



mindfulbytes

The MaaS Framework for Schools

Implementation Guide

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A program of NM-CCCR

INTRODUCTION: FROM RESEARCH TO YOUR SCHOOL

You've read about the research. You believe in the approach. Now the question is: how do we actually do this?

This guide is for school administrators, curriculum coordinators, and teacher leaders who want to bring MindfulBytes into their building.

The Mindfulness as a Service (MaaS) framework was originally designed at the intersection of two fields: cybersecurity (how we protect systems) and mindfulness (how we build human awareness). You already protect your network with firewalls and content filters. MindfulBytes protects your students by building their internal awareness.

THE FOUR FOCUS AREAS — ADAPTED FOR SCHOOLS

FOCUS AREA 1: CHILD TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Children need developmentally appropriate digital literacy that starts with self-awareness, not rules. MindfulBytes sessions integrated into existing instruction. Age-appropriate body-awareness activities tied to screen use. Students develop vocabulary for describing their digital experiences.

FOCUS AREA 2: TECHNICAL BEST PRACTICES FOR CHILD-CENTRIC ENVIRONMENTS

The platforms and tools children use should be designed with developmental needs in mind. Review of classroom technology tools through a developmental lens. Configuration of school devices to support natural pause points. IT and instruction working together.

FOCUS AREA 3: CHILD COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Children process digital stimuli differently at different developmental stages. Grade-banded implementation (K-1, 2-3, 4-5) with developmentally appropriate activities. Teachers trained to recognize Digital Bonding Patterns in classroom behavior.

FOCUS AREA 4: CHILD BEHAVIORAL DECISION THEORY

Children's digital decisions are driven by rapid body-level assessments, not deliberate reasoning. The three-moment session structure built into classroom routines. The focus shifts from compliance to capacity.

ASSESSMENT: THE DIGITAL WELLNESS ASSESSMENT (DWA)

The Digital Wellness Assessment is an exploratory measurement instrument designed to capture children's internal experience of technology use.

What the DWA Measures:

- Interoceptive signals
- Digital Bonding Patterns
- Creative engagement

What the DWA Is Not:

- It is not a diagnostic tool
- It is not a standardized test
- It is not a screen time tracker

The DWA uses developmentally appropriate formats: visual analog scales for younger students, body-mapping exercises, and structured reflection prompts.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The DWA is currently in its pilot phase. We are transparent about this because integrity matters more than marketing.

BUILDING BUY-IN

WITH YOUR ADMINISTRATION:

"MindfulBytes is a research-backed K-5 digital wellness program developed through a Harvard Graduate School of Education fellowship. It doesn't add a new subject to the schedule — it adds a 60-90 second awareness practice to technology transitions we're already doing. We're not restricting technology. We're building the internal skills students need to use it well."

Key credibility signals:

- Harvard Center for Digital Thriving fellowship backing
- Peer-reviewed research foundation (MaaS 2.0 framework)
- 25+ years of cybersecurity expertise across the Pentagon, Los Alamos, Boeing, and IBM
- NM-CCCR nonprofit research organization
- No additional curriculum purchase required for basic implementation
- Aligns with existing SEL standards

WITH YOUR TEACHERS:

"This isn't something you teach. It's a question you ask. 'How does your body feel right now?' That's it. That's the intervention."

WITH PARENTS:

"We're teaching students to be aware of how technology makes them feel — the same way we teach them to be aware of how food makes them feel, or how exercise makes them feel."

TIMELINE: PILOT TO FULL IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 1: EXPLORATION (2-4 WEEKS)

- Review this guide and the companion Teacher's Quick Guide
- Identify 2-3 champion teachers willing to pilot
- Schedule a 30-minute introductory call with NM-CCCR
- Share parent guides with your school community
- Present the concept at a staff meeting

PHASE 2: PILOT (6-8 WEEKS)

- Champion teachers implement the three-moment structure
- Administer baseline DWA

- Weekly 15-minute check-in among pilot teachers
- Collect student language and responses
- Midpoint share-out at staff meeting

PHASE 3: EXPANSION (ONE SEMESTER)

- Pilot teachers present their experience to full staff
- Grade-level teams select activities
- Full staff professional development session (half day)
- School-wide three-moment structure adopted
- DWA administered at beginning and end of semester

PHASE 4: INTEGRATION (YEAR 2 AND BEYOND)

- MindfulBytes practices embedded in school culture
- New teacher onboarding includes MindfulBytes orientation
- Annual DWA administration for program monitoring
- Connection to broader school wellness and SEL initiatives

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

What Costs Nothing:

- The three-moment structure
- The five classroom activities in the Teacher's Quick Guide
- These downloadable guides
- The body-awareness practices

What Has Modest Costs:

- Professional development time (half-day PD session)
- DWA materials (estimated \$2-5 per student per administration)
- Optional Breathing Buddy supplies for K-1 classrooms

What Requires Investment:

- Full MindfulBytes Program Partnership: NM-CCCR offers comprehensive support packages. Pricing is school-specific. Contact michael@merck.io
- Conference keynotes and assemblies

Funding Sources to Explore:

- Title IV-A (Student Support and Academic Enrichment)
- SEL program budgets
- Health education grants
- PTA/PTO funding
- State digital literacy mandates
- Research partnerships

SUCCESS METRICS

Student-Level Indicators:

- Increased body-awareness vocabulary
- Improved self-regulation during technology transitions
- Student-initiated body check-ins
- Growth in DWA scores

Teacher-Level Indicators:

- Teachers report smoother technology transitions
- Body check-ins become routine
- Teachers begin noticing their own body signals during technology use

School-Level Indicators:

- Reduction in technology-related behavioral incidents
- Improved classroom climate during screen-based activities
- Parent engagement with digital wellness concepts

What We Don't Promise: MindfulBytes does not promise reduced screen time, improved test scores, or the elimination of technology-related challenges. What we promise is that children will develop greater awareness of their internal experience during technology use.

THE CYBERSECURITY BRIDGE: WHY THIS FRAMEWORK WORKS

The MaaS framework was born from cybersecurity — specifically, from 25+ years of protecting digital systems across the Pentagon, Los Alamos, Boeing, and IBM. The most important lesson: the most sophisticated cyberattacks don't target the technology. They target the human operating the technology.

The same dynamic applies to children and digital platforms. The most concerning aspects of technology for children — attention manipulation, reward scheduling, algorithmic content loops — don't target the device. They target the child's developing nervous system.

The NIST Cybersecurity Framework operates on five functions: Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover. MindfulBytes translates these into a developmental vocabulary:

- IDENTIFY: Know what you're protecting (your attention, your emotions, your creativity).
- PROTECT: Build practices that safeguard those assets.
- DETECT: Notice when something feels wrong.
- RESPOND: Have strategies ready (pause, breathe, choose).
- RECOVER: Know how to return to baseline.

This isn't a clever analogy. It's a structural insight: the same organizational thinking that protects digital infrastructure can protect human infrastructure.

GETTING STARTED

- Schedule a conversation. No pitch. No pressure. Email michael@merek.io.
 - Share these guides with your team.
 - Identify your champions.
 - Try it yourself. Before your next meeting, close your eyes for five seconds and notice one thing your body is doing.
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MindfulBytes is a program of the New Mexico Center for Cybersecurity and Cyberpsychology Research (NM-CCCR), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Learn more: mindfulbytes.io Research: cyberpsychologyresearch.io Contact: michael@merek.io

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