

Outdoor silent walk, or indoor contemplation

Developing mindfulness and taking time out

Aim: Pupils recognise how a behaviour impacts on others and how living in a democracy enables us to be able to speak out and make informed choices.

Outdoors: If you have even the smallest green area, take a regular, slow paced, silent walk to it – whatever the weather. The pupils may find this tricky at first but it will become more comfortable with practice. This walk could be carried out to fit into regular routines such as immediately after morning break, while pupils still have their coats on, or after lunch break.

Before the walk:

- Agree gestures that will indicate, silently, 'activities' to do *en route*, such as sniffing a plant.
- Remind pupils of key behaviours needed in order to be able to take advantage of the setting and to be able to see and hear everything: Good listening skills = silence; good looking skills = observations.
- Tell pupils that afterwards, you might ask them to describe what they saw and heard to share what they observed in their quiet walk - a plant, a leaf, an insect... but remember that feedback is not always necessary. The silent walk in itself, without the pressure of having to say something afterwards, is very beneficial, giving pupils some quiet time in nature with no other 'agenda'.



After the walk (indoors or outdoors):

Discuss how other's behaviours affected their own ability to be quiet and observe the world around them - whether it helped or hindered. Observations from the walk might include:

- Things that are the same or have changed since the last walk
- What I thought about during the walk
- External factors that helped me to be mindful (for example: other pupils being silent / respectful / unhurried). How did other people's behaviour affect or influence my own behaviour or mood?

Use the inclusive language of circle time, for example 'I like it when....' 'I don't like it when'

- Suggestions for next time 'would it help if I...was silent, kept my hands to myself, watched where I was going?'
- Over time pupils could be given a focus for the walk to link it into the focus for the circle time activity for example, choices, consequences and rewards.

Indoors: If you have no outdoor green space, or the weather is particularly inclement, then bring the greenery indoors and contemplate it in a quiet, focussed circle time session.

- Younger children could each hold a leaf, branch or cone and examine it closely and silently.
- For older children, place the plant or flowers centrally as a focus, in a similar way that you might use a candle or incense stick.

More springboards:

- PSHE Learning Springboard: 'Sitting contemplation' followed up with a circle time to talk about what plants pupils saw and how they might have changed from last time.

Key vocabulary: respect, quiet, silent, choice, consequence, action, reward.

Success criteria:

- ✓ Pupils show respect for one other and the natural world.
- ✓ Pupils will develop a range of strategies to express how they feel about how someone is behaving and how they manage how they respond to that.

Resources:

- Outdoor space – or bring herbs, house plants or branches indoors.