Spy School

Mission: the thief planted a mole and hid the code in a spy cipher. Read people, catch the bluff, crack the code on the whiteboard, whisper the password, open the box, free the mascot. Character trait today: **Relationship Skills**.

1 · Wink Detective (5–16 min) — circle up, spot the secret Winker

Warm-up one Winker, no guess limit, smaller circle. Coach: "watch for the wink, and watch who looks nervous."

Guess limit full circle, Detective gets 3 guesses only. Rule people out with your eyes before spending a guess.

Two Winkers tap two secret Winkers. Detective finds both, players keep two straight faces. Reward reading the room over one-person staring.

Diff TK–2: wave instead of wink, no guess limit, coach helps. 3–8: 2 Winkers, strict 3-guess limit, a timer, scored rounds, and students run the circle and keep score.

2 · Detective Mafia (16–31 min) — night and day phases, town vs Culprits

Setup eyes closed, tap 2–3 Culprits and 1 Detective. Night: Culprits pick who to catch, Detective investigates one (thumbs up if a Culprit). Day: announce who is out, debate, vote one out.

Win town clears all Culprits; Culprits win by outlasting the town. Ask every accuser "what did you see?" Cut rounds at 7 minutes.

Diff TK–2: 1 Culprit, no Detective, short and silly. 3–8: 3 Culprits, faster 4–5 min rounds, every accusation defended out loud, a student moderator runs the whole game. The one middle schoolers ask to replay.

3 · Spy Code (31–45 min) — decode the cipher on the board to the box password

OPEN shift-by-1 cipher. Write **PQFO** + key "shift back 1 letter." P→O, Q→P, F→E, O→N spells OPEN.

SPY reverse cipher. Write **YPS** + key "read it backward." YPS backward spells SPY. Good for a first round or younger team.

Diff TK–2: short reverse cipher, coach points letter by letter. 3–8: longer codeword (SECRET, DECODE) with a mixed cipher (shift + reverse), beat-the-clock with a wrong-guess penalty (10 sec + lost turn), teams design a spy code for rivals.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team whispers the spy code, announces the password to the room, coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional "thief's note" inside: "You read my mole and broke my code. I surrender!"

Award the **Relationship Skills** trait wristband to detectives who read faces, listened closely, defended a reason, and kept a secret they promised ("I watched the whole circle", "I heard what they really meant").

3–8 For older kids and the two middle schools, run the whole hour competitive: fixed teams, score every game on the whiteboard, visible timer each round, crown a champion here. Games bank adds **Guess the Leader** as a quick swap if a room runs tight.

Detective's Oath (say together, magnifiers up): I am a detective. / My brain is my best tool. / I don't guess, I reason. / I follow the clues to the truth.