

Mindfulness in the Classroom

What is Mindfulness?

In schools, mindfulness helps students of all ages build focus, self-regulation, and emotional awareness. By reducing stress and supporting well-being, mindfulness can improve behavior, strengthen resilience, and enhance academic engagement. Integrated into daily routines, mindfulness fosters calmer, more positive learning environments, and equips students with lifelong coping skills.

When to Use Mindfulness Activities

- **Morning Transitions:** Help students arrive focused and ready to learn.
- **Before Tests or Presentations:** Reduce anxiety and improve concentration.
- **After Recess, Lunch, or Stressful Events:** Support smooth transitions.
- **During Emotional Upsets or Conflict:** Provide strategies for self-regulation.
- **End of Day or Week:** Encourage reflection and closure before dismissal.

How to Implement Mindfulness Strategies in the Classroom

Establish Clear Expectations

- Normalize mindfulness as a practice for everyone.
- Set norms (quiet, respect, no judgment).
- Reinforce that practice takes time and consistency.



Create a Supportive Environment

- Provide a calm, quiet space free from distractions.
- Use simple, age-appropriate language and visual cues.
- Model mindfulness to encourage participation.

Choose Age-Appropriate Practices

- Elementary: Keep activities short (1–5 minutes), incorporate movement, breathing, and visualization.
- Secondary: Extend practices (3–10 minutes), integrate journaling, reflection, or structured breathing.
- Allow flexibility—students may close their eyes, look down, or focus on an object.

Facilitate Activities Effectively

- Give clear, step-by-step directions.
- Allow private reflection; sharing is optional.
- Maintain consistency to build comfort and habit.

Reflect and Reinforce Skills

- Connect mindfulness to classroom or life skills (focus, kindness, persistence, stress management).
- Encourage students to use strategies outside of school.
- Recognize effort and celebrate growth in self-regulation.

Sample Mindfulness Practices by Grade Level

Elementary Students

- **Balloon Breathing:** Imagine blowing up a balloon with deep breaths.
- **Five Senses Check-In:** Notice one thing you can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste.
- **Mindful Movement:** Stretch tall like a tree or sway like branches.
- **Listening Game:** Identify sounds in the classroom or outdoors.
- **Gratitude Share:** Think of one thing that made you smile today.

Middle School Students

- **Square Breathing:** Inhale, hold, exhale, and pause for four counts.
- **Mindful Stretching:** Release tension with slow, focused movements.
- **Gratitude Journal:** Write one thing you appreciate each day.
- **Mindful Listening:** Focus intently on music or natural sounds.
- **Emotion Check-In:** Rate emotions before and after a mindfulness practice.

High School Students

- **Body Scan with Reflection:** Notice sensations head to toe, then write down one insight.
- **Mindful Journaling:** Prompts like “Right now I feel...” or “I can let go of...”
- **Visualization:** Imagine success in a challenge or picture a calm place.
- **Loving-Kindness Practice:** Send compassion to yourself and others.
- **Pause and Reset:** Before starting a new task, take three slow breaths and set an intention for how you want to approach it (e.g., focus, patience, effort).

Evidence-Based Practice Resources for Teachers

- [MindUP for Schools \(K-8\)](#)
- [Learning 2 BREATHE \(Middle and High School\)](#)
- [Mindfulness in the Classroom | Child Mind Institute](#)
- [Mindfulness in Education | Edutopia](#)
- [Mindfulness Resources for Teens | APA](#)

References

- Mindfulness in Schools Project. (n.d.). *Mindfulness in Schools Project: Bringing mindfulness to pupils, teachers, and parents*. Retrieved September 18, 2025, from <https://mindfulnessinschools.org>
- Broderick, P. C. (n.d.). *Learning to BREATHE: A mindfulness curriculum for adolescents*. Retrieved September 18, 2025, from <https://learning2breathe.org>

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