



INTRODUCTION

Mapping PSHE and MiSP Curricula

Exploring the relationship between mindfulness and personal, social and health education



OCTOBER 2022

Summary

This resource is for educators who use or plan to use the Mindfulness in School's Project (MiSP) curricula in school. It has been designed to support teachers and school leaders in easily identifying where the themes explored in the MiSP curricula overlap with PSHE and highlight the way that mindfulness teaching can enhance PSHE learning and vice versa.

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This work was developed in partnership with Annabel Talbot

Annabel spent 30 years as Adviser for PSHE for Cambridgeshire. This included leading the team in researching, writing and providing training on the renowned Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme. She was also involved in writing national units of work for PSHE for QCA (for both primary and secondary age groups), and led the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme for Cambridgeshire.



1. Purpose of this document



The intention of this document is to explore and illustrate the relationship between the MiSP curricula and PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) curricula, focusing here on the Department for Education (DfE) Statutory Guidance for schools in England and the PSHE Association Programmes of Study. It highlights opportunities for linking and enhancing teaching and learning in schools where there is a commitment to delivering both mindfulness and PSHE, within the context of a whole-school approach to the wellbeing of everyone in the school community.

The value and benefits of delivering mindfulness in schools are well documented in research and other guidance. For many children and young people, the impact has been shown on their wellbeing and mental health, concentration and cognition, social and emotional learning and behaviour. For further information about this research and evidence, see the MiSP website.

The PSHE Association describes PSHE Education as:

a school subject through which pupils develop the knowledge, skills and attributes they need to manage their lives, now and in the future. It helps children and young people to stay healthy and safe, while preparing them to make the most of life and work.

Mindfulness can play a unique role here. As well as supporting children and young people (and adults) to develop their knowledge and skills, it also helps them to cultivate a way of being or an approach to the way they live their lives. It is fundamentally a practice, and it invites us to model what we learn and to embody and enact mindful approaches and attitudes in everything we do.

This document could support a PSHE coordinator or mindfulness lead in schools in explaining to senior leaders, governors and others the potential role and contribution that mindfulness can make to school life and how it can support the wellbeing and learning of adults and children. It could potentially also add to the credibility of its role within and alongside the school's existing curriculum.





It is not intended to be used as a checklist of content enabling teachers to say that, by delivering mindfulness, areas of DfE statutory guidance requirements will be covered. The relationship between the two is much more nuanced. One does not substitute for the other – rather they can potentially complement, enrich and extend the learning in each. For teachers looking to save curriculum time through potential cross over, this may not seem helpful, but in terms of children and young people’s learning and development, it can make a bigger difference to outcomes.

Delivering mindfulness in schools must go beyond the curriculum; it is much more than about the teaching. There needs to be a commitment to staff having their own mindfulness practice, and it is important that it is embedded within whole school approaches to promoting the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community, as explained in Section 3 below.

2. Terminology



In the UK, there are many different ways of describing whole-school approaches, teaching and learning curricula and frameworks for young people’s development in this field, including Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), Wellbeing, Personal Development, Relationships Education, Citizenship and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development. Internationally and in research, the term ‘Social and Emotional Learning’ (SEL) is often used. This also goes beyond the curriculum and includes all opportunities for learning and developing within a whole school approach.

The DfE statutory guidance refers to Relationships Education (Primary), Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary) and Health Education / Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing (all key stages). The PSHE Association Programmes of Study(2) are for Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education. This document uses PSHE as a term to encompass these frameworks and curriculum statements.

3. Whole school approaches



This document is focused on curriculum mapping, and also recognises that teaching and learning can only be effective within the context of a positive whole school approach to SEL, Health Education and Wellbeing. The DfE and PHE document ‘Promoting Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing’(3) provides a model with eight principles for a whole school approach: leadership and management, the ethos and environment, curriculum, teaching and learning, enabling student voice, staff development (to support their own wellbeing and that of students), identifying need and monitoring impact, working with parents and carers and targeted support. Wellbeing must be prioritised and embedded through all these aspects of the whole school community and its work.

This is reinforced in the Foreword of the DfE Statutory Guidance(1), which states (in reference to the subject content):

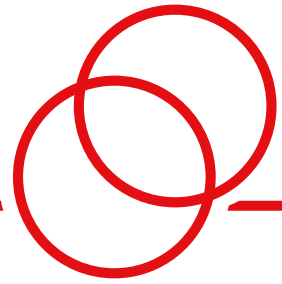
‘This content should support the wider work of schools in helping to foster pupil wellbeing and develop resilience and character that we know are fundamental to pupils being happy, successful and productive members of society.’

There is a wide range of different programmes and approaches used in schools to frame and enact this, including Healthy Schools, Growth Mindset, Forest Schools, Protective Behaviours, Philosophy for Children, Thinking Schools, Building Learning Power, Penn Resiliency, Pupil Participation, Peer mediation, Student voice, Learning to Learn, Coram Life Education (Scarf), Healthy Minds/Bounce forward and the Leader in Me.

Some aspects of mindfulness and the MISP curricula will provide the foundation for or sit comfortably within or alongside these programmes and/or aspects of school life, without necessarily having a direct link with the statements in the DfE statutory guidance and PSHE Association Programmes of Study, for example, learning about focus, attention, concentration, learning about the brain, exploration of breathing etc.



4. Overarching aims and outcomes in PSHE and in Mindfulness



For both mindfulness and PSHE there are some key areas of aims and outcomes that are both overarching and threaded through whole programmes, and both need to sit within a strategic whole school approach to the wellbeing of everyone in the school community. The relationship between the two, and the themes which run across them, can underpin the foundational capacity of mindfulness to support many aspects of mental and physical wellbeing of staff and students in schools.

These overarching themes can be woven into discussion through enquiry after practices or through the examples used to illustrate learning in lessons. They could include general discussions and learning about mental health and wellbeing for instance, and the following statements from the DfE and PSHE Association guidance are examples of learning that can be built through a range of mindfulness lessons:

Exploring the theme of identity and diversity is another possibility, for example through recognising that when practising mindfulness we explore and normalise that we have different experiences, different perspectives and different responses. Statements in the DfE and PSHE Association guidance that could be linked here include:

‘The importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs.’

‘about respecting the differences and similarities between people and recognising what they have in common with others e.g. physically, in personality or background’.

‘mental wellbeing is a normal part of daily life, in the same way as physical health’

‘the characteristics of mental and emotional health; to develop empathy and understanding about how daily actions can affect people’s mental health’

Although there is not always a direct link between the intentions of a mindfulness lesson and statements in the DfE guidance and PSHE Association programmes of study, the teaching and learning in mindfulness can make a significant contribution to overall wellbeing outcomes. The statements listed in the mapping documents which follow provide more detailed illustration of potential links, but sometimes it is the character and nature of the learning, and how it is delivered that are subtly distinct.

Mindfulness teachers are encouraged to teach from a place of embodiment of their own mindfulness practice; which includes embodying the attitudes of mindfulness - non-judgement, allowing, compassion etc so 'walking their talk' in the classroom. The way mindfulness teachers teach and how they are with children and young people, matters as much, if not more than anything they teach. When leading a mindfulness practice, the teacher is practising alongside the children and young people (whilst at the same time being aware of what is happening in the room), which invites the children and young people to see the teacher as a fellow explorer rather than the expert. The teacher's approach to 'enquiry' in mindfulness supports children and young people in bringing a friendly curiosity to what they notice in their experience and deepens their understanding of how they relate to the world, other people and themselves. It mostly involves open questions, and children and young people learn that there are no wrong answers here - the process of exploration is more than or just as important as the outcomes.

Examples of key areas from within the mindfulness curricula that do not directly match with PSHE statements include: focus/attention, compassion, self-regulation, emotional regulation, becoming aware of the thought process/metacognition, awareness of thoughts/feelings/body sensations, learning about the brain, exploring breathing and being with the difficult.

Examples of areas of PSHE which are not reflected directly in the wording of stated mindfulness objectives include: courage, tolerance, relationship building, bullying, puberty, substance education, body image, safeguarding, loss and change and sources of support. However, as explored in this document, the proven outcomes of effective mindfulness programmes will certainly contribute to children and young people's ability to manage situations in all of these contexts.

There may also be opportunities to link to PSHE learning in the examples used in mindfulness lessons to apply the learning. For example, when exploring choice making, examples to do with healthy lifestyles, family relationships or safety could be used.

The development of mindful approaches can also make a significant contribution to children's learning behaviours, for example, their ability to concentrate, direct their attention, focus, communicate and cooperate. These are touched on in the PSHE Association Programmes of Study, and although they are not explicit in the DfE statements, they are addressed in many PSHE programmes.



5. How mindfulness can enhance a school's approach to teaching and learning in PSHE



The guide 'Implementing Mindfulness in Schools'(4) suggests that teaching mindfulness as part of a programme of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can be a good fit.

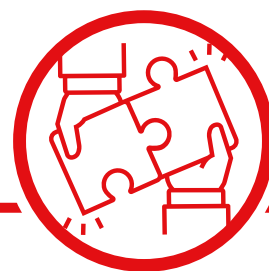
The following is taken from the document:

Evidence suggests that mindfulness practice can cultivate social and emotional skills and qualities including self-awareness, self-regulation, resilience, relationship skills, empathy, compassion and a sense of social responsibility.

- **Through its present moment, embodied, skills-based approach, mindfulness can help ensure that the aims of SEL are realised in practice and action, not just expressed as theories, words and future intentions.**
- **SEL can be somewhat solution focused. In contrast, mindfulness does not immediately focus on outcomes such as finding an answer to a dilemma or feeling better: it offers an alternative response to difficulties that cannot immediately be 'solved'.**
- **Mindfulness adds the ability to be fully present and non-reactive, in body as well as mind, with whatever is happening, including with uncertainty and unpleasant emotions. This can help build patience, resilience and insight - often more realistic and valuable responses to life's dilemmas than knee-jerk reactions.**

If mindfulness is to make this unique contribution it is important that it is taught in its fullest sense, as including but being more than just 'relaxing', 'calming' or even 'paying attention', all of which can easily become a form of simplistic 'fix it'. The core integrity of mindfulness, as forming a new relationship to experience, approaching what is happening in the present moment, including the difficult, with open-minded kindness and curiosity as the basis for wiser action needs to be firmly in place.'

6. Delivering an integrated approach to PSHE and Mindfulness



In order for mindfulness to be delivered effectively within school, it is essential that staff receive appropriate training. This begins with an eight week programme to learn mindfulness for themselves, followed by a period of time when they develop a regular practice, then a recognised MiSP training course enabling them to deliver the relevant programme for children and young people and ongoing support for teacher development and implementation. As well as being able to deliver training for children from their own practice (see section 4), teachers need to understand safeguarding and trauma-sensitive practice in the context of teaching mindfulness programmes to children and young people. We include guidance in our training and teaching notes and recommend further trauma- sensitive training.

There are a number of research and guidance documents which provide evidence of the positive impact staff learning mindfulness can have on staff-student interactions and therefore relationships, including Singh et al (2013)(5). The benefits of having a mindfulness practice for staff in schools are also well documented, and they include psycho-social wellbeing, physical health and wellbeing, reducing and preventing mental health problems and teacher effectiveness (from Implementing Mindfulness in Schools(4)). Further information and research references can be found on the MiSP website.

This level of mindfulness training helps to support mindfulness programmes being delivered with integrity, for example: recognising the importance of teaching the programmes in order and not prioritising those aspects that deliver on statutory requirements, and understanding the subtle differences in approach to teaching (see section 4 above).

Equally, it is important that staff delivering PSHE have received appropriate training, including around mental health and emotional wellbeing. In the Ofsted report 'Not yet good enough: Personal, Social, Health and Economic education in schools' (2012), one of the key recommendations was that staff teaching PSHE should receive subject-specific training (including in the teaching of sensitive issues), updates and support.

As suggested in section 4, when teaching mindfulness there will be opportunities to draw into the discussions aspects of PSHE. It might be about the open-ended questions and discussions (through enquiry for instance) and scenarios teachers choose to use – for example, when exploring choice, situations involving healthy lifestyles, coping with exams, keeping safe, or friendships and relationships could be included.

For a school where there is a commitment to delivering quality teaching and learning in PSHE as well as mindfulness, there are also valuable opportunities to draw mindfulness approaches into PSHE lessons. For example, when teaching about managing risk and safeguarding, reminding children and young people about noticing and allowing signals from their body or emotions, creating space and enabling wise choices which might include seeking help or talking with someone.

Sometimes the learning intentions/objectives are quite different between PSHE and mindfulness. For example, in PSHE and health education, the body and movement are included in the context of physical activity and exercise, whereas in mindfulness the emphasis is rather on helping us to move from thinking into sensing, the ability to tune into body sensations and noticing signals that help us to recognise what we need.

Even within statements where there is a direct link, it is important to note that there may be elements that are different. For example one PSHE statement about strategies for promoting emotional wellbeing includes the idea of avoiding negative thinking, whereas in mindfulness we would be encouraging young people to notice and allow all their thoughts, acknowledge or allow the thoughts to pass by (whichever would be the kindest thing to do) and then choose how to best support themselves, perhaps by focusing attention on something else.



7. Meeting Ofsted requirements for Personal Development



Within the current Ofsted framework (Inspection handbook April 2022(6)), under the ‘Quality of Education’ judgement, inspectors will specifically monitor that the statutory requirements for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education are being delivered.

‘Personal Development’ is also one of the key judgements. Both mindfulness and PSHE, in combination and separately, can make a valuable contribution to the provision within schools. Some of the aspects of this judgement that are particularly relevant include the following:

- **developing and deepening pupils’ understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance**
- **promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique**
- **promoting an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all pupils**
- **developing pupils’ character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society**
- **developing pupils’ confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy**

There are also aspects of the key judgement of ‘Behaviour and attitudes’ to which mindfulness and PSHE potentially make a contribution. These include pupils’ motivation and positive attitude towards learning, a positive and respectful school culture in which staff know and care about pupils, and an environment in which pupils feel safe.

8. What is in this document and how it works



Following this introduction, there is a mapping chart for each of the MiSP curricula:



(Introduction)



(3-6 years)



(7-11 years)



(11-18 years)

Each chart contains the learning objectives/intentions for each MiSP session, mapped against the relevant DfE Statutory Guidance statements for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. Statements from the PSHE Association Programmes of Study for PSHE Education are also cross-referenced. At the top of the chart, there is a list of the codes used to show where in the national guidance the statements appear. This also includes a list of the 'Core Mechanisms' which appear in the first column and come from the document 'Implementing Mindfulness in Schools', published by the Mindfulness Initiative(4).

The statements are colour coded to indicate whether they are a direct link or an indirect link to the MiSP session intentions/objectives (green for direct, purple for indirect). Where there is a direct link, intentions and objectives match more clearly, and there may be opportunities for teaching and learning in both simultaneously. Where there is an indirect link, it is more about showing a possible opportunity for cross-referencing in the teaching, but the intentions and objectives are different and should be taught discretely.

It is important to pay careful attention to the links. As stated above, sometimes where there is a link, the objectives or learning intentions may be very different, and it is important to take care not to assume coverage or substitution. There are also some statements from the DfE and PSHE Association guidance that have been included, where part of a statement links and part of it does not.

In the 'Notes/Opportunities' column, some of the possibilities for linking teaching and learning are explored, and also indicate where the objectives or intentions differ between mindfulness and the DfE and PSHE Association guidance. The notes sometimes explain in greater depth the intentions, approach, practices and learning within mindfulness, which supports a deeper understanding of where the teaching and learning is distinct from and/or coincides with that within PSHE.

Conclusion

As guidance around PSHE requirements inevitably will change and the MiSP curricula updated to reflect current thinking about what is effective in mindfulness in education, we will update this document at regular intervals.

Please refer to **the MiSP website** for reference and further information, and contact us at **enquiries@mindfulnessinschools.org** if we can support you further.

References

1. Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education – Statutory Guidance (DfE September 2021)
2. Programme of Study for PSHE Education Key Stages 1-5 (The PSHE Association)
3. Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing – A Whole School Approach (Public Health England / DfE 2021)
4. Implementing Mindfulness in Schools: an evidence-based guide (The Mindfulness Initiative, 2021) Authors: Katherine Weare and Adrian Bethune
5. Nirbhay N. Singh, Giulio E. Lancioni, Alan S. W. Winton, Bryan T. Karazsia & Judy Singh (2013) Mindfulness Training for Teachers Changes the Behavior of Their Preschool Students, *Research in Human Development*, 10:3, 211-233, DOI: 10.1080/15427609.2013.818484
6. School Inspection Handbook (Ofsted July 2022)