



An Eco-Schools Seven Step Guide

‘To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all’

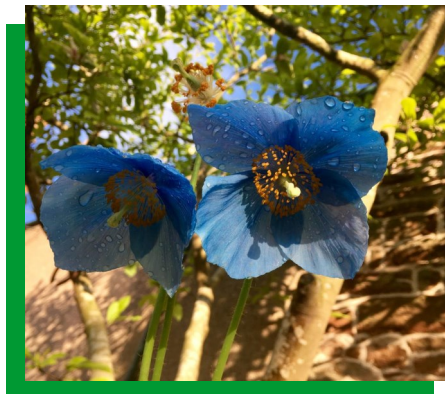
Oscar Wilde

Thank you for choosing to participate in our Healthy Living topic national call to action: Mindfulness Minutes, a week long project designed to get pupils and school staff thinking and talking about their mental health and well-being.

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 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)



‘What the world needs really is more love and less paperwork’

Pearl Bailey

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 develop the Mindfulness Minutes national call to action. Like all of Eco-Schools projects Mindfulness Minutes has been designed to be a manageable and pupil-led project that helps your school work towards our international Green Flag award (as part of the Healthy Living topic) whilst following the global Eco-Schools Seven Step framework.

Mindfulness Minutes is a week-long project that can run at any time of the academic year. It enables pupils to take control of their mental health and well-being. It will require some guidance from school staff, and we also encourage all staff to actively take part in Mindfulness Minutes too.

Throughout the project pupils will be tasked with:

- Researching and leading the Mindfulness Minutes actions in and out of class.
- Recording how many minutes are carried out during your school's week of mindfulness.





Seven Step Overview

1. **Mindfulness Committee:** Choosing a group of pupils who are going to lead the Mindfulness Minutes project in your school.
2. **Mindfulness Review:** Completing a survey designed to get pupils (and staff) thinking about mental well-being before and after your mindfulness week.
3. **Mindfulness Plan:** Deciding when and how you will carry out your mindfulness week and which year groups in your school may benefit the most from a week focusing on their mental health and well-being.
4. **Mindfulness in the Curriculum:** Incorporating mindfulness in your pastoral and academic curriculum.
5. **Mindfulness Message:** Spreading the mindfulness message to your whole school community.
6. **Mindfulness Monitoring:** Summarising whether your week of action had an impact: will pupils and staff continue to be mindful in their school lives?
7. **Mindfulness Code:** Incorporating mental health and well-being into your existing school affirmations.



Step 1: Mindfulness Committee

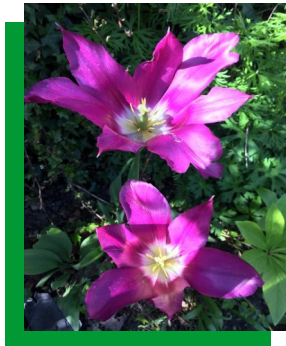


To begin you will need to appoint a Mindfulness Committee to plan and lead the week long project in your school. You can use your existing Eco-Committee/ school council or, alternatively, choose to appoint a new group.

It is important that your Mindfulness Committee contains a least one pupil from each class, these pupils will need to be available in the run up to and during your mindfulness week of action. After this week, the same pupils will need to review and evaluate the success of Mindfulness Minutes in your school.

**‘If you think you are too small to make a difference,
try sleeping with a mosquito’**

Dalai Lama



Step 2: Mindfulness Committee



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

Review

When you have a Mindfulness Committee that represents your whole school it is time to review how your school promotes mental well-being. As well as undertaking our Mindfulness Review, try to find out what actions your school is carrying out to promote mental health and well-being (e.g. meditation, yoga clubs etc).

Your Mindfulness Committee should aim to survey as many pupils and staff as possible (before and after your Mindfulness Minutes week to help with Step 6: Monitoring and Evaluation).

Don't forget to ask your Mindfulness Committee to leave some copies of the Mindfulness Review in the staff room too for teachers to complete- they are anonymous, so no one needs to be embarrassed about their answers!

Read

When your Committee have surveyed pupils and staff and researched how your school promotes mental well-being it is time for them to analyse the results. Are the students in your school Mindfulness Beginners or Mindfulness Jedis?

Repeat

After your week of mindfulness, we strongly recommend that your committee complete a second Mindfulness Review to evaluate the success of your project as this will help your committee decide if they should carry out further weeks of mindfulness in the future.

**'If you have found what you love in life,
life will love you back'**

Arthur Rubinstein



Step 3: Mindfulness Plan



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

1. When will they carry out their week of mindfulness?
2. How many minutes of mindfulness a day will those involved in the project carry out?
3. What will they do during minutes of mindfulness (we have some ideas on the following pages to help with this).
4. How will they let the rest of the school know about their week of mindfulness (Step 5: informing and involving) - assembly, letters home to parents, school newsletter etc.

When

The Mindfulness Committee should think about when, in the school year, would be the best time to carry out their mindfulness week - we suggest around examination times as these are stressful anyway. They should also consider when during the school day Mindfulness Minutes should be carried out - we suggest 2-3 minutes in the morning and after lunch.

Make sure that there is someone to start and end your mindfulness minutes with a stop watch, but please don't sound an alarm when your minutes are up: we don't want to give anyone a shock if they are nice and relaxed!



Where

The great thing about Mindfulness activities is they can be carried out anywhere, on the bus to school, queuing for lunch or more formally in class. Any spare minute is the perfect time to be mindful—just make sure to record them all!

What

This is the fun bit- what are you going to do during your mindfulness minute?

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,' don't worry about it - simply come back to the moment and 'swoosh' those thoughts away. Try focusing your attention on an item. Try sandwiches at lunchtime; how does it feel in your hand? What does the bread smell like? Don't worry no one will judge you for smelling your sandwich! Then when you chew your sandwich think about what it feels like on your tongue, can you taste the different fillings in you sandwich?

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.



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 (we won't bore you with the stats!) 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 week:

- Take 2 minutes to list all the positive things that have happened during your school day.
- Over the week focus on different parts of the body- on Monday bring full attention to your hands - how do they feel, cold or warm? Any tingling sensations? What does the surface they are resting on feel like? Tuesday - legs, Wednesday - back, Thursday - face, Friday - the whole body.
- On your way to and from school pick an object to focus on and count how many times you see this object, such as dogs or cats. The amount of mindfulness minutes for this activity is how long your journey takes.

- Grow a plant and every day look at it for 1 minute to see if anything has changed.
- During break look at the sky for a few minutes, notice the different colours that you see. Record these on a sheet of paper in your class room as a cloud chart. If you carry this out over the course of the year how do the colours on your cloud chart change?
- After sitting quietly for 2 minutes outside make a note of all the different smells, sounds and sights you see. Keep a record of this and create a Scentsation Diary. Try being mindful in different parts of your school grounds how does your Scentsation Diary vary?
- During your Mindfulness Minutes, write all the words that come into your head with your opposite hand. How does it feel to write with a different hand? What type of words were you writing and can you then group them or link to different emotions.
- Remember a 'To Do' list will always be full because they are things you need to do... Instead use your mindfulness minutes to write a 'Done' list of all the things you have achieved that day, no matter how small.

One for the staff room:

- Have a tea/ coffee tasting session - try a few different brands, how do they taste? Rank the brands and maybe even who makes the best cuppa!

**'It does not matter how slowly you go as long
as you do not stop'**

Confucius





Step 4: Mindfulness in the Curriculum



Here are some ideas for how you can incorporate Mindfulness Minutes into your schools curriculum:

- In PE you could try having a mediation or yoga lesson.
- Religious Education lessons could focus on mindfulness and meditation across different religions.
- Approach Mindfulness from a scientific perspective: How does mindfulness effect how your body feels? How does it affect the chemical balance in your brain?
- In History look at how inspirational people from the past have used mindfulness and meditation to help them achieve greatness.
- For Art lessons gather items with different textures from the school grounds to create a mindfulness masterpiece and encourage others to interact with it.
- Music: Close your eyes and listen to traditional music from a different country - how did it make you feel?
- In English use Mindfulness Minutes as a stimulus for writing: write a news article about the success of your Mindfulness Minutes project or use persuasive writing to create a leaflet encouraging parents and guardians to be more mindful at home.

‘A ruffled mind makes a restless pillow’

Charlotte Brontë



Step 5: Informing and Involving



Your Mindfulness Committee should aim to involve the whole school community, however, this may be difficult at first. Initially, you may only have one class taking part in Mindfulness Minutes - but that's better than no one. Next time, you might get three more classes involved as, through Informing and Involving, more people find out about your actions. You may even have a Mindfulness Minutes session at your next school open evening for all who attend!

We are always happy to hear about your Eco-Schools work, so don't forget to share your Mindfulness Minutes stories with us **#EcoSchoolsMindfulMins**

Email: eco-schools@keepbritiantidy.org

Eco-Schools Website Stories:

www.eco-schools.org.uk/inspiration/news/submit-your-story/

Twitter: [@EcoSchools](https://twitter.com/EcoSchools) [@KeepBritainTidy](https://twitter.com/KeepBritainTidy) Facebook: [Eco-Schools England](https://www.facebook.com/EcoSchoolsEngland)

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 what they have planned for their chosen week of Mindfulness Minutes. We recommend delivering a school assembly 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.

Involving

Involving pupils in your week of Mindfulness Minutes is easy if there is someone from every year group on your Mindfulness Committee, simply ask each pupil to lead this in their class and let their classmates choose which mindfulness action(s) they want to carry out throughout the week. You could even kick start your mindfulness week with a full 2 minute mindfulness session in assembly.

**‘You’re only here for a short visit. Don’t hurry, don’t worry...
And be sure to smell the flowers along the way’**

Walter Hagen

You should now have everything in place to run a week long Mindfulness Minutes project. Have fun and remember even if you only get a few pupils and staff taking part and thinking about their mental health and well-being then the project has been a success!



Step 6: Monitoring Mindfulness



When you have completed your week of Mindfulness Minutes it is time for your Committee to consider whether it has been a success and how they could develop the project in the future. Your Mindfulness Committee can evaluate their successes in a variety of ways, however, here are some of our suggestions:

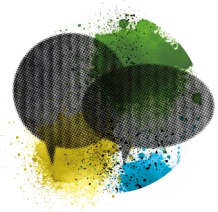
- Carry out the Mindfulness Review before and after your mindfulness week to see if attitudes in school have changed. Have pupil’s scores increased and does your school now have more Mindfulness Jedis than before?
- Collect all Mindfulness Minutes Tallies so that you are able to calculate the total amount of Minutes of Mindfulness carried out in your schools over the week. You may want to reward the class with the most Mindfulness Minutes logged with a prize in assembly.
 - Please remember to let **EVERYONE** know what this total is and pin to your Eco-Board, this will help if you want to run another week of Mindfulness Minutes in the future and gives you a figure to aim for and beat!

Once you have all of this information, you may want to present to your head teachers, PTA and school governors to help you consider how to scale up and improve Mindfulness Minutes or other mental health and well-being projects in your school.

We would also love you to include these results in your Green Flag application form and make sure you tell our Green Flag Assessor all about your Mindfulness Minutes project. Maybe even ask them to take part in a couple of mindfulness minutes at the start of their visit!

**‘Our greatest weakness lies in not giving up.
The most certain way to succeed is always to try just
one more time.’**

Thomas Edison



Step 7: Mindfulness Code



Your Mindfulness Committee should have organised, completed and evaluated their week long Mindfulness Minutes project - now its time to celebrate your success with a Mindfulness Code.

Your code should be a ‘mantra’ that reflects your schools commitment to improving the mental health and well-being of all who attend and work there. It can be in any form you like; poem, chant, dance, art work - let your (now relaxed) imaginations go wild.

Through out this hand out we have added lots of inspirational quotes we like, please feel free to share these across your school. Here are some more we think make great Mindfulness Codes:

- I focus on what I want from life
- You’re the creator of your own happiness
- Cheerfulness is the very flower of health
- Look at a tree, a flower, a plant...Allow nature to teach you stillness (Eckhart Tolle)
- You must be the change you want to see in the world (Mahatma Gandhi)
- Everyday brings a chance for you to draw in a breath, kick off your shoes...and dance (Oprah Winfrey)



Mindfulness Review

For each statement below, enter the number from the scale that best shows how often you experience these things.

1 Never **2** Rarely **3** Sometimes **4** Frequently **5** Always

1. When I'm walking to school and pass a flower along the way, I stop to smell it.	
2. I worry about what will happen in the future and get upset about things that went wrong in the past.	
3. When I eat my school lunch I take time to think about the different tastes and textures of the food.	
4. I don't notice what is happening around me on my journeys to and from school.	
5. I think about others things when my friends (and teacher!) is speaking to me.	
6. I notice what my body feels like when I am upset or angry.	
7. I am happy to just sit down and relax without a mobile phone or any form of social media and watch the clouds drift by.	
8. After falling out with friends or family I keep thinking about different things I could have said.	
9. I think about other things even if I'm doing something I really enjoy.	
10. I get impatient if I have to wait for something at school.	
11. I think about the nice things that have happened in school when I get home.	
12. If I make a mistake in class or on a test I get angry with myself.	
13. I think and worry about things that I can not control (like exams!).	
14. I listen to what I can hear when in the school grounds at break time and lunch.	
Sum of answers to questions 1, 3, 6, 7, 11, 14	
ADD 34	
Subtract the sum of answers to questions 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13	
TOTAL SCORE	

Mindfulness Review Scores

0-18: Mindfulness Beginner: 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.

19-38: Mindfulness Mostly: You do have some moments of mindfulness during your school day, great! You're well on your way to becoming a Mindfulness Jedi.

39-56: Mindfulness Jedi: 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.



Mindfulness Minutes Tally

Please remember during your week of mindfulness to ask every class taking part to record how many Minutes of Mindfulness they carry out. For instance if a class of 30 pupils is mindful for just 2 minutes every morning before lessons start - that's a whopping 300 mins or 5 hours of mindfulness in one week!

Class:	
Day	Number of Minutes
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Total	