

Wellbeing in Schools Program Curriculum Description for Teachers

PROJECT NAME: Enhancing Resilience and Well-being of All Students in Primary Schools

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This document serves solely as supporting material for teachers implementing the Erasmus+ Wellbeing in School program. It may only be used by teachers who have successfully completed the relevant training for this program.

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This curricular document provides a brief overview of the educational program for implementing mindfulness practices in the lower secondary educational level (ISCED 2) in five countries (CZ, SK, EL, IE, FI) within the project of Wellbeing in Schools. Here are the key elements that it includes:

1. **Introduction** – Purpose, rationale, and target audience
 2. **Educational Goals** – Broad goals and specific learning outcomes
 3. **Content Overview** – Lesson plan outline, topics and key skills to be developed
 4. **Structure and Organization** – Curriculum framework and implementation
 5. **Teaching Methods** – Instructional approaches and classroom activities
 6. **Assessment** – Methods and criteria for evaluating learning
 7. **Resources** – Required materials and technology integration
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1. Introduction

Purpose and Rationale

The Wellbeing in Schools mindfulness curriculum addresses the growing need for social-emotional support and mental resilience among adolescents. Lower secondary education students often face academic pressures, social challenges, and emotional fluctuations that can impact their learning and wellbeing. This curriculum equips them with practical mindfulness tools to enhance focus, regulate emotions, and respond thoughtfully in real-life situations. By integrating short daily practices and dedicated lessons into the school routine, the program aims to foster inner awareness, self-regulation, and healthier relationships, ultimately creating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

Target Audience

The curriculum is designed for students at **ISCED 2 level** (typically ages 11–15), covering lower secondary education across diverse classroom contexts. It is adaptable for different subjects and school settings, ensuring accessibility for teachers in multiple countries and subjects. Activities are developmentally appropriate for early adolescents, combining brief guided practices, interactive discussions, and reflective exercises that align with their cognitive and emotional needs.

2. Educational Goals

Main Goal

Enable students to develop greater awareness of their inner world (i.e. thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations) and learn tools to manage real-life situations and relationships with more calm and clarity, and apply these tools at their own pace to cultivate healthier behaviors.

Sub-goals

- **Inner Awareness:** Students learn to notice and name emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations—and recognize how they influence behavior toward themselves and others.
 - **Mindfulness Tools:** Students discover mindfulness tools that help them work better with emotions, thoughts, and the body, supporting calm, focus, and emotional regulation—in both solo moments and social interactions.
 - **Real-Life Situations:** Students understand which techniques help in different real-life situations—like before a test, during conflict, or when feeling overwhelmed. Throughout the program, students will encounter at least one situation where they successfully use mindfulness tools to respond with greater thoughtfulness and calmness.
 - **Mindfulness Tool-Box:** Students develop a personal “mindfulness tool-box”— a list of go-to techniques and situations of when to use them, both for self-care and better relationships.
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3. Content Overview

Lesson Plans Overview

The *Wellbeing in Schools* mindfulness program is organized into **11 lesson plans**, which are thematically distinctive and focus on developing particular skills:

1. **Mindfulness: Hit the Pause Button** – Introduction to mindfulness and noticing present moment experience (*skills: noticing body and sensations, calming with breath and movement*)
2. **Focus on the Important** – Focused attention, noticing thoughts and other distractions (*skills: sustaining focus, noticing distractions, using breath as anchor*)
3. **Taste the Moment** – Mindful eating; awareness of senses, focused attention; self-awareness in consumption (*skills: mindful eating, listening, appreciating details*)
4. **When it Gets Uncomfortable** – Inner awareness of discomfort, noticing elements of inner experience: thoughts, emotions, body sensations (*skills: noticing body signals, noticing and regulating emotions, shifting to calm*)
5. **Stress Less, Chill More** – Awareness and regulation of stress (*skills: recognizing stress signs, calming breath, grounding*)
6. **Be Your Own Bestie** – Self-compassion and inner kindness (*skills: kind self-talk, supportive touch, empathy*)
7. **Declutter Your Mind** – Thought awareness and rumination regulation (*skills: observing thoughts, grounding, mental clarity*)
8. **Real Connection, Not Just Reaction** – Awareness and regulation of anger; building relationships (*skills: spotting anger signals, pausing, responding calmly*)
9. **Little Things, Big Mood Boost** – Awareness of pleasant everyday moments and turning attention to the positive (*skills: noticing positives, sensory grounding, boosting mood*)

10. **You and the Algorithm** – Mindful tech use and attention control (*skills: pausing before tech use, mindful attention, real-life focus*)
11. **Owning Mindfulness – Build Your Go-To Practices** – Toolbox creation and routine building; gratitude (*skills: selecting favorite tools, linking to situations, building routines*)

Format of the Content

Every lesson plan combines three complementary content formats under the **Watch–Listen–Act** framework:

- **Watch:** A short **animated video** (2–3 minutes) with a psychoeducational purpose, introducing key concepts such as attention, stress regulation, or self-compassion. These videos provide clear explanations and relatable examples to help students understand the “why” behind mindfulness practices.
 - **Listen:** Several **audio recordings** (typically 2, 4, and 7 minutes) offering guided mindfulness practices. These recordings focus on techniques like breathing exercises, body scans, grounding, or self-kindness, enabling students to experience mindfulness in a structured and supportive way.
 - **Act:** A set of **text-based activities** for both **in-classroom work** and **out-of-classroom individual practice**. Activities include breath and body awareness practices, journaling, role playing and creation of visual walls that encourage reflection and application of mindfulness tools in real-life situations such as before tests, during conflicts, or when feeling overwhelmed.
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4. Structure and Organization

The curriculum is designed to be **flexible and adaptable**, enabling teachers to integrate mindfulness practices into daily routines or dedicate full lessons to mindfulness. The framework includes three main scenarios:

First Scenario: Daily Short Sessions (5–7 minutes)

- **Objective:** Incorporate brief mindfulness practices into any subject (e.g., Math, English, Civics) or classroom routines (e.g., morning circle) to promote ongoing emotional regulation and focus.
- **Structure:** Each weekly lesson plan provides four or five short sessions, using either one activity or combining two of the three activity types assigned for the lesson plan: Watch (animation video), Listen (guided audio practice), Act (practical activity). Each activity should be followed by at least a brief 2-minute reflection. These sessions are designed for easy integration into the school day without disrupting core teaching time.

Second Scenario: Dedicated Mindfulness Lessons (45 minutes)

- **Objective:** Offer deeper exploration of mindfulness topics through structured activities.
- **Structure:** Weekly 45-minute lessons can be integrated into related subjects (Ethics, Civics, PE) or delivered as extracurricular sessions. Each lesson includes:
 - Introduction (overview and brainstorming);
 - Watch - a short psychoeducational video;
 - Listen - a guided practice (7 min - the longest) followed by reflection;
 - Act - discussion, journaling, or group activity; if time permits, you may incorporate one more shorter audio-guided practice;
 - Closing - reflection and introduction of daily challenges (out-of-classroom activities). Out-of-classroom activities reinforce learning between lessons.

Third Scenario: Flexible Integration

Teachers can select and combine Watch–Listen–Act practices to fit available time and classroom needs. Recommended approach: After the video animation, students should begin with the longest audio recording (about 7 minutes), as it offers the most complete guidance before progressing to the shorter 4- and 2-minute versions. Depending on the Lesson Plan, one to three recordings may be available, and all should be used. At least one or two text-based in-classroom activities are recommended, or all three if time permits. The sequence can be varied—for example: video animation, longest audio, a text-based activity, then a shorter audio. Students should also be encouraged to choose and complete at least one of the out-of-classroom activities daily throughout the week. Always conclude with reflection and practical application.

Minimal Requirements for Implementation of the Program

The recommended approach is to implement the full set of 11 Lesson Plans over 11 weeks, delivering one Lesson Plan per week. As explained above, each lesson plan can be implemented in three ways: as 5–7 minute sessions most days of the week, as one 45–60 minute mindfulness lesson once a week, or through a flexible weekly arrangement of video, audio and text-based activities. It is possible to combine these three formats during certain weeks if needed, although establishing a consistent and predictable routine is advisable. The recommended approach is to implement all the content provided in each Lesson Plan.

However, if it is not feasible to implement all 11 Lesson Plans, teachers may choose to deliver at least 8. This represents the minimum acceptable implementation. Having said that, the selection of the Lesson Plans should not be made on a cherry-picking basis, as the curriculum has been designed very deliberately and progresses gradually: it begins by cultivating foundational mindfulness skills and then builds upon them. Skipping certain Lesson Plans would therefore undermine this developmental sequence.

The minimum required set consists of Lesson Plans 1–7 and Lesson Plan 11, with Lesson Plans 1–7 implemented in the proposed order and the sequence concluding with Lesson Plan 11.

Minimum requirements for activities within each selected Lesson Plan are as follows:

- Each Lesson Plan should begin with the Video Animation.
 - The minimum implementation of audio recordings is two audio-based sessions. These may consist of two repetitions of the longest recording, or one longest and one shorter recording. However, using the longest recording at least once is essential, as it provides the most thorough explanation of the practice.
 - For the text-based in-classroom activities, at least one should be included. Teachers may choose which one.
 - In addition, it is important to encourage students to choose at least one of the two out-of-classroom activities within that Lesson Plan and to complete it at least once during the week.
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5. Teaching Methods

Implementing mindfulness activities for adolescents requires teaching strategies that are developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and sensitive to diverse emotional and social needs. The goal is to create a safe, predictable, and non-judgmental classroom environment where students feel respected and free to engage at their own pace. Participation should always be voluntary, allowing students to choose the level and form of involvement that feels comfortable.

- **Experiential Learning** is central to mindfulness education. Students learn primarily through direct experience rather than abstract explanation. Activities are short and structured, enabling students to explore mindfulness in a practical, embodied way. Teachers act as facilitators rather than directors, modeling calm awareness and emotional regulation. This approach emphasizes doing before explaining, encouraging students to interpret their experiences personally.
- **Reflective Practice** complements experiential learning by helping students process what they notice during activities. Reflection can take various forms, such as journaling, pair sharing, or group discussion. Teachers use open-ended prompts like “What did you notice?” or “How did that feel?” to foster curiosity and self-awareness without judgment. These practices support emotional vocabulary development and empathy while respecting individual comfort levels.
- **Journaling as a Tool for Reflection** offers students a private and flexible way to explore their experiences with mindfulness. Writing down observations, feelings, or physical sensations helps deepen self-awareness and consolidate learning. Prompts such as “One thing I noticed was...” or “Something that surprised me during the practice...” encourage honest, non-evaluative reflection. Journaling can stand alone or precede group sharing, making it particularly valuable for students who prefer quiet, individual processing. Over time, journals can serve as a record of personal growth, helping students recognize patterns in their thoughts and emotions.

- **Collaborative and Dialogic Methods** encourage peer support and normalize emotional exploration. Optional sharing in pairs or small groups helps students feel connected and validates their experiences. Teachers should maintain a tone of curiosity rather than evaluation, ensuring that all contributions are welcomed without pressure.
- **Direct Instruction**, used occasionally, can be helpful for introducing essential ideas, clarifying the purpose of an activity, or highlighting the relevance of mindfulness—such as considering its benefits or recognizing physical signs of stress. This type of input should remain brief, invitational, and supportive of the experiential process rather than replacing it. Conceptual explanations serve to provide context and deepen understanding, but they should never overshadow the practical experience at the heart of the session.
- **A trauma-sensitive and inclusive pedagogy** underpins all activities. Teachers remain attentive to signs of discomfort and offer alternatives when needed, such as adjusting posture or opting for a quieter form of participation. Clear boundaries and predictable routines help create emotional safety, while flexibility ensures that diverse needs are met. Students may choose to keep their eyes open, sit in a preferred position, or engage in creative expression instead of verbal sharing.

The overall teacher mindset is to **facilitate, not force**. Mindfulness activities are not about performance but about cultivating presence, self-regulation, and social connectedness. Teachers prioritize care and compassion, guiding students gently while respecting autonomy. By integrating experiential learning, reflection, and inclusive practices, educators can help adolescents develop resilience, empathy, and emotional balance in a supportive classroom culture.

6. Assessment

In this program, there is no formal assessment or evaluation of students' mindfulness practice. Participation is entirely voluntary, and students are invited—not required—to engage with activities at their own pace. The emphasis is on creating a supportive environment where curiosity and self-awareness can naturally develop. Teachers act as facilitators, offering gentle guidance and encouragement without imposing expectations or standards.

Instead of measuring outcomes, the approach prioritizes presence and experience. Feedback, when offered, is descriptive and affirming, focusing on what students find meaningful rather than on correctness or performance. This ensures that mindfulness remains a personal journey, free from pressure, comparison, or judgment.

7. Resources

A wide range of mindfulness resources exists for educators and students in primary and secondary education. The following list is not comprehensive; it represents a selection curated by the authors of this program, and several activities included here were directly adapted or inspired by these resources:

Apps for Teachers

- **Calm Schools Initiative** – Classroom meditations & self-care guide: <https://www.calm.com/schools/resources>
- **Headspace for Educators** – Free access for K-12 teachers: <https://www.headspace.com/educators>
- **Insight Timer** – Free library of guided meditations & teacher sessions: <https://insighttimer.com>
- **Smiling Mind** – Free, evidence-based program & educator hub: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Websites & Online Platforms

- **Educating Mindfully (Coalition of Schools Educating Mindfully)** – Frameworks, events, PD: <https://www.educatingmindfully.org/>
- **Greater Good in Education (UC Berkeley)** – 400+ research-based SEL & mindfulness practices: <https://ggie.berkeley.edu/>
- **Kristin Neff – Self-Compassion Resources** – Guided practices, exercises, and research: <https://self-compassion.org/>
- **Mindful Teacher Community Network** – Newsletter, research, teacher voices: <https://mindfulteachercommunitynetwork.com/resources/>
- **Mindfulness in Schools Project (MiSP)** – Evidence-based school curricula & training: <https://mindfulnessinschools.org/>
- **New Leaf Foundation Mindfulness Toolkit** – 7 lesson plans, audio, and slides: <https://newleaffoundation.com/mindfulness-toolkit/>
- **MindUP** – Social-emotional learning and mindfulness curriculum: <https://mindup.org>
- **MSC-T (Mindful Self-Compassion for Teens)** – Self-compassion practices for adolescents: <https://centerformsc.org/msc-teens/>
- **The Mindset Clinic – Breathing Exercises to Reduce Stress:** <https://themindsetclinic.co.uk/breathing-exercises-reduce-stress/>

Books

- **Fogarty, R. (1994).** *The Mindful School: How to Teach for Metacognitive Reflection.* Palatine, IL: IRI/Skylight Publishing. ISBN 978-0932935496
- **Hawkins, T. (2017).** *Mindful Teacher's Toolkit: Creating Calm, Focus and Wellbeing in the Classroom.* London, UK: Routledge. ISBN 978-1138670684
- **Jennings, P. A., & Siegel, D. J. (2015).** *Mindfulness for Teachers: Simple Skills for Peace and Productivity in the Classroom.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN 978-0393708073

- **Jennings, P. A. (Ed.). (2019).** *The Mindful School: Transforming School Culture through Mindfulness and Compassion*. New York, NY: Guilford Press. ISBN 978-1462540020
- **Kabat-Zinn, J. (2016).** *Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment and Your Life*. Boulder, CO: Sounds True. ISBN 978-1622036677
- **Neff, K. (2011).** *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself*. New York, NY: William Morrow. ISBN 978-0061733529
- **Schoeberlein David, D., & Sheth, S. (2009).** *Mindful Teaching and Teaching Mindfulness: A Guide for Anyone Who Teaches Anything*. Boston, MA: Wisdom Publications. ISBN 978-0861715671