



Evidence-Based Intervention: Mindfulness

Introduction

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity, and without judgment (e.g. see some great further explanatory resources here: [Free resources and events - Mindfulness in Schools Project](#)). By practicing the noticing of where our minds wander off to, and the subsequent re-focusing of attention to the present moment, we can help to give our minds a break from either worrying about the future or ruminating on the past (and thus positively impact our physiological and emotional regulation); we can begin to better notice unhelpful thinking patterns or internal scripts so as to have a better chance of re-shaping them; for some, mindfulness practice over time can help to develop their 'attention control muscle'.

In UK schools, it is increasingly recognised as a valuable tool to support mental health, emotional regulation, and learning. Programmes such as 'b', 'Paws b', and 'Mindfulness Now' have been developed specifically for educational settings, offering age-appropriate curricula for pupils and training for staff.

Purpose of Intervention

The practice of mindfulness in education settings can be seen to help: 1) promote self-awareness, emotional wellbeing and resilience, 2) reduce stress and anxiety, 3) enhance focus, attention, and self-regulation and 4) improve classroom climate and teacher wellbeing.

Target Audience

Mindfulness can be adapted for use with pupils, staff and parents (recognising that calm, regulated adults are in a better position to calm and regulate the children and young people they support). Programmes are tailored to developmental stages, with younger children engaging through playful activities and older students exploring more structured practices.

Who Can Deliver the Intervention

Anyone can practice Mindfulness, and staff and parent / carers should feel to try it out, to encourage and facilitate and model its practice (e.g. using a good quality app to guide them). Guided mindfulness meditation can be 'practiced' by individuals, groups or sometimes whole classes. However, in order to *teach* it to others, adults should complete an accredited training programme. (e.g. <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/>; [Mindfulness Teacher Training - MindfulnessNow](#)).

Session Structure

Typical mindfulness sessions include:

- A short introduction and check-in
- A guided mindfulness practice (e.g. breathing, body scan, mindful movement)
- Reflection and discussion
- Application to daily life or classroom challenges

Sessions are interactive and age-appropriate, often using animations, stories, or metaphors to engage learners.



Frequency and Duration

Mindfulness practice can be dipped into on a frequency that suits the individual and their context. However, if practiced on a regular basis its impact is likely to be more notable and longer lasting.

For adults, daily mindfulness meditation practice for a minimum of 10 minutes over the course of at least 8 weeks has been shown to have measurable benefits. However, there are no hard and fast rules and even regular practice on a once-weekly basis, might still bring felt benefits for the individual.

In terms of teaching mindfulness to children, the following model is typical:

- Programmes usually run for 8–10 weeks
- Weekly sessions last for up to an hour, largely depending the age group being taught
- Some schools integrate brief daily practices (e.g. “mindful moments” or “brain breaks”)
- Sustainability is enhanced through embedding mindfulness into school culture and routines

Key Principles

Effective mindfulness programmes in schools should:

- Be championed by adults who can model authentic mindfulness practice and a related mindset
- Be lead within a setting by at least one trained practitioner (more ideally two)
- Remain optional and non-forced
- Include the sharing of relevant information with parent / carers
- Be offered within the context of a setting committed to inclusive, restorative, relational and trauma-aware practice

Training and Implementation

There are a number of options here, with examples as follows:

- Introduction training to the principles, concepts and practice of mindfulness for adults within a setting to enable them to start their own practice (this is requestable from the Suffolk Psychology and Therapeutic Service).
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and / or Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) programmes delivered locally by external providers for adults to complete for themselves / for their own practice and knowledge.
- Staff training via CPD-accredited courses (e.g. [Teach .b Foundations - Mindfulness in Schools Project](#), or [Mindfulness Teacher Training - MindfulnessNow](#)) to learn how to teach mindfulness to pupils.
- External agency delivery of mindfulness teaching directly to children (e.g minimemindfulness.co.uk)

Evidence and Outcomes

Research shows promising results:

- **Students:** small to moderate improvements in wellbeing, attention, and emotional regulation
- **Teachers:** reduced burnout and improved classroom climate
- **Whole-school:** enhanced connectedness and respect, though effects may diminish without sustained practice

The MYRIAD study (Oxford University) highlights the importance of practice over theory and the need for tailored, engaging delivery. See also Mindfulness in Schools research page <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/the-evidence-base/>.



Feedback

Feedback from schools suggests:

- Pupils enjoy the calm and focus mindfulness brings
- Teachers value the impact on classroom behaviour and their own stress levels
- Challenges include time constraints, staff confidence, and sustaining momentum

Further Information and Resources

- Mindfulness in Schools Project [Mindfulness in Schools Project \(MiSP\) - Bringing Mindfulness to Schools](#) and their evidence base [https:// mindfulnessinschools.org/the-evidence-base/](https://mindfulnessinschools.org/the-evidence-base/)
- The Mindfulness Initiative – Implementation Guide [Implementing Mindfulness in Schools: An Evidence-Based Guide | The Mindfulness Initiative](#)
- MiniMe Mindfulness® – Resources for Schools [Wellbeing & Mindfulness Resources for Schools | MiniMe Mindfulness®](#)
- [British Mindfulness Institute](#) (for individual adults to pursue for themselves or to train to teach others)