



## Parent Information: Mindfulness Lessons at Cleves School

Dear Parents,

Over the last 2 terms, I have had the privilege of teaching the Year 6 classes the core lessons from *The Youth Mindfulness Kids Programme*. The mindfulness programme is an introduction to mindfulness suitable for 7-11 year-olds. The course introduces mindfulness in a way that is engaging, relevant, and enjoyable! During the lessons we make use of games, experiments, videos and group discussion to convey key concepts as well as to teach mindfulness practices such as the **mindfulness of breathing meditation** and the **body scan**. The core objectives of the course are to enhance **mental, emotional** and **social wellbeing** of children by improving:

- Attention
- Self-control
- Self-awareness
- Emotional Regulation
- Gratitude
- Kindness ( to oneself and others)

The following are the topics covered in the **6 core lessons**:

Lesson 1	Training The Mind	Lesson 4	Allowing and Letting Be
Lesson 2	What is Attention?	Lesson 5	The Beginner's Mind
Lesson 3	The Benefits of Breathing Well	Lesson 6	Exploring Willpower

### *What is Mindfulness?*

Mindfulness is the “**awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.**”<sup>1</sup> Quite simply we teach the children that mindfulness is ‘**paying attention to the present moment and allowing the moment to be exactly as it is; to notice and allow.**’ Although mindfulness is a natural human capacity it is not our normal orientation to experience.<sup>2</sup> We are often lost in ruminative thinking about the past or the future – not truly present with what is happening in the here and now. By training our attention to dwell in the present moment we can gradually cultivate this capacity. With time, we are able to develop greater awareness of our thoughts, emotions and actions. This awareness enables us greater control over our impulses; act with more volition; and develop a heart-felt kindness to ourselves and others.

---

<sup>1</sup> Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: Past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144-156.

<sup>2</sup> Farb, N. A. S., Segal, Z. V., Mayberg, H., Bean, J., McKeon, D., Fatima, Z. and Anderson, A. K. (2007). Attending to the present: Mindfulness meditation reveals distinct neural modes of self-reference. *Social Cognitive Affective Neuroscience*, 2(4), 313-322.

## **This is what your children had to say:**

Here are some of their quotes straight from the Year 6 class feedback forms ....

### **Would you recommend learning mindfulness to a friend?**

*'I would say get started as soon as possible because if they're upset or angry they can use it to calm down and it helps them get the most out of the wonders of everyday human life.'*

*'Yes, because it helps me stay concentrated while doing work and it's very fun!'*

*'I would say you should learn mindfulness because it teaches you to be calm and stay in the present moment. Mindfulness lessons are enjoyable and fun.'*

*'I would tell them to learn mindfulness because it helps your life a lot. Noticing and allowing is really important otherwise you would constantly be stressed and mad at yourself for feeling a certain way.'*

### **What is it like to be mindful?**

*'Thinking about the present moment and noticing how you are feeling'*

*'Your mind would be in the present moment and you would be noticing and allowing'*

### **If you wanted to be mindful right now, what would you do?**

*'I would either try talk myself through a body scan, do some belly breaths or do some finger-breathing.'*

*'I would take 3 deep breaths in and out and close my eyes.'*

*'I would do finger breathing and focus on my breathing and the present moment.'*

### **How has mindfulness helped you?**

*'When I found it hard to fall asleep, I did some deep breathing and I fell asleep quicker than usual'*

*'When I was taking a test to get into a school I did my finger breathing and closed my eyes for 5 minutes to feel more calm.'*

*'I was fighting with my sister so I walked away and did some belly breathing to calm down.'*

*'I was in a race and there were much faster and older kids than me but I breathed in and out and then I was fine.'*

*'When I couldn't focus in literacy, I breathed in and out deeply 3 times and then I could concentrate.'*

*'It helped me get ready to go on stage when I went to theatre school.'*

*'It helped me stay in control of a tough situation and stay calm.'*

*'One day I kept thinking about something after school that I didn't want to do but mindfulness brought me back to the present moment and I felt better.'*

### **How do you think mindfulness will help you in the future?**

*'It will help me if I'm anxious before exams, starting a new secondary school and sometimes when I'm just feeling down.'*

*'If I ever feel sad or anxious, I will take a deep breathe in and out.'*

*'If I am doing an interview or an event, I now know how to stay in the present moment'*

*'I used to feel quite stressed out but now I know what to do when I'm feeling like that.'*

### **What is the most important thing you learnt during the mindfulness sessions?**

*'I have learnt to focus on the present, not the past or the future.'*

*'You don't have to be perfect; it's ok to allow how you are feeling'*

*'I've found ways to help me be more of a happy person.'*

*'That you don't have to force yourself to be something just notice and allow.'*

*'It has taught me that being angry, sad or happy is all ok- just bring yourself back to the present moment and notice and allow yourself to be.'*

*'It helped me realise to take things slowly; notice and allow.'*

If you would like to know more about the mindfulness lessons being taught at the school, I will be doing a presentation via Zoom on **Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> of April at 19:30**. The session will be roughly 30-40 min long. Please can you sign up if you are interested in joining the call. The presentation will be recorded and available to any parents unable to make the session.

I will gladly answer any further questions you may have so please contact the school with any queries. I look forward to continuing to inspire and nurture the minds of your children here at Cleves School.

Sincerely,  
Paula Webster