

# MINDFULNESS ACTIVITIES

One way to promote positive mental fitness in schools is to introduce mindfulness into the classroom. In this pack, you will find a list of short mindfulness activities that are aimed at Primary age groups.

This collection of mindfulness activity ideas has been put together for teachers to be able to integrate quickly and easily into their daily timetable. Most of these activity ideas should take around 5 minutes, require little to no resources and could be used with any Primary age group.

A daily **5 minute** mindful activity could potentially help your pupils to:

- Improve concentration
- Develop self-control
- Lower anxiety and stress levels
- Regulate emotions

Some tips for integrating mindfulness into the classroom routine:

- To begin with, it is useful to choose a set time that you will try and use a mindfulness activity with your class every day – to help you and your children remember to fit it in! For example, straight after break or lunch, first thing in the morning, in between back to back lessons.
- Play some relaxing sounds or music during your activity. As the children get used to hearing this, they may gradually get into a routine of becoming quiet and calm when they hear the music and recognising that this is their 'mindful time'.
- Enjoy the activities with your class! Make the most of this calm time with the children. Mindfulness activities are a great way to build relationships with your pupils and a great way to model working on our Mental Fitness.

# BELLY BREATHING

Have children lie down on their backs and let them place a small object or soft toy on their bellies. Ask them to take some long deep breaths into their bellies and watch their object or toy rise up and go down with their breathing.



# STAR FISH BREATHING

Children spread out their fingers in front of them. Ask the children to take long deep breaths in and out. As they breathe in, they trace upwards on their first finger with their other hand and as they breathe out, they trace back down that finger. Try with eyes closed.



# RAINBOW BREATHING

As the children take deep breaths in, they reach their arms up and imagine they are painting a rainbow shape with their hands. As they breathe out, they imagine wiping the rainbow away. Repeat and ask children to try it with their eyes closed.



# TRIANGLE BREATHING

Have children imagine drawing a triangle with their finger as they breathe in and out. As they breathe in, they draw one side of the triangle, they hold their breath as they draw the second side, and they breathe out as they complete the third side of the triangle. This can also be done with eyes closed and you could ask the children to put their hands down and imagine drawing the triangle in their minds.



# BUBBLES

Sit children in a circle and blow some bubbles, allowing the children to pop them. Blow the bubbles a second time and ask the children to sit and observe them this time without popping any. Perhaps they can pick one bubble to follow. Ask questions asking the children to describe the bubbles, the colours and how they feel when they watch them.



# PASS THE WATER

Fill up a cup, small bowl or other container so that it is almost full to the rim with water. Have the children very carefully pass around the cup or bowl, focussing on trying their best not to spill any. Make sure the children know that it is okay if they do spill a little by accident! You can also encourage children to say thank you to each other as they receive the cup of water.



## ZENTANGLE

Give children a small piece of scrap paper each. Using a pen or pencil, they start in the middle of the paper and create a spiralling square or circle shape. Ask the children to take their time and to focus on getting the lines as close together as possible without them touching. Remember – the focus of this activity is for the children to concentrate on something in the moment, not to have a finished picture at the end of it.



## BODY SCAN

Ask children to sit up straight on their chairs or to lie down on the carpet. Invite the children to squeeze their whole bodies and faces in tightly, tensing their muscles, and then to relax.

You can ask the children to imagine a ball of light travelling around their body going from the toes, up the leg, into their belly, up to the heart, down the arms, into the fingers etc. This brings their attention and awareness to every part of their body.



## MINDFUL WALK/NATURE

Take children outside or into a large indoor space and ask them to follow you, walking in a line. Give the children something to focus on – it could be how their feet feel on the ground, concentrating on their breathing, listening for different sounds they can hear, or what they can see around them.



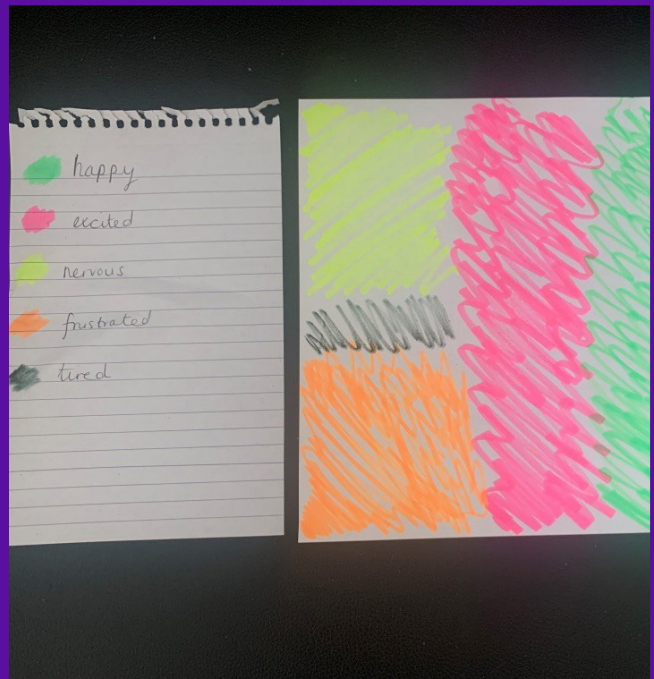
## SENDING GRATITUDE/KINDNESS

Ask children to picture somebody in their minds that they like – i.e. a friend or family member. Ask them to really concentrate on what that person looks like in their minds. Children imagine that they could send them some positive energy or some kind wishes. As they breathe in, they gather up some positive energy or kind wishes and as they breathe out, they imagine sending it to that person. Repeat a few times. Older children may eventually become more comfortable with imagining somebody that maybe they feel like they dislike or they have had a fall out with, or somebody that needs some kind wishes.



## COLOUR YOUR FEELINGS

As a class, ask children to assign a colour to some different emotions that they might be feeling today. Have the children colour in a blank piece of paper showing how they are feeling in that moment. You can model this to the children before they try it themselves. For example, you might show a lot of green for 'happy' on your paper, and then tell the children that you are going to colour a small section of your paper in blue for 'worried' and a small part red for 'frustrated'. There is no right or wrong answer to this activity – it needs to come from the children, and they do not have to be able to explain the reasons behind each feeling. The focus is to develop the skill of recognising and identifying their own emotions.



# ENERGY HANDS

Ask children to take a few deep breaths together. Invite the children to rub their hands together for 30 seconds – to 1 minute. Then immediately ask the children to put their hands a small distance apart from each other as if they are holding a ball. Children try to focus on whether they can feel any of the energy that they have created between their hands (this may take a few goes before they can feel anything!)



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Invite the children to take a quick break from what they are doing. Ask them to quickly identify 5 things that they can see right now, 4 things they can hear, 3 things they can feel, 2 things they can smell and 1 thing they can taste.

Identifying something the children can feel can include things like the shoes on their feet, their hands on the table, a ring on their finger etc. Taste is usually a more difficult one, but even if the children say they can taste their own saliva in their mouth, as long as they are focussing on the 'here and now'.



TASTE



SENSES



TOUCH



VISION



LISTEN



SMELL

# MIRRORING

Choose one child to go in front of the rest of the class or have children do this in pairs. One child does slow movements with their hands and arms whilst the other children copy.



# MINDFULNESS JARS

Mindfulness jars can take a longer time to make, but this is a good activity to use to introduce mindfulness. The jars can then be used for a **5 minute** mindfulness activity.

Children use a clear glass jar and fill it with glitter, water and some clear glue. Seal the jar shut with a hot glue gun. Children can shake up their mindfulness jars and watch the glitter swirl and move around.

They continue to observe the glitter in the jar as it eventually settles and goes back down to the bottom of the jar and becomes still. You can compare the swirling glitter to being like our minds when we feel a strong emotion such as anger, and after some time and finding ways to calm down, our minds can become clearer and more settled, like the glitter in the glass jar.

