



KAMBALA

Leading Together: Harnessing the Power of Homeroom Teachers

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We all remember the adults who made us
feel safe enough to be *seen* and known enough to
belong.

It is no surprise to us that school **belonging** matters

It **directly correlates** with:

- positive attitudes towards learning
- happiness and psychological functioning
- self-efficacy and self-esteem ¹

It is **inversely related** to:

- bullying and disruptive behaviour
- emotional distress and absenteeism ²



¹ Goodenow, C., & Grady, K. E. (1993). The relationship of school belonging and friends' values to academic motivation among urban adolescent students. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 62(1), 60–71.

² Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2016). *What Schools Need to Know About Fostering School Belonging: A Meta-Analysis* (*Educational Psychology Review*, 30:1-34).

Or that **teachers** are the most powerful contributors

“Teacher support ($r = 0.46$) had the **strongest effect**, more so than peer support ($r = 0.32$) and parent support ($r = 0.33$).”³



³ Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2016). *What Schools Need to Know About Fostering School Belonging: A Meta-Analysis* (Educational Psychology Review, 30:1-34).

Students' sense of belonging
has been **gradually declining
in Australia** over the last
several years.⁴



⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2019). Sense of belonging at school. In PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What school life means for students' lives. OECD.

At **Kambala**, we knew that our Homeroom Teachers (**Mentors**) were one of our best resources.

We just needed to make a few adjustments.



Our journey to make Mentoring **matter**

Step 1: We gathered data

Core Beliefs of Successful Mentors:

- I am *capable* of creating a culture of belonging.
- I see pastoral care as a *shared* responsibility.
- I believe my interactions can have a lasting *impact*.



Our journey to make Mentoring **matter**



Step 2: We highlighted capability

The Activity

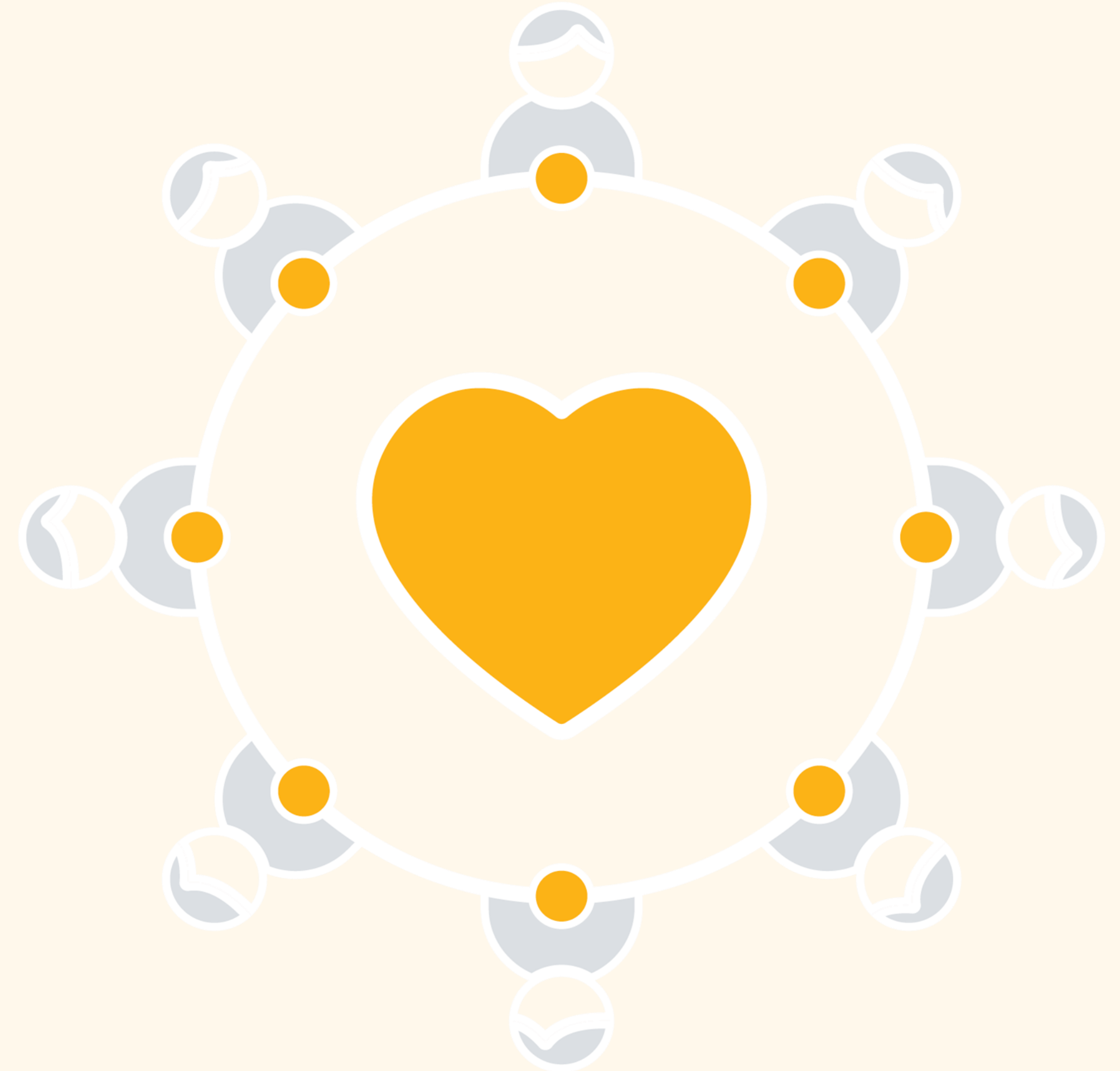
- A structured thinking routine facilitated by the Head of Year during a scheduled team meeting.

Time Required

- 30 – 60 minutes.

Resources Required

- Blank paper or class lists, pens, and markers.

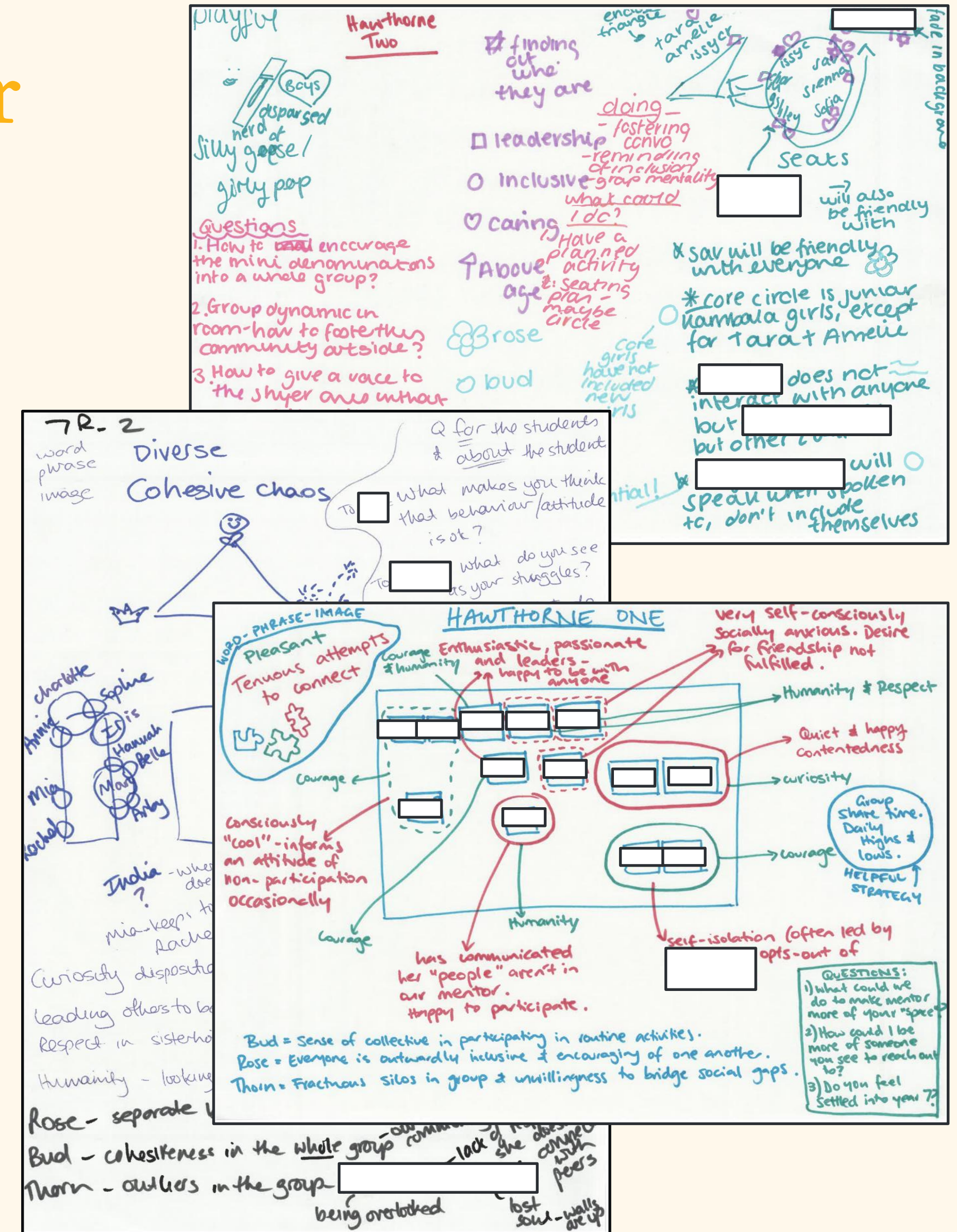


Our journey to make Mentoring **matter**

Step 2: We highlighted capability

The Thinking Questions

1. Where do your students 'sit' in relation to one another?
2. In one word, image, and phrase, how would you describe your group?
3. What roses (strengths), buds (potential), and thorns (challenges) do you see in your students?
4. Where do you see the School's values flourishing?
5. Where would you like to see those values grow?
6. What routines or actions are helping your group, and what might need to change?
7. What questions do you have for and about your students?



Our journey to make Mentoring **matter**

Step 3: We modelled shared responsibility

Group Discussion Questions

- What *clarified* in your thinking about the group?
- What do you think the group *needs* from us?
- What *works for others* that could work for your girls too?
- What do you need from me to *support* you in your work?



Our journey to make Mentoring matter

Step 4: We made value visible

Mr Azzopardi

As a mentor, you do more than just show up – you matter. Every conversation, every word of encouragement, every time you notice and care, you make your students feel they truly matter. The words below are from your students and show the powerful impact of your presence and support.

“Mr Azzopardi always asks about our morning and he always plays a game to get us engaged in the morning.”

“Mr Azzopardi is really supportive and helps us with our problems and tries to make it better.”

“Mr Azzopardi is genuinely interested in our group and he is really invested in seeing us grow. I was late every day last term and Mr Azzopardi helped me to get back on track with this. I don’t want to disappoint him by being late now. He notices when I’m on time which I appreciate.”

“Mr Azzopardi always brings us a block of chocolate or lollies for our birthdays - even if the birthday is in the holidays. He always finds us fun games to play in the morning, like scribble! He finds all of these games we get to play together.”



Ms Scevity

As a mentor, you do more than just show up – you matter. Every conversation, every word of encouragement, every time you notice and care, you make your students feel they truly matter. The words below are from your students and show the powerful impact of your presence and support.

“Ms Scevity is always looking out for us and helps us in tricky situations.”

“I feel like I can talk to Ms Scevity if anything is wrong. She is always there for us.”

“I feel like Ms Scevity really knows us well and she knows what we need in the morning. She is so personable.”

“Ms Scevity always helps us before assessments to calm us down.”

“Ms Scevity always comes and talks to everyone. She checks in with us to see how we're going every morning. If we ever need help with assessments, she helps us out.”



Ms Ng

As a mentor, you do more than just show up – you matter. Every conversation, every word of encouragement, every time you notice and care, you make your students feel they truly matter. The words below are from your students and show the powerful impact of your presence and support.

“Ms Ng relates to us. If we’re sitting there not doing anything, she’ll talk to us and think of fun things for us to do.”

“Ms Ng sometimes plays music in the morning and we appreciate that. She makes us feel comfortable in Mentor.”

“Ms Ng always bakes for our birthdays to make sure we all feel celebrated. She also takes such an interest in our lives. I might tell her something that I have on and a week later she will remember to ask me about it. She always makes sure we have someone who cares for us and someone we can turn to.”

“When a new student enters our Mentor Group, Ms Ng always makes them feel welcome. She makes everyone feel together and welcome in the space.”



Ms Christodoulou

As a mentor, you do more than just show up – you matter. Every conversation, every word of encouragement, every time you notice and care, you make your students feel they truly matter. The words below are from your students and show the powerful impact of your presence and support.

“Every morning in Mentor, Ms Chris tells us a joke and it makes us feel happy for the rest of the day. I like that she tries to make us laugh.”

“Ms Chris has always made an effort to get to know us and show interest in us. She is always approachable.”

“Ms Chris is always passionate about our group and is always interested in how we are doing. She drives us, she makes me laugh and puts a spring in my step for the rest of the day after Mentor Period.”

“In the morning, when we're not doing work (maybe looking at only shopping), she'll try to relate to us by talking to us about what we're looking at. She always tries to make us all feel together as one.”



“The heart and soul of school culture is what people *believe*, the assumptions they make about how schools work.”

- Thomas J. Sergiovanni