

Benefits of Volunteering for Primary School Students:

Volunteering can be a lovely activity for primary school students, and it has been linked to numerous wellbeing and mental health benefits. Volunteering can boost students' mood by releasing feel good, 'happy hormones'. It can also provide a nice break from daily routines and school-related worries. Volunteering can be a great opportunity for primary school children to try something new and get involved with helping another person, or their school community.

Being a volunteer is also a great chance to make new friends and learn new skills. Teaching children about volunteering does not have to mean a big time commitment, or big gestures. Volunteering at primary school level can include small daily tasks of helping someone else, or even random acts of kindness. By introducing volunteering in this way, children can start to learn about the positive benefits of their actions. Starting small such as helping a friend or loved one, can instil a sense of wanting to help others outside of their usual community, and enhancing their own wellbeing in the process. This can be a stepping-stone to children getting more involved in structured volunteering, and developing their empathy and social conscience as they grow.



Volunteering Activities for Primary School Students:

Care home Christmas cheer:

Why not partner with a care home and spread some well wishes during the festive season? Your primary school class could design and decorate Christmas cards or other art works with positive messages and well wishes from the children. An Post often offers postage free of charge to care homes. Check in with your local post office to see if they are offering this service. If so, simply write FreePost where you would usually put the stamp!



Toy drive:

Organise a general collection of toys that are in good condition that can be donated to a charitable organisation in your local community such as St. Vincent De Paul or another organisation. Giving to others who are in need can promote a sense of empathy, and sharing toys with others can build a sense of satisfaction and positive emotion. Experiencing positive emotion builds resilience in children and improves their emotional ability to deal with negative emotions.



School garden and wildlife project:

Consider starting a community garden in your school. Each class can take turns looking after the garden and this can also support the development of responsibility and connection to nature. See our Primary School [Nature Wellbeing Activity book](#) for some inspiration!

Building a bird box to feed the birds is another example of a mindful activity that a class can do together. This activity also gives students a chance to take a break from the classroom and do something for their wellbeing. Students can take turns checking the feed each day and keeping it clean and safe from other animals. They can even keep a record of the different birds that they see each day and draw them in their art class e.g. a Robin or a Blackbird.

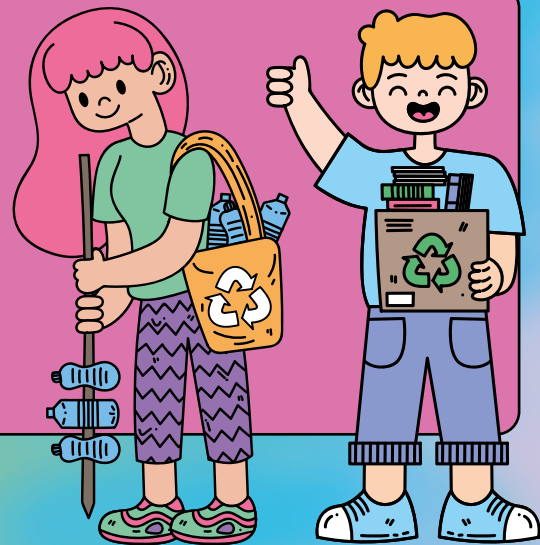


Reading buddies:

Older primary school students can volunteer to read with younger students, helping them build reading skills and develop their confidence. This is a great way to encourage peer support between classes and develop social connections and friendships. The benefit of older children helping younger children learn lasts beyond the volunteering activity itself; it can give the volunteer a sense of pride and confidence and may also instil a sense of safety and belonging among younger children. Anecdotally, we know that students learn well from their peers and enjoy connecting with each other.

Litter collection:

Organise a litter collection day at your school, local park or elsewhere in your community. Students can work together to collect litter. This can build a sense of social responsibility while also supporting children to develop friendships and team-working skills. This is also an opportunity to teach children about the importance of looking after the environment while at the same time indirectly engaging in physical activity which as we know helps to support wellbeing.



We would love for schools to share their volunteering activities on our [School Portal](#), to inspire other schools to get involved and spread the positive mental health messaging.



Weekly Planner:

Using the spaces below, write down a plan for what positive activity you are going to do each day of the week.

Tip: You can plan to do something nice for someone in school; a friend; someone at home; or in your community. You can even plan to do something nice for yourself - learning to look after yourself is important too!

Today I will...

Monday: _____

Tuesday: _____

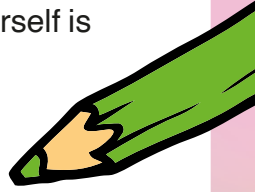
Wednesday: _____

Thursday: _____

Friday: _____

Saturday: _____

Sunday: _____



Kindness Bingo:

Even if you do not have the time to organise a scheduled volunteering event, you can still boost your mood by doing something kind for someone else. Below are examples of random acts of kindness – see how many you can do this month! Colour in the squares in the Kindness Bingo sheet after you have finished each random act of kindness.

Tell someone why they are important to you	Give a family member a hug	Push in a classmate's chair for them	Take some 'time out' for yourself (like some quiet time to relax)	Help a Friend	Give someone a compliment
Say thank you to an adult	Write down three nice things about yourself	Tell a joke to someone new	Spend some time with a pet	Give someone else a turn during play time	Ask someone if they need help
Ask a classmate how their day is going	Smile at someone	Help to tidy up without being asked	Say thank you to a friend	Make a thank you card	Help someone who got hurt
Tell someone they had a good idea	Hold the door open for someone	Ask someone new to play	Help to put rubbish into the recycling bin	Share with a friend	Write down three nice things about someone else