JC: So, to start with, is there anything that immediately comes to mind in terms of maybe factors that impact sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion in school for the young asylum seekers that you work with?

P6: I could talk for weeks about it. I don't know whether it is better to go through your structured questions because otherwise I could just rabbit on.

JC: OK. So let's go through them and then at the end, we will have some time where we can discuss anything else that you think is relevant.

P6: Okay.

P7: Yeah, that would be good.

JC: So first, let’s think around culture and identity, so it's it'd be quite useful if we can to try and sort of illustrate with examples where they're relevant, just because that makes sure I've definitely understood it the way it's meant. So, let’s think about some examples of how the asylum-seeking or refugee young people can sort of be themselves at school.

P7: What comes to mind for me is celebrations. Like the one recently was Christmas and, jumping to Ukraine as we have Lots of students from Ukraine, but they do something after Christmas, don't they?

P6: Yeah. Ukrainian Christmas is later. 7th of January.

P7: 7th of January and some, not all, participated in that at the school, so there was singing and activities. So as a school we allowed them that time to celebrate it. But not all of them joined in. I guess across lots of different cultures there are lots of different celebrations that are potentially missed or bypassed because we don't know about them

JC: Yeah, I understand that. It's really difficult, isn't it?

P7: That is the thing that came to my mind.

P6: Ramadan starts next week. We have students who are Syrian who obviously have refugee status and we work closely with the RE [religious education] team. Umm, we have a breakfast club, EAL Breakfast Club, that takes place every Monday. There's just a few students in it, but it doesn't matter. We just give people lots of different options where they feel comfortable being themselves. And even just two people go. That's two people who feel they're seen and heard and be able to express themselves. It's largely led by a couple of 6th formers and bring their friends along and nominally it's to, you know, learn English language. But really, it's about saying how are you checking in? Giving people a sense of ownership and then they come up with brilliant projects and as it's Ramadan, we've got hold of, advent calendars. They're Ramadan calendars. So, you open the window and there's a date or a halal chocolate and it takes to the whole way through Ramadan. So the pastoral head, \*\*\*, she went to the supermarket in \*\*\* and she found these Ramadan calendars and she said ‘what do you think?’ And I said ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah’. Because we trying to think what to do. We also have like a scrapbook for Ramadan, so each day you fill in something and write something, you talk about your feelings or something especially for Ramadan. And it's not designed as a teaching aid for those who are not Muslim, it's actually just what you would have if you were at school in Malaysia or wherever, or Indonesia or Saudi Arabia or anywhere, this is what you would do. And so the two Syrian girls in this little breakfast club are going to do a whole school assembly with the head and \*\*\* and the 6th formers and present what Ramadan is. It's meant to be a year 7 breakfast club by invitation. There are two year Sevens, one Ukrainian boy and two Syrian boys there.

JC: Okay, that sounds lovely

P6: Last year when it was Ramadan, \*\*\* was in year seven. And she she's very capable. But, you know, she's been five years in a camp. Yeah, and had to leave overnight because ISIS were coming into their town. So left in their pyjamas. Pretty much. Five years, in a camp, very frightening, her parents couldn't afford school for their daughter and then into a primary school and lockdown and then into straight into year seven, so a big ask. And you're the only person you are wearing head scarf. And you're Syrian. And you come from Ultra conservative family. But her form teacher talked to me and we had a think and we asked her what she wanted to do and she ended up doing a talk to the class, at the beginning of Ramadan, and then as a surprise he got all this Eid, decorations and decorated the form in two to time, got food in and they had a party. And that was when \*\*\* suddenly became this very chatty, bouncy Tigger.

JC: Yeah, that sounds lovely.

P6: Having before been so serious and her body language was so closed. I think, you know, we both work together with students who've been through very challenging times. You [P7] work with students from all backgrounds, I just do one little slice of the pie, but some of those have overlapping very big things that they brought with them.

P7: I think that's probably the biggest thing - asking.

P6: Yeah.

P7: What and how much do they want to celebrate. Like, when they I worked with an EAL group the other day. So we had the, there was a minute silence to mark the start of the war in Ukraine last week.

P6: Yeah, it was on 24th of February, a couple of weeks ago.

P7: A couple of weeks ago. And I had my EAL group coming up to work with me and we asked and they didn't want to take part in it because they were like, we don't need the reminder, we live it.

P6: Yeah.

JC: Okay

P7: And so I guess talking to them asking what they want to participate in and what they don't.

JC: Yeah.

P7: And like, I guess that's

P6: I think it's incredibly important to be respectful and not overlay our interpretation of what people want.

JC: Yeah.

P6: Because the… We're already working with people who've lost so much control and power and autonomy and place in society and identity, and you come to a new culture and then people make assumptions - often very caring assumptions - about what people want or how they feel or who they want to be, or what they like doing. And as you [P7] said, when we had the Ukrainian Christmas celebration it was very much the head just said, ‘would you like to?’ And it was very low key and there was no pressure. And we do get approached by outside organizations, but there are some organizations who want to give something, but they want to have a reward for giving. And I'm nominally the EAL coordinator, I'm nominally helping people with their English. But that's just on the skin of it, isn't it? It's like you're normally doing stuff, but there's so much underneath the skin that there's not identified, but is

P6: I didn't expect it

P7: multi-faceted, umm, approach. So, it's like it's like looking to diamond and you can look at the diamond through just one facet and then turn it around the other facet. And there's another facet and they look upside down there's another. So, we get approached quite a lot by people who say, well, we're gonna give you this because you want this and isn't it great cause we've got some money because you've got these guys at your school and now we want this out of it. An awful lot of saying I hear what you're saying, thank you, but no – and possibly thinking something rather stronger in one's head.

JC: Yeah.

P6: It can be quite testing at times. But one of the absolutely most important things is to say to people, ‘I see you as a person and therefore I see you as a person with choice.’

JC: Yeah.

P6: And sometimes you have to say you're a person with choice, but actually you're 12 and you will turn up to lessons on time. And being Ukrainian doesn't let you off the hook. Because there are umpty, umpty, umpty students have umpty, umpty excuses, but they still have to turn up in time, and those boundaries will make you feel better. And but other stuff is like, I see you, and you really don't have to go and eat Ukrainian Christmas food and you really don't have to tell anyone about how it feels to be Muslim, or you don't have to talk about your time in a camp in Burundi. And you don't need anyone to speculate because you're coming here to learn not to have to sing for your supper.

JC: Yeah.

P6: And I I think that's something I feel incredibly strongly about.

JC: I guess, yeah. The impact of that for young people being given the choice like knowing that the things are there for them, but being given the choice, what do you think the impact of that is for those young people?

P7: For some of them it's., I think two ways. For some of them it's quite hard because they're like choosing not to take part in something, and I think that's an internal battle within themself and yeah, they're choosing not to take part in the Christmas celebration because they don't want to celebrate. It's bringing up a whole plethora of emotions. Umm. The fact that they’re given that choice definitely builds up and their ability to say ‘right, this is who I am, this is what I want to focus on, this is where I'm going, these are my goals’ and that gives them that autonomy. And I guess on the flip side, you've also got somebody that all of a sudden thinks, ‘right, this is part of me, although I'm not in the same country this will always be part of me, and actually I'm going to celebrate it’. So it kind of goes in both ways.

P6: And in some ways, students might want to think. And some students are really made a lot of friends and they don't - There's a student in year 8, and year 8 is quite a complicated group of students, it's quite a spiky group. And there are lots of interesting dynamics in that particular little group. A lot of power games and people echoing their parents stuff. But there is a child in there who when they’re with the group of Ukrainian students they sit in the corner and doesn't want to engage and it's miserable. When they're in class life and soul of the party, loads of English friends, they just don't happen to get on with the students who are Ukrainian. But almost you can say ‘what a success story’ because they're just being themselves, and they've chosen who they like being with not based on race, colour, gender, or cultural identity. It’s just ‘I'm this person and this this is who I like hanging out with, I really don't like hanging out with the Ukrainian kids in my class’. And there was an incident last term -

P7: The sandwich incident?

P6: Mhm, the sandwich incident. And there was just - It was a bullying incident and it had to be told to be dealt with as a bullying incident and really where people are from was irrelevant. It was just stuff. And again, that's this sort of idea of you come here and you leave behind, umm, the way in which you're viewed by the culture, you come as a refugee and you're just yourself, and that might also be you bring a lot of rubbish with you. Or you bring behavioural stuff. I think sometimes you move countries and it inflates stuff, for some people it’s a chance to shed stuff, for some people it’s a chance to explore stuff, and I think all we can do is a school is just be this constant, constant, reliable, repetitive, open minded

Forum.

JC: Yeah.

P6: You come to learn that we don't use the word refugee in school, ever ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever. Because it's it then becomes, umm, well, it can be somewhere to hide, it can be somewhere that's very constricting, suffocating, and it it's a label, isn't it? It's been extraordinary experience, hasn't it, The last few years>

P7: Mhmm.

P6: But I mean you [P7] understand, because you work with children from all sorts of backgrounds.

P7: So, I'm the head of alternative education.

JC: OK.

P7: So any child that can't access mainstream education, we will kind of work through them. And I also do outreach for lots of different groups for lots of different reasons. And which is where the EAL Group come up.

P6: And you've been sort of lifebelt when it all started and you just said, ‘look, would you like everyone to come up and do forest school and have support’.

P7: Even before that, \*\*\* was one of the first [asylum seekers] I was aware of –

P6: He was in the jungle, wasn’t he?

P7: Yeah. And came in from Calais on the back of the van. And then I think ended up in \*\*\* [local authority] somehow, \*\*\* [local authority], actually. And whoever took him in chose \*\*\* [this school], he was the first student I worked with in, like, an alternative provision setup where I was just building social skills and building relationship with him to then helping him into classes and to help him with those sorts of things. So, it's started, he was here six years ago, and I think from there it's just been building and building and building.

P6: And he's so interesting, isn't it because he came over on his own and he's definitely older than he said he was, significantly, because he came as a child, but probably a late teenage child rather than a young teenage child, and that's not unknown for people coming from the African continent, for a multitude of reasons. Umm, and he's not come with a parent or a family member, or a godparent or an uncle. You know, or an Auntie.

JC: So he came completely alone?

P6: Completely alone, and he's now the family that Fostered him have now adopted him. And so his English has gone [whistles and moves arm upwards], but he's had to make this enormous change.

P7: He got English and Maths GCSE, didn’t he?.

P6: I'm actually - he a got eight for Maths.

P7: And then he stayed on to do A-Levels. I think he wants to go to the military, that's the latest thing.

JC: That's a real success story, really, isn't it? For somebody that came over with very limited English, no relationships to then –

P6: The way he had totally engage. Because he, I mean, he does have a mum back at home officially, he told students he didn't have a mum, but now he does have a mum. It's so complicated. And I just feel who are we to judge? I just said to my husband, she's like, Blimey, I went well. You think about it and if everything was actually dire, you would just do anything in your power to give your child a chance. Even if it meant losing that child.

JC: Yeah. And it's hard, isn't it? Because there's lots of different reasons why people withhold information. And we we can't know why or what's the right thing to do.

P6: And we have another student, a venerable student in year 10. Who's from, gosh I’m trying to think, East Africa. On her papers it says Rwandan but she's actually from Burundi and she ended up on her own in a camp in Rwanda at the age of 10. And she lost all contact with her family. And there are a number of theories as to why that happened, like child trafficking or child slavery, and she's epileptic and that's seen as a sign of witchcraft. And she's been with us since two days before Easter last year. And she's got guardians, and you know, she's clean and fed, but she's vulnerable.

JC: Yeah

P7: Yeah. And we have one intervention which has worked so well for her, so we have voluntary readers.

P6: So largely retirees, but actually her voluntary reader - this we started up in the autumn. Through the local churches and it sort of spread out and then people came screened and do lots of forms and DBS and da da da da.

JC: What is voluntary readers?

P6: Some comes in, so our voluntary reader just finished the library today and comes in spends half an hour week reading one child in the library and \*\*\* reads with this lady who I then found out is a theatre director. I was talking and saying, ‘gosh, her body language is changed, she's just so much more confident because she used to speak like this [quietly] and talk to her feet and very, very fast’. And she said ‘Oh yes’, and that's when she told me about the theatre ‘I'm teaching her to inhabit her body and I'm teaching her to look at people, because what was polite in her culture - not to look - is wrong in our culture’. And you think, gosh, it's so exciting you can have a volunteer coming in and doing intervention, you would never think of, but she's opened so many doors for this one person, and she she's such an amazing sponge. She really absorbs so much and it also she has really connected with a Ukrainian student. And that Ukrainians student has very high anxiety and I think came over here with a lot of baggage, highly academic, but huge pressure because, is the case of quite a lot of students, when everything else is falling apart, you want your child to do well. You gave majorly sacrifice if your child, your child, has got to do well, and then a child has a huge burden of doing well. And they're probably also interpreter for the family. So, it's some people fall apart.

JC: That sounds like a lot of pressure.

P6: But these two girls have become friends, haven't they? And they really look out for each other.

P7: One another thing I thought, that in sports the rules are the same across the world. And, umm, it doesn't matter what's going on with that if I'm like, ‘oh, you wanna play this?’ They're like, ‘yeah!’. So lots of our students play sports either after school or when they come up to me and we do at least half an hour. The first thing they do is say, ‘Can we play tennis?’ or you talk about your favourite sport and they absolutely love it. Umm, that's quite cool. Basketball, air hockey, netball, tennis.

P6: You even get them sawing wood, don’t you?

P7: Yeah.

P6: Do you remember that moment when everyone was sitting there sawing wood? And it was one of those cold yucky days, and you were with \*\*\*, and you said ‘you're really good at this’, and he said ‘ohh, I always did this with my granddad’. His grandad is stuck behind Russian lines. And you think - But there he was so happy he wasn't going ‘[crying noises] ohh I used to do this with my grandad’. So, and that's sort of real zone.

P7: I think that's it, isn’t it, it's finding what it is for that person to if it's the sport that they love that they don't need English language to play, they can understand the rules, or if it's the sawing, or the activity that works for them, that's where it comes into building those relationships and knowing what each person loves. We played capture the flag for two hours last week.

JC: Really?

P7: Yeah.

P6: That's wonderful

P7: We were supposed to be in the forest and forest school activities, but I said ‘I don’t know if you have ever played this game, capture the flag?’ and they were like ‘Ohh yeah, yeah, yeah’. So we said we would play one game and then we'll go and go and forest and then that one game turned into ‘OK we want to try and better ourselves on new tactic’, so I said okay, but after 2 games then it was a draw and they had a break in top 10s, and they just played for hours and it was so silly. But they were like, yeah, we've all played this played at home, different rules, but –

P6: And that's also it's so lovely because you need to be silly cause, you're living with a host, or you just living in a host country, or you might have moved permanently to the country if you are from a Syrian family where the whole family has come over. And this is it. Umm, and you’re sort of on your best behaviour the whole time and the chance to be silly and no ones judging your saying. Well, ‘that's an 8 for that one’, or ‘how's your English coming?’. Just to be playful.

P7: Mhmm.

JC: Yeah.

P6: I was really thinking a lot about the different interventions, infact, Breakfast Club we only have two or three students going, but it doesn't matter. And this week, especially today, it really hit me hard because we've got a thing where we worked hard with the local Cricket Club, to do two cricket taste a days and they're here on a Sunday morning last Sunday this coming Sunday and we worked with two other secondary schools and said five students from each school, so 15 altogether and cricket coach is coming. And then there's a view to one or two students maybe having a bursary to go and do cricket because obviously this could be a good thing. We saw Freddie Flintoff program all about. Yeah. And so we're gonna give it to go, but I guess I've got used to the idea that even if one person does it, that's brilliant. And even if nobody does, it's brilliant. It's just the matter they have choice.

P7: Yeah, we, we sign them up to lots of activities, don't we?

P6: And then sometimes they come and sometimes they don't come and it’s absolutely fine.

P7: Over the holidays, summer holidays, Easter holidays, Christmas holidays, there will be activities that we, well I get sent a lot and I forward them onto you [P6] and then you [P6] share them. So the Forest school ran sessions, a farm run sessions –

P6: Christian youth enterprise run tester sessions

P7: Sailing days

P6: And ohh gosh, where does \*\*\* work? Oh yeah, \*\*\* church. They're amazing.

JC: So, these are places that you as a school have links with?

P6: Yeah. And then they offered us saying this is what we can offer for free for young people across the school, like it doesn't have to be asylum seekers and refugees, it could be anyone. This is open to –

P6: The theatre do something

P7: Yeah, umm, and students struggling with anxiety. But I pass them on to Susie. Susie passes around the families. And one of the things, \*\*\* church, it’s a church down in \*\*\* [town], and they've done this huge youth celebration like a basically like a youth festival.

JC: Yeah.

P7: And loads of the Ukrainian students went.

P6: And actually, one ended up working as interpreter before she joined us at sixth form.

P7: We have clergy visit at the \*\*\* - the alternative provision center that I work at. And they do clergy visit and they come up once a week. And the guy that ran the youth service came up on the same day that the Ukrainian students were there and he walked in he was like ‘hello!’ And literally their faces lit up, it was so cute. Because all of a sudden – he hasn't seen them since summer, they haven't seen him since summer, he remembered all their names, he went and chatted to them.

P6: He is such a lovely person.

P7: It was just all of a sudden, like and all the other kids that are there all the time were like, ‘how do you know him?’ and all of a sudden it got everyone talking about how you know this one person. And it all comes together

P6: So it's forging connections. It's forging a network. I always think – I was saying to someone again with this cricket thing because the 15 people is 5 people per school, 3 secondary schools or five people from here, though one got sick, one had mocks on Monday and had a panic – he was in year 11. Two came and one’s mum took her son to the wrong venue because of language and she's just in the middle of moving house and she's so stressed she can't think straight. Yeah. And took him to the wrong venue.

JC: Oh no.

P6: And so two out of the five came, but to me, 2 out of five is like whoopee, amazing! And from the other two schools nobody came, so they had two people instead of 15 people. And I got this rather grumpy e-mail saying ‘well, we're not doing it the second day of the taste of the next week if only two are coming’. But I wrote back and said ‘two people coming, just think that's two lives and two people having an opportunity to just think do I like this?’. And they said that the two students they had were really good and they really loved it, so I think ‘how can you let them down by not doing the following Sunday when you promised? How could you break your promise?’ I really, I'm really upset about it because I realize I've got to the point where I don't think any more about how we've got 15 places so if we haven't got 15 filled it's not right, I just think we've giving you an option, and if somebody likes it, great. And if they don't like it, it's also great. But we did it and we have to live up to a promise. We can't walk out half ago. Well, you two came, but you two don't count because we want 15 of you, and then we can go tick.

P7: And yeah, It's not consistent and stable as it can be.

P6: The one who is ill is desperate to go, and the one whose mom took him to wrong address and drove around town is desperate to go too. There will be a guaranteed 4 from here, probably 5. But we don’t know what is happening yet as they emailed saying, ‘What's the point in us doing this? We haven't got 15’, but we are like ‘each one of them is a human’. So, I realize that I've been totally impacted by this school, cause here it is all about the individual, everybody mattering, everyone being equal. And you can only operate like that if you totally buy into it on every single level and just fall into the embrace of that ethos.

JC: Yeah.

P6: And so, I'm looking at where it's gonna take place because I'm so upset about it. It's not a case of, well, you two absolutely loved something, but we're cutting it off because the others didn't go and therefore your time wasn't valid. I think this is how this is sort of how we're dealing with it isn't in terms of everything. and it hasn't the fact that. You can’t say well, no one else came, so even though you enjoyed it, we're gonna stop it. Because if 15 people had gone, they'd be like, oh, that was a great success. Let's do it again. It's a real success already. Refugee and asylum-seeking families find change very difficult. They find getting from A to B very difficult. They're living under immense strain, and also, just getting paying for a bus fair is very difficult. And It's also very overwhelming being offered something extra. And it's keeping everything in your mind and remembering it all as well. It's just there's a lot, a lot to process for them at the moment.

JC: I can see how difficult that must be. We have touched on the sort of next topic as well. I might move on if that’s okay?

P6: I told you I could rabbit on!

JC: It's great, and what we are discussing is really useful for my research and gives me an idea about what some of the additional challenges these young people may face. I would like move on to thinking about your experiences of sort of being with young people, and to discuss how the relationships that they build in school can well in school and how these can impact their sense of belonging? So, this could involve relationships with adults and with other young people.

P7: So, I think my relationship with the students isn't very strong. I see them once every two weeks. Umm, I know them, but they drip feed little bits of information about themselves, they don't open up.

JC: Okay.

P7: So I know little bits about students, but I wouldn't say I know them very well. I don't think they'll open up to me about something specific. But that's, I guess, that’s not why I'm working with them. I'm working with them to give them a place where they can just not have to think about anything and actually learn skills. In terms of relationship building, we have quite a set structure at school where we have a tutor, head of house, then head of Key stage, and they were being encouraged to work on the relationships with all of those and then more specifically, refugee students work with P6 and \*\*\*, so in terms of staff they will see them with regards to anything that they need to discuss as to, I guess, anything really. Mainly pastoral, but I reckon they're probably closest with you [P6] when it comes to talking about their life before coming to the UK, their tutor in their head of house are focused on pastoral, o something's going on there behaviour or they're turning up to lessons late or really anxious, those two were kind of oversee that and they will have quite a strong relationship with both the longer they’re here. And then the final one key stage 4, the head of their key stage will have an oversight, so will know all of them and will pick them up and be like ‘oh, where you supposed to be now’ and support them. But it's again it's supposed to be more like me where we know who they are but we don't necessarily know about them. And so that's the staffing thing that they have available to them, plus all their teachers and stuff like that. But they're the specific staff. And I think the good thing about the house system, is you, you do - students do have that sense of belonging through it.

P6: Absolutely. Absolutely.

P7: I think more schools should have a house system because straight away you have a sense of belonging and it becomes competitive. Yeah. And we thought we've got grandparents who - and it's ridiculous - the grandparent will bring their child to school and that their grandchild to school and even ask, can they be put in the same house that I will say when I was there. And you're like, it doesn't work like that, I'm really sorry. But like, that's what they want, they want that continuation. And they have their head of house from your seven will go through to you 11, that same pastoral support, that same person

JC: Okay, so consistency then in their relationships, is helpful.

P7: Exactly, and I think consistency of who to go through for what and as well so they have that consistency which is I think really important for all kids; even more so for asylum seekers

P6: Yeah, because it is dependable. It's solid ground under their feet. And they know exactly what happens and you have tutor time every day. So you know that someone is checking in with someone and you are the focus.

JC: Yeah

P6: 30 of you every single day. So like the teacher doing a surprise Eid party - That's because they're his tutor group and they matter to him and they are special to him. He wasn't a whole school thing, it was for \*\*\* and her tutor group. And that was amazing. I say, amazing, but I'm, I have only been here a few years and I'm not a teacher, and I'm constantly surprised and overwhelmed by the way it's like lots of little families within a big family. It's almost quite tribal, isn't it?

P7: Cult like? No, I’m kidding.

P6: Yeah, but it's just there is an element of lots of families within a greater whole. And I think that is a huge safety thing. And then in addition, these interventions, again, are an opportunity, if you want to, to form a connection. So, one thing that's very popular with a group about between 10 and 15 students is games Café

JC: Oh, nice

P6: And it is for EAL student, particularly those seeking asylum or with refugee status. And one or two others for various reasons have come along and three sixth formers now come and help, and just by chance one is Vietnamese heritage another one you know, they have something, and it's run by the parents of our head of languages. And when everything kicked off these just so we want to do something to help and we'd like to do a club. And I I've had a lot of support from the \*\*\* [charity], which is not the \*\*\* [charity], but it sounds like it is. Anyway, look it up, it's massive thing funded by Einstein in the 1930s and they now setting up -they’ve been in the UK for a few years. And they've actually been very, they do genuinely constructive support rather than me- dare I say, sort of [indistinguishable word] support, which is what we sometimes get.

JC: Do these individuals give support to you at school, or directly to the families?

P6: To schools, yeah. On how to help people. And so, it's umm, healing classrooms. It's really interesting you look up \*\*\* [charity] healing classrooms, they are absolutely brilliant. And they are coming to us at the end of this term to do some training and I hope you [P7] will be coming, not that I think you would need any training.

P7: We have had EMTAS

P6: Ethnic Minority and Travel Advisory Services.

P7: Yeah, came in and gave inset training to all of our staff.

P6: EAL strategies in the classroom, EAL strategies for exams and revision, and EAL and emotional well-being.

P7: So that supports the staff but where the staff is more supported, I guess it can support young people.

P6: Well, it trickles down, doesn't it? Cause it's very hard in a mainstream class if you've got somebody sitting there and they don't speak a word or they they're volunteering me.

P7: We have quite we have quite the kids, just when they're with me, maybe it's me, when they're with me, but they do just cry. They're so emotional and I think where they're all of a sudden with me and I'm doing something completely random and they're just like [deep breath out], and I think that is quite tough.

P6: Oh because it’s all too much. They let go.

P7: But I think if seven or classroom and teacher has a child crying, it's how do they deal with that whilst trying to deal with everybody else.

P6: Yeah, not making people feel worse.

P7: But yeah, so I think EMTAS coming in and helping, that was really good.

P6: And they worked reasonably close with that closely with us and \*\*\*, which is the Polish lady who's the local, she covers \*\*\* [local authority] and she's very proactive because she's she gets it, it’s her lived experience. But no in terms of games Cafe what is nice there is it's run by grandparents and it's so obviously grandparents, and you know Julie comes in and does baking, and it's always involving chocolate because you discovered anything cheese nobody cares. It's like, ‘uhh’. And they've made pancakes and cookies and cupcakes and more pancakes and more cookies. And that's every Tuesday afternoon in school because one of our lovely food tech teachers said we could use their kitchen. And there is gardening, so they’ve been growing bulbs in the garden in the summer and clearing the raised beds and and, and also board games so Jenga, Gruffalo snap, stuff you might play when you're really little, but they're rules are simple and it brings you back to that sort of security. So, I've been told they have Gruffalos in the mountains in Ukraine, did you know that? No, they do. We played Gruffalo snap and \*\*\* said, ‘but miss, they have Gruffalos’.

JC: It sounds really nice to have so many options.

P6: And that, and that's again a relationship and you know the option is to everybody.

P7: We love board games, they’re such a good way.

P6: Jenga.

P7: We play at Launchpad, so I've got, this is like with my alternative education stuff. I have 15 kids that bicker all the time, not big fans of each other, forced friendships cause they've there's only 15 them and then like today we sat down for Uno, and it doesn't matter who sat next to you're trying to stitch me up.

P6: Oh fantastic.

P7: And all of a sudden there's an alliance of all the kids versus me and they're laughing and they're giggling and they forgot what happened at the weekend and they forgot that. And they're just trying to beat me.

JC: [Laughs]

P6: [Laughs]. Uno is hugely popular with all the things we do and yeah, and Dobble is another one. Even if you don't have much English, you can still play. Yeah, they love ganging up on the grandparents. Yeah, and they absolutely adore it.

P7: All of a sudden they have a common interest of beating the person in charge.

P6: And another things have got this, for example, have just set up based on the EMTAS EAL training on inset day, one of our teachers set up the lunchtime art club. When she came, it was set up last week and nobody came, and I just said, ‘don't worry, it takes ages for people to come, and if you don't, one person coming fabulous’. And I, I really mean that. If just one person has found somewhere they feel comfortable. We have one Ukrainian student who comes every Thursday, and she came here into your 11 insane pressures of expectation from family and host, and she's very bright. But we said she really ought to be back-classed because she's doing her GCSEs having missed 2/3 of the syllabus and in a foreign language. But there's such pressure of expectation because she's got to be the family success story. And she is very capable, but it's brutal. And it was against the school's best advice. But anyway, she's in the 11, she's doing well, but she said she said I have no time to make friends. And she's her mum's care because Mom is very capable but doesn’t really speak English.

JC: Okay, so do you mean carer as in a translator?

P6: Translator, communicator, you know, if you get the gas bill or you've got a letter from the Council about free school lunches or trying to get themselves some shoes, or booking doctor's appointment. It's endless, and they have so much paperwork. And, but we've managed to persuade her to go up and do some art on a Thursday lunchtime and it's so nice because she stopped to think, sitting just chatting. And it's these little victories.

JC: Yeah, but they might feel little, but they're also really big at the same time, getting something that they can engage in.

P6: So, you talk about relationship building. Yeah. It's like some, I mean, there are a couple of students who say to me pretty much every day, when am I going to Launchpad? You know, what P7 does at Launchpad is, it's just so joyous, isn't it? And it's like you loosened up emotions and you loosened up the person. It's almost like, got floppy joints cause they just in there and all the sort of expectations and pressures. And I said they will cry and laugh and squabble and be beastly.

P7: There was one boy that was, umm, so very low when he first came over and he was drawing bombs and swords and dead people and all that.

P6: Very angry, and quite scary.

P7: Just so angry, yeah. And you said the first time you saw him smile was when he came up and was doing the clay and was just working with clay, and somebody made it something really out of clay.

P6: He thought it was hilarious.

P7: He thought, and he was, and you [P6] said ‘I’ve never seen him laugh’. And they were just laughing at the clay.

P6: I remember sitting around the farm with you, and I just, I have not seen this child smile. And all of a sudden, it starts in connection.

P7: You're just like everyone finds that sort of thing funny now, Willy Willies out of clay are just the best thing ever.

P6: Keep that in [laughing].

P7: [Laughing]

JC: [Laughing]

P6: Yeah, but no, I think you're right. It is just that something that they can connect with, whether it is a, a clay Willy or whether it is just something else that-

P7: It was just so silly and so innocent that same time as being very inappropriate.

P6: But you're [P7] so wonderful because you don't impose expectations, you give people a place to just let go, but also with the doing something that's universally familiar. Yeah, play, basketball, sawing wood, melting marshmallows.

JC: Things that can take the language out of it and still be able to do.

P7: And it doesn't matter if you're from Burundi or you're from East Ukraine, or whether you're with your family - because there are lots of tensions, cause some people come with their dad, some people haven't. Some people speak Russian at home, some people speak Ukrainian at home. Some people’s mum might have got a decent job, because she speaks English. Somebody’s mum might be a scientist, but she's cleaning. So there could potentially be so many tensions. But we've also got this sort of idea that language is not politicized at school. So actually, 2 new students are hoping to join the school going into 9 and 11, being back-classes, coming next week, possibly.

P7: How many students does that take us up to now?

P6: Well, it changes every year because some leave got 30 Ukrainians, 4 Syrians – I say got it sounds awful, doesn’t it?

JC: That’s okay, I know what you mean.

P6: On role is what I meant to say. And then two people have left this term, which is really tough, isn't it?

JC: Do you mean left as in they moved to another school?

P6: One is going to Poland, one has gone back to Ukraine and we just found out today someone who joined us at the beginning, \*\*\*, is going back at Easter. So \*\*\* and I will be getting the hankies out. And the one going back to Ukraine is quite concerning because we know where they live. And then another four or five may be going back, but then more people come in and sometimes they are going back because Granny's had a heart attack and somebody needs to look after them, and some people are going back because they are just in denial about it or some because the child can't cope, or mum's missing her husband, or they can't find anywhere to live as one family – like one that has just gone back, his little brother was gonna start with us and the autumn, \*\*\*’s family.

P7: \*\*\*’s gone back?

P6: \*\*\* has gone back. They gave three days notice. He was a very bouncy Tigger, very sporty, lovely person, lovely person.

P7: Full of energy.

P6: And I they wanted to stay here in the circumstances they are going back to are not ideal, he is from Medessa. But it's so hard here to live, cause the cost living so high, rental properties are so scarce, and it's the highest - it's the most expensive place to live in England because of the low salaries and the high accommodation.

JC: Yeah, it's difficult, really difficult.

P6: So what do you do to keep slugging away even though you know your child is happy? But your child also wants to go home because it's like dreamland and they can't wrap their head around the fact that there's no - you get water once a week and there's no heat and no light.

JC: And I'm quite sure there's certain things that parents protect their children from. So children maybe aren't aware of –

P6: And then some families were they don't protect them. You can almost pick it off, you can just go ‘that family - they've said we will do the worrying, and you go into school and this is your this is your school family, get on with it, do your homework’.

JC: Yeah.

P6: And then other families, the children come and tell us, ‘Well, we might be moving to Poland. Well, we might be doing this. Well there's no point me learning cause I'm not staying here. Oh this is all bad. And we hate this’. And you know, some of the children are just giving you their parents stuff.

JC: And do you see a difference, then, between those children in school and look how they fit in in school?

P6: Yeah massively.

P7: It’s their attitude and their engagement.

P6: Willingness to make friendships.

P7: Willingness to attempt and practice English. The ones who have that little glimmer of going home, they hold on to it, umm, and then it sets us back. And it doesn't just happen with asylum seeking students. Any student I find that has an option to be somewhere else - as soon as they've got that. So, I had one student I'm working with. The mum told them they were gonna be going to a different school and all of a sudden they were like, ‘Well, I'm not listening to you, because you’re not going to be my teacher in two weeks time’.

JC: Yeah.

P7: And then the child doesn't go into the other school. So, all of a sudden you are working with the disappointment and the embarrassment and then kind of trying to build back up that relationship, that they purposely destroyed because they thought it's easy to push me away and then to be pushed away.

P6: Absolutely.

P7: And all of a sudden you've got a confused child who's between their heart and their head. Not knowing whether they are coming or going and not knowing what they really want. And then, so, I think the easiest thing to do is push everyone away and give up. Which is really tough because –

P6: And absolutely applies to the students with this status that we're talking about today. But, you know that's absolutely how it is and it's, it's sometimes really hard work isn't it because you're trying to engage someone who's discuss saying, ‘Well, my parents say we're going back next month, so this is a waste of time, you can just talk to my phone’.

JC: It must be really difficult. For the adults supporting them too I am sure, but it must be really difficult for these young people just not knowing.

P6: Yeah, I mean what an exhausting way to live. So, you come home and there's the dinner table conversation of – I mean its all just very raw, isn't it? It's unfiltered,you just get your parents stuff.

P7: Some of them do. Some get absolutely everything. Then others yet so little that they come in again on the other side. They don't get told anything because their parents aren't talking to them because they've gone to do something and they just want to ignore it and crack on. They come in and they don't know what's going on. They don't know how their families doing. They don't - and that is again another set of worries. And so there is, like, very few students in the middle ground by their like they know enough, but they don't know too much.

P6: Yeah, I was thinking about our colleague, \*\*\*, who wasn’t able to make it today. So, she's a secondary school teacher from the east of Ukraine. So, the area is under the areas under Russian occupation, so it's pretty hideous. It's been a civil war since 2014.

And her nephew's at this school. And you can just see that they've got this the balance right in this little collective of families that have all come over together and it's like, ‘no, you could only your studies. We'll tell you stuff, we'll do our best, but this is what we need you to do and you could be here for three years. So, you, you need to work hard, and you might stay here for university’ and, I heard her say the other day, ‘Look. We were saving up to send you to someone school in England, but look you’re here anyway, so that's one thing Putin's done for you. So isn't this fun? So yay for you, because this will help your career, and you're gonna have this superpower speaking English. And we want this to be good for you, be, you know, have this as an adventure’. And I think it does work.

JC: So is that the view or the way that the parents sort of betray their views to the young people can impact their engagement. And I get it must be really hard to want to feel like you fit in somewhere when you don't think you're gonna stay there when you fit in and you're school in Ukraine or wherever you have moved from.

P6: Or you fantasise about where you were before, it suddenly becomes the perfect place. So, one student is going back, possibly. But you know, there's all this sort of game playing because I know she's talked to her granny about it because her host has told me and the hosted loves her dearly, but today you need to know. But Sophie will say, ‘Oh, no, no, no, no, I'm staying here long term’, but it's like a secret and it's all spiralling around. And so, some of you know, and it's also this fantasy world. She thinks ‘If I go back to Ukraine, my mom will love me’ because her Mum has stayed in Ukraine to be with her boyfriend because it was a choice between boyfriend and daughter.

JC: Did she come over with a family member?

P6: She came with her granny who doesn't want to be here because Granddad's not well. And Granny said to the host, ‘Can you keep her, and we'll go back’. And the host said, ‘I don't think that's right’. So she's built this fantasy world where she's going to go back to Ukraine and mum will love her and be there for her and she'll have a friend. Although, she has actually made friends, she is really good friends with \*\*\*. I think the reason I'm bringing that story and is not so much because it is very personal story, but more just as an example of how children cope. I'm sure you [P7] must see this whole time you build this fantasy world of what if-

P7: They always think that the grass is–well, everyone does always. Like if I if quit and worked at another school, I could get paid more. I could get XYZ. But actually you get there and you're like, OK, I did really like it before, so, I'm gonna go back. So the you, you, you, you, the thing that humans can't do is you can't see into the future and you can't change the past and I think students that we have, lots of students and parents, are split between what's happened and wanting to build for the future that they can't they can't focus on the now and that is really difficult for them.

JC: Yeah, I can see that being really tricky.

P6: And it's almost easier for the families, for example, from Syria, because the horrendous thing is there's no going back.

JC: Yeah.

P6: To get refugee status as a Syrian person, they've come from the camps on the border with Syria, they haven’t come on the boats. Their situation must be so terrible that they've got refugee status because it's so hard to get it. But it’s the way they've had that. It's a path, it’s a route forwards, and they have to engage with where they are to survive. But in a way, it's sort of the first rung on the ladder. I mean, it's the great immigrant story, isn't it? Mum and Dad come here with nothing, work like mad – like a huge Hollywood film. That's what I'm saying, that you know, one of these films set in New York, they end up in the backstreets and it's all terrible, but they push forward and then the next generation does this and, you know, you see the children say, well, I'm going to be a dentist, I'm going to be a teacher, I'm going to be a doctor. And like, whoa, that's a lot of pressure. Yeah. But the same point that is that they've gone through that grief cycle and sort of accepted that this is where they have to be, and even though there have been bumps and they be terrible sadness when somebody back home is lost, their building this as a home for their children, whereas if you come and you're a victim of war and your husband's back at home and your granddad and the teachers and the dog.

P7: Yeah, lots of them talk about their animals.

P6: Yeah, still so much.

P7: Constantly, ‘Ohh I had chickens, I really miss them’.

P6: And then think of \*\*\* who brought her dog with her.

P7: Yeah. And then my cat.

P6: But they are just being split down the middle because if you're parents haven’t bought into being here and are on the phone saying, is Dad alive? Do you think can go back? Oh, look, they might have water next week.

JC: It sounds like they have a lot to deal with as well as education

P6: And you can have a very nice house. Many Ukrainians had very nice houses, there's a lot of money sloshing around in Ukraine. Their highly cultured, the have an amazing education system. It's not like people are living in without running water.

P7: What's the schools relationship with the, umm, the host families.

P6: Very mixed.

P7: So does it depend on the host?

P6: Depends on the host and depends on the family and not everyone's with a host family because the six months are up.

JC: Yeah, there's some stayed on but some have ended the–

P6: So some are still with the same host and they've just been absorbed into the family. Quite often people who are retired, or there are a lot of very wealthy people round here. There's also a lot of very hard up people around here. So, you're from an old \*\*\* [town] family, you're probably living \*\*\* [suburb] or [suburb] on commuting in because you can't afford to live for any longer. But, a lot of stuff people have second homes, there is the highest proportion of wealthy retirees in the country.

JC: OK

P6: I used to work in the local paper, so I love all this data. It's all in the local plan. And so second homes, annexes, holiday homes, wealthy retirees.

JC: So people with potentially more space to have people?

P^: But maybe there are some hosts, but there are some hosts who, umm, If they have a family living with them behaviors, if they have parental responsibility, and they legally don't. For some hosts it's– It's really hard, I always say I love my dad, but if he lived with me for more than three days I'll be under the table with a gin bottle. Don't quote me. But I really would, so six months is a long time when you have different eating habits, different sleeping patterns, different cultural norms, you've got miserable, grumpy teenagers in your spare room who you know does not the front door or something, or forgets to feed the goldfish, or yeah, or you might feel you sort of slightly a sense of ownership with our family.

P7: I think that the relationship with the host family again will impact everything else. Because if it's going well and you think, OK, this is my home, I'm gonna be staying here. That's something that's stable.

P6: But if you're tiptoeing around, you come in. And so, that's another initiative that's going on at \*\*\* development trust in \*\*\* [town]. So, there was a remember stuff used to be here who has various hats. He is a youth group leader, and he and the team at \*\*\* Community development trust have set up an initiative where a youth club for students with this particular status and it started off with a pilot with \*\*\* [this school] cause \*\*\* and I went, ‘Please help us’. Like you've got some funding… Hello!. And it's been extended now to secondary school age children called leading those that college notes were home schooled to go and have a club or they can go straight after school every Wednesday, hang out as most beautiful place, I don't know if you have ever been there, it’s stunning, it’s an architect converted chapel.

P7: And it has a little cafe as well.

P6: It’s amazing. They got music and spaces and sofas and nooks and crannies. But it's incredibly cool and beautiful and it's absolutely stunning. And they give them supper and the children now have a say, cause they said ‘we'll give you pasta’ and Ukrainians don't like pasta, they think it is yucky, so they had made borscht and all this sort of stuff.

JC: So they made things that they like things they would be eating back in Ukraine?

P6: Absolutely. And there is a Ukrainian person working with cafe who's a student at the university, and so and, umm, it just gives them a space to hang up because we had worked with \*\*\* who said to us one of the hardest things is that you are on your best behaviour at school and on your best behaviour with your host, so where do you hoof about and be a teenager?

JC: Yeah.

P^: Where'd you sort of, you know, sit there strumming a guitar and sing out of tune? Where do you just relax because you can't sort of hoof about in the host house, can you? You can’t just lie on a sofa? Especially not at the beginning when you don't know them very well. After a while when they getting irritated with you.

JC: Yeah, yeah.

P6: Or you play music loudly or you wanna have a friend over you want to see someone outside of school and actually it's a nice place to go and hang out, and friendships are being made with other students. And, and they thought they’d get masses. And the said ‘Well, we only got 5’ and I said ‘No five is amazing, five is a lot!’. Those are five people who feeling better now but, umm, yeah, it’s very difficult sometimes with hosts, but I think host it absolutely brilliant. But one or two the wheels have come off - we've had a student who is with the host and it all went pear shaped, because I just think they all had very different expectations of what was normal and then maybe the guest would do something the way that they thought was a thank you and the host would be like ‘Oh my God and I’ve got to eat this’.

JC: Yeah. Maybe that comes from a difference in culture.

P6: And everyone came in with the best intentions, and when people are under the height pressure, people that are sort of traumatized and stressed and might not always be showing off their best selves or able to adapt to other people in their house. And so, this child was with the host and then they went into temporary accommodation in \*\*\* street, and then they were given a room in a hotel for three months with no access to Internet and kept getting homework detentions, well, then then we found out Mum couldn't afford to pay for Internet access, so school dealt with that.

JC: That sounds like so much uncertainty.

P6: And now they’re finally up in \*\*\*[suburb], it's half an hour on the bus, but they're a much happier child. Eventually. In a hostel they've created for Ukrainian families like lots of little flat-lets in a former hotel in \*\*\*[suburb].

JC: So it sounds like they have possibly found somewhere that feels a bit more permanent.

P6: So the host thing is tricky, isn't it? Which is another reason why Launchpad is so brilliant. Everyone just goes there, as you said, they feel free, it’s not necessarily academic, it's a chance just to do activities. Say you're going to visit your favourite great auntie at the weekend, it would be absolutely lovely and they probably give you a nice cake, but you wouldn't be able to necessarily walk around your PJ's with the headphones and just –

P7: I also like it that I don't know who they're talking about so they can complain about as much as they want about teachers down here.

P6: [Laughing] Yeah.

P7: So I’m like ‘How are your lessons?’, and they are like, ‘Oh, this teacher…’ and I was like, ‘alright, I don't know who that is, but it sounds rubbish’.

P6: And I don’t always come because I'm too flat out all the time to come, but it's quite good. They just they go with you and \*\*\* goes, yeah. And then we also have students doing work experiences at \*\*\* university, which is great.

P7: One is doing the undergrad for being an Ed Psych right now.

P6: She's fantastic. And then another one who's third year SEN and EAL studies. And we’ve got one who clearly is just doing time and hates every living minute of it and keeps on going out for a cigarette break out there and saying, ‘Oh, I can't come and got a sniffle’. ‘I've got a tummy ache’ or ‘I'm hungover’. Ohh dear, or nobody answered the door I think was one when I came at 8:00 o'clock and I was like, OK so. But generally that's a really good intention.

P7: Do you want to move on to the next bit?

JC: In just a second, yeah. Just the last bit of this I think is probably useful is about the friendships these young people make in school.

P7: You'll probably be able to answer this better than I can.

P6: I think it's sort of. I know like with all kids in varies.

P7: I know that every child, regardless of where they're coming from and who they are, if they join the school late, they get given a buddy in their tutor group. So every single student–

P6: And actually, Ukrainians get two buddies because it's quite intense for the buddies.

P7: So, they, they have all had buddies with them and they're, they're all encouraged, like I said, to do sports and activities any after school club. So, we, we run so many clubs as a school next so many. And on Friday I was down and there was \*\*\* she was playing football and she's there with all her friends she gets really well with them. Because I guess friendships are made where you have common interests in something or good friendship is made when you have a common interest, something. So we do encourage people, anyone, to go to sports and clubs.

P6: And the sports department are absolutely brilliant. It's really about sports and clubs. Yeah.

P7: We just try to encourage as many students.

P6: Art, music. If you want to when you come over you can have free music lessons and you can borrow instrument as long as you're here. And that's because- and again. So, we got someone's doing violin, someone is doing saxophone, another doing drums. Another few people doing guitar. It's not everybody, but you just happen to be that if that's who you are, then you want to unpack that and carry on being that person.

P7: I think we tried to force friendship, but that's like, like you can't force friendship. But forcing people to get together, they have buddies and then they’re encouraged to join stuff and to do things. And then from their tutor and the head of faculty we are basically given list of students - I know we shouldn't and everyone's different - but you'd get told like, how many people premium students are doing in activity in your department? How many EAL students are doing an activity in your student? OK, well, you've got a huge disparity in the number of English-speaking students and English as additional language taking part in your art class – what can you do to support that? And so, there is quite a large pressure on staff to create something not, not in like a I guess it’s positive pressure and like, if you know this information you know that you don't have a representative from whatever groups is, then what can you do? So at some teachers and faculties might not do anything but lots of them do try to encourage all students.

JC: And that brings it really nicely into the next point, which is about their learning experience. And so let’s talk about how learning experiences can impact belonging in school for young asylum seeking and refugee students.

P7: Now, I don't know if this is true, but one of my students got a letter saying they can sit some of the GCSE's in her first language. Is that true?

JC: Oh that is lovely

P6: Well, there's a letter saying what they called heritage languages, as I discovered. We're running the initiative, so, so people have studied Latin, French, German and Spanish. Any everyone has the option to do that at GCSE, but we're also an exam centre or working with our brilliant examination officer to, umm, be a base where you can take exams in your in your home language. If it's a heritage language, so Arabic, Russian, unfortunately not yet Ukrainian, but Ukrainian and Russian are very close.

JC: Oh brilliant, Yeah.

P6: And the majority of our students speak Russian at home because their from industrial cities or the east, and also the president speaks to national his first language, so it's not a biggie. Um, Polish. What else have we got? Hungarian. Greek. You know you name it. So, they've got the opportunity. The letter went out to every single child and every single family in the school; you know, parents and carers, saying if your child speaks another language at home and they would like to do a GCSE in their language and that option exists in that language, we will endeavour to do. We can't teach really a language. We don't have resources, but we will work with EMTAS to find specialist speakers. We've got people in the school who speak Russian, people who speak Polish.

P7: So, my student, she's French and so she's going to be doing her exams in French

JC: So does that mean they gonna do all of their GCSEs in French, or an additional French GCSE?

P6: So with the heritage GCSes it is the language, so Polish GCSE, or Russian GCSE, just like you might so Spanish. I didn't actually know about it where you could do all your subjects in some languages.

JC: Lovely, okay

P7: So, I think the questions will be in French, but she will have to answer in English, but would help her understand it.

P6: But the interesting thing, one of the huge challenges were having is that at most schools EAL comes under support, because the government sees the EAL is a special educational need, and we argue at this school that it's a gift [banging table]. And that's our view on everything to do with EAL, it is a gift, and we want to share it[banging table], and that we're an International School and I work very closely with \*\* who is head of our international team. And she said everything we do is international at this school. It’s universal, so, at the moment, our examinations, obviously, if you are, for example, Syrian student Arabic is your first language your year 11, and you're doing your GCSEs. At most schools you would be SEN, you don't get extra time and you have no extra support. And that's hard.

JC: It sounds very hard.

P6: And one of our university students who is in year 3 was specializing in EAL was absolutely horrified and said, ‘how can this be right?’. So we've got three EAL students with refugee status doing their GCSE's this summer and they won't have extra time. But we're giving them the option not to do things like English lit or RE that are very text heavy and are all about context and analysis. They’re very hard to do in a second language.

JC: So there is a bit more flexibility about what they do.

P6: But there is one student who will do it and she'll absolutely nail it. But she's, she gets that choice. But also, the other thing we're doing I-GCSE English as a second language because that's acknowledging. It's, it's a globally recognised GCSE but it's written for people who don't speak English at home and I just as a way that they can get a high grade.

P7: Yeah, they got something that key stage four students are expected to just follow the syllabus, sorry key stage 3 so years 7, 8, and 9. They're expected to just follow the syllabus for which would then lead into GCSEs. And the other than the only adaptations in curriculum would be the I-GCSEs.

P6: Yeah, and dropping English lit, for example, or RE. The other thing we're doing now is setting up a hybrid sixth form. So, we have a 12 students who are doing a year 14.

JC: Ohh, lovely. And that could be because they're staying on an extra year?

P6: Extra year, language challenges, or whatever.

P7: Basically a barrier to learning.

JC: Yeah.

P6: Yeah, people who have sort of, divergence.

P7: Yeah, so some of them stay on it and do GCSEs in the first year and then A levels second and third year. But there's only there's only extreme cases that they've happened. So, like there’s some students with extreme mental health and struggles that haven't been able to- at the time of their GCSE's weren’t able to access. And then others who were only here for a year before the GCSE’s and then didn't, didn't do as well as they wanted or came in year 11 halfway through them and like, no I’m not going to sit them, so they get another opportunity.

P6: And then with some of our new EAL students, there's going to be an option to maybe knock up a few more GCSEs in what would have been lower sixth. Or maybe do an A level and some GCSEs or two A levels because you have to leave with maths and English and we feel we- and there funding to keep doing that.

P7: You keep, you have to keep studying English and maths until you're 18 if you don't achieve a level 2, which is grade C and above. So if they don't get a four, old money C, they have to keep studying English and maths until they’re 18 and your parents can get fined if they don't. And so if, for example, a student leaves school 16, and what's going to work, they still have responsibility to then join a college or a sixth form to sit and do the English and Maths and to learn it.

JC: So do you find that when young people initially have very little English it impacts their engagement in their learning and their lessons?

P7: Yeah, and they get to a point where their English isn't very good, but they start picking up and they become comfortable with it. All of a sudden, they know enough to get by, but not enough to fit in. So, they just stop talking. Yeah, that happened with \*\*\*, didn’t it?

JC: So they learned enough to say when they need to have something, but not to build relationships?

P6: Yeah, we had \*\*\* who came here and had been voluntary mute his primary school and he wouldn't- there were other Russian and Ukrainian speaking students in his class in year six, but he wouldn't talk to anybody. And he had clearly has a learning difficulty, but he comes from a culture where if you had a learning difficulty go mainstream education and there was no help unless you paid for it. So there's a horror of admitting there's a challenge.

JC: Okay.

P6: But parents are slightly left in there to sink or swim and talking to \*\*\*, she said this is probably the first time in his life that he's had all these interventions, all these people just determined to help him. He's got the head of English giving him tutoring, she's with him in loads of his lessons and she speaks to him in Russian and English.

JC: So does she support him by translating too?

P6: It's not- She doesn't even translate, she just gets him going and she's teaching him. And then he also has various interventions. And I think he can run but he can't hide almost. And he's like ‘woah’, he's never had to do that before, so it's very tiring. But it's also we're just really want to open the door for him to see what he could do it. But I think it's very common, as P7 said, it's extremely common to get to a certain stage or people come to us and they sort of pre intermediately done a few years at school in Ukraine or wherever and they think they can get by and suddenly get to here and it is like this tidal wave of words and it's easier just to close off than admit you can't do it.

P7: And I know teachers say that they find they don't be patronizing. So, it's working out what the level of, umm, what words do you need to translate to them so they have the translation. Do you just give them a dictionary and ask them to translate the words? How much support how, how much English do they know? Am I assuming they know nothing? Or- and it's really difficult. I was talking to a couple of colleagues who, who did feel that they were patronizing some of the students because they were putting– in terms of ability, you've got a high level student, high ability, clearly very able, but their English language very low. So, they get printing off these very basic, umm, support mats for them that they will be giving the lower ability students. So, they're looking at and just filling in one word, Umm. There must be something in that as well around being a high ability student and being given simple work.

JC: So maybe if somebody hashad a lot of success in school then coming into a school in the UK where they know the work but not the language to access the work–

P6: Well together with EMTAS, we've been, sort of, saying to staff that actually when you have high ability students it is critical they go into the high ability class because although they don’t have the language, the motivation stays.

JC: Okay.

P6: So I'm not a teacher, I don't have PCCE, but because I'm a journalist I'm used to getting information and passing it on, not understanding thing myself, but just being a channel for it because I'm not an expert on this. But I can tell you what everyone says. And going around stuff and saying no, believe me, trust yourself and put this high ability child in the high ability class, cause otherwise they'll be depressed.

JC: Mmm.

P7: And I think that's what was happening at the beginning, especially. You're gonna go into the bottom set because there's lots of additional support and there's lots of this-

P6: And that's really damaging then.

P7: And then actually they already knew all the information, like they could do the- they could understand every part of the plant they could label it just not in English. But actually, their memory of what it is and what- so if they're in the lesson and you've given the opportunity to translate the words, they can understand it. But it's, it's so difficult.

P6: It is difficult. And, and, one, one thing we found very helpful again the \*\*\* [charity] and EMTAS tasks and I've done is to put all the stuff online stuff. Pre teaching. So allow people to – if you are doing something in a subject as a new topic, send out and put everything on the Google Classroom and allow people to look at it. They can use their phone, they can just look at Google Translate and have some naughty words and they're whoopee, you know because it's very iffy. But just to get a taste and also a pre teach key critical vocab so \*\*\* in year eight loves science, and she's really bright. She came here with really limited English but thirst for knowledge and she's so able. And in science, we work very hard with staff, to encourage them to give them a chance to read things when advance so they can learn vocabulary.

P7: The homework is usually for the next lesson, too.

P6: It is just wonderful. So in advance of the lesson she would already have that superpower of these words. Or \*\*\* in geography, I remember she couldn't say the days of the week, so she was dropped into the middle of her geography lesson and they were doing climate. So, the geography team got me the stuff and we, she and I and her supporters at \*\*\* worked on teaching her core vocabulary. And I was sitting in there with her in the lesson and they showed pictures of things because we decide this is the way to make it very even and they ask people what something was and suddenly this hand went up, ‘Miss, miss, miss! Anemometer’. She couldn’t say Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, but knew anemometer.

JC: So she had learnt some subject specific words? That is lovely.

P6: It was amazing. It was just wonderful and encouraging. Again, I think, I think it's like trying to work in English language is like the torrent with crocodiles and currents and rocks and floods and waterfalls, and you're just getting the core keywords key vocabulary. It's like finding stepping stones across the torrent.

P7: It was so funny, last week when I was working with my EAL group, one of the girls said ‘English is silly’. And I tole her I don't know what do you mean, and she was like in French you have le or la like male or female, but in England you have anything. I just walked off and I was like, ‘yeah, you're right, We do’.

P6: Like how lovely! English is silly, though, isn't it silly? Very silly language.

P7: It's just strange word to use as well, silly. English is silly, yeah, you're not wrong.

P6: How lovely to have a teacher that you can say that to. But I mean, isn't that doesn't just say everything about what P7 does? And we love it. They can just be silly.

P7: And then we were just being silly and saying ‘le table’ and she was like ‘La hair’. And then we would just being silly and putting ‘le’ and’la’ in front of everything.

JC: It sounds like that was a nice way to build a relationship with them by accepting what they say and listening to them.

P7: I mean, I don't get it. I'm dyslexic, so for me I was like, yeah, English is silly. I get that.

JC: And is there anything we think that schools in general could change that might help increase belonging for asylum seeking young people?

P7: I don't think all schools run many clubs.

P6: No, I agree.

P7:And I know that in the PE world that you’ll go and even in a friendship – like some of my friends have kids, I talk about clubs they’ve got running here and they're like, ‘My child has the option of netball, football and rugby, and that's it’.

JC: So not many options at all then.

P7: And that’s it, because the staff don't want to run it and it comes down to the fact that you don’t get paid to run clubs, that’s just something that staff are willing and offering to do to try and increase engagement in their subject, but also build relationships with those who need it.

JC: Yeah.

P7: So, I know lots of schools that don't, umm, because like I said, it's it comes down to money and like commitment, because since the pandemic less and less teachers and staff in schools are willing to give up that time, cause where they've worked from home, and they've enjoyed it, and they've really used to having their time and have realised that actually I don't have to work till 5:00, o'clock at night for free, I can go home at my directed hours. And \*\*\* the head teacher here is a real advocate for it and says if you don't have a reason to be here, go home - well, finish your work at home because, like, I think he doesn't want people to stay here beyond the time that they need to because everyone got families. But I think there has been a decline in some schools in the amount of activities and after school clubs that they do offer.

P6: Oh, they are so important. Yeah, so brilliant and different age groups, people of different of experiences, all shapes and sizes.

Also like outside of schools as well the connect the- so part of my job is I work with lots of external agencies like loads from farms to fishing companies to work experiences places, to cafes, or therapy sessions, like I work with lots of them, and within my role I also talked to lots of schools and I'm like, ‘ohh, have you, have you heard of this?’ And their like ‘ohh, no’. And then in the outreach, I think more schools need to be confident in going out and asking for help. Because I think a lot try to do it in hand or in school, and can't cope, and then the only person that's impacted the young person.

JC: But if you build those connections and you have like a group approach So you've all the support of everyone around you?

P7: It’s almost like, if I was able to go to \*\*\* Council and say I have a young person that has gone through this, what agencies are out there that can support me starting at £0 and I have a budget of £100 per child. And them say okay, this is the interventions you can get, this is the cost. That would just make life so much easier for schools and for the young people and families.

JC: Yeah, that sounds great. It feels like that is a council/government change that would be helpful, rather than a school change.

P7: Yeah, it should be the council in charge of those sort of things and that, but they're just not, and so schools are responsible for looking themselves. And unless you have a member of staff willing to look, it gets missed.

P6: And I think also trickles down from the head. I mean the head from day one and has the attitude that everyone is welcome they are all on a level playing field, everyone matters, and that's a that's permeated the whole school, hasn't it?

P7: Ohhh yeah.

P6: It absolutely has, it’s extraordinary.

P7: And I think even for example,so we had the Ukrainian flag flying and then when the queen died, it came down. But he bought all the Ukrainian students in to explain why he had taken the flag down and why he was changing it rather than just doing it.

P6: It’s so respectful, isn’t it?

JC: Yeah, that is very thoughtful.

P7: And actually. He is really respectful. And I again, I can't speak for other schools and what that's like.

JC: Do you feel like that filters into the students as well, that respect?

P6: Certainly. Totally. I mean, everyone's– we were very lucky also to have a member of staff who's Lithuanian who's speaks fluent Russian, who's got family in Ukraine and Russia. So when the invasion happened obviously there was stuff but she was absolutely amazing. There was a lot of stuff going on, and I have my stepchildren half Russian, so I wrote to the head and said look, I totally get this, but we have to remember a lot of Russian speaking people at the school and it's an awful police state and these children can't carry the burden of that and their shoulders and we can't make any judgments. And she did the same. And she said right, OK, then you can come and deal with all this. So that would be very typical, I think. And she has been absolutely extraordinary because from day one she said to all the families, ‘Look, I don't speak Ukrainian, but I speak Russian so we can all communicate, isn't this great? So on we go’. And but she's very, very direct, which is very typical communication style on that part of the world. And she's so committed and so kind. And she forms – I mean, you talk about relationship building, she is a head of house and she knows every child there and she has formed great relationships because I think the other thing.

P7: One thing I was going to say is having that- So for the Ukrainian students we have 31 at the moment. We have two members of staff who can speak to them in their in their language.

P6: And understands the culture.

P7: But there are other students that may struggle because they don't have that. Like Syrian.

JC: So other nationalities?

P6: Yeah, I have been banging the drum for so long to get someone who's speaks Arabic. We had somebody who was a TA at another school who would have done it, but then we have the cultural issue. One family said, ‘Well, it's the wrong sort of Arabic’ and, ‘They’re from that part of Syria’. And you’re just like, ‘OK’. Whereas luckily with the Ukrainians, because we have such an enormous group of Ukrainians, if you started playing that game because we have \*\*\*, our Lithuania colleague, at the beginning just going ‘if you don't like me speaking Russian, get out of yourself because we are all here to work together’. And that sounds quite harsh, but it was brilliant because it also dealt with the fact we have so many things to do speak Russian at home who were scared and had been bullied for it outside of school.

P7: I just wanted to say that in schools, I think that would be, again, something will be amazing for all schools - if they had access to, even if it’s just short term, something about the government initiative that says, right, ‘have you got an asylum seeker in your school? What language do they speak? This is what we can offer your school for six weeks’ and like just having at something available for all schools.

P6: [Participant retracted sentence -an indication was made that some funding has been made available to some organisations but this is not reaching schools]. We have less funding for refugee children and we get the mainstream children, and I'm so angry. Yeah, but actually, this is something. I'm passionate is probably a tactful way of saying it, but we promise one thing, then something else, and then what’s come through. So, we are having this because of the- we’re talking about what schools could learn and I think one of the really powerful messages we could share with schools is that when children come to \*\*\* [this school] that they are given a free school uniform and a laptop stationary and buddies, so from day one they look the same. And we had an event, didn’t we? In the summer in the marquee they had up for the prom and we invited all the Ukrainian families and lots of other people from the communities as we are trying to get awareness and somebody came and said, ‘So, which are the \*\*\* students and which are the Ukrainians?’. And we went there all \*\*\* students ,and you could not tell because they just had blazers on and they all look absolutely the same, you know, teenagers. Yeah, they just look like a load of teenagers hoofing around and trying to eat all the cake.

JC: Yeah.

P6:And that was great, it was so powerful

P7: That’s one I was trying to set up, wasn’t I? I Keep trying to set up just, like, terminally events with all the families.

P6: So it gets families involved, gives them all the same starting line, same uniform. Notice the buddies. Dictionaries- you not even use it, but it’s just basically an-. We found one in Ugandan for \*\*\*

JC: Is this a language dictionary?

P6: Yeah, you have the bilingual dictionary, it’s probably too embarrassing to use in class, but it is basically just saying, ‘I see you, I acknowledge you’.

JC: It sounds like you have found a way of helping them access – so, the words that they don't understand, they don’t have to look at them there, they can go home and look them up. So they've got an ability to check out what that means.

P6: I don't- the other thing I wanted to say is that, I think currently the third lowest funding in the country in \*\*\* [county].

P7: So they went through this huge funding thing about schools because we were in an affluent area that and because the results of schools was like outstanding, good, and that.

P6: So your damned if you do and you’re damned if you don’t basically.

P7: So we got less funding.

JC: So they give you less help because schools are doing better?

P7: Yeah. So, there was a huge movement about five or six years ago just saying pay up for like these school’s need more, so we were the lowest funded schools in the country. And like it didn't have an immediate impact, but ten years of the lowest funding has, has an impact.

P6: And there wasn’t an EAL person, this has just grown out of thin air and I spend a lot of time fundraising and so does the head. So, everybody, you know, we're just constantly looking under the sofa cushions. And, I can say it's sometimes really demoralizing because you can see what you need to get, but I've got to fight to get money for people to do just a little something in that can make a huge amount of difference. And you know there's globally things are really tough, and I've got to go out into the community and just beg for something to enable somebody to have shoes or to have a dictionary or to have, you know, the somebody come in and assess their English. And if I was in an inner-city school, if I was in a big city school, I would not have this battle. None of us would have this battle and it takes- I think it removes dignity from- I don't want young people here to realize we're having this struggle, but I think it's really hard. I had a letter from \*\*\* [charity] two weeks ago and I haven't got back to them, I’m seeing the head this Thursday and he and I will do our level best saying can you help us provide, I know I keep saying shoes, but parents can't afford to buy shoes, and it's so humiliating for a child not come in with the right footwear.

JC: Yeah.

P6: It's so humiliating from parent to have to ask, and it's actually wrong for a school to have to put all their energy to finding shoes when they should be getting interventions, language support, help form a psychologist. And it's, it's sort of like that Solomon's judgment, isn't it? What's more important? And everyday staff are making those judgments about what do I actually think is more important to this child? And I mean, I'm passionately glad that Launchpad and what P7 does is right at the top of the pile, because it's - you just see it straight away. If you went up, you’d just go ‘oh yeah.’

JC: Yeah, there's some things you can just tell straight away that they are helpful

P6: And it has always ripple effects.

JC: Yeah