

# What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is “to pay attention, on purpose, to the present moment” (L. Grossman, Mindful Schools).



## Teaching Mindfulness: Tips for Teachers

### 1. First, develop a personal practice.

If you have never practised mindfulness before, spend a little time practising the activities yourself before you take them into your classroom.

### 2. Be honest with your students about your own level of experience.

If mindfulness is new to you, your students will appreciate knowing that you are learning this together.

### 3. Make mindfulness mini-lessons a special time of day.

Make students aware that the 5 or 10 minutes you spend on mindfulness each day is a special time. Try using a visible change in the environment, such as turning the lights out, or beginning and ending each of your mindfulness sessions by ringing a little bell.

### 4. Explain what mindfulness is in a simple way.

Younger students may understand words like ‘awareness’ or ‘noticing’ when introducing the concept of mindfulness. Older students will benefit greatly from exploring how and why mindfulness techniques work to help calm difficult emotions and refocus our minds.

### 5. Practise naming emotions.

Practising naming and describing emotions and what they feel like in our body will help students get better at recognising and then using mindfulness techniques to process their own emotions.

### 6. Acknowledge with your class that you cannot ‘fail’ at mindfulness.

Tell students that their minds will wander during mindfulness activities and that it’s okay. We simply notice that our thoughts have wandered in that moment and return our attention to our breath, in whatever our mindful activity may be.

### 7. Be flexible.

If your class doesn’t take to a particular mindfulness activity, take it out of your rotation. Don’t feel like your mindfulness mini-lessons are a waste of time if things aren’t going well – next time try an activity that is more suited to the personalities in your class.

### 8. Let go of expectations.

Don’t expect a sudden change in your classroom environment after practising mindfulness for a short time. It is a skill that takes time. When it is new to your students they will need consistent practise and support to get to a place where they can call upon their own mindfulness skills outside of your direct instruction.