



Everyone is Carrying Something



Activity overview:

Age range: KS2 (adaptable for Y3-Y6)
Duration: 15 minutes
Whole-class, low-risk, opt-out friendly

Purpose of session:

To build empathy, emotional literacy, and understanding of invisible challenges **without referencing illness, siblings, or caregiving directly.**

Safeguards:

No requirement to share personal information.

Illness, death, or siblings are **not mentioned.**

Opt-out language (“might”, “could”) reduces emotional pressure.

Teacher remains emotionally regulated and neutral.

Psychological Rationale:

Research shows siblings of children with life-limiting conditions often experience **hidden emotional strain** and value school as a stable, normalising space (Rainbow Trust Children’s Charity, 2018).

Children benefit from **empathy-building approaches** that do not single them out or require disclosure (Cassidy, 2025).

Peer understanding and emotionally safe environments are protective factors for wellbeing (Rajendran et al., 2024).



“Everyone you meet is carrying something you can’t see.”

Today we are going to think about how we can be kind and understanding at school, even when we don’t know what someone is dealing with.

Do not ask pupils to share personal experiences, or someone else’s story.

Prompt (think-pair-share or whole class):

“What are some things people might be dealing with that others don’t notice?”

(Examples can include: worries, tiredness, missing someone, having lots of responsibilities)

Sam is usually chatty and helpful, but lately they seem tired and sometimes get cross more easily.

They still try hard at school, but some days it feels harder than others.



Discussion questions:

“What *might* be going on for Sam?”

“What could friends or adults do to help Sam feel okay at school?”

Focus on **supportive actions**, not guessing causes. (Examples can include: being patient, listening, using kind words)

Building a Kind Classroom



Things that help people feel safe at school	Things adults can do to help

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Discussion:

Things that help people feel safe at school

(e.g. patience, listening, routines, kind words)

Things adults can do to help

(e.g. noticing effort, giving time, being fair, checking in)

Link explicitly to **school as a place that helps everyone cope**, even when life outside school is tricky.

Building a Kind Classroom

What this might look like for our class

Saying “Do you want to play with us?” to someone standing nearby.

Making sure no one is left out when choosing partners or groups.

Offering help and using kind words.

Smiling or waving at someone who seems alone.

Being patient if someone is having a slow or tricky day.

Listening when someone else is talking.

Helping keep the classroom tidy so it feels calm and organised.





**“We don’t need to know everyone’s story
to be kind.**

**Small things we do every day can make
school feel like a safe place for everyone.”**

Read the slide

Let's do a mindfulness activity to get us ready for what we are learning next.

Using our senses to notice, what can you:



See



Hear



Smell



Feel



Taste

Optional calm transition back to learning.