



*Together We Are Safe, Together We Are Respectful, Together We Achieve*

## **Wellbeing Wednesday #6**

*Each Wednesday we will be posting some exciting Wellbeing content for our community. This may include information about how you can support your children's and families' wellbeing, a snapshot on mental health issues currently prevalent in the community, or information about a local service in the area that might benefit you or your child.*

**This week's topic is Mindfulness**

**“You are the sky, everything else is just the weather.” - Pema Chödrön**

### **What is mindfulness?**

Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and without judgement. There are two kinds of mindfulness, formal and informal. Formal practice is mindfulness meditation where you sit, usually with the eyes closed, and focus attention on one thing, usually either your breathing or the sensations experienced within your body. With informal practice you bring the same kind of improved attention that you might get from formal practice to everyday situations. This involves directing your full and non-judgemental attention to the activity you're undertaking at a particular moment – it might be washing the dishes, brushing your teeth, chatting with a friend or studying.

### **Why practise being mindful?**

Research has shown that regular mindfulness practise, both formal and informal, has many benefits. These include reducing worry, anxiety and distress; feeling a greater sense of calm; being better able to regulate our emotions; improved concentration and productivity; a greater sense of connection and empathy with those around us; and better physical health and sleep patterns.

During 2020 many of us experienced a loss of control over our lives. In 2021 we are (hopefully) continuing to open up so that our lives look similar to pre-Covid. Both of these transitions resulted in an increased anxiety for a lot of us, kids included. Using mindfulness as way to ground ourselves in the present moment, without worrying about what we can't control, is a tremendous way to combat this anxiety. If you or your family are getting insufficient sleep, consuming a poor diet, overstimulated from screens, have chaotic or intensely busy households, or are dealing with other stressors it might be time to start some mindfulness practice.

### **How do I start Mindfulness?**

There are many phone apps that will help you on your mindfulness journey. Smiling Mind is an Australian company that is dedicated to help young minds thrive. Their app has been downloaded by over 6 million Australians and is used by a third of Australian educators in the classroom. The app has heaps of helpful hints and tips on how you can get your mindfulness journey started, as well as some easy ways to track your progress.

Smiling Mind suggest some tips for teaching mindfulness to children:

- Create time to practise mindfulness. This might mean regular practise during the morning routine, after school, or at bed time. Mindfulness can be built in almost anywhere.
- Aim to avoid rushing. Being late is one of the biggest stressors for a child. Using visual reminders and job rosters for older children is a great way to help with this.

- Practise a breathing technique. There are many to choose from but when you are pressed for time, two minutes of calm breathing may be the difference between meltdown and a successful day. The Smiling Mind app can help with this.
- Create mindful routines around sleep. Practising our mindfulness and calming strategies before bed is an excellent way of helping with your child's sleep patterns.
- Practise mindfulness yourself. It is vital that children see the behaviours we want them to do in us. By showing children how we calm ourselves down when we get stressed they are significantly more likely to join and find the techniques useful.
- Spending time in nature is a great mindfulness idea. Exposing our senses to the wonders of nature is an easy way to ground ourselves in the present and allows for calm and peaceful exploration.

For more information, search [Smilingminds.com.au](http://Smilingminds.com.au). There are many articles and a significant amount of research to provide further reason why mindfulness can help you and your children. Alternatively, browse some of the many other mindfulness apps available. If you have further questions, contact Griffin Errey through the Woodville PS email or phone line.

Have a great week!

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