

Stepping out of the whirlwind starts with honest reflection. Use this sheet privately, at the end of a half term or whenever you need to think clearly about how you are leading. There are no right answers. Just honest ones.

1 Balance empathy and sanctions

Care deeply. Hold the line.

Think of a recent incident where you applied a sanction. Did you also have the pastoral conversation?

Where are you on the spectrum right now? Too soft? Too rigid? What is one thing you could adjust?

2 Handle difficult parent conversations

Hear them first. Then lead the conversation.

Is there a parent conversation from this half term you wish had gone differently? What would you change?

How many positive parent contacts have you made this half term? Is that enough?

3 Move from firefighting to proactive systems

Stop putting out fires. Start preventing them.

What are you currently firefighting that could be prevented with a better system or earlier intervention?

When did you last properly review your year group data? Is your Focus 5 up to date?

4 Identify student needs earlier

The student you never worry about might need you most.

Name one student who is quiet, never in trouble, and who you have not checked in with recently.

What system do you have for catching students who are slowly declining rather than suddenly crashing?

The honest question

If a colleague observed your year group for a week without knowing you, what would they say is working well? What would they say needs attention?
