

Feelings & Emotions

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Early Years / Reception | Ages 3–5 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can name and recognise at least three emotions in themselves and others.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Early Years / Reception	Ages 3–5	20–25 minutes	Feelings picture cards, drawing materials, whiteboard or flip chart

Overview

Children are beginning to develop emotional literacy — the ability to name and understand feelings. Research shows that children who can name their emotions are better able to manage them. This lesson introduces three core emotions and gives children tools to express how they feel.

This lesson is especially important during periods of disruption. When children feel unsafe or confused, naming the feeling helps them feel understood and reduces the intensity of their emotional response.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Warm welcome — greet each child by name and smile warmly. Set a calm, safe tone from the start.
2. Show feeling picture cards one at a time — happy, sad, scared. Use your own face to model each one clearly.
3. Ask: "Has anyone felt like this? When?" Validate all answers: "Yes, that makes sense."
4. Read a short picture book or show a short clip featuring a character with big feelings.
5. Pause and ask: "How do you think they feel right now? What can we do when we feel like that?"
6. Give each child a plain face outline. Ask them to draw how they feel today.
7. Share in a circle — each child holds up their drawing. Celebrate every response warmly.
8. Close with balloon breathing together — three slow breaths in and out as a group.

Discussion Prompts

- Which feeling did we talk about today? Can you show me that feeling on your face?
- What makes you feel happy? What makes you feel sad or scared?
- What can we do when we feel a big feeling? (breathing, telling someone, drawing)
- Is it okay to feel sad sometimes? Why?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide two picture cards (happy and sad) only. Adult names the emotion as the child points.

■ Core

Independently name and draw three emotions with brief verbal explanation.

■ Extend

Write or dictate a sentence for each emotion: "I feel happy when..." encouraging full explanation.

Recommended Follow-Up Activity

Follow this lesson with the **My Feelings Check-In** activity sheet (Activity 2 in your Psychology Flows pack).

Use the feelings check-in grid at the start of every subsequent session to reinforce vocabulary.

Link: psychologyflows.com/activities/feelings-check-in

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Cosmic Kids Yoga

YouTube — guided yoga and mindfulness stories for young children

youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga

Headspace for Kids (Ages 3–5)

Short guided meditations designed for early years

headspace.com/meditation/kids

GoNoodle Calm

Free movement and mindfulness videos for young children

gonoodle.com

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Breathing Buddies — Regulation Activity

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Early Years / Reception | Ages 3–5 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can use a simple breathing technique independently to help themselves feel calm.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Early Years / Reception	Ages 3–5	15–20 minutes	Soft toy or small stuffed animal per child (or children draw their own)

Overview

Young children regulate their emotions best through the body. Slow, deep breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system — the body's natural calming response. Giving children a physical anchor (a "breathing buddy") makes this abstract concept concrete and memorable.

This technique is evidence-based, simple to teach and can be used independently by children as young as three. Practising it regularly — even for two minutes — builds a lasting self-regulation habit.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Introduce the breathing buddy: "This is your special helper. When things feel big and scary, your buddy helps you breathe."
2. Ask children to place their buddy on their tummy and lie down or sit comfortably.
3. Model balloon breathing: breathe in slowly through the nose — the buddy rises. Breathe out — the buddy sinks.
4. Narrate gently: "In we go... and out... feel your buddy go up... and down... well done."
5. Practise together five times with slow, calm narration throughout.
6. Ask: "How did that feel? Did you feel your buddy move?" Celebrate all responses.
7. Discuss: "When might you want to use your breathing buddy?" Build a class list together.
8. If children have drawn their own buddy, invite them to name it and decorate it.

Discussion Prompts

- What is your breathing buddy called? Where do you keep it?
- How does your body feel before the breathing? How does it feel after?
- When do you think you might need your breathing buddy most?
- Could you teach a family member how to use their breathing buddy?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use visual prompts and picture cues — show the balloon breathing movements on screen.

■ Core

Independently demonstrate balloon breathing and name one situation where they would use it.

■ Extend

Teach the technique to a partner or family member and explain why it helps.

Teacher Note

Keep breathing buddies accessible in the classroom — in a calm corner, on desks, or in individual trays.

Reference the breathing buddy during any stressful transition: "Shall we do three buddy breaths before we start?"

Cosmic Kids Yoga on YouTube has excellent guided breathing sessions for this age group.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Cosmic Kids Yoga

YouTube — guided yoga and mindfulness stories for young children

[youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga](https://www.youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga)

Headspace for Kids (Ages 3–5)

Short guided meditations designed for early years

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

GoNoodle Calm

Free movement and mindfulness videos for young children

[gonoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

My Safe Place — Guided Visualisation

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Early Years / Reception | Ages 3–5 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can identify a real or imagined place where they feel safe and use it as a mental anchor.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Early Years / Reception	Ages 3–5	20 minutes	Calm background music (optional), drawing materials, quiet space

Overview

The concept of a "safe place" is a cornerstone of trauma-informed practice. Having an internal anchor — a place in the imagination where a child feels completely safe — is a powerful resource during times of uncertainty or anxiety.

For young children, this works best as a guided visualisation followed by drawing. The act of drawing makes the safe place feel real and accessible. Children can return to their safe place mentally any time they need to.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin with three slow belly breaths together to settle the group.
2. Explain: "We are going to use our imaginations to visit somewhere that feels really safe and calm. It can be a real place or one you make up."
3. Play quiet, calm music softly in the background if available.
4. Lead the visualisation slowly: "Close your eyes if you want to... imagine a place where you feel completely safe..."
5. Give sensory prompts gently: "What can you see around you? What sounds are there? Is it warm or cool? Who, if anyone, is there with you?"
6. Allow 2–3 minutes of quiet imagining, then gently bring them back: "Take one more look around... and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes."
7. Invite children to draw or paint their safe place.
8. Share in small groups or with a partner — no child should be required to share.

Discussion Prompts

- What did your safe place look like? What sounds or smells were there?
- How did you feel when you were there in your imagination?
- Could you visit your safe place in your mind any time — even when things feel hard?
- Is your safe place real or imaginary? Both are perfectly fine.

Differentiation

■ Support

Adult leads the child through the visualisation one-to-one with gentle prompts.

■ Core

Complete the visualisation independently and draw their safe place with 2–3 details.

■ Extend

Write or dictate a description of their safe place including sensory details.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Cosmic Kids Yoga

YouTube — guided yoga and mindfulness stories for young children

youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga

Headspace for Kids (Ages 3–5)

Short guided meditations designed for early years

headspace.com/meditation/kids

GoNoodle Calm

Free movement and mindfulness videos for young children

gonoodle.com

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



Kindness Stars — Class Activity

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Early Years / Reception | Ages 3–5 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children understand that kindness makes others feel happy and can name one kind act they will do today.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Early Years / Reception	Ages 3–5	20–25 minutes	Star-shaped paper cutouts or star template, pencils or crayons

Overview

Kindness is both a social skill and a wellbeing practice. Research consistently shows that performing acts of kindness increases wellbeing for the giver as well as the receiver. For young children, making kindness visible and celebrated helps embed it as a core value.

This activity is particularly powerful during times of difficulty — focusing on what we can do for others shifts attention away from anxiety and towards agency and connection.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Can anyone tell me what kindness means? What does being kind look like?"
2. Share examples together: holding a door, saying thank you, sharing, helping someone who has fallen.
3. Discuss: "How does it feel when someone is kind to you? And when you are kind to someone else?"
4. Introduce the kindness star: "We are going to each make a kindness star. Inside your star, draw or write one kind thing you are going to do today."
5. Give children time to create their stars with drawing or writing.
6. Share as a group — each child shows their star and names their kind act. Celebrate each one.
7. Display the kindness stars on a class "kindness tree" or wall display.
8. At the end of the day, revisit: "Did anyone manage their kind act? How did it feel?"

Discussion Prompts

- How does it feel when someone is kind to you?
- Can a kind act be very small? Does it still matter?
- Can you be kind to yourself as well as to others?
- What is one kind thing you could do at home today?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide three kind act options to choose from with pictures.

■ Core

Independently generate and draw their own kind act on the star.

■ Extend

Plan a kindness act for each day of the week and explain their choices.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Cosmic Kids Yoga

YouTube — guided yoga and mindfulness stories for young children

[youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga](https://www.youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga)

Headspace for Kids (Ages 3–5)

Short guided meditations designed for early years

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

GoNoodle Calm

Free movement and mindfulness videos for young children

[gonoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



Positive Emotions — Introduction

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Early Years / Reception | Ages 3–5 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can name at least two positive emotions and describe what causes them.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Early Years / Reception	Ages 3–5	20 minutes	Psychology Flows Positive Emotions activity sheet, picture cards

Overview

Barbara Fredrickson's research shows that positive emotions do more than feel good — they broaden children's thinking, build resilience and help them bounce back from difficulty. Even small moments of joy, gratitude or amusement have measurable effects on wellbeing.

This introductory lesson plants the seeds of emotional literacy around positive feelings. It is particularly valuable during periods of disruption to deliberately notice and name good feelings.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Ask: "Can anyone tell me a feeling that makes you feel good inside?" Accept all responses warmly.
2. Introduce three positive emotions with pictures: joy (a big smile), gratitude (saying thank you), love (a hug).
3. For each emotion, ask: "When have you felt this? What caused it?" Share your own examples first.
4. Play a quick game: describe a scenario and ask children to point to which positive emotion they might feel.
5. Give out the Psychology Flows activity sheet. Children draw one positive emotion they felt recently.
6. Share in a circle — name the emotion and what caused it.
7. Close with a gratitude round: each child names one thing they are grateful for today.

Discussion Prompts

- Which positive emotion do you feel most often?
- Can we choose to feel positive emotions? What might help?
- Can we feel happy and sad at the same time?
- What makes your heart feel warm and full?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use picture cue cards with emotion names. Focus on joy and gratitude only.

■ Core

Name and describe three positive emotions and draw one they felt this week.

■ Extend

Explain the difference between a positive emotion and just "being happy all the time."

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Cosmic Kids Yoga

YouTube — guided yoga and mindfulness stories for young children

[youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga](https://www.youtube.com/@CosmicKidsYoga)

Headspace for Kids (Ages 3–5)

Short guided meditations designed for early years

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

GoNoodle Calm

Free movement and mindfulness videos for young children

[gonoodle.com](https://www.gonoodle.com)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Emotion Thermometer Check-In

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | KS1 | Years 1–2 | Ages 5–7 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can rate their emotional state on a 1–5 scale and communicate how they are feeling.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
KS1	Years 1–2 Ages 5–7	20–25 minutes	Printed or digital emotion thermometer (1–5 scale), whiteboard

Overview

The emotion thermometer is a simple, powerful tool that gives children a concrete way to communicate their emotional state without needing words. A 1–5 scale reduces the cognitive demand of identifying feelings while still giving teachers vital information.

Used consistently at the start of every session, the thermometer becomes a reliable wellbeing indicator. Children who regularly score 4 or 5 should receive individual check-ins.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Show the thermometer: 1 = feeling great, 2 = pretty good, 3 = okay, 4 = a bit hard, 5 = really hard.
2. Model it yourself openly: "Today I am a 2 because I slept well and I am looking forward to our lesson."
3. Ask each child to show their number on their fingers or type in the chat if online.
4. Acknowledge every response warmly: "Thank you for telling me. That really helps me understand."
5. Pair children at similar numbers for a 2-minute check-in conversation: "Tell your partner one thing about how you are feeling."
6. Debrief briefly with the class: notice if anyone is at 4 or 5 — plan to check in individually.
7. Revisit the thermometer at the end of the session and notice any changes together.

Discussion Prompts

- Is it possible to be a 5 and still be okay? (Yes — feelings are temporary and all are valid)
- What might help someone move from a 5 to a 4? What small thing could make a difference?
- Why is it useful to know how we are feeling before we start learning?
- Does your number change throughout the day? What affects it?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use three levels only: fine, a bit tricky, really hard. Adult helps child identify their level.

■ Core

Use the 1–5 thermometer independently with a brief verbal explanation.

■ Extend

Keep a daily feelings log for a week and notice any patterns.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Balloon Breath — Regulation Activity

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | KS1 | Years 1–2 | Ages 5–7 | psychologyflows.com

Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can independently use balloon breathing to manage anxiety or distress.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
KS1	Years 1–2 Ages 5–7	15–20 minutes	Drawing materials for breathing buddy (optional soft toy)

Overview

Balloon breathing is a simple, evidence-based technique that activates the vagus nerve and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system. When children breathe deeply and slowly, the body's threat response diminishes and they return to a calmer state.

Teaching this as a fun, visual activity with a breathing buddy removes any stigma and makes it something children want to use rather than resist.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Has anyone ever felt really worried or upset? What does that feel like in your body?"
2. Explain: "Your body has a special superpower — you can use your breath to help it calm down."
3. Introduce balloon breathing: place hands on tummy, breathe in — tummy rises like a balloon, breathe out — it deflates.
4. Model it yourself first, exaggerating the movement so children can see clearly.
5. Practise together five times with slow, calm narration.
6. Ask: "How did your body feel before? How does it feel now?"
7. Ask: "When might you use this?" Build a class list of situations.
8. Children draw or decorate their breathing buddy to take home.

Discussion Prompts

- What happens in your body when you feel really worried or angry?
- How did balloon breathing make your body feel different?
- When could you use this without anyone else noticing?
- Could you teach this to someone at home?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use a visual breathing guide on screen and count breaths together as a class.

■ Core

Independently demonstrate and explain the technique.

■ Extend

Teach it to a partner and explain why slow breathing helps the body.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



My Gratitude Journal

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | KS1 | Years 1–2 | Ages 5–7 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can identify things they are grateful for and explain how gratitude affects how they feel.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
KS1	Years 1–2 Ages 5–7	25 minutes	Psychology Flows Gratitude Journal activity sheet, pencils

Overview

Gratitude practice is one of the most researched interventions in positive psychology. Regular gratitude journalling has been shown to increase wellbeing, reduce anxiety and improve sleep — even in children as young as five.

During periods of disruption, intentionally noticing good things is not denial — it is a genuine psychological protective factor that helps children build resilience.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Has anyone ever said thank you for something really small — like the sun shining, or a kind smile?"
2. Introduce gratitude: noticing and appreciating the good things in our lives, big or small.
3. Share: "Research shows that when we practise gratitude, our brains actually feel better. It is like exercise for our happiness."
4. Give out the Psychology Flows Gratitude Journal sheet. Children write or draw 3–5 things they are grateful for.
5. Share with the group — model by sharing your own first.
6. Discuss: "Did anything surprise you about what you were grateful for? Did it feel any different to focus on good things?"
7. Explain: "We can add to our journal any time — and read it back when things feel hard."

Discussion Prompts

- Did anything surprise you about what you were grateful for?
- How did it feel to think about the good things?
- Can we be grateful even when things are difficult? How?
- Who would you most like to say thank you to? What for?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide sentence starters: "I am grateful for my ___ because ___"

■ Core

Complete the journal independently and share one item with the class.

■ Extend

Write a paragraph explaining what gratitude is and give three personal examples.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Worry Monster Activity

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | KS1 | Years 1–2 | Ages 5–7 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can externalise their worries and use at least one coping strategy.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
KS1	Years 1–2 Ages 5–7	25–30 minutes	Worry monster template or drawing activity, coloured pencils or crayons

Overview

Externalising worry — giving it a name and form outside ourselves — is a technique drawn from narrative therapy. When children can see their worry as separate from themselves, they feel more in control of it. The worry monster provides a safe, playful container.

This approach acknowledges that worries are real and valid while also giving children a sense of agency over them. It is developmentally appropriate for ages 5–7.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Has anyone ever had a worry that kept going round and round in their head?"
2. Explain: "Worries can feel like noisy monsters — they seem very big but we can shrink them."
3. Introduce the worry monster: a friendly creature who is very good at keeping our worries safe while we get on with things.
4. Children create or colour their own worry monster — give them freedom to make it funny or friendly.
5. Ask children to write or draw 1–2 worries inside their monster. These are private unless they choose to share.
6. Teach a coping strategy: "Once the monster has your worry, take three deep breaths and say: I can handle hard things."
7. Crucial message: "The worry monster helps with everyday worries. If a worry feels very big, always tell a grown-up."

Discussion Prompts

- Do worries always come true? What might that tell us?
- What helps you feel better when you are worried?
- What is the difference between a small worry and a big worry?
- When is it really important to tell an adult about a worry?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide pre-drawn monster outline with two worry prompts to fill in.

■ Core

Create their monster and write two worries plus one coping strategy.

■ Extend

Write a guide for a younger child explaining what to do when they feel worried.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



My Confidence Cape

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | KS1 | Years 1–2 | Ages 5–7 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can identify personal strengths and use them to build self-belief.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
KS1	Years 1–2 Ages 5–7	25 minutes	Confidence Cape template or large paper cut to cape shape

Overview

Strengths-based approaches are a cornerstone of positive psychology. When children identify and articulate their own strengths, they build a more secure sense of identity and are better equipped to cope with challenge and difficulty.

The Confidence Cape makes this abstract concept concrete and tangible. Children can "wear" their cape mentally any time they need courage — a simple but powerful anchor.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Ask: "Has anyone seen a superhero film? What powers do superheroes have?"
2. Explain: "We all have our own superpowers — they are called strengths. And they are real."
3. Brainstorm together: being kind, brave, curious, funny, caring, creative, helpful, a good friend.
4. Give each child a cape template. They fill in: a strength, something they are proud of, something they are good at, what a friend would say about them.
5. Share in a circle — celebrate each child's strengths loudly and specifically.
6. Explain: "Your confidence cape is invisible — but you can put it on any time you need it."
7. Ask children to practise "putting on" their cape — stand tall, shoulders back, breathe.

Discussion Prompts

- Are strengths always things we are brilliant at, or can they be small?
- What strength would you most like to grow?
- How does it feel to focus on what you are good at?
- What strength would you give to a friend as a gift, and why?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide a list of six strengths with pictures to choose from.

■ Core

Complete the cape independently and share one strength with the class.

■ Extend

Write a character strength profile and explain when they have used each strength.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

headspace.com/meditation/kids

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

calm.com/schools

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

mindfulnessinschools.org

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Window of Tolerance

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Lower KS2 | Years 3–4 | Ages 7–9 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can explain what the Window of Tolerance is and identify their own signs of hyper- and hypo-arousal.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Lower KS2	Years 3–4 Ages 7–9	30–35 minutes	Window of Tolerance diagram (draw on whiteboard or print), worksheet

Overview

The Window of Tolerance (Siegel, 1999) is one of the most useful frameworks in trauma-informed practice. It describes the optimal zone of arousal where we can think clearly, feel our emotions and learn. Outside this window — in hyper-arousal (too activated) or hypo-arousal (too shut down) — learning becomes very difficult.

Teaching this model to children aged 7–9 gives them a vocabulary for their inner states and practical tools to return to their window. It is particularly relevant during periods of disruption when many children will be spending significant time outside their window.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin with a scenario: "Imagine you hear a very loud bang outside. What happens in your body?"
2. Draw three zones on the board: Window of Tolerance (middle), Hyper (too activated — top), Hypo (too shut down — bottom).
3. Explain each zone using child-friendly language: Window = "just right", Hyper = "too revved up", Hypo = "too flat or numb".
4. Ask children to identify what each zone feels like in their body — create a class list for each.
5. Share examples of what takes them out of their window (triggers) and what brings them back.
6. Introduce three strategies for returning to the window: breathing, movement, talking to someone.
7. Children complete their personal Window of Tolerance diagram noting their own signs and strategies.

Discussion Prompts

- What takes you out of your Window of Tolerance most often?
- What is the first sign in your body that you are leaving your window?
- What brings you back most reliably — breathing, movement, talking to someone, or something else?
- Is it possible to be in your window even during difficult times? What helps?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use simple calm/worried/shut-down labels instead of clinical terms. Adult supports completion.

■ Core

Complete the full diagram independently with personal examples for each zone.

■ Extend

Research what happens in the brain during hyper-arousal and present findings to the class.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Toolkit

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Lower KS2 | Years 3–4 | Ages 7–9 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can use the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding technique to manage anxiety and return to the present moment.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Lower KS2	Years 3–4 Ages 7–9	20–25 minutes	Psychology Flows Breathing Toolkit printable

Overview

Anxiety often pulls us into the future — worrying about what might happen. Grounding techniques anchor us in the present moment using our senses, which interrupts the anxious thought cycle and reduces its intensity.

The 5-4-3-2-1 technique is evidence-based, simple to remember and can be used silently in any setting. It is particularly helpful for children experiencing anxiety related to uncertainty or threat.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What does the word 'grounded' mean? Have you ever felt ungrounded — like your mind was somewhere else?"
2. Explain: "Anxiety often drags us into the future, worrying about things that haven't happened yet. Grounding brings us back to right now."
3. Introduce 5-4-3-2-1: name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, 1 you can taste.
4. Practise together as a class — go through all five senses in the current environment.
5. Discuss: "How did that feel? Did you notice your thoughts settling at all?"
6. Ask children when this technique might be most useful for them.
7. Children make a personal grounding cue card using the Psychology Flows toolkit.

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think using our senses helps reduce anxiety?
- When during the school day might grounding be most useful?
- How is this different from just telling yourself to calm down?
- Could you use this without anyone around you noticing?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use three senses only: see, hear, touch. Adult guides throughout.

■ Core

Complete the full 5-4-3-2-1 sequence and identify two situations to use it.

■ Extend

Research the neuroscience of grounding and present to the class.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Circles of Control

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Lower KS2 | Years 3–4 | Ages 7–9 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can distinguish between what is within and outside their control and focus energy on what they can influence.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Lower KS2	Years 3–4 Ages 7–9	30 minutes	Circles of Control worksheet (two concentric circles), pencils

Overview

One of the most common sources of anxiety during difficult times is focusing energy on things that cannot be controlled. Stephen Covey's circles of control model gives children a concrete framework for redirecting their focus.

This lesson is particularly relevant during the current context — many things feel very uncertain and out of children's hands. Helping them identify what they can control restores a sense of agency.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Are there things happening at the moment that feel worrying or scary?" Allow honest responses.
2. Draw two concentric circles on the board: inner = things I can control, outer = things I cannot.
3. Model with an example: "I cannot control the news (outer circle), but I can control whether I watch it and for how long (inner circle)."
4. Work through examples together — some will surprise children (e.g. other people's feelings = outer circle).
5. Key message: "We cannot control everything — but we always have control over how we respond and what we choose to focus on."
6. Children fill in their own circles with current worries and things they can control.
7. Each child chooses one thing in their inner circle to focus on this week.

Discussion Prompts

- What is in your outer circle that you spend the most energy worrying about?
- How does it feel to shift your focus to what you can control?
- Is it easy to let go of things outside your control? What makes it hard?
- What is one thing you can control today that might make things a little better?

Differentiation

■ Support

Sort pre-written examples into the correct circle rather than generating independently.

■ Core

Complete their own circles and explain the difference to a partner.

■ Extend

Write a reflection: "What I have learnt about control and how it affects my wellbeing."

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

My Hope Bubbles

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Lower KS2 | Years 3–4 | Ages 7–9 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can articulate personal and collective hopes and understand hope as an active psychological strength.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Lower KS2	Years 3–4 Ages 7–9	25–30 minutes	Psychology Flows Hope Bubbles activity sheet

Overview

Hope is not passive wishful thinking — it is an active psychological strength (Snyder, 2002). Hope involves having goals, believing pathways exist to reach them, and having the agency to take steps forward. Research consistently shows hopeful thinking is one of the strongest predictors of resilience.

This lesson gives children language and space to articulate hopes for themselves and others — a powerful counterbalance to anxiety and uncertainty.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What does it mean to hope for something? Is it the same as wishing?"
2. Introduce hope as an active strength: "Hope is not just wanting — it is believing something is possible and taking steps towards it."
3. Share examples of people who held onto hope during very difficult times.
4. Give out the Psychology Flows Hope Bubbles sheet. Children complete all six bubbles.
5. Share in pairs — notice how sharing hopes feels. Does it make them feel stronger or more real?
6. Discuss as a class: "What can we do to keep our hope alive when things are difficult?"
7. Create a class display of shared hopes.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between hope and wishful thinking?
- Can you feel hopeful and sad or worried at the same time?
- Who or what helps you feel most hopeful?
- What is one small step you could take towards a hope this week?

Differentiation

■ Support Provide sentence starters for each bubble.	■ Core Complete all bubbles independently and share one hope with reasons.	■ Extend Research hope theory and explain the difference between hope and optimism.
--	--	---

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



VIA Bravery Shield

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Lower KS2 | Years 3–4 | Ages 7–9 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children understand bravery as a VIA character strength and can recognise and celebrate it in themselves.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Lower KS2	Years 3–4 Ages 7–9	30 minutes	Psychology Flows Bravery Shield printable

Overview

The VIA (Values in Action) Character Strengths framework identifies bravery as one of 24 core human strengths. Bravery does not mean the absence of fear — it means doing what is right or difficult even when you are scared.

Every child navigating uncertainty, disruption and distance learning is demonstrating bravery every single day. This lesson makes that visible and celebrated.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What does bravery mean? Does it mean not being scared?" (Establish that bravery means being scared AND doing it anyway.)
2. Introduce the VIA framework briefly: we all have character strengths, and bravery is one of them.
3. Share examples of everyday bravery: asking for help, trying something new, speaking up for a friend.
4. Invite children to share a moment of bravery from their own lives — model by sharing your own first.
5. Give out the Psychology Flows Bravery Shield. Children fill in all four sections.
6. Gallery share: children show their shields and celebrate each other's courage explicitly and specifically.
7. Children write their brave motto on the bottom of the sheet.

Discussion Prompts

- Think of someone you consider brave. What makes them brave?
- Have you ever been brave in a way nobody knew about?
- How does recognising our own bravery help us face future challenges?
- What would you say to yourself the next time you feel scared?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide examples of brave acts to choose from rather than generating independently.

■ Core

Complete the shield with genuine personal examples.

■ Extend

Research a person in history who showed bravery and connect their story to the VIA framework.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Emotion Coaching

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Upper KS2 | Years 5–6 | Ages 9–11 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can apply the four steps of emotion coaching to a real scenario and explain why validation comes before problem-solving.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Upper KS2	Years 5–6 Ages 9–11	35–40 minutes	Emotion coaching steps poster (draw on board), scenario cards

Overview

Emotion coaching is based on Dr John Gottman's research showing that how adults respond to children's emotions shapes children's ability to regulate themselves long term. The four steps — notice, name, validate, problem-solve — are simple but transformative.

Teaching children to emotion-coach themselves and each other builds empathy, resilience and emotional intelligence simultaneously. At this age, children can genuinely apply it.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What do you usually do when someone you care about is really upset?" Collect responses without judgement.
2. Introduce the four steps: 1) Notice the feeling, 2) Name it, 3) Validate it ("it makes sense you feel..."), 4) Problem-solve — but only once they feel heard.
3. Discuss why validation must come before problem-solving: "Has anyone ever had someone try to fix your problem before you felt heard? How did that feel?"
4. Model with a scenario relevant to the current context: a child who feels frightened about the news.
5. Pairs practise using scenario cards — one person emotion-coaches, the other plays the role of someone with big feelings.
6. Swap and debrief: what felt easy? What felt hard? Which step is most tempting to skip?
7. Discuss when they might use this in real life.

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think validation comes before problem-solving every time?
- Can you think of a time someone emotion-coached you? How did it feel?
- Is emotion coaching only for children, or can we use it with adults too?
- What happens when we skip straight to problem-solving?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide the four steps on a cue card throughout. Use one simple scenario only.

■ Core

Apply the four steps to two different scenarios independently.

■ Extend

Write an analysis of a scenario: explain why skipping validation makes problem-solving less effective.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



Resilience & Character Strengths

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Upper KS2 | Years 5–6 | Ages 9–11 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can identify their top three VIA character strengths and explain how to use them under pressure.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Upper KS2	Years 5–6 Ages 9–11	35 minutes	VIA character strengths list, resilience reflection worksheet

Overview

Resilience is not toughness — it is the ability to adapt and recover, and it is built on a foundation of self-knowledge and personal strengths. The VIA Character Strengths framework (Peterson & Seligman) identifies 24 universal human strengths.

Helping children name their strengths and connect them to their capacity to cope builds a more secure, positive identity. This is especially powerful during challenging times.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What does resilience mean? Is it the same as never struggling?"
2. Introduce resilience as the ability to bounce back — not bounce away from difficulty, but through it.
3. Share the VIA strengths framework — read through the 24 strengths together.
4. Ask children to identify their personal top three — allow 5 minutes of quiet reflection.
5. Discuss: "How have you used these strengths during a hard time recently?"
6. Children complete a resilience plan: my top three strengths + how I will use them this week + one person I can turn to.
7. Close with a class strengths gallery — celebrate each person's unique combination specifically and genuinely.

Discussion Prompts

- Is someone without resilience weak? Or are they still building it?
- Can our character strengths change or grow over time?
- What role do relationships and community play in resilience?
- Which of your strengths do you rely on most during difficult times?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide a simplified list of eight strengths with descriptions.

■ Core

Identify top three strengths with examples and create a one-week resilience plan.

■ Extend

Write a detailed piece on how character strengths contribute to psychological resilience.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Journalling for Wellbeing

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Upper KS2 | Years 5–6 | Ages 9–11 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can use journalling as a self-regulation and emotional processing tool and understand the evidence behind it.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Upper KS2	Years 5–6 Ages 9–11	25–30 minutes	Journals or paper, optional guided prompts

Overview

Research by James Pennebaker shows that expressive writing about thoughts and feelings reduces stress, improves immune function and helps process difficult experiences. Even brief, regular journalling (10–15 minutes) has measurable effects on wellbeing.

Key rules for wellbeing journalling: it is private (no one reads it without permission), spelling and grammar do not matter, and there are no wrong answers.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Has anyone ever written down their feelings? What was it like? Did anything shift?"
2. Introduce the research behind journalling — keep it brief and age-appropriate.
3. Establish the key rules: private, no grading, no wrong answers.
4. Offer five optional prompts (see discussion section below).
5. Children write for 10 minutes — completely free, no correction of spelling or grammar. Remain present but do not monitor.
6. Debrief: "How did it feel to write? Did anything surprise you about what came out?"
7. Discuss how to build a journalling habit — even 5 minutes a day makes a measurable difference.

Discussion Prompts

- How does my body feel today and what might have caused that?
- What is one thing I am genuinely proud of from this week?
- What is one worry I have and one small thing I could do about it?
- Who has been kind to me recently and how did it make me feel?
- What do I hope for — for myself, for my family, for the world?

Differentiation

■ Support

Use sentence starters and shorter writing bursts of 5 minutes.

■ Core

Write freely for 10 minutes using at least two prompts.

■ Extend

Develop a regular journalling habit and write a reflection on what they have noticed about themselves.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.

Peer Support & Connection

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Upper KS2 | Years 5–6 | Ages 9–11 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children understand the role of peer relationships in mental health and can articulate what good peer support looks like.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Upper KS2	Years 5–6 Ages 9–11	30 minutes	Discussion cards, peer support pledge cards

Overview

Strong peer relationships are one of the most powerful protective factors in children's mental health. Research consistently shows that social connection buffers against anxiety, depression and the effects of adversity.

This lesson helps children understand what supportive friendship looks like in practice and gives them tools to be a good support to others — while also knowing when to involve an adult.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "Think of a time a friend really helped you. What specifically did they do?"
2. Share research: peer relationships are one of the biggest protective factors in mental health.
3. Discuss what good peer support looks like: listening without fixing, validating feelings, not giving unwanted advice, knowing when to involve an adult.
4. Pairs discuss: "A friend tells you they are feeling really scared and sad. What do you do?"
5. Class debrief: share strategies. Add a key message — good friends also know when to tell a trusted adult.
6. Crucial safeguarding point: "Some things are too big to manage as a friend alone. Telling an adult is not betraying a friend — it is protecting them."
7. Each child writes a peer support pledge: one specific thing they commit to doing for a classmate.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the difference between a good listener and someone who just tells you what to do?
- When is it important to involve an adult rather than handle something ourselves?
- How can we support friends when we cannot be physically with them?
- What makes it hard to ask for support? What might make it easier?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide a list of five support strategies to discuss and choose from.

■ Core

Independently generate three ways to support a peer and write a pledge.

■ Extend

Design a peer support charter for their class using psychological principles.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

[headspace.com/meditation/kids](https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids)

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

[calm.com/schools](https://www.calm.com/schools)

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

[mindfulnessinschools.org](https://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.



My Kindness Calendar

Psychology Flows Lesson Plan | Upper KS2 | Years 5–6 | Ages 9–11 | psychologyflows.com
Psychology Flows • Dr Kayleigh Sumner, Educational Psychologist (Doctorate in Education and Child Psychology) • psychologyflows.com/resources

Learning Objective: Children can plan and carry out daily acts of kindness and reflect on their impact on their own and others' wellbeing.

Year Group	Age Range	Duration	Resources Needed
Upper KS2	Years 5–6 Ages 9–11	25 minutes	Psychology Flows Kindness Calendar printable

Overview

Research by Sonja Lyubomirsky shows that performing acts of kindness increases wellbeing significantly, particularly when acts are varied and intentional. For this age group, the calendar structure adds reflection and accountability.

During periods of disruption, kindness to others is one of the most evidence-based ways to maintain our own wellbeing — it shifts focus outward and creates connection.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Begin: "What is the last kind thing someone did for you? How did it make you feel?"
2. Share the research: performing kind acts increases the giver's wellbeing, not just the receiver's.
3. Introduce the Kindness Calendar — children will plan or record a kind act every day.
4. Brainstorm kindness ideas as a class — especially things that can be done remotely or online.
5. Discuss: "Can you be kind to yourself? What does that look like?"
6. Children plan their first week of kindness on the calendar.
7. Return to the calendar weekly: what did they notice about how it made them feel?

Discussion Prompts

- Is it possible to be kind to yourself? What does that look like in practice?
- Does a kind act have to be big to matter?
- How does knowing someone has been kind to you affect your day?
- What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?

Differentiation

■ Support

Provide a menu of five kindness ideas to select from.

■ Core

Plan independently and reflect weekly on impact.

■ Extend

Research the psychological evidence for why kindness improves wellbeing.

■ Recommended Mindfulness & Meditation Resources

Headspace for Kids (Ages 6–12)

Guided meditations and breathing exercises, free in app

headspace.com/meditation/kids

Calm Schools Initiative

Free mindfulness resources for primary classrooms

calm.com/schools

Mindfulness in Schools Project (.b)

Evidence-based mindfulness curriculum for schools

mindfulnessinschools.org

■ Safeguarding

If you have any concerns about a child's welfare or safety following this activity, report these immediately to your school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Do not investigate concerns yourself. Record what the child said using their exact words. These resources are educational tools — they do not replace professional safeguarding procedures.