Crack the Code

Mission: the thief locked the mascot behind a secret code. Learn the signals, send messages across the room, decode the cipher on the whiteboard, whisper the password, open the box, free the mascot. Character trait today: **Responsible Decisions**.

1 · Secret Signals (5–16 min) — call the signals fast, kids decode into moves

Code **1 clap** = JUMP · **2 claps** = SPIN · **1 stomp** = FREEZE · **2 stomps** = TOUCH FLOOR · **whistle** = SWAP SPOTS.

Trick chain two signals (clap-clap then stomp = SPIN then FREEZE). Then a student invents a new signal (snap = WIGGLE) and leads a round.

Levels TK-2: 3 signals, slow, say the action aloud first. 3-8: 5+ signals, fast, trick combos, kids lead.

2 · Spies Across the Room (16–31 min) — number key on the board, send words with fingers

Key A=1 B=2 C=3 … Z=26. Write it on the board and leave it up all game.

Setup split each team in half: Senders across the room hold up fingers for each letter's number; Receivers decode with the key, then swap roles.

Words OWL (15-23-12) · SPY (19-16-25) · CAT (3-1-20) · KEY (11-5-25) · BOX (2-15-24). TK-2: single letters with coach help. 3-8: 3-letter words, race to decode.

3 · Crack the Cipher (31–45 min) — write the code on the whiteboard, decode to the password

OWL 15-23-12 → O-W-L.

CLUE 3-12-21-5 → C-L-U-E.

SPY 19-16-25 → S-P-Y.

Shift older kids: each letter shifted by 1, so P-X-M shifts back one → O-W-L. Tell teams: use the key, decode, check the word makes sense, then whisper. First team to whisper it correctly opens the box. TK-2: A=1 key + picture hints. 3-8: 4-letter word or the shift cipher.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team announces the decoded password to the room, coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional coded "thief's note" inside: "You broke my cipher. I surrender!"

Award the **Responsible Decisions** trait wristband to detectives who used the right key and checked their answer before acting ("I read it back to be sure").

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.