

# Being Mindful

Kay Murphy explains how to make mindfulness part of your daily routine.

Now that we are back in school, it is a good idea to prioritise our own wellbeing and get the new school year off to a healthy start. The first mindful skill I am sharing can be done at any time of the day and may be needed often as we settle back to school.



## STOP

Stop is an easy to remember four-step mindfulness practice.

**Stop** whatever you are doing.

**Take** a moment to just sit or stand with awareness, concentrate on the breath allowing the mind and body to settle.

**Observe** thoughts, noticing strong thinking patterns trying to pull you into action. Notice the body and try to get an overall sense of how you are really feeling at this moment. Can you identify any emotional states? If not, just continue to be an observer of your internal world.

Before **Proceeding**, bring your attention back to the breath, get ready to transition to your normal mode of being, perhaps with a new sense of clarity and calm.

## Reflection

As reflective practitioners, let's add another element while we familiarise ourselves with this mindful practice. Each time you practice STOP, make a mental

note of your learning. Better still, grab a journal and record your insights – go wild with drawings, ideas, and notes.

You have now begun your own wellbeing journal which will be useful to come back to as you incorporate your own wellness goals from the very beginning of the new academic year.

## Mindfulness and wellbeing classrooms

The acronym STOP is a simple mindfulness skill which with practice you can pass onto your students.

1. Teach the STOP mindfulness practice twice a day, before circle time and home time perhaps. Sharing information about its benefits and why you use it will motivate your pupils to learn from you.
2. Integrate the STOP mindfulness practice into the whole school culture at assembly. Use a visible display board, agree on the language used and be sure to congratulate pupils who use it and are then ready to proceed with learning.
3. Create calm down jars/bottles, keep the jars in class, pretty soon

your pupils will self-regulate by reaching for their calm jar. Just shaking it and watching the glitter settle is grounding. These bottles are great for children with sensory needs and useful after emotionally upsetting situations.

4. Use the learning to build empathy within the classroom. We are all familiar with overwhelmed 'shaken up' feelings and we all appreciate taking a breather to pause and begin again.

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## Make your own calm down jar

We made this simple calm down jar (left) by using a plastic bottle, water, glitter stars and then glued the cover (this is a must).

This clip has easy to follow steps to get you started <http://bit.ly/CalmDownJar>.

