



NHFS is supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing

PSHCE education helps children and young people to understand their own and others' emotions, develop healthy coping strategies and seek appropriate support. And talking openly about mental health issues is an effective means of breaking down any associated stigma.

Teaching about mental health and emotional wellbeing is also now a requirement as part of statutory Health Education. PSHCE education equips pupils to adopt healthy behaviours and strategies from an early age, and to seek trustworthy support when they or their friends need it. Protective learning – including good communication, problem-solving, healthy coping skills, resilience and recognising emotions – can reduce the risk of pupils turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms. These factors lay the foundations for more specific learning about mental health later on, including a focus on issues such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders. Here at NHFS we are ensuring that the pupils are learning about the importance of looking after their mental health and how to ask for support if needed.

The festive season is often associated with feelings of excitement and happiness, but for some it may not always be a positive time.

The shorter days, colder temperatures and the pressures associated with this time of year can impact many people, adults and children alike.



Mindfulness activities can help to relax and support pupils who suffer from anxiety. Please see the pages attached for ideas and use the accompany guidance for instructions on how to deliver the activities if your child needs support.



During our Nurture Group sessions this term, we have had lots of discussions around what makes us feel good, the pupils have concluded that the below activities can help support their mental health at home;

- *Talking through any problems or issues*
- *Outdoor play and gardening*
- *Calming music*
- *Dancing*
- *Walks in nature*




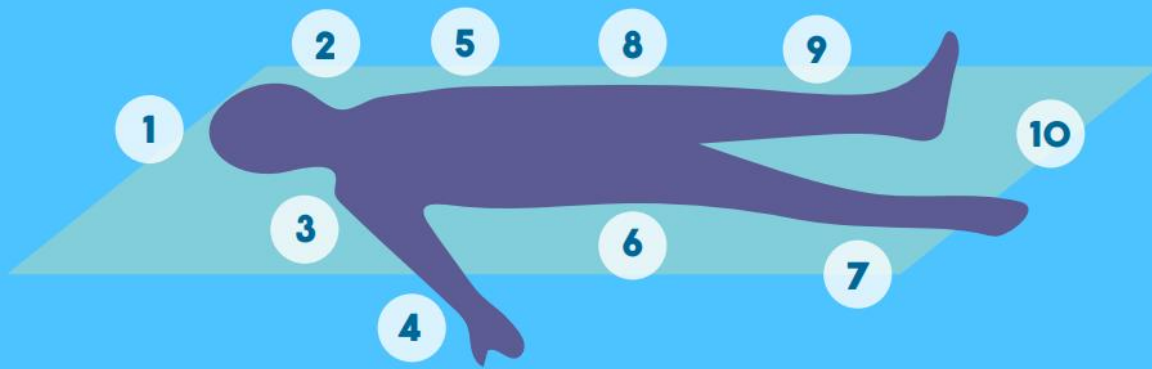
Mindfulness calendar: daily five-minute activities

This is a **two-week calendar** with **daily mindfulness** activity suggestions. You can run these activities whenever you like, for example at the **start of lessons**, or **after playtime**, to help ground and relax the children.

The activities within the calendar will take approximately **five minutes** and can be done **at home or in school**, with **individuals, small groups or whole classes**. You can display this poster in your classroom or staff room, and use the accompany guidance for instructions on how to deliver the activities.

MINDFULNESS CALENDAR

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
<p>COUNTING BREATHS</p> <p>1-2-3</p>	 <p>ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE</p>	 <p>USING THE SENSES</p>	<p>COLOUR BREATHING</p> 	 <p>BIRTHDAY CAKE BREATHING</p>
MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
<p>FEATHER BREATHING</p> 	 <p>FINGER COUNTING</p>	<p>SLIMY HANDS</p> 	 <p>RISE AND FALL</p>	 <p>RELAXING MUSCLES</p>



- 1** Tense face muscles including forehead, cheeks, mouth, upper neck. Release.
- 2** Gently roll head from side to side, with awareness of the tightening muscles. Release.
- 3** Tighten shoulders. Release.
- 4** Tense right arm, from shoulders to fingers without making a fist or lifting arm off of floor. Tense left arm. Release.
- 5** Gently tense chest muscles and abdomen, without holding the breath. Release.
- 6** Tense right hip and buttock. Release.
- 7** Tense right leg down through feet and toes. Release.
- 8** Tense left hip and buttock. Release.
- 9** Tense left leg down through feet and toes. Release.
- 10** While no longer tensing any muscles, allow attention to drift back up through legs, abdomen, chest, arms and back to the face.

Counting breaths

1-2-3

- Encourage the children to focus on their breathing by counting the number of 'in' breaths and 'out' breaths.
- "I am breathing in 1, I am breathing out 1, I am breathing in 2, I am breathing out 2...". Encourage them to continue do this until they reach number 10.

Attitude of gratitude



- Ask the children to focus on their breathing. If they want to, they can close their eyes.
- Encourage them to think of one thing that they are grateful for and encourage them to keep this image in their mind.
- Ask them to notice any feelings or sensations that arise.
- Continue this for a few minutes.
- You could also run this as a writing activity, using the following sentence starters:
 - Something I am grateful for today is...
 - The best thing that happened today was...
 - Something I did well today was...
 - I'll make the rest of the day great by...

Birthday cake breathing

- Ask the children to sit in a chair and place their hands on their bellies.
- Ask them to make their left hand into a fist and to imagine that this is a cake.
- Ask them to inhale, pretending to smell the cake.
- Ask them to exhale, pretending to blow out the candle.
- Continue this for a few minutes.



Feather breathing



- If you can provide real feathers or cotton wool for this activity, that would be great. Otherwise, children can use their imagination.
- Ask the children to sit comfortably on a chair and imagine that there is a feather or ball of cotton wool in front of them. If they have a feather or cotton wool they can place this in one of their hands and hold their hand out in front of them.
- Then ask them to breathe in through their nose and breathe out slowly through their mouth, in order to make the object float.
- Repeat this a few times.

Using the senses

- Remind the children of the five senses (seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting).
- In this order, ask children to focus on one sense at a time, noticing:
 - Five things they see
 - Four things they hear
 - Three things they smell
 - Two things they can touch
 - One thing they can taste
- By focusing on one sense at a time, children will be able to reduce their anxiety.

5 x



3 x



1 x



4 x

2 x

Colour breathing

- Ask the children to sit or stand in a comfortable position. They can close their eyes if they wish.

Ask the children to imagine their favourite colour, or a colour which helps them to feel calm.

- They are now going to take a breath in and imagine that they are breathing in this colour.
- As they breathe out, they are going to imagine blowing a bubble made of this colour.

You can repeat this process for a few minutes and encourage the children to see if they can take longer, slower, deeper breaths (both in and out) and blow larger imaginary bubbles.