



Developing Resilience

This week is Mental Health Awareness week. With the Elders away on their first residential, I thought this would be an apt time to talk about resilience. Resilience is the positive way in which we adapt to the adverse challenges we face in life. It is more than 'bouncing back' when knocked down, it is the ability to adapt to challenges and things that go wrong and building a reservoir of protective factors to counterbalance any risks we might face.

Resilience building is about developing a range of different ways of thinking which include having a positive, 'give things a go' or 'can do' attitude and being prepared to change the direction of thinking if needed. Children need to learn from failure and setbacks. We work hard to develop 'Grit' (Duckworth, 2007) which is described as 'perseverance and passion for long term goals'.

At Annan we use 'Zones of Regulation' in class to teach children to identify, regulate and express their emotions. Sometimes children also need to build a resilience to distractions and temptations so that they can say no or regulate their behaviour to support themselves. Mindfulness techniques are also taught in the junior classes to help create a calmer learning environment to reduce stress and promote calmness.

As parents and teachers we can:

Set Brave Goals.

Model Learning from Mistakes.

Encourage Responsible Risks.

Label Difficult Emotions.

Write and Talk About Setbacks and Human Resilience.

Teach children to recognize and name their feelings.

Foster supportive relationships.

Teach children to ask for help.

Help children develop a range of coping strategies.

Give children a chance to practice their life skills.

We need to bear resilience in mind when our children say things aren't going well and help them to face the difficulties with a positive mindset.

This week several children in Elders were anxious about staying away from home on their first residential. Others will have been anxious about trying new and challenging activities. The impact of the sense of achievement they get when they overcome their anxiety through grit, determination and resilience cannot be underestimated.





[Adults]..must grasp children's earliest activities and understand their impulse to make things and to be freely and personally active; they must encourage their desire to instruct themselves as they create, observe and experiment. ."

Froebel

Kayaking at Cuckmere Haven

The Willow Class took learning about meanders, erosion, tidal rivers and all things geographical to a whole new level this week. They went kayaking at Cuckmere Haven. Their first stop was to High and Over to get a good view of some of the parts of the river they had been learning about in class.

After High and Over they drove to the Seven Sisters Country Park. They looked around the Visitor Centre, exploring the information displays about the river system, how it had changed over the years and how it was being managed to face the challenges of a changing climate. They then had lunch on the river bank before heading to the kayaking centre where they wrestled themselves into wetsuits. The instructors guided them up the river and taught them to steer the kayaks and challenged the children to try and walk from boat to boat. When the kayaks were put away, they moved on to a raft building challenge.

The children made two rafts and then had a very dramatic race in teams across the river to rescue rubber ducks! It was great to see the children working so well in teams, encouraging each other and assisting with rescues when their friends fell into the river!



Following the Cuckmere river

After great preparation in mapping the Cuckmere on digital and physical maps, Chestnuts drove to see the Cuckmere at different points of its journey. They found where the Flutterbrook, one of its tributaries, rises near Ruslake Green. It was very orange due to the iron in the ground!

They then saw the Cuckmere at Arlington reservoir and stopped at High and Over to get a fantastic view of the Cuckmere meanders.

Finally, they hiked their way all the way to the sea, along the old meanders of the river. Next week, they will be analysing water samples to see how much iron or salt content the water has at different points.



