal worry, but to identify when thought patterns become unhelpful — and what to do about it.

Students identify and work with three key patterns of anxious thinking:

Thinking Traps

Cognitive distortions are predictable, identifiable errors in thinking that anxiety produces. Common ones include: black-and-white thinking ("Either I succeed completely or I've failed entirely"), mind-reading ("They definitely think I'm stupid"), and fortune-telling ("I know this is going to go wrong"). Naming the trap weakens its grip.

Catastrophising

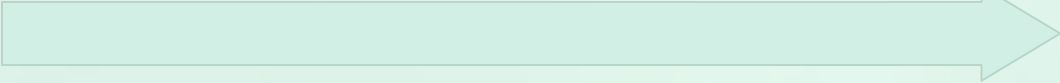
The tendency to imagine the worst possible outcome — and then treat it as likely, or even inevitable. Students learn to ask: "What is the actual probability of the worst case? What is more likely? And if the worst did happen, could I cope?" The answer to the last question is almost always yes.

Negative Loops

Rumination — the habit of replaying events, imagining alternatives, or rehearsing future catastrophes — keeps the brain in a state of low-level threat. Students explore interruption strategies: physical movement, grounding techniques (5 things you can see, 4 you can feel, 3 you can hear), and deliberate distraction.

Bouncing Back: Building Resilience

Resilience is not the absence of difficulty — it is the capacity to move through difficulty and come out the other side changed, but not destroyed. It is one of the most important life skills we can give young people, and it can be taught, practised, and strengthened over time. This lesson introduces a four-stage framework.



Pause

When something hard happens, resist the urge to react immediately. Create space between the event and your response. This is where perspective becomes possible — and where reactive decisions are replaced by considered ones.



Adjust

What needs to change? What is within my control? What can I learn from this? Adjustment is where agency re-enters the picture — the move from "this happened to me" to "what do I do now?"



Accept

Acknowledge what has happened, without minimising it and without catastrophising it. Acceptance is not resignation — it is the honest recognition of reality as the starting point for moving through it.



Move Forward

Take one step. Not the whole journey — just the next step. Resilience is built in small increments, not dramatic transformations. One honest conversation, one new attempt, one decision to keep going.

Asking for Help

Knowing when and how to ask for help is one of the most important — and most undervalued — skills in a young person's toolkit. This lesson works to dismantle the idea that asking for help is a sign of weakness, and replaces it with the understanding that it is, in fact, a sign of self-awareness, courage, and maturity.

Students map their **personal support network** — identifying the real, named people they could turn to in different circumstances:

In School

- **Form tutors** — Often the first point of contact for pastoral concerns, and the adult most likely to notice change.
- **Subject teachers** — A trusted relationship in a specific context.
- **Pastoral staff / Heads of Year** — Equipped to coordinate wider support and involve other services.
- **School counsellors** — A confidential space for more sustained support.

At Home

- **Parents and carers** — For many students, the first and safest port of call.
- **Extended family** — Grandparents, aunts, uncles, older siblings — often underestimated but frequently very significant.

Students are also signposted to external resources: Childline, Young Minds, The Mix, and school-specific referral pathways.

Reflection Week: My Resilience Toolkit

The final lesson of Unit 4 invites students to create a personal **Resilience Toolkit** — a concrete, usable reference document they can turn to when things are hard. This is not an abstract exercise: it should contain real strategies, real names, and real plans.



My Thinking Strategies

The specific thinking-trap interruptions and grounding techniques that work best for me.



My Physical Reset

The physical activities I can use to break a low mood or anxiety cycle — walking, breathing, stretching.



My People

The specific named people — in school and at home — I will contact when I am struggling and need support.



My Resilience Mantra

A sentence or phrase — in their own words — that they will return to when things feel overwhelming. Something true that helps them keep going.

- ✔ Resilience toolkits work best when they are revisited. Consider building in a brief check-in during form time each half-term, asking students to review and update their toolkits as they grow and as circumstances change.



SUMMER TERM 1

Unit 5: Purpose

Six lessons helping students look forward with intention — redefining success on their own terms, imagining their future selves, auditing their skills, exploring all available pathways, and connecting with a sense of purpose that extends beyond exam results.

What Is Success?

One of the most quietly damaging things schools can do is reduce success to a narrow set of academic outcomes. This lesson challenges students to question the inherited definition of success — and to construct one that is genuinely theirs.

"Success is not a place you arrive at. It is a way of travelling."

Students explore a broader, richer definition of success — one that includes dimensions often ignored in formal education:



Happiness

Contentment, meaning, and the daily experience of a life that feels worth living — not as a destination, but as an ongoing practice. Wellbeing is an indicator of success, not a reward for it.



Security

Financial stability, physical safety, and the freedom to make choices. Security is not wealth — it is the foundation that makes other forms of flourishing possible.



Relationships

Deep, reciprocal connections with people who matter. Research on wellbeing is consistent: strong relationships are the single greatest predictor of life satisfaction across the lifespan.



Contribution

The sense that you are adding something to the world — to your community, your family, or the lives of people you have never met. Contribution is where purpose lives.

My Future Self

This lesson uses one of the most powerful reflective tools available to young people: the act of writing a letter *from* their future self, at age 25, looking back at the person they are now. It requires students to inhabit their own future with confidence and compassion — to project themselves forward rather than being defined entirely by the present.

The Letter

Students write a letter from their 25-year-old self to their 15-year-old self. The letter should feel genuine, warm, and grounded in real hope. They are guided to include:

- **Where do I live?** — Not necessarily where they are now. A place that feels like home.
- **What do I enjoy?** — The activities, relationships, and experiences that bring genuine pleasure.
- **What matters to me?** — The values and priorities that will still be important a decade from now.

Why This Works

Writing from the future requires students to make implicit decisions about what kind of person they want to become. It is a values-clarification exercise disguised as a creative writing task. Research in psychology shows that vividly imagining a positive future self increases motivation, improves decision-making in the present, and strengthens a sense of personal identity.

Students are invited — but never required — to share their letters. Many will want to. The ones who don't will often be the ones for whom the exercise meant the most.

- ❏ Letters can be sealed and kept in form files to be returned to students at the end of Year 11 — one of the most powerful moments a tutor can create.

Skills for Life

Academic qualifications matter — but they are not the whole story. Employers, universities, and the wider world consistently report that the qualities they most value are not content knowledge but transferable human skills. This lesson asks students to audit themselves honestly against four key domains.



Communication

The ability to express yourself clearly and listen with genuine attention. This includes written, verbal, and non-verbal communication — and the ability to adjust your style for different audiences and contexts. Ask students: Where do I communicate well? Where do I hold back?



Creativity

The capacity to approach problems from unexpected angles, generate new ideas, and make connections others miss. Creativity is not reserved for artists — it is one of the most valued skills in every sector. Ask students: When do I feel most creative? What conditions help me think freely?



Leadership

Influence, responsibility, and the willingness to take initiative. Leadership does not require a title — it requires the choice to act. Ask students: When have I led? What did it feel like? What would I do differently?



Empathy

The ability to understand and share the perspective of another person. Empathy is foundational to every professional and personal relationship. Ask students: Can I name a time I truly listened to someone different from me? What did I learn?

Careers Without Pressure

One of the most anxiety-inducing experiences for Year 10 students is the implied question: "What are you going to do with your life?" This lesson removes the pressure by widening the frame. There is no single right path — there are many, and none of them are closed yet.

A Levels

The traditional academic route into university. Valuable for those with clear academic interests, though requiring strong motivation and independent study skills. Not the only path to a successful career or a place at university.

Apprenticeships

Earn while you learn. Apprenticeships range from Level 2 to Level 7 (equivalent to a master's degree), spanning every sector from engineering to law. An increasingly respected and financially sensible route.

T Levels

Technical qualifications equivalent to three A Levels, combining classroom learning with substantial industry placements. Particularly valuable for students who learn best by doing.

College

Further Education colleges offer a broad range of vocational and academic qualifications in environments that often suit students who found secondary school difficult.

Employment

For some students, moving directly into work — with training, progression, and a clear plan — is the right choice. Work experience in Year 10 can be transformative in clarifying this.

Purpose Beyond School

This lesson asks perhaps the most important question of the entire programme — one that is rarely asked in formal education, and one that students deserve the space to sit with seriously:

What problems in the world would you like to solve?

This is not a careers lesson. It is a purpose lesson. Purpose is the bridge between personal identity and contribution to the world — and research shows that young people who have a clear sense of purpose have better mental health outcomes, stronger motivation, and greater resilience in the face of difficulty.

Students explore the questions: What makes me angry? What makes me sad? What do I wish someone would fix? These are not abstract philosophical questions — they are the raw material of vocation, civic engagement, and a life lived with meaning. Students are invited to connect their personal strengths (identified in Lesson 3) with the problems they care about most.

 This lesson works particularly well as a paired or small-group activity, with students helping each other to name the thing they care about but might not yet have the language for.

Reflection Week: Vision Board Creation

The reflection activity for Unit 5 is perhaps the most joyful of the year: students create a personal **vision board** — a visual representation of the future they are working toward. This is not wishful thinking; it is intentional goal-setting made visible.

What Goes on a Vision Board

Students draw, cut, write, or print images and words that represent:

- The kind of person they want to become
- The relationships they want to cultivate
- The experiences they want to have
- The contribution they want to make
- The feelings they want to feel regularly
- The skills they are developing

Boards should include *all* of these, not just career aspirations. The whole life, not just the professional one.

Why Vision Boards Work

Visualisation is not a self-help gimmick — it is grounded in psychological research. When we create vivid, concrete images of a desired future, we activate the same neural pathways as actual experience. This primes the brain to notice relevant opportunities, maintain motivation in the face of setbacks, and make decisions that align with long-term goals rather than short-term impulses.

Vision boards also serve as a physical record of aspiration — something to return to, revise, and be surprised by over time.

- ✓ Displaying vision boards (with permission) in form rooms or along school corridors creates a powerful visual culture of aspiration that benefits everyone who walks past them.

SUMMER TERM 2

Unit 6: Legacy

The final six lessons of the year bring the journey full circle. Students move from asking "Who am I?" to asking "What do I leave behind?" — exploring community, service, leadership, and the lasting promise they will make to themselves as they look toward Year 11.



Community Matters

We are shaped by the communities we belong to — but we also shape them. This lesson helps students see themselves not just as recipients of community, but as active contributors to it. The question shifts from "What does my community give me?" to "What do I give my community?"

The Communities Around Us

Students map the different communities they are part of, many of which they take for granted:

- School and form group
- Local neighbourhood
- Sports teams and clubs
- Faith communities
- Family networks
- Online communities

For each community, students consider: What does this community need from me? What am I currently giving? What could I give if I chose to?

Why Community Matters for Wellbeing

Research in positive psychology consistently shows that people who feel strongly embedded in community — who feel responsible for and connected to others — experience greater life satisfaction, lower rates of anxiety and depression, and stronger long-term resilience.

Community is not just a nice addition to a good life. For many people, it is the foundation of it. This lesson plants that seed deliberately, inviting students to begin thinking of themselves as community builders rather than community consumers.

Giving Something Back

Students design a **community project** — a real, actionable plan to contribute something meaningful to the world around them. The scale matters less than the intention and the follow-through. This lesson is about moving from aspiration to action.



Charity Events

Sponsored activities, bake sales, awareness campaigns. Events that raise money or visibility for causes students genuinely care about — designed and led by the students themselves, not adults.



Environmental Action

Litter picks, school garden projects, plastic reduction campaigns. Tangible, visible acts of environmental stewardship that connect students to place and to responsibility.



Peer Mentoring

Older students supporting younger ones — with schoolwork, with transition, or simply with the reassurance that it gets better. Often the most impactful form of contribution, because it is person-to-person.

Becoming Leaders

Leadership is one of the most misunderstood words in education. Students often hear it in the context of head students, captains, and prefects — roles with visible titles. This lesson reframes leadership entirely: it is not about position. It is about influence, and everyone has it.

Leadership is not a title. It is the decision to take responsibility for something that matters.



Leading by Example

The quiet power of consistently doing the right thing — especially when it would be easier not to. Students who lead by example shift the culture of a classroom or corridor without saying a word.



Speaking Up

The willingness to name something that isn't right — to say "that wasn't okay" when others stay silent. This is one of the most important and courageous forms of leadership available to young people.



Supporting Others

Making space for the person who is struggling. Sharing your notes. Walking with someone to the lesson they're nervous about. Small, invisible acts of leadership that change someone's day entirely.



Taking Initiative

Seeing what needs doing and doing it, without being asked. This is perhaps the rarest and most valued form of leadership in every area of life — and it begins in small moments, in school corridors, every day.

My Legacy

Legacy is an unusual word to use with 15-year-olds. But it is exactly the right one. This lesson asks a question that most people don't ask themselves until much later in life — and there is profound value in asking it early:

What do you want people to remember about you?

Not your grades. Not your achievements. But *you* — the person. The way you made people feel. The things you stood for. The difference you made, large or small.

Thinking About Legacy

Students are guided through a structured reflection:

- When I leave a room, how do people feel?
- What have I done this year that I'm genuinely proud of?
- If someone described me to a stranger, what would I hope they said?
- What would I like to be true about me in five years that isn't fully true yet?

Legacy as Daily Practice

Legacy is not built in dramatic moments — it is built in ordinary ones. The daily decision to be kind, to be honest, to show up, to support someone who is struggling. Legacy is the accumulation of small choices made consistently over time.

This lesson helps students understand that they are already building their legacy — right now, today, in how they treat the person sitting next to them. The question is only whether they are doing it intentionally.

Celebrating Growth

This lesson returns to Lesson 1 — the very beginning of the year. Students retrieve their Identity Wheels, their "The world needs more of my..." sentences, their initial belonging check-in scores, and their strengths profiles. And then they compare who they were in September with who they are now.

What Has Changed?

Students reflect on questions that honour the full breadth of their growth:

- What do I understand about myself now that I didn't in September?
- Which of my strengths have I used and developed this year?
- What relationship lessons have I actually applied?
- What was the hardest moment this year, and how did I get through it?
- Which of my habits have genuinely shifted?
- What do I know about my future now that I didn't before?

The Celebration Principle

Schools are very good at marking academic milestones — results days, prize ceremonies, end-of-term assemblies. They are less good at marking personal growth, and yet personal growth is often where the most significant work has happened.

This lesson is an act of deliberate recognition. Not of perfection — but of effort, courage, honesty, and the simple act of showing up across a full year. Students deserve to see how far they have come.



Consider making this lesson a shared, celebratory experience — with form tutors sharing a specific observation about each student's growth. This is one of the most powerful things a tutor can do.

The Future Starts Today

The final lesson of the programme culminates in a single, powerful act: students write **My Promise to Myself** — a personal commitment that carries the spirit of everything they have learned, explored, and grown into across the year.

I promise to show up. To ask for help. To be kind. To stay curious. To support others. To believe in my future.

Show Up

To school. To relationships. To myself. To the hard conversations and the uncertain moments. Presence is the foundation of everything else.

Ask for Help

Because knowing when to reach for support is a sign of strength, not weakness. And because nobody builds anything meaningful entirely alone.

Be Kind

Consistently, quietly, and without waiting for it to be noticed. Kindness is both who I am and who I choose to be.

Stay Curious

About the world, about other people, and about myself. Curiosity is what keeps learning alive long after school ends.

Support Others

Because their growth and my growth are not in competition. When I help someone else rise, the floor gets higher for everyone.

Believe in My Future

Even when it is hard to see. Even when I doubt myself. The future belongs to those who keep walking toward it.

The Termly Belonging Survey

Throughout the year, students complete a short, ten-question belonging survey once per term. The data these surveys generate is invaluable — both for individual pastoral conversations and for whole-school strategic planning. Used well, this is one of the most powerful early-warning systems a school can have.

Students rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 10:

01	02	03
I feel welcome at school.	I have trusted adults.	I have good friends.
The basic, foundational experience of school as a place that is for me, not merely a place I am obliged to attend.	At least one adult in school I would approach if something was wrong. The single greatest predictor of student wellbeing in secondary school.	People who are genuinely kind to me, who I enjoy spending time with, and who help me feel less alone.
04	05	
I feel safe.	I know where to get help.	
Physically, emotionally, and socially safe. Free from threat, mockery, exclusion, or fear — in corridors, classrooms, and online.	I am aware of the pathways available to me and feel confident enough to use them.	

The Termly Belonging Survey (continued)

01

I feel optimistic.

About my future, my place in school, and the possibility of things getting better when they are difficult.

02

I feel valued.

Like my presence, contribution, and perspective matter to the people around me.

03

School prepares me for my future.

I can see the relevance of what I am learning to who I am becoming and the life I want to live.

04

I enjoy being here.

School is a place I experience as positive, engaging, and worth being in.

05

I want to attend school.

Not because I have to — but because I want to. Because something here is worth showing up for.



Survey results should be shared with pastoral leads and senior leaders at the start of each term. Patterns across questions, year groups, or form classes are often more significant than individual scores. Low scores on questions 2 and 4 require immediate pastoral response.

Using Survey Data Well

Collecting data is only valuable if it changes what you do. This guide sets out how belonging survey results should be analysed, shared, and acted upon across the year.

At the Individual Level

Any student scoring 3 or below on questions 1, 2, 4, or 5 should receive a pastoral check-in within two weeks of the survey being completed. This is not a formal conversation — it is a simple, warm, one-to-one moment with their form tutor. Often, being noticed is enough to shift a score.

Scores should be tracked across terms. A student whose scores are declining across multiple questions over two consecutive terms requires a structured intervention, not just a conversation.

At the Whole-School Level

Aggregated scores should be presented to senior leaders each term as a **Belonging Indicator Report**. Patterns worth investigating include:

- Significant differences between form groups or year groups
- Low scores on question 8 (school prepares me for my future) — a signal about curriculum relevance
- Low scores on question 10 (I want to attend school) — the clearest attendance predictor in the data
- Improving scores over the year — evidence that the programme is working

A Flagship Model: The National Vision

From One School to Many

This programme has been designed with the ambition of a model that could be replicated nationally. The logic is straightforward: attendance crises in English secondary schools are primarily belonging crises. Young people who do not feel seen, safe, connected, purposeful, or hopeful do not show up. Addressing attendance at the level of data, penalties, and percentages will never be enough.

A structured, carefully sequenced programme that builds belonging as a *skill and a culture* — from the very first lesson of Year 10 — addresses the cause, not just the symptom. And the evidence from