

Mindfulness Monthly



Issue 33: August 2026

Welcome to the August edition of 'Mindfulness Monthly'. We understand that it is really important to enjoy the holidays and not worry about school, but we also wanted to keep in touch with some top tips to promote mental health and well-being ready for the return back in September. Have a lovely summer break!

The power of looking forward

As summer draws to a close, conversations can easily become focused on what is ending rather than what is beginning. Whilst it is natural to feel disappointed that the holidays are coming to an end, young people can benefit from also thinking about the opportunities the new academic year might bring. This could include seeing friends again, joining a new club, studying a favourite subject, taking on greater responsibility, or working towards a personal goal. Focusing on positive possibilities helps balance fears about the unknown and encourages a more optimistic outlook. Parents and carers can support this by having simple conversations about things their young person is looking forward to. Sometimes writing down three things they are excited about for September can help shift attention away from worry and towards opportunity. Looking ahead in this way doesn't ignore challenges; it simply reminds us that new beginnings often bring exciting possibilities as well.

The back-to-school reset: Starting September calmly

By the middle of August, many young people begin to think about returning to school. While some look forward to seeing friends and getting back into a routine, others may experience feelings of uncertainty about the year ahead. New teachers, different expectations, unfamiliar timetables, or changes in friendship groups can all contribute to anxiety during this period.

One of the most helpful things parents and carers can do is encourage a gradual return to routine rather than a sudden change during the final few days of the holiday. Re-establishing regular bedtimes, introducing some daily structure, and talking positively about September can help young people feel more prepared and less overwhelmed.

It is also important to remember that mixed emotions are completely normal. Feeling excited and nervous at the same time often means that something matters to us. By acknowledging these feelings without rushing to fix them, parents and carers can help their young people approach the new academic year with confidence and resilience.

Rebuilding healthy sleep habits before school returns

Sleep is one of the most important foundations of good mental health, yet it is often the first routine to change during the summer holidays. Later nights and slower mornings can be enjoyable and restful, but they can also make the return to school routines more challenging if left until the final few days of August.

Rather than making dramatic changes, it can be helpful to adjust sleep patterns gradually. Bringing bedtimes and wake-up times forward by 15–20 minutes every few days allows the body clock to adapt naturally. Reducing screen use before bed, increasing exposure to natural daylight during the day, and maintaining a calming bedtime routine can also support better sleep.

A well-rested young person is often better equipped to manage emotions, concentrate in lessons, and cope with everyday challenges. Investing time in healthy sleep habits before September can make the return to school feel much smoother and less stressful for everyone involved.

Friendship worries before returning to school

For many young people, returning to school isn't solely about lessons and home learning. Often, the biggest concerns are social ones. Questions such as 'Will my friends still be my friends?', 'What if friendship groups have changed?' or 'What if I feel left out?' are extremely common during the summer break.

Parents and carers can help by listening without dismissing these worries. While friendship concerns may seem small from an adult perspective, they can feel hugely significant to a young person. Providing space to talk, reassuring them that friendships naturally evolve, and reminding them of previous challenges they have successfully navigated can all be helpful.

It can also be useful to encourage perspective. Many young people assume they are the only ones who feel nervous about returning, when in reality many of their peers are experiencing similar thoughts. Focusing on reconnecting rather than comparing can help reduce anxiety and build confidence as the new term approaches.

Managing results day nerves (for Years 10 and 11)

For students awaiting GCSE or other examination results, the weeks leading up to results day can sometimes feel more stressful than the exams themselves. It is natural for young people to wonder what their results will be and what those results might mean for their future.

Parents and carers can play an important role in keeping these worries in perspective. Reminding young people that results provide information rather than a judgement of their worth can help reduce some of the pressure they place on themselves. Whatever happens on results day, there will be options, support, and opportunities available.

Encourage your young person to focus on things they can control in the present, rather than trying to predict an outcome that is still unknown. Spending time with friends, staying active, pursuing hobbies, and enjoying the summer break are all healthy ways to manage the waiting period and maintain emotional well-being.

If you are viewing this newsletter electronically, the following websites may be useful to access if you would like further guidance or support;

- <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/08/nine-tips-for-supporting-your-child-on-results-day/>
- <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/exam-results>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/articles/2025/gcse-results-day-bbc-bitesize-support>

A simple technique: 'Three Things I'm Looking Forward To'

As the summer holidays begin to draw to a close, it is natural for young people to start thinking about the new school year. While some anticipation is healthy, focusing only on worries can make challenges feel bigger than they really are. A simple technique that can help is called 'Three Things I'm Looking Forward To'. Encourage your young person to write down three things that they are looking forward to in September. These do not need to be major events. They might include:

- Seeing friends again
- Joining a club or activity
- Studying a favourite subject
- Decorating a new planner or organiser
- Meeting new teachers
- Transitioning from one phase to another (joining secondary school, starting GCSEs or working towards moving on to college)
- Getting back into a routine

The aim of this activity is not to ignore worries, but to balance them with positive possibilities. When the brain is feeling anxious, it naturally focuses on potential problems. Taking a few moments to think about opportunities and enjoyable experiences can help create a more balanced perspective. Parents and carers can join in too. Sharing what you're looking forward to can spark positive conversations and help young people feel more optimistic about the transition back to school.

If there are fears that lead to the young person feeling anxious, it would be a good idea to reach out to the pastoral team in school as soon as you can so that they can support the transition back into school and make it run as smoothly as possible.

Other mindfulness techniques that would work well for August

As well as the 'Three Things I'm Looking Forward To' activity mentioned on the previous page, you may also wish to consider one of the techniques below;

The Circle of Control

Draw two circles. Inside the circle write 'Things I can control'. These could include;

- Getting enough sleep
- Packing my bag
- Being kind to others
- Trying my best

Outside the circle write 'Things I can't control'. These could include;

- Exactly who is in my classes
- What other people think
- Unexpected changes
- Future outcomes

This activity helps young people focus their energy on areas where they can make a difference.

The 'September Confidence List'

Ask your young person to write: three things they did well this year, two challenges they overcame, and one thing they are proud of. This simple reflection helps build self-confidence before returning to school and reminds them that they have successfully managed challenges before.

The 'Summer Memory Jar'

Throughout the holidays, write positive moments on slips of paper and place them in a jar. At the end of August, spend time reading them together. This helps young people recognise positive experiences, practise gratitude, and end the summer on an uplifting note before school begins again.

Confidence through preparation

Confidence is often misunderstood as something that people either have or don't have. In reality, confidence frequently grows from feeling prepared. When young people know what to expect and feel organised, they are often more willing to face challenges and try new things. The weeks leading up to September provide an opportunity to support this sense of readiness. Small actions such as organising school equipment, discussing any upcoming changes, planning travel arrangements, or setting personal goals for the term ahead can help young people feel more in control. Importantly, preparation is not about striving for perfection. It is about helping young people feel capable and equipped for what lies ahead. Even small steps can reduce uncertainty and create a stronger sense of self-belief as they begin the new academic year.

Website recommendation of the month

National Trust: 'Family Days Out'

(<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/family-friendly>)

As the summer holidays continue, many families are looking for affordable ways to spend quality time together. The National Trust's Family Days Out website is packed with ideas for outdoor adventures, family activities, nature trails, and seasonal events taking place across the UK. Whether you're looking for a local walk, a day exploring a historic property, or inspiration from their popular '50 Things to Do' activities, the website offers a wide range of opportunities to get outdoors, make memories, and enjoy time together before the new school year begins.



Well-Being Quote:

"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you"

Anne Lamott

Altruistic August 2026

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

1 Set an intention to be kind to others (and yourself) this month

2 Send an uplifting message to someone you can't be with

3 Be kind and supportive to everyone you interact with

4 Ask someone how they feel and really listen to their reply

5 Spend time wishing for other people to be happy and well

6 Smile and be friendly to the people you see today

7 Give time to help a project or cause you care about

8 Make some tasty food for someone who will appreciate it

9 Thank someone you're grateful to and tell them why

10 Check in with someone who may be lonely or feeling anxious

11 Share an encouraging news story to inspire others

12 Contact a friend to let them know you're thinking of them

13 No plans day! Be kind to yourself so you can be kind to others too

14 Take an action to be kind to nature and care for our planet

15 If someone annoys you, be kind. Imagine how they may be feeling

16 Make a thoughtful gift as a surprise for someone

17 Be kind online. Share positive and supportive comments

18 Today do something to make life easier for someone else

19 Be thankful for your food and the people who made it possible

20 Look for the good in everyone you meet today

21 Donate unused items, clothes or food to help a local charity

22 Give people the gift of your full attention

23 Share an article, book or podcast you found helpful

24 Forgive someone who hurt you in the past

25 Give your time, energy or attention to help someone in need

26 Find a way to 'pay it forward' or support a good cause

27 Notice when someone is down and try to brighten their day

28 Have a friendly chat with someone you don't know very well

29 Do something kind to help in your local community

30 Give away something to help those who don't have as much as you

31 Share Action for Happiness with other people today



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together