

## What is F-TEC Open Minds?

Welcome to Open Minds, a bimonthly newsletter from F-TEC that's all about promoting awareness, wellbeing, and shared values in our community. Each edition focuses on real-life topics that matter to you—from mental health and social issues to safety tips and personal development. We also explore and celebrate the Fundamental British Values, helping to build a respectful, inclusive environment for everyone.

### Our aim is simple:

- To keep you informed
- To help you feel connected
- To celebrate diversity
- To support a safe, inclusive learning and working environment

## British Values: Why Do They Matter?

British Values are about more than tradition or flags. They're the foundation of how we treat each other and build strong communities at college, at work, and beyond.



### Here's what they mean in real life:

**Democracy** - Everyone should have a say. That means voting, speaking up, and listening to others. Whether it's in elections or everyday decisions, your voice matters.

**Rule of Law** - Rules and laws help keep things fair and safe. Knowing your rights and your responsibilities helps you protect yourself and others.

**Individual Liberty** - You have the right to be yourself. That includes your identity, your choices, your beliefs, and your voice as long as they don't harm others.

**Mutual Respect** - We don't have to agree with everyone, but we can still treat people with dignity and kindness. Mutual respect means recognising that other people's feelings, opinions, and boundaries matter just like yours do.

**Tolerance of Different Faiths and Beliefs** - Not everyone believes or lives the same way and that's okay. Tolerance is about accepting and learning from people with different cultures, religions, or backgrounds. It's not about changing your views it's about living peacefully alongside others.

## Summer is Coming – Let's Make It Count

With summer just around the corner, it's time to enjoy the longer days, sunshine, and time to unwind. Whether you're planning holidays abroad, heading to festivals, enjoying beach days, or simply relaxing at home with friends or family, this season is all about recharging and making lasting memories.



As the social calendar fills up, it's also a good time to think about your wellbeing. Summer can be a season of fun and freedom but staying safe, especially around alcohol, drugs, and your mental health, is just as important as having a good time.

In this edition of Open Minds, we're sharing practical tips and helpful resources to help you enjoy the season while staying informed, safe, and connected—wherever summer takes you.

**Here's to a summer that's memorable for all the right reasons.**

## Social Life & Safety: Making the Most of Summer

As your social calendar starts to fill up with barbecues, beach days, or evening meetups, it's important to find the right balance between enjoyment and safety. Here are a few ways to stay safe while enjoying everything summer has to offer:

### Before you go out:

- Make a plan for how you'll get home.
- Let someone know where you're going and who you'll be with.
- Check your phone is charged and consider taking a power bank.



### While you're out:

- Stay hydrated—drink plenty of water, especially in warm weather.
- Stick with friends or trusted people. Don't wander off alone.
- Respect personal space and boundaries—yours and others.
- Pay attention to how you're feeling—physically and emotionally.



### Afterwards:

- Make time to rest and recover.
- Talk about your experiences—good or bad—with someone you trust.

Looking after each other is part of enjoying your time together. If something doesn't feel right, speak up or check in with a friend.

## Holidays Abroad: Stay Safe While You Explore



Heading overseas this summer? Whether you're going on a beach getaway, travelling through Europe, or enjoying your first trip without family, holidays abroad can be a great way to relax, explore, and create lifelong memories.

But different countries come with different rules, risks, and routines—so it's important to stay informed and travel responsibly.

### Before You Go: Be Prepared

- Check your passport – Make sure it's in date and valid for your entire trip.
- Research your destination – Know local laws, customs, and any travel advice.
- Sort travel insurance – Medical costs abroad can be high, so it's essential.
- Make copies of key documents – Keep digital and paper copies of your travel tickets and insurance info.



### While You're There: Stay Smart

- Keep your belongings safe – Use a hotel safe if available and avoid flashing valuables in public.
- Know how to get back to your accommodation – Especially at night or in unfamiliar areas.
- Watch what you drink – Alcohol can affect you differently in hot weather. Be cautious of local brands with unfamiliar strengths.
- Be mindful of local laws – What's legal at home may not be legal abroad, especially around alcohol or drugs.
- Avoid risky behaviour – Swimming after drinking or riding mopeds without a helmet can be dangerous.



### Stay Connected

- Let someone at home know your travel plans and check in regularly.
- Know how to call emergency services in the country you're visiting.
- Download useful apps (like Google Translate, maps, or the local transport system).



Most importantly: enjoy your time away but look after yourself and your friends. If something doesn't feel right, trust your instincts. A good holiday is one you can remember for all the right reasons.

## Alcohol & Substance Awareness



Summer often brings festivals, parties, and social events where alcohol or drugs may be present. You always have the right to say no, and staying informed is key to making safe choices. Trust your instincts, know your limits, stick with friends you trust, watch your belongings and drinks, and plan how to get home safely.

Saying no doesn't mean missing out—it means putting your wellbeing first. By staying aware and prepared, you can enjoy summer while keeping yourself and others safe.

### When it comes to alcohol:

- Know your personal limits—and stick to them.
- Eat something before drinking.
- Drink water in between alcoholic drinks to stay hydrated.
- Never leave your drink unattended.
- Avoid drinking if you're feeling anxious, upset, or pressured.



### If you're around drugs:

- Do not feel pressured to take anything.
- Understand that combining drugs or mixing with alcohol increases risk.
- Be cautious in unfamiliar places—music festivals or large crowds can be disorienting.
- Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, it probably is.



**If you or someone you know needs advice or support around alcohol or drug use, these services are here to help—confidentially and free of charge:**

### FRANK

Website: [talktofrank.com](https://talktofrank.com)

Phone: 0300 123 6600

Confidential advice about drugs and alcohol, available 24/7.

### Drinkaware

Website: [drinkaware.co.uk](https://drinkaware.co.uk)

Offers information, tools, and support for safe drinking.

### NHS Substance Misuse Helpline

Phone: 0300 123 6600

For advice and local support services.

## Mental Health Matters: Looking After Yourself



While summer can be exciting, it isn't always easy. Not everyone feels relaxed or confident in busy social settings. For some, this season can bring feelings of isolation, social pressure, or even anxiety—especially with the expectation to be constantly active or social.

It's okay if your summer doesn't look like everyone else's. You're not alone in feeling this way, and it's important to go at your own pace. If you're feeling overwhelmed, here are a few gentle reminders.

### Stay grounded with a simple routine:

- Try to wake up and go to sleep at regular times.
- Plan time each week for rest, not just activity.



### Take breaks from social media:

- If it starts to feel overwhelming or causes stress, it's okay to log off.
- Remember that people often only share their highlights—not the full picture.

### Find calm where you can:

- Spend time in nature, listen to music, read a book, or go for a walk.
- Practice mindfulness, breathing exercises, or gentle stretching.



### Talk about how you feel:

- Open up to a friend, family member or a professional.
- You don't need to wait until things feel serious to ask for help.



You are never alone. Support is always available, whether you're going through something yourself or are concerned about a friend. Here are some places to turn for help:

## Mental Health & Emotional Support:

- **Shout**  
**Text:** SHOUT to 85258  
Free, confidential 24/7 mental health support via text (UK).
- **Mind UK**  
**Website:** [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)  
Mental health information, support services, and advice.



## Make This Summer Yours

There is no right or wrong way to spend your summer. Whether you enjoy large social events or prefer quiet time at home, the most important thing is that you feel comfortable, respected, and in control. Take care of your mental and physical wellbeing, support those around you, and remember—it's okay to set boundaries, take breaks, or ask for help.

**Let's make this a summer to remember, for all the right reasons.**

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