



Mindful Minis

Guide for Parents

2021 Edition



Who are we?

The Mindful Minis Team have developed a corpus of materials in the form of school workshops, journals, online training and content, articles and information for children, teachers and parents.

Our aims:

Our mission is to improve the mental health and resilience of children and young people by giving them access to mindfulness skills and techniques which reduce stress and anxiety, develop attention and focus, promote emotional regulation, teach empathy and compassion, and create a sense of well-being.

Why is mental health and mindfulness important?

Mental health is of growing importance, particularly among children and young people. Early intervention and promoting positive mental health from a young age is crucial, as we know that 75% of mental illnesses develop before a young person turns 18. Furthermore, according to NHS Digital's official statistics, one in eight (12.8%) of 5 to 19-year olds experience at least one diagnosable mental illness.

Mindfulness is an evidence-based approach which has been proven to both help people recover from a mental illness as well as prevent the onset of mental health difficulties. Demonstrating the integrative mind-body based approach used, evidence shows that mindfulness can have a positive physiological effect as well as improving our mental health and wellbeing. For example, it has been found that parts of the brain linked to emotional regulation are larger in people who have practised mindfulness and used meditation regularly.

There is a wealth of evidence which suggests that schools are well placed to deliver mindfulness-based interventions, and positive outcomes can range from improved wellbeing, reduced anxiety and distress, as well as an improvement in behaviour and concentration.

This is why Mindful Minis wants to create a culture where mindfulness is embedded in education as part of a positive mental health approach.



Main benefits of mindfulness



Improved sleep



More self-control



Higher self-esteem



Improved social skills and communication



Reduced anxiety and stress



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Improved mood

Better decision making

About the Mindful Minis School Workshop

The Mindful Minis School workshop has been designed to give your children an introduction into a number of mindfulness practices including breathing, yoga and meditation. Our workshop is either pre-recorded or physically delivered within your child's school. We have included a small section about the current times and how we can deal with emotions.

♡ **Introduction:**

The workshop begins with a discussion on the concept of mindfulness, what the word means and why people do it.

♡ **Breathing Exercises:**

We then talk about the importance of the breath and how powerful breathing exercises can be for our bodies and our minds, before taking the students through a series of different techniques, some calming, some energising.

♡ **Discussion about our emotions:**

We ask students to highlight their emotions and enter a discussion about the best ways in which to respond to them.

♡ **Yoga:**

The students are guided through a sequence of yoga postures, with emphasis being placed on the breath and the mind.

♡ **Guided meditation:**

Students are guided through a calming relaxing meditation. This gives the students a chance to taste what meditation is like and hopefully continue in school or at home.

♡ **Mental wellbeing discussion:**

To end the workshop, there is a short discussion about why it is imperative to look after our mental health and how mindfulness habits can help us do so.



About the Mindful Minis School Journal

The Mindful Minis School Journal is intended to provide mindfulness tools and techniques to your children each day for one month. The 'Mindful Month' is divided into four weekly themes, which are detailed below. Each theme includes a one-page introduction which can be delivered at the start of the week, and then each journal entry should take no more than 5-10 minutes and can be completed at home each evening.

-  **Week 1 – 'Me, Myself and I':** This first week is all about encouraging your child to look inwardly, to engage with different breathing techniques which connect the mind and body, and explore their likes and dislikes with the 'Love yourself Challenge'. Each journal entry will explore a different breathing technique, as well as introducing meditative practices such as acknowledging gratitude and accomplishments.
-  **Week 2 – 'Emotions':** The second week's theme is all about developing emotional awareness and recognition. It also includes taking a closer look at some of our main emotions - Happiness, Fear, Anticipation, and Anger. This week's daily tasks are centred around exploring each of these emotions and identifying each of their features, as well as how to regulate them.
-  **Week 3 – 'Yoga and Meditation':** For the third week, the focus shifts to yoga and meditation, where the introduction touched upon its origins and the key principles of slowing down, focusing inwards, and bringing awareness to the mind and body connection. Each journal entry with either introduce a simple yoga pose or a guided meditation/relaxation practice. It is important to reiterate that to fully feel the positive effects on their wellbeing, these poses and practices should be practised regularly.
-  **Week 4 – 'Growth Mindset':** In the fourth and final week, we introduce the concepts of a 'fixed' or 'growth' mindset. They will be encouraged to adopt the latter in order to improve their ability to be flexible and progress as well as avoiding negative thinking patterns. In the introduction and Class Task, you will introduce your children to 'positive affirmations' which will help them to reframe 'fixed' ways of thinking in their daily tasks.



Looking after your own mental health

Although this journal is targeted to children and young people, the principles are very transferable to your own life. As per the saying 'you can't pour from an empty cup', it is important that you look after your own mental health and wellbeing.

There are many resources out there which promote mindfulness techniques to achieve positive mental health for adults:

Headspace: www.headspace.com **The Free Mindfulness Project:**
www.freemindfulness.org/download

Oxford Mindfulness Centre:

www.oxfordmindfulness.org

Further support:

 **YoungMinds:** www.youngminds.org.uk

The UK's leading charity for children and young people's mental health, with a wide range of information for children and young people, teachers, and parents/carers.