

# **4 Weeks of Mindfulness**



**An Eco-Schools Seven Step Guide  
For Secondary Schools & Colleges**

## **'It was good to get out of the classroom and enjoy nature. It made me feel refreshed.'**

Between January and June 2021 students are asked to choose four weeks of term time when they will lead a series of mindfulness actions across their school or college. Using this handout as a guide, young people will be shown how to promote and record mindfulness practice in their subject and year bubbles, assemblies, during lunch time and even whilst travelling to and from school. School staff are also encouraged to take part in the project with mindfulness in the staffroom. At the end of the four week period students will calculate the total number of mindfulness minutes achieved collectively in their school or college and submit online to Eco-Schools England before 30th June as part of a national goal to achieve one million minutes of mindfulness in 2021!

### **A quick message from Eco-Schools England:**

'Between our team we have nearly 25 years teaching experience; we have sat, laughed, cried and celebrated with our pupils and colleagues over examination results, we have skipped lunch breaks to run school clubs and we have given up our Sundays and summer holidays to plan and prepare. Therefore the ideas and actions for our Mindfulness Minutes national call to action have not been rigorously assessed by a team of academics, but instead have been tried and tested with our own primary, GCSE and A 'Level students in a 'real' school. Some of our ideas may not work for all your pupils but we hope that Mindfulness Minutes encourages you, hard working Eco-Coordinator and your pupils to STOP for a just minute and chillax - or smell the roses, whatever works best for you!'

***Lee Wray-Davies (Eco-Schools Manager)***

### **Thank You**

The team at Eco-Schools England would like to thank all the young people and staff who piloted the project from: Bayton Primary, Christ the King, Cradle Hill, Market Drayton Infants, New Silkworth Academy, Penhurst Hessel Academy, St Olaves, Torkington School & Woodstone Community Primary School. Thank you for providing us with the wonderful quotes and feedback that have helped us develop the Mindfulness Minutes eco-project and aim for one million minutes. Thank you also for showing us just how important and beneficial taking a minute to be mindful is for all ages!

## Introduction

Many of us live our lives rushing through the day, blink and it's the end of term. Life is happening, but we may not notice due to everything else that is going on in our surroundings, both classroom and at home. Mindfulness has many definitions, put simply it means being more aware of what is going on around us and learning from what we find. To do this we need to pay full attention to all our senses, rather than getting swept up in life and our school routine.

**Quick Task: Stop reading now. Close your eyes and count 5 deep breaths. Well done that was first hand experience of mindfulness, easy!**



Thanks to a generous donation Eco-Schools England have been able to expand our Mindfulness Minutes national eco-project. Like all Eco-Schools projects the Mindfulness Minutes campaign has been designed to be a manageable project that helps your school work towards our international Green Flag award, whilst following the global Eco-Schools Seven Step framework. Mindfulness Minutes is a flexible 4 week-long project that can be undertaken at any time between 1st January to 30th June 2021. Your chosen four weeks can run concurrently or you could choose to carry out one week every month, what ever works best for you and your pupils. **Most importantly please remember to submit online the total number of mindfulness minutes achieved at the end of your chosen four weeks in order to contribute to the one million minutes we hope to achieve across all Eco-Schools!**



## Seven Step Overview

1. **Mindfulness Committee:** Choose a group of students who are going to lead the four weeks of Mindfulness Minutes in your school or college.
2. **Mindfulness Review:** Complete a survey designed to get pupils (and staff) thinking about mental well-being before and after your four weeks of mindfulness.
3. **Mindfulness Plan:** Decide when and how you will carry out your four weeks of mindfulness, which year groups or subject areas will participate and which mindfulness activities will be most appropriate for them?
4. **Mindfulness in the Curriculum:** Incorporate mindfulness in your pastoral and academic curriculum areas.
5. **Mindfulness Message:** Spread the mindfulness message to your whole school community and beyond, don't forget the power of social media #EcoSchools #OneMillionMinutesMindfulness
6. **Mindfulness Monitoring:** Collated your total number of mindfulness minutes and submit online before 30th June 2021 to the national Eco-Schools total.
7. **Mindfulness Code:** Incorporate mental health and well-being into your existing school Eco-Code or school policy.

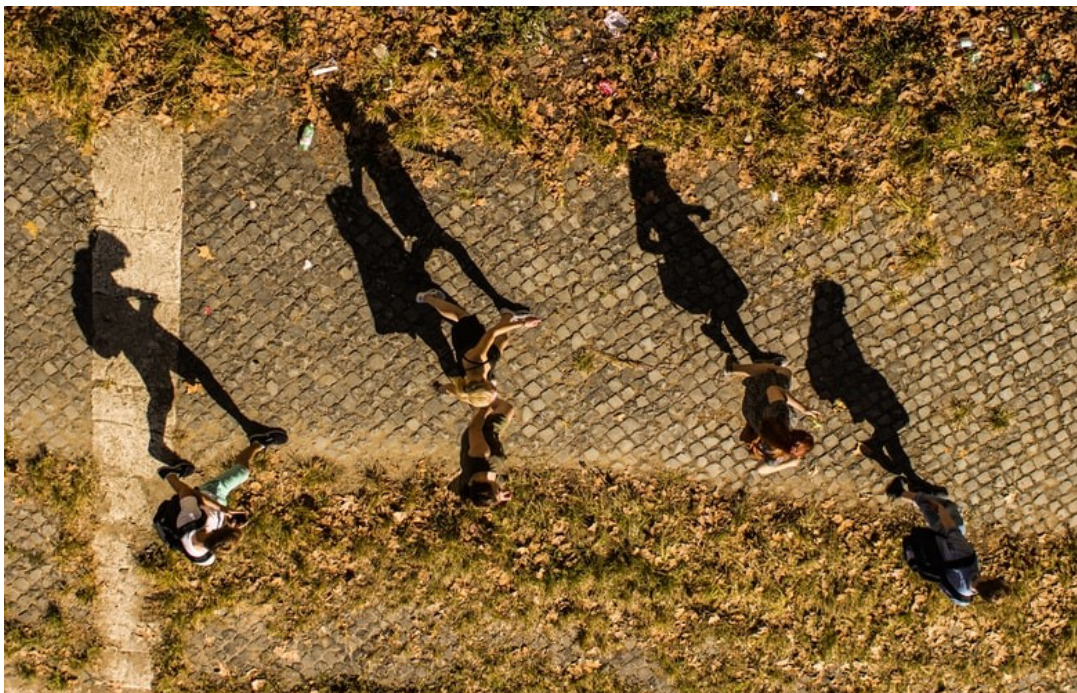


## **Step 1 Mindfulness Committee**



To begin you will need to appoint a Mindfulness Committee to plan, lead and monitor the four week long project in your school. You can use your existing Eco-Committee/ student council or, alternatively, choose to appoint a new group.

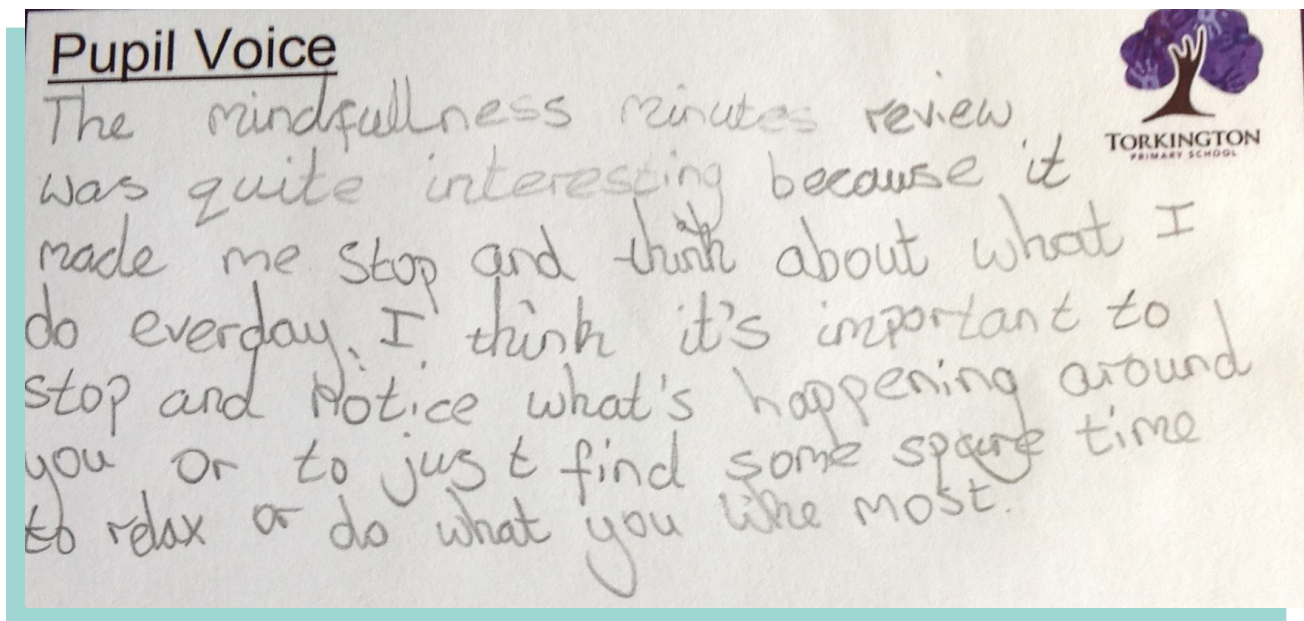
It is important that your Mindfulness Committee contains a least one student from each year group, these students will need to be available during the project so you may want to run Mindfulness Minutes in the lead up to the examination period. After the four weeks are over, the same students will need to review and evaluate the success of the project in school and submit your total number of Mindfulness Minutes.



**‘It is so important to be mindful as it helps my mind do something that it needs, to switch off and appreciate everything around me.’**



## Step 2 Mindfulness Review



In the Additional Materials section at the back of this handout, you will find a Mindfulness Review that can be used by your Mindfulness Committee.

## Review

When you have a Mindfulness Committee that represents your student body it is time to review how your school or college promotes mental well-being. As well as carrying out our Mindfulness Review, try to find out what actions your school is already carrying out to promote mental health and well-being (e.g. meditation, yoga clubs etc) as these can be incorporated into your four weeks of action too.

Your Mindfulness Committee should aim to survey as many students and staff as possible. Don't forget to ask your Mindfulness Committee to leave some copies of the Mindfulness Review in staff rooms too for teachers to complete - they are anonymous, so no one needs to be embarrassed about their answers!

## Read

When your Committee have surveyed students and staff and researched how your school promotes mental well-being it is time for them to analyse the results. Are their classmates Mindfulness Newbies or Mindfulness Influencers?

## Repeat

After your four weeks of mindfulness, we strongly recommend that your committee complete a second Mindfulness Review to evaluate the success of your project (are their classmates now all Mindfulness Influencers?) this will help your committee decide if they should carry out further weeks of mindfulness in the future. We will not ask you to submit the results of your Mindfulness Review at the end of the project only the total number of mindfulness minutes achieved.

**‘Although it can be hard to sometimes switch off,  
if you are just silent for a minute, you can hear  
sounds you never noticed.’**



## Step 3 Mindfulness Plan



There are several things that your Mindfulness Committee will need to consider when planning their four weeks of mindfulness:

1. When will they carry out their weeks of mindfulness between January and 30th June 2021?
2. How many minutes of mindfulness will they aim to achieve each week?
3. What will they do during their minutes of mindfulness (we have some ideas on the next pages to help with this)?
4. How will they let the rest of the school know about their weeks of mindfulness (See Step 5: informing and involving) - assembly, letters home to parents, school newsletter etc?

## When

The Mindfulness Committee should think about when between January and 30th June 2021 they would like to carry out their mindfulness actions - we suggest in the lead up to the examination window. They should also consider when during the school day Mindfulness Minutes should be carried out – when we piloted the project in several schools, we found that completing Mindfulness Minutes at the start of the day and after lunch helped young people relax and focus in their next lesson.

Whenever they choose just make sure they time how long they spent on their mindfulness task (maybe using the timer on their mobiles). But, please remember don't sound an alarm when your minutes are up: we don't want to spoil the relaxed atmosphere by giving anyone a shock!

**‘After lunch my emotions were a deep red, as I'd been running around playing football and not had a minute to relax, but once I started my Mindfulness Art I could slowly feel myself become an orange. That's when I knew Mindfulness was a really positive thing, as I wouldn't have relaxed that quickly had I not had time to find calm.’**

## Where

The great thing about Mindfulness activities is that they can be carried out anywhere outside, inside or even queuing for lunch! Any spare minute is the perfect time to be mindful—just make sure to record them all!

## How Many?

The total amount of Mindfulness Minutes each student or member of staff carries out for every action can be suggested by your Mindfulness Committee; 2- 10 minutes is a good length of time. At the back of this pack you will find a Mindfulness Minutes Tally Template, which you can use to record the total number of minutes completed by each student, class or year group every week. Remember the total number of mindfulness minutes across your entire school or college will need to be submitted online to Eco-Schools at the end of your chosen four weeks.

**For example if a class of 20 carry out just 2 minutes of mindfulness every day during week one that's 200 minutes. Over the four weeks that 800 minutes!!!**





## What

This is the best part- what are you going to do during your Mindfulness Minutes?

Easy, absolutely nothing if you wish! Mindfulness can be as simple as: closing your eyes and listening to the noises around you or looking out of a window and watching the world go by. There are no rules to mindfulness - just stop and notice what is happening around you.

At first you might find it difficult to 'clear your mind' and 'stop thinking,' as thoughts try to hijack your brain. But the great thing about mindfulness is it's impossible to do it wrong and it doesn't judge you, simple refocus and start again. The aim of mindfulness is not to feel better but to get better at feeling.

Remember being mindful does not mean you have to sit in the lotus position for hours (but you can if you want) it is simply acknowledging what is happening right now and learning from it. Slowly, you will start to find it easier to become more mindful and learn to appreciate small things around you. Mindfulness is a great skill to have no matter your age, especially if you are finding yourself stressed about things in school and your mind is racing thinking about all the work you have to do - this applies to teachers too.

**'Carrying out a few minutes of mindfulness before revising helped me push away all the thoughts that were racing round my head and then another few minutes after revising helped me to switch off and sleep better.'**

Taking just a few minutes a day to 'switch off your auto pilot' has been proven by lots of clever people with lots of qualifications to help strengthen your mental resilience and improve grades. Below are just a few ideas for activities your Mindfulness Committee could introduce during your Mindfulness Minutes weeks:

- At the start of every lesson try to bring awareness to your posture– are you sitting in a comfortable position? Can you see and hear clearly what is going on? You could really mix things up by suggesting everyone sit in different seats for one lesson! How does it feel to sit in a different position? Why do you think some of your classmates like 'their seat' so much?
- Create a touch point in your school bag, this could be your pencil case homework diary. Every time you touch it remember to take 30 seconds to stop and be mindful.
- Take notice of your language during break and lunch time. How often do you say 'I' or 'Me'? Notice how you talk about yourself to others, do you use positive or negative words when describing yourself?
- If you get sad or angry throughout the day– maybe you are struggling with a particular subject or have lots of work to catch up on, try being your own best friend. Think about the positive advice you would offer a friend if they told you they were feeling down or stressed. Now take your own advice and be equally as kind to yourself.
- 7/11 breathing is a great technique to calm your nerves. For a few minutes as you breath in count to seven and as you breath out count to eleven. Combine this breathing exercise with visualizing yourself in your 'happy place'.

### **Outside of school or college**

- Selfie or self– think about the situation you are in every time you go to take a selfie, how are you feeling just before? Do you start to notice any patterns of when and why you post on social media. Just before posting try one minute of mindfulness breathing.
- Before going to sleep take 2 minutes to list all the positive things that have happened during your school day, this can be academic or personal.

### **... and one for the staff room:**

Stop marking and planning during your 'break', have a tea/ coffee tasting session instead. Try a different brand each week– how do they taste? Rank the brands and maybe even who makes the best cuppa!



## Step 4

# Mindfulness in the Curriculum



Here are some of our ideas for how you can incorporate Mindfulness Minutes into your studies:

- In sport try yoga or mindfulness shadow boxing.
- In science research the effects of mindfulness and meditation on the brain.
- In computing or media studies create a mindfulness presentation with images of nature that will help others to relax during their Mindfulness Minutes.
- In music lessons research great composers and musicians who have created music that can help you relax- create a mindfulness playlist.
- In English create a 'How to' set of instructions for mindfulness.
- In art go outside and sketch or paint natural objects.



- In maths don't forget to calculate the total amount of mindfulness minutes carried out during the four weeks!



## Step 5

# Mindfulness Message



Your Mindfulness Committee should aim to involve the whole school or college community, however, this may be difficult at first. In week one, you may only have one class or year group taking part in Mindfulness Minutes whilst you introduce mindfulness techniques, but that's a great place to start. Over the next three weeks, you might get three more classes involved and continue expanding until the whole school is participating. **As part of the online collection of data we will also be asking you to tell us how many students and staff were involved in your Mindfulness Minutes project each week.**

## Informing

The first thing your Mindfulness Committee will need to do is let the whole school know what mindfulness means (keep this message simple) and how they plan to introduce Mindfulness Minutes to your school. We recommend delivering year group assemblies and adding lots of information to your school's Eco-Board. You should also consider letting the wider school community know about your mindfulness week through: school newsletters, school website and school social media if your school has an account. One of the best things about working for Eco-Schools is hearing positive stories from schools across England, so make sure you share your **#MillionMindfulnessMinutes** with us on our [website](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

## Involving

Involving students in your Mindfulness Minutes project is easy if there is someone from every year group on your Mindfulness Committee, simply ask each student to lead this in their tutorials and let their classmates choose which mindfulness action(s) they want to carry out throughout the weeks. They could even kick start your mindfulness weeks with a full 2 minute mindfulness session in assembly or registration.



## Step 6

# Mindfulness Monitoring



After all the disruption and stress in 2020 the goal of our national Mindfulness Minutes project is to bring together all 20,000+ Eco-Schools in England and other Eco-Schools from around the world to focus on our combine mental health and well being.

**<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MMSecondary>**

We need all schools taking part in this project to please submit the results of their mindfulness actions before 30th June 2021 to see if united we can achieve over 1,000,000 minutes of mindfulness in just six months... a feat that has never before been achieved!

At the end of your four week Mindfulness Minutes project we ask that you tell us the following:

**The number of minutes of mindfulness carried out in total across your school during weeks 1, 2, 3 and 4.** This is the number of mindfulness minutes multiplied by the number of participants (staff and pupils) for all mindfulness actions that you carried out during these weeks.

**How many pupils from your school were involved in your Mindfulness Minutes actions during weeks 1, 2, 3 and 4.** If you did more than one action each week, please indicate the average number of children involved.

**How many staff from your school were involved in your Mindfulness Minutes action during weeks 1, 2, 3 and 4.** If you did more than one action each week, please indicate the average number of staff involved.

Please do not worry if you are not able to carry out the Mindfulness Minutes project for the full four weeks, you are still very welcome to submit your result for however many weeks of mindfulness action your school was able to take part in.



## Step 7

### Mindfulness Code



**‘The class has been so wonderfully calm and peaceful during our daily breathing exercises.’**

Your Mindfulness Committee should have organised, completed and evaluated their four week long Mindfulness Minutes project - now it's time to celebrate your success by adding a section on mindfulness and mental health to your Eco-Code. Remember your Eco-Code can take any format it likes (poster, poem, song, statement, pledge etc.), but it should be valued and reflect what Eco-Schools topics and projects you are working on. Here are a few of our ideas for an additional statement on mindfulness that could easily fit into many Eco-Codes (but we're sure you could do better).

- In our school, taking a minute to be mindful is important.
- Mindfulness helps us be friends with ourselves.
- Almost everything works if you unplug it for a few minutes (this includes us).
- We appreciate that each moment is filled with joy and wonder.
- Healthy world, healthy body, healthy mind.

**‘Students developed the ability to focus on one thing and notice the small things/changes around them.’**



## Step 2 Mindfulness Review



Question	Yes	No
When I'm travelling to school I take time to appreciate the nature I pass.		
When I eat my lunch I take time to think about the different tastes and textures of the food instead of just wolfing it down as quickly as possible.		
I notice what my body feels like when I am upset or angry.		
I am happy to just sit down and relax without a mobile phone or any form of electronics.		
I think about the good things that have happened in school when I get home.		
I listen to what I can hear when in the school grounds at break time and lunch.		
I try not to worry too much about things that I can't control.		
When I travel to school I look around me and notice even the smallest changes on my journey.		
When my friend or teacher talks to me I think about nothing else and concentrate on them.		
After I fall out with friends, I find it easy to put the argument behind me and be friends again.		
I am patient with my friends, family and teachers.		
If I make a mistake in class I learn from it and move on quickly.		
I often take a few minutes to just stop and think.		
I regularly take the time to stop and think about how amazing nature is.		
I remember to focus on each of my five senses at some point everyday.		



## Mindfulness Review Scores



### Give one point for every yes ticked

**Score 0-5 Mindfulness Newbie** You are probably not thinking about what is going on around you and could be missing out on lots of exciting things - don't worry Mindfulness Minutes will help you with this.

**Score 6-12 Mindfulness Mostly:** You do have some moments of mindfulness during your school day, great! You're well on your way to becoming a Mindfulness Influencer.

**Score 12-13 Mindfulness Influencer:** Wow, you are taking the time to appreciate everything going on around you, spread the word and help others become as mindfully magnificent as you.







## Step 6

# Mindfulness Monitoring



**Please submit all results before 30th June 2021**

<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Number of students participating:</b> <b>Number of staff participating:</b>	
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Number of Mindfulness Minutes</b>
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Week 1 Total</b>	



## Step 6 Mindfulness Monitoring



**Please submit all results before 30th June 2021**

<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Number of students participating:</b> <b>Number of staff participating:</b>	
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Number of Mindfulness Minutes</b>
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Week 2 Total</b>	



## Step 6 Mindfulness Monitoring



**Please submit all results before 30th June 2021**

<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Number of students participating:</b> <b>Number of staff participating:</b>	
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Number of Mindfulness Minutes</b>
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Week 3 Total</b>	



## Step 6 Mindfulness Monitoring



**Please submit all results before 30th June 2021**

<b>Class:</b>	
<b>Number of students participating:</b> <b>Number of staff participating:</b>	
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Number of Mindfulness Minutes</b>
<b>Monday</b>	
<b>Tuesday</b>	
<b>Wednesday</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	
<b>Week 4 Total</b>	