Breathing exercises

Affirmations

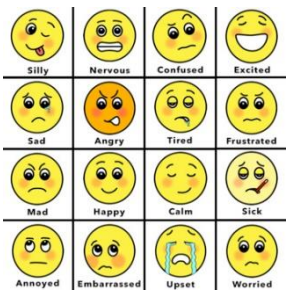
Worry monster

Movement within lessons

Validating feelings and emotions

Time and space

Identifying emotions



- **Breathing techniques**

Simple breathing techniques can help relieve stress and reduce anxiety. They take a few minutes and can be done anywhere. See Appendix 1.

- **Affirmations**

Affirmations are positive statements that can overcome negative thinking and drive positive change. See Appendix 2.

- **Worry monster**

Each class has a worry monster. Children learn that they can write their worry on a piece of paper, and put it into the monster's mouth. In the early years, children put their photo inside the monster, to tell the class teacher they have a worry. Upper KS2 have a post box rather than a monster.

- **Movement within lessons**

Teachers actively encourage children to move around the classroom, either during lessons, or after every 45 minute period.

- **Validating feelings and emotions**

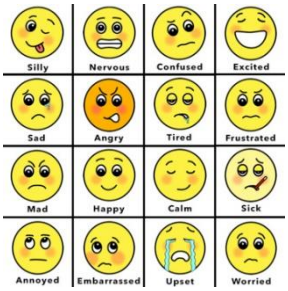
Staff members recognise, understand and accept the way a child may feel. They may say things such as "It's ok to feel that way" and "I'll be here to support you". In some instances, there may be chance for whole class discussions, reflecting on the question "Has anyone else felt like that?"

- **Time and space**

Often, children with heightened emotions cannot think as clearly. Teachers give children both time and space, which allows the child to calm down. Staff members will reflect on the situation later on in the day.

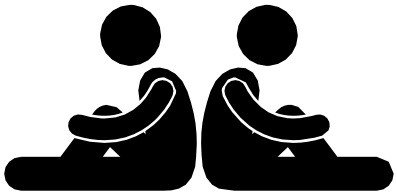
- **Identifying emotions**

Staff members identify and label their emotions and how they are feeling. For example, staff members may reflect on their own emotions and say things such as “I’m feeling like this because…” With children’s emotions, particularly in the early years and KS1, staff members say things such as “I can see you’re feeling…”



Appendix 1: Breathing techniques

Back to Back Breathing



Find a partner and sit on the floor back to back. Sit tall and close your eyes if you want to. Decide who will start - that person begins by inhaling deeply and then exhaling slowly, then continues to breathe slowly and deeply. You should feel the expansion in your partner's back each time they breathe in. Try to sync your breathing so that you are breathing in time together.

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Tummy Breathing

Lie on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on your stomach. Breathe in deeply though your nose and feel the stuffed animal rise, and then feel it lower as you slowly exhale through your mouth. Rock the stuffed animal to sleep using the rise and fall of your stomach.

You are Amazing

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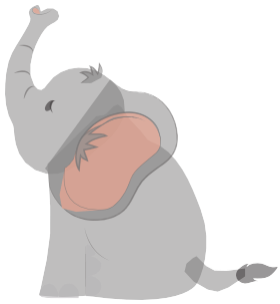
Elephant Breathing



Stand with your feet wide apart and your arms dangling in front of your body like an elephant's trunk. As you breathe in deeply through your nose, raise your arms up high above your head. Then slowly swing your arms down again as you breathe out through your mouth.

Every Moment Passes

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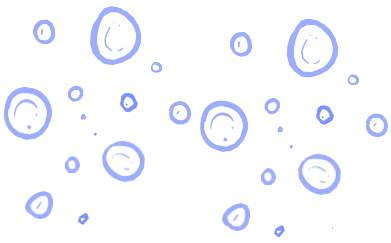
Bubble Breathing



Sit comfortably with your eyes closed. Imagine you are holding a bubble wand. Breathe in deeply and, as you breathe out slowly and gently, imagine you are blowing bubbles into the room. Imagine the bubbles are filled with peace, love or happiness and that you are filling the whole room with a peaceful, happy feeling. As you keep breathing slowly and blowing your imaginary bubbles, feel your body become calm and relaxed.

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Balloon Breathing

Sitting in a comfortable position, place your hands around your mouth as if you were about to blow up a balloon. Take a deep breath in through the nose and, as you slowly exhale through your mouth, start to spread your hands out as if you are blowing up a great big balloon. Hold your hand position as you inhale again and then spread your hands further as you exhale. Once your balloon is as big as it can be, gently sway from side to side as you release your balloon up into the sky

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Shoulder Roll breathing

Choose a comfortable sitting position. As you take a slow deep breath in through your nose raise your shoulders up towards your ears. Breathe slowly out through your mouth, lowering your shoulders as you exhale. Repeat slowly, rolling your shoulders up and down in time with your breath.

Emotions are Normal

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Take 5 Breathing

Sit comfortably, resting one hand in front of you with fingers outstretched like a star and the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your hand. Starting at the base of your thumb on the outside of your hand, breathe in slowly through your nose as you slide your pointer finger up to the top of your thumb. Breathe out slowly and slide your pointer finger down the inside of your thumb. Breathe in as you slide your finger up the next finger and out as you slide down. Continue breathing in and out
as you trace your whole hand.

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Bumblebee Breathing

Sitting comfortably, gently place the tips of your pointer fingers in your ears and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose and then hum quietly as you slowly breathe out.

'The only way out is through'

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Appendix 2: Affirmations

There is no one better to be than myself.

I am enough

I am safe

My mistakes help me learn and grow

I deserve to be loved

I deserve to be happy

Every day is a fresh start

Emotions are normal