



Back to School

A wellbeing activity
guide for educators





Back-to-school guidance for student wellbeing

At Life Skills Group, our vision is that every child has access to an effective, measurable and affordable social, emotional and physical education. This has never been more important given the social, emotional and physical impact of global events on our lives this past few years – which has presented particular challenges for caregivers and educators responsible for our next generation of leaders.

This booklet is intended to help educators create space for their students to express their thoughts and emotions as they begin a new school year. The activities, mindful practices and non-competitive game ideas provided will help your students build their own social and physical awareness, express their feelings and create opportunities to learn and practice important values alongside their academic activities this coming year.



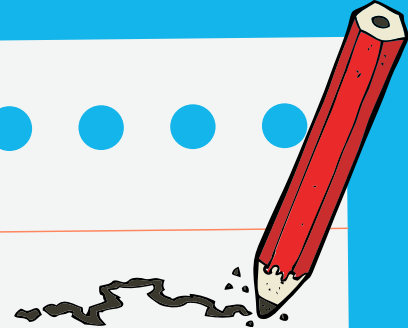


First Day Journal

Your students will likely have many feelings about returning to school. The following printable sheets can help them express their feelings, so you can be aware and mindful of every student's needs during this new school year and transition period.



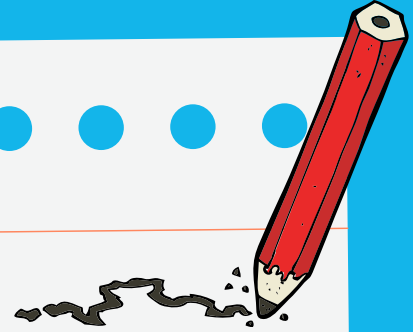
I am excited about...



I am worried about...



Did you miss school during the holidays? What did you miss?



Can you list some of the feelings you're having today?



First day activities

The following non-competitive game and mindful practice ideas will help your students build social and physical self-awareness and nurture positive relationships with their classmates for the year ahead. Have fun!

CRAB SOCCER



Divide into two teams facing each other, approximately two metres apart.

Set up a goal at each end of the space and decide on which goal your team will be trying to score in.

- Before the game begins, practise your crab.
- Each team will need a team name and each team player will need their own number that corresponds to where they are sitting (e.g. the first person in line will be Number 1, the second person will be Number 2).



Build Self-Management, Physical Awareness and Social Awareness



1. Select a leader to call out a team name and then a number.
2. If your number is called, you need to move like a crab and kick the ball to your goal in a controlled way. Aim to stop the ball within the goal area with your foot to score a goal.



- You could put the team names into a hat or cup and numbers in a separate hat to draw them out.
- How could you make this game more fun? For an additional challenge, call out two numbers at once and work with your team player to score.
- Maybe the first person to crab walk into the middle to get the ball will work to score a goal, and the other team member can try and stop them. If two numbers are called, they can play two versus two. If neither team score after a set period, all players return to their line.



How did you feel when you scored a goal?

Did you prefer to have a team member help you?

How did you feel when you helped someone else score a goal?

What sensations did you feel in your arms and hands as you played this game?

What are some respectful decisions you can make while playing this game?



Develops gross motor skills, fitness, balance, postural control, muscular strength, coordination, body awareness and muscle tone.



Learning through movement, develops listening and decision-making skills.




I persevere.



MINDFUL GRATITUDE



Sitting quietly, cross-legged on the floor or comfortably in a chair with a pen, a piece of paper and an envelope.

TAME your  by sitting in your Mindful Body.

Take a breath, **A**lign the spine, **M**ind on breath, **E**yes closed or gently lowered.

Build Self-Awareness, Self-Management and Social Awareness



1. Take three mindful breaths. Think of someone in your life you are grateful for. As you breathe in and out, think of all the reasons you are grateful for this person.
2. Take another breath in. As you breathe out, gently open your eyes. Pick up your pen and write a note to this person, telling them why you are grateful to have them in your life.
3. Fold the letter and place it in an envelope. Address the letter to the person you would like to send it to.
4. You may decide to post the letter or you may prefer to keep it. The important part is to notice what it feels like to be grateful for the people in your life.



- After writing the letter, spend some time thinking of people you are grateful for who you have never met. This may be a bus driver, the local emergency services teams, or a shop assistant.



How did you feel when you thought about the person you are grateful for?

How often do we tell people we are thankful for them?

Is it important to show gratitude to people we don't know?

Why do you think practising gratitude can help make your thoughts more positive?

If you practised being grateful every day, how might it change how you feel?



Improves posture and develops awareness of body and breath.



Higher brain function, increases awareness and focused attention.



I am grateful.



WEATHER REPORT



Sitting quietly, cross-legged on the floor or comfortably in a chair.

TAME your  by sitting in your Mindful Body.

Take a breath, **A**lign the spine, **M**ind on breath, **E**yes closed or gently lowered.



Build Self-Awareness and Self-Management



1. As you breathe, consider how you feel today. Do you notice any feelings or sensations? What is the weather like inside your body?
2. Perhaps you feel happy, so the weather on the inside is sunny. Maybe you don't feel so great and there is a storm brewing on the inside.
3. Take some time to notice your internal weather. If you notice your mind wander, simply bring your attention back to your breath.
4. Sit in silence for one minute, noticing the weather inside your body.
5. Take another mindful breath in. As you slowly breathe out, listen for any sounds in the room. Notice the parts of your body in contact with the floor. Gently open your eyes.



- Practise this activity for one minute or longer. Provide examples of what the weather may be like: sunny, partly cloudy, stormy or foggy.
- Whatever you are feeling inside today, remember that one day might be cloudy and the next day might be clear. So if you are feeling low or stormy, that's okay because the sun may return tomorrow. The weather is always changing, just like our thoughts, feelings and emotions.



Can you give your weather report?

How do you feel after checking the weather inside?

What might we do if we felt stormy or rainy on the inside?



Improves posture and develops awareness of body and breath.



Higher brain function, increased awareness and focused attention.



I am caring.

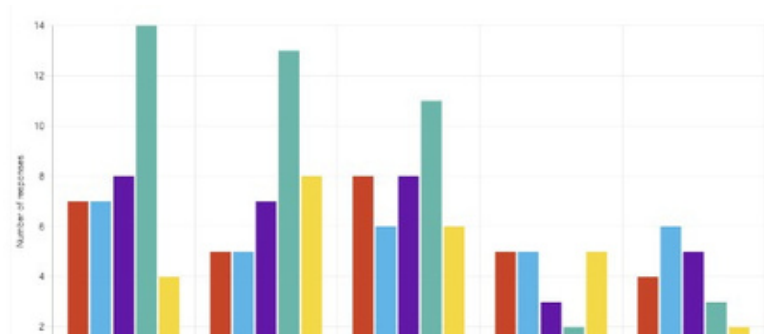


DID YOU KNOW?

The Weather Report is also a well-loved feature of our online social, emotional and physical learning platform, Life Skills GO - which not only allows you to check in on how your students are feeling at any point during the day but also track how they are feeling over time.



Learn more about how this feature works - and how our partners at Guildford West Public School are using it to assess their students' wellbeing.



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GO

How are you
feeling?



Anxious



Hurt



Miserable



Nervous



Impatient



Tired



Annoyed



Embarrassed



Scared



Worried

A photograph of four children lying on their backs on a grassy field. The child at the top left is a boy with dark hair, wearing a blue shirt with dark stars, smiling with his hand on his forehead. The child at the top right is a girl with brown hair, eyes closed, smiling. The child in the middle right is a girl with long brown hair, eyes closed, laughing with her mouth open. The child at the bottom left is a girl with dark hair, wearing a red and white striped shirt, smiling and waving her hand. A large white semi-circle is on the left side of the image, containing text.

About Life Skills Group

Our mission is to globally empower educators to prioritise, support and measure the development of social, emotional and physical literacy for our next generation of leaders.

We provide curriculum-aligned, evidence-based and measurable social, emotional and physical education solutions which enable children to thrive in their academic, personal and professional lives.

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GAMES

MINDFUL
PRACTICE

Classroom Resources

FOR BUILDING SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL
INTELLIGENCE BY LIFE SKILLS GROUP



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BALLOON BREATH



Sitting quietly, cross-legged on the floor or comfortably in a chair.

TAME your  by sitting in your Mindful Body.

Take a breath, **A**lign the spine, **M**ind on breath, **E**yes closed or gently lowered.

Build Self-Awareness and Self-Management



1. Place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Pretend you have a beautiful balloon in your belly. It can be any colour you like.
2. Breathing in through your nose, feel the balloon in your belly start to slowly and gently fill. As you are breathing out, feel the balloon slowly and gently deflating. Continue breathing in through your nose and out through your nose, noticing each time you breathe in. Each breath and each balloon will be different and unique – just like you and I.
3. If your mind wanders off, gently direct your attention back to your breath and start over.
4. Continue to breathe in through your nose and notice the balloon filling up, then gently deflate as you breathe out. See if you can sit like this for one minute and focus your attention on your balloon inflating and deflating.
5. Take another mindful breath in. As you breathe out, listen for any sounds in the room. Notice the parts of your body in contact with the floor. Open your eyes slowly and quietly.



- Practise to keep your balloon belly soft and relaxed.
- You do not want your balloon to feel as though it could burst.
- Breathe slowly and gently.



Do you feel different to how you felt before the activity?
What did you notice while doing your balloon breaths?
Think of a time when you might use the balloon breath to help you feel more relaxed or calm.



Improves posture and develops awareness of body and breath.



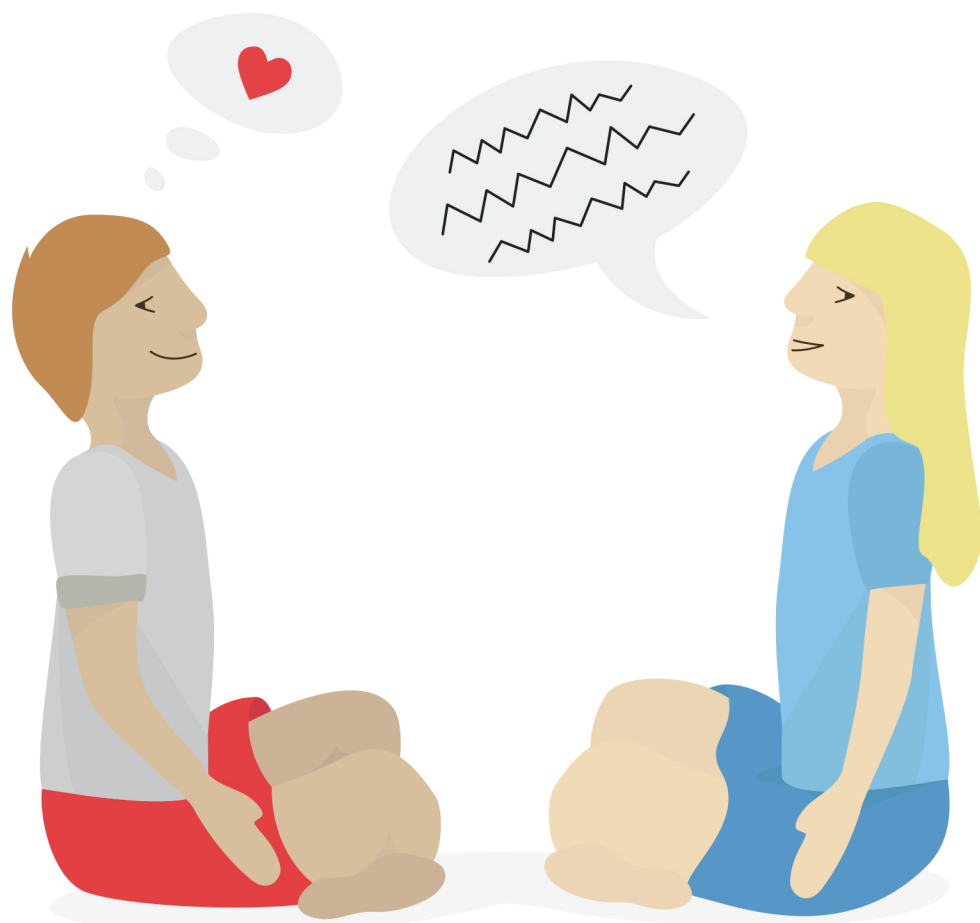
Higher brain function, increased awareness and focused attention.



I am calm.



MINDFUL COMMUNICATION



Sitting quietly, cross-legged on the floor or comfortably in a chair.

TAME your  by sitting in your Mindful Body.

Take a breath, **A**lign the spine, **M**ind on breath, **E**yes closed or gently lowered.

Build Self-Awareness, Self-Management and Positive Relationships



1. Take three mindful breaths. On the third breath, as you breathe out, gently open your eyes and turn to your partner.
2. Partner A will speak to Partner B for one minute about their favourite sport, hobby or food. Partner A is to speak mindfully, ensuring their words are kind and honest.
3. Partner B listens mindfully by not interrupting and listening with their whole body.
4. Swap roles. Partner B will now speak to Partner A for one minute about their favourite sport, hobby or food.



- To help us speak mindfully, we can ask: Is it kind? Is it necessary? How did I feel?
- To help us listen mindfully, we use our breath and look at who is speaking with our whole body, using all our senses.



How did it feel to speak for one whole minute?

How did it feel to be listened to?

How did it feel to listen mindfully?

Did you feel the urge to interrupt?

What else does mindfully listening involve?

How do you know someone is listening mindfully to you?

When you spoke for one minute, what sensations did you feel and where were they in your body?

Were you able to listen mindfully without your mind wandering?
How easy was it to bring your mind back?



Improves posture and develops awareness of body and breath.



Develops engagement and communication skills.



I am respectful.



TABLES AND CHAIRS



Come to sitting in a circle.

The game will be played on the inside of the circle.

- Practise the table pose and the chair pose.

Build Self-Management, Physical Awareness and Social Awareness



1. Once two people have volunteered to be taggers, decide how each of you is going to move around the space. You will move slowly, respectfully and mindfully – perhaps like a lion, an astronaut or as though your feet are stuck in mud.
2. Once you have decided how to move, taggers start in the middle with everyone else on the outside of the circle.
3. If you are respectfully tagged, you become a table. The great news is you are not out; you just need to wait for someone to make a chair next to you for three seconds before you can return to the game.
4. While a chair is helping a table, they cannot be tagged.



- Play music and when it stops, decide how to make the game more fun.
- How could you make it more challenging? Perhaps you can't come out of table until there are four chairs who all remain for the count of three. How could you work together to communicate and free the tables?



How did you feel when a chair came to help you?

Were you someone who went around freeing tables or did you focus on not being tagged?

How is this game good for your body?

How does exercise increase our wellbeing?

Were you able to move mindfully and respectfully?



Develops gross motor skills, fitness, balance, postural control, muscular strength, coordination, body awareness and muscle tone.



Learning through movement, develops listening and decision-making skills.



I am helpful.





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Life Skills Group is the preferred wellbeing partner of hundreds of schools, bringing social, emotional and physical learning programs to students, teachers and communities across a variety of delivery methods.

We look forward to partnering with you to bring curriculum-aligned SEL/Mindfulness programs to your school.

**Schedule a time to meet with one of our
School Wellbeing Advisors today!**

lifeskillsgroup.com.au/wellbeingstrategy



Improve school
wellbeing



Improve academic results
and problem solving skills



Increase resilience and
self regulation



Positive relationship
skills resulting in
decreased bullying



Self-awareness and
emotional intelligence



Growth mindset

Start of Term Reflection

This term, I am
excited about...

Today, I am feeling...

Who in my
school do I trust will
help me this term?

This term, I am
worried about...

This term, I will
change...

My goal for
this term is...

WARRIOR 1



Stretches the legs, torso and shoulders. Strengthens the ankles, legs, spine and arms.



Helps to develop concentration, inner strength and resilience.



Stand tall and proud in mountain pose.



1

Step, or mindfully jump, your feet a leg's distance apart. Extend your arms out at the height of your shoulders. Can you get your feet under the line of your fingertips?



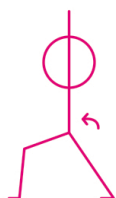
2

Turn your feet, hips, torso and head to face over your right foot. Raise your arms towards the sky, keeping them strong like a warrior.



3

Bend your front knee, bringing it in line with your ankle. The more you bend your knee, the more you need to reach your arms up to touch the sky.



4

Stay for 3-5 breaths. To come out, straighten your right leg, extend your arms out at the height of your shoulders, and then turn to do the left side.



- Breathing in, straighten your right leg, and breathing out, bend your right knee. Repeat 4-5 times.



- What inner strengths do you need to develop to be able to do this pose?
- Warrior one stretches a lot of muscles; can you name some of them?
- What is the difference between stretching and strengthening?
- Being organised helps us to complete tasks and feel confident. How can you be more organised?
- Is there something you need to get better at remembering?



DOWNWARD FACING DOG



Strengthens the arms and shoulders. Lengthens the hamstrings and calves. Stretches the spine and strengthens the back.



Calms the nervous system, energises the body, and helps relieve stress and anxiety.



Come to a tabletop position. Hands under your shoulders and knees hip-width apart.



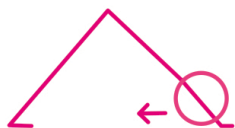
1

Open your palms and spread your fingers wide. See if you can press the whole of your hands into the floor.



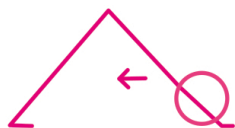
2

Tuck your toes under, breathe out, lift your hips to the sky, straighten both of your arms.



3

Keep your arms straight and long, let your head hang down. Keep looking back at your toes.



4

Without holding your breath, can you begin to move your chest back towards your thighs, lengthening and stretching your back?



- To come out, return to a tabletop position.
- Can you raise one leg into the air without bending your arms or holding your breath?
- What noise does a dog make?



- How did your body feel?
- Did parts of your body feel tired?
- Did parts of your body feel strong?
- Did parts of your body enjoy the stretch?
- Practise the pose again and notice how your body feels.
- What are different ways you could do the dog pose?
- Can you think of a time in your life where you could practise this pose to help calm your mind? (e.g. before you go to sleep?)



CHAIR



Strengthens the ankles, thighs, calves and spine, and stretches muscles of the shoulders and chest.

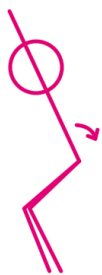


Develops focus and concentration.



Standing tall and proud in mountain posture.

Keeping your arms strong and straight, raise them above your head, as if you wanted your fingertips to touch the ceiling.



1

Breathe out, bend your knees and sit down on an imaginary chair. Keep your knees over the line of the toes.



2

Can you keep your fingertips reaching to the ceiling and sit a little lower without holding your breath? Stay here for 3-5 breaths.



3

To come out, straighten your legs and return to the mountain pose.



- Practise doing this in a line or circle with your friends.
- Be careful to move into the pose and out of the pose together.



- Which muscles do you think you were working in this pose?
- What did you silently say to yourself to help you stay in the pose longer?
- Did you feel any different after doing this pose?



ANGRY



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**What happens when
you feel angry?**

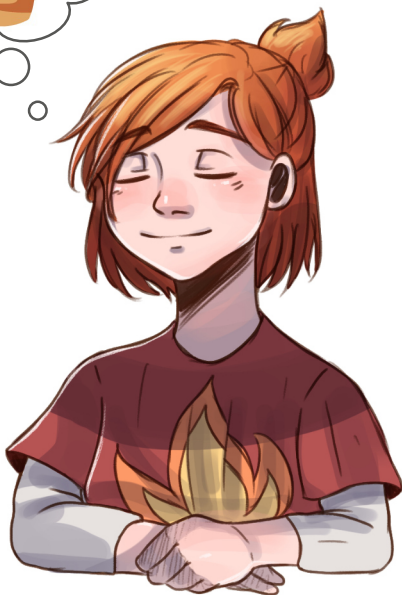
**When do you feel
angry?**

**Where in your body do
you feel angry?**



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CALM



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**What happens when
you feel calm?**

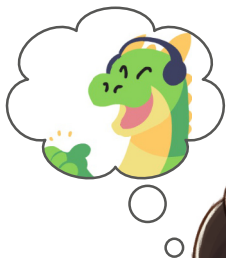
When do you feel calm?

**Where in your body do
you feel calm?**



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HAPPY



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**What happens when
you feel happy?**

**When do you feel
happy?**

**Where in your body do
you feel happy?**



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SAD



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**What happens when
you feel sad?**

When do you feel sad?

**Where in your body do
you feel sad?**



www.lifeskillsgroup.com.au

TIRED



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**What happens when
you feel tired?**

When do you feel tired?

**Where in your body do
you feel tired?**



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WORRIED



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**What happens when
you feel worried?**

**When do you feel
worried?**

**Where in your body do
you feel worried?**



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