



*Individuals achieving
Our community succeeding*

Newsletter

Friday 12th February 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Request from Revd Alan Jewell, Vicar St. Cross Church

On Mothering Sunday (6th March) the Bishop of Stockport, Bishop Libby, is coming to the 10:30AM service at St Cross Church. It's a significant occasion, as Bishop Libby was the first woman bishop in the Church of England, so we are very excited about welcoming her to Appleton Thorn.

We would like to ask a small group of children to present Bishop Libby with a posy at the end of the service and I am wondering if you could find some children from the school who would like to do this.

We are expecting a full house, but would reserve a number of seats for those children and their parents, if they would like to attend. I know that people really appreciated the children who represented the school at our 'St Cross Day' service back in September and it would be lovely to have representatives from the school attend again.

If you would like your child to represent the school at the service and have them present a posy to Bishop Libby then please contact the school office.

Children's Mental Health Week (8th – 14th February)

I read an article relating to this earlier this week and I thought I would share it with you. The article is attached to the back of the newsletter and I do feel it has some interesting points.

Scooters and Playing Football

Please can we remind you that riding scooters on the school playground/grounds and playing with footballs are not allowed for obvious safety reasons. There was an incident this week where a parent was hit in the face by a football on the school grounds. We have already spoken to the children in school about this issue but can you also remind your child/children that they are not allowed to play with case footballs either before school, after school or during the school day on the tarmac playground or similarly ride scooters on the school grounds. Thank you in advance for your support.

Drama club

There will be no drama club on Tuesday 23rd February. We will be having a dress rehearsal on Tuesday 8th March and the children will need to bring their costumes with them.

On Tuesday 15th March, drama club will be performing some short sketches for parents. The performance will start at 3.45pm and last approximately 1 hour. If you are a parent of a child from drama club and would like to attend, please fill in the form below.

Our Year 6 High 5s team played in the cluster High 5s competition on Tuesday; it was their first time playing competitively and they all played excellently. Unfortunately, the team lost 3-1 against St. Matthews and 4-2 against Broomfields, but they learnt a lot and are looking forward to their next games. Well done team!

It has been a long standing tradition for girls in Guiding to wear their Guiding uniforms on World Thinking Day. The 22nd February is the first day back to school after the February half-term and we would like to give permission for the children to wear their Rainbow/Brownie/ Guide uniforms to school on that day.

John Wilson came back from Conway without his pencil case. It is a black one, and had a lot of new pens in it. We have checked with the coach company and the centre but have had no joy. If anyone comes across it, please could they hand it in to the office. Thank you.

The citizen for this week is Zoe Porter in Year 2. Zoe is a delight to have in school. She always works hard, looks after her friends and peers and never fails to use good manners. Well done Zoe😊!

Headteacher

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*Signed _____ (Optional) Date: _____

Drama Club performance – Tues 15th March at 3.45pm

I would like to reserve _____ seats. My child is _____
and attends Drama Club.

Signed _____

Date _____

The following is an article I read this week relating to Children's Mental Health Week.

Parents have an innate desire to protect their child from the challenges life will throw at them.

But how can you prepare your child for the sometimes inevitable life events they might encounter, such as divorce, death or serious illness so that they have the resilience to "bounce forward"?

Helping build resilience in children will prepare them for life's challenges.

"Resilience is made up of coping skills and all children have them, they just may not be aware of them," Dr Fiona Pienaar, Place2Be's director of clinical services.

"It's helpful for them to develop an awareness of these so they grow up with a range of skills they know they've got. That underpins resilience."

What practical steps can parents take to help children develop their own coping skills before they are faced with challenging experiences?

We chatted to Dr Pienaar and Dr Harold Koplewicz, founder of the Child Mind Institute - an organisation devoted to transforming mental health care for children - to

get their advice.

1. Show that seeking support is a part of life.

People who suffer from anxiety and depression can find it hard to ask for advice. Children should learn from a young age this is a part of everyday life.

"Parents should show they ask for support in everyday situations," explained Dr Pienaar.

"Even if it's a mother saying 'I'm feeling upset because my friend is ill so I'm going to phone them and have a chat' or 'I'm not feeling well so I'm going to make an appointment to go to the doctors'.

"I can't stress enough that it's important children feel it's a part of their resilience that they know who they can seek support from."

Dr Pienaar said parents should make their children aware of the range of support they have around them, whether that be a neighbour, aunt or other caregiver.

"Then if they tell you they've had a rough day at school, you can say 'who did you talk to about that?' and show we all need to be connected."

Dr Harold Koplewicz said research on resilience shows that the support of communities has the greatest effect on children's ability to cope with upsets in life.

"Communities include parents, siblings, teachers, friends and other peers who share the same experience," he explained.

"If a child has a robust connection to her community that she can leverage in times of stress — particularly making contact with peers who have shared experience — that makes a huge difference in terms of her ability to respond in a healthy way.

"The most important thing is to teach children to interact and draw comfort and support from the community."

2. Give them age-appropriate freedoms.

It's important to allow children to learn from their own mistakes and begin to build a sense of independence.

Dr Koplewicz calls this "cultivating grit".

"Grit is a quality that includes persevering in the face of adversity, being optimistic, and setting and accomplishing long-term goals," he explained.

"Cultivating grit starts with the mindset and attitudes of parents, teachers and other caregivers.

"Parents should have a 'growth' mindset that values community and collaboration.

Kids who believe they can (and should) grow are more adaptable and open-minded about life's challenges."

Children should understand that seeking support is beneficial

Dr Pienaar agrees.

"Don't rescue them all the time," she explained. "You can gauge the situation as a parent and know they can cope with it.

"If there's someone new in the playground you could stand there and support them, or you could let them try something new and stand back, getting them to develop those social skills themselves."

Pienaar said allowing children these freedoms gives them the opportunity to try and to fail, both of which will benefit them as they get older.

But defining these freedoms can be hard, because many factors will come into play.

"It's not as simple as 'yes you can walk to school on your own because we want you to develop resilience'," explained Pienaar. "It depends on the environment you're in, the community, the culture, or their age.

"Take a jungle gym in a park for example, a two-year-old might want to play on there on their own but you wouldn't allow it, but with a five-year-old you might say 'Okay, why don't you give that a go'."

Dr Pienaar said once children begin trying new things they will gain a "sense of mastery", something that will contribute towards their resilience when they are faced with stress.

3. Be an emotional role model.

It is important to let children know it's perfectly normal to feel upset, sad or angry.

By being an "emotional" role model, you can act as an example for them by showing your child how you behave when you're feeling down.

"It gives them idea of how to deal with these situations."

4. Discuss other's people's life challenges.

Children may not have experienced challenges themselves but noticing friends or children at school who are going through difficult times is a way to educate them about certain situations.

Pienaar advised not to overwhelm young children with too many details about the situation, but remember they are likely to be far more aware of what's going on than you give them credit for.

"Gauge the situation as it arrives," she explained. "If one of their friends is experiencing parents going through a divorce, you might talk to them about how difficult it has been for that friend and what they can do to help."

"Children are naturally kind, so discuss how they can help with that. Kindness and being aware of others is a part of resilience."

Dr Koplewicz said sometimes what helps the most for children is being able to help other people.

"A healthy sense of perspective isn't easy to come by, but it can be the most important thing when life gets difficult for our kids," he said.

5. Allow downtime.

Ensure children always get downtime when they are given the option to choose what to do.

This can mean different things for different families but, Pienaar explained, children can be so busy with school and after-school clubs that having an hour where a parent asks 'what would you like to do?' will be beneficial.

"They might just want time to ride their bike, or play with a friend, or spend time with you," Pienaar said. "Spend time with them as much as you can and just listen to them."

"If this is part of what you have in your family and they know that they have regular downtime, then when there is a stressful situation to deal with, it's something they have in their repertoire of what they can do."

"It's just another coping strategy."

Dr Koplewicz agrees, explaining that ensuring downtime is part of a child's daily routine will fix the system in place if anything bad was to happen.

"Routines aren't something that parents can put in place after something bad happens and life threatens to become chaotic," he added.

"Daily structure is vitally important and it needs to include that diverse community outside of the family, should something like death or divorce upset the balance."
