



## **PSHE (Learning for Life) for T5 & 6**

We have been focusing on our wellbeing in PSHE this year and in particular our mental wellbeing. Part of this work has included mindfulness and meditation. Please find below some information about mindfulness and then some activities that families might like to try together during this time when it will be crucial to look after our wellbeing.

There are some very helpful tips and advice on the following website for parents on how to support our young people's mental health at this time.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

### **What Is Mindfulness?**

Being aware of what is going on around you is important for lots of reasons: it keeps you safe; it keeps you informed; it helps you to decide what you need or want to do. But being aware of what is going on inside your head – your thoughts and feelings – is just as important for your mental health.

Being aware of your environment as well as your own feelings and thoughts is called mindfulness. It helps us to pay attention to things, understand our feelings and enjoy a better life.

Thoughts, feelings and the outside world can change all the time. Part of mindfulness is being aware of the changes that are happening from one moment to the next. A big part of mindfulness is focusing on the present moment – this includes what you can see, smell, hear, taste and touch, as well as what you're thinking about. The goal of mindfulness is to help you reconnect with your body and mind so that you can think about things clearly.

One of the big advantages of mindfulness is that it lets you appreciate things that you would otherwise take for granted or not think about. This could be even the simplest of things like the way it feels to sit in a chair, or the smell of a particular room. It also lets you notice your stream of thoughts and allows you to start seeing patterns in your thinking. For example, after practicing mindfulness, a person might start noticing that they are thinking in an unhealthy way and they can then choose to deal with this in a productive way. Stress, anxiety and depression can all be noticed more easily through mindfulness and can therefore be treated more effectively. This doesn't mean that mindfulness can cure stress, anxiety or depression, because these conditions are often complex and severe, but mindfulness is recommended by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) as one way of treating some of the symptoms.

Mindfulness has been around for many centuries as part of several Asian traditions, including Buddhism. It is now becoming widely accepted and popular in lots of different parts of the UK.

### **Mindfulness activities to encourage mental wellbeing**

- 1. Rainbow breathing.** Draw a rainbow. Place your finger at the bottom of the rainbow. Breathe in through your nose and trace the red arc until you reach the top. At the top, exhale and trace the red arc to the bottom. Repeat with all colours.
- 2. 60 seconds until you sit down!** Everyone in the family to stand up, clocks covered, watches away. Sit down when you believe 60 seconds is up.
- 3. Worry balloons.** 1 balloon per person (or draw a balloon if don't want to touch balloons!) Blow up balloon, write on it their worry or a code to represent that worry, then burst balloons!
- 4. Worry on a paper.** Alternative to above. Write worry on scrap of paper, screw up in a ball, throw at a target.
- 5. Sign name.** Fill a page up with your signature. Concentrating on something like this, gives you a chance to switch off from worries.
- 6. Gratitude A-Z.** Make a list of things you are grateful for from A-Z.
- 7. Colouring** (Plenty can be found and downloaded from google)
- 8. Observation** Choose a natural object from the window or go into the garden. Focus on watching it for a minute / two. Don't do anything except notice everything you can about that item.
- 9. 7-11 breathing.** Breathe in count to 7, breathe out count to 11.
- 10. Gratitude for what's around us.** Think about an object in the room and how many people contributed to it being there (ie who made each part of it)
- 11. Dissolve a thought.** Breathe in deeply through your nose (1,2,3,4) out through your mouth (1,2,3,4) Imagine that each thought you have is a cloud that forms above your head. As you breathe in, (1-4) notice the cloud, as you breathe out let the cloud dissolve (1-4). Repeat with a new thought.
- 12. Magnetic hands!** Breathe in deeply through your nose (1,2,3,4) out through your mouth. Put your hands in front of you shoulder width apart and palms facing each other. Pretend there is a magnet that is slowly drawing your palms together. Bring your palms very, very close until they almost touch. Then slowly bring your palms out again. Keep breathing and repeat.
- 13. Mindfulness meditation.** See <http://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/> for child-friendly meditation and mindfulness activities.