

# Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

## Mindful meditation



Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts and body sensations. Being free from distraction or judgment and aware of our thoughts and feelings, without getting caught up in them.

Practising mindfulness for ten minutes a day helps students be in the present, reducing the 'what if' head talk. Using mindfulness in class may lead to positive coping strategies which impact academic performance, self-awareness, regulating emotions, attention spans, self-esteem and social skills.

Mindfulness helps a student develop awareness of how their body automatically responds to different triggers by focusing on a mindful activity and practicing acknowledging and letting go of any intrusive feelings, thoughts and body sensations, calming the body and reducing stress.

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### Listen to the bell

Focus on paying attention to what students can hear. Use a singing bowl, a bell or a phone app. Tell students to listen carefully until they can no longer hear the sound (usually 30 seconds to a minute).

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### Breathing buddy

Each student takes a stuffed animal or other light object such as a pencil case, and then lies down on their back with their buddy on their belly. Students focus their attention on the rise and fall of the stuffed animal as they breathe in and out.

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### Mindful walk

Taking a short nature walk while paying attention to the experience with all senses, recognising the emotional and physical responses that take place before, during and after the walk.

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### Five senses exercise

Have students sit quietly and nominate five things they see, four they feel, three they hear, two they smell and one they taste. This helps students slow down and focus on the environment they are in.

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### Mindful eating

Eating a raisin or a piece of chocolate while paying attention to the experience with all senses, recognising the emotional and physical responses that take place before, during and after eating.

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### Mindful colouring

Focuses students on choosing and applying colour in a design to bring their awareness to the present moment and noting the emotional and physical responses they have to each colour.

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### Mindful visualisation

Have students close their eyes and imagine a place of their choosing where they feel relaxed and happy, ask students to imagine what they may see, feel, hear, smell and taste in their imagination.

Once students have practiced mindfulness when they are relaxed, students can be encouraged to use mindfulness activities at home, as practice or when they feel the build-up of strong emotions.

***If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.***

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>