



BUILDING RESILIENCE

- A Parents and Carers Guide -

Building Resilience: A Guide for Parents and Carers.

Primary school is a time of discovery and learning, an environment where children are engaged in education and problem solving on a daily basis. They are learning academically, emotionally, socially and cognitively through their schoolwork and in the playground. Children are also beginning to take greater self-initiative to learn about themselves, their interests and develop their strengths.

In our ever-changing complex world, children are faced with challenges and uncertainties more often than we realise. At Hoole Church of England Primary School, we offer support to our children through this important time of growth and development. We enable our children to have the ability to thrive despite these challenges through the resilience skills we teach. We are providing them with the fundamental building blocks for life.

Building resilience means that our children have the ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, and can help our children to manage stress and feelings of anxiety and uncertainty. We aim to provide children with the skills to manage these feelings as they will experience difficulties in their lifetime. We aim to build the skills so our children can 'keep on going'.

This guide is to provide parents and carers with ideas to help support and develop their child's emotional resilience at home.

Glyn Blackett at The Stress Resilient Mind Organisation explains that there are Five Key Principles of Stress Resilience. <https://www.stressresilientmind.co.uk/articles/five-key-stress-resilience-skills>. He describes resilience as the ability to recover quickly and easily from stress, upsets and set-backs outlining the different areas that need developing.

1. Self-Awareness
This links with the awareness of your body responses and your thoughts and thinking patterns. It is the awareness of how the mind-body connection plays out in practice e.g desires and urges to act. Developing this skill enables us to pause and consider our choices before deciding and acting.
2. Attention – flexibility and stability of focus
Our developing work on mindfulness in school is a key tool for guiding our attention. The focus of being here, in the moment, now. Our minds tend to wander and worry about the future or events in the past. Mindfulness encourages present-moment awareness.
3. Letting go – physically
Developing this skill enables children to let go of muscles and body tension. In school, we promote yoga and mindful breathing and movements where children are solely concentrating on their bodily posture and breathing. The movements release tension and stress in the body and develop strength, flexibility and body alignment.
4. Letting go – mentally
Mindfulness plays a vital role in developing the ability to let go of a concern, worry, stress or anxiety by creating a mental space where you can explore thoughts, feelings and emotions. It helps to teach children to pay full attention to something, slowing down to really notice what they are doing and focusing in a relaxed way. Building on this means children can respond more skilfully to whatever the present-moment throws at us.
5. Accessing and sustaining positive emotion
This does not mean that simply getting rid of negative emotions is going to help our children. This focuses on withdrawing our attention from the negativity and instead giving that attention the positive aspects, this naturally displaces the negatives.

Based on the key principles set out above, the table below outlines different strategies that we put in place as a school that support the building of resilience. Many of the below techniques can be used in the home to support when supporting your child to 'keep on going'.

Self-Awareness and Self-Regulation	Attention – flexibility and stability of focus	Letting go (1) – physically	Letting go (2) - mentally	Accessing and sustaining positive emotions
<p>Timers An effective tool for transition, staying on task and promoting independence.</p> <p>Magic 123 Positive parenting course.</p> <p>Rewards Charts Allows the children to see they have done a good job by reinforcing positive behaviour.</p> <p>Routine Charts Enables children to learn time and life management skills.</p> <p>Celebrations Reinforcing positive behaviour, certificates and time in the day for celebrating.</p> <p>Safe space A low stimulation area that children can use to settle in, have quiet time in. Encouraging managing their own behaviour when recognising their stress levels are rising.</p> <p>Fresh start Recognising that the behaviour has changed and a new start can begin.</p> <p>Mindful colouring/doodling This can enhance focusing skills, increase retention of information and ease feelings of impatience. This is a calming method of helping a child to engage in the present moment.</p> <p>ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) Sessions are planned for the individual child. It aims to develop social and emotional skills, coping strategies, communication and friendship. They are not about teaching pupils or telling them what to do, but about facilitating greater self-awareness in pupils and</p>	<p>Fiddle object Used to provide a sensory input in a less distracting way. They help to improve concentration and attention to tasks by allowing the brain to filter out extra sensory information.</p> <p>Workstation To support children with independent learning. Recognising and managing their own behaviour when recognising their stress levels are rising.</p> <p>Mindful colouring/doodling This can enhance focusing skills, increase retention of information and ease feelings of impatience. This is a calming method of helping a child to engage in the present moment.</p> <p>Routine Charts/ Now and Next Board Enables children to learn time and life management skills and gives them the independence to know what is coming next and what is expected of them.</p> <p>Calm Music Soft instrumental music and soft lighting helps to set the mood for concentration and focus.</p> <p>Mindfulness A time in the day where they can have calm, meditation and mindfulness practice can see children reduce stress and anxiety.</p>	<p>Sensory breaks and circuits A time to gain the sensory input they need in their bodies to stay alert, on task and focused. They enable time to reset, decompress and get the blood flowing back into their brains.</p> <p>Daily mile A social physical activity, with children running or jogging at their own pace, in the fresh air with their friends.</p> <p>Stress ball/fiddle object Used to provide a sensory input in a less distracting way. They help to improve concentration and attention to tasks by allowing the brain to filter out extra sensory information.</p> <p>Safe space A low stimulation area that children can use to settle in, have quiet time in. Encouraging managing their own behaviour when recognising their stress levels are rising</p> <p>Yoga The movements release tension and stress in the body and develop strength, flexibility and body alignment.</p> <p>Mindful walking Helps you to become more aware of the sensations in your body. By tuning into your environment and the sensations in your body as you walk, it can help you to focus on the present moment.</p> <p>Breathing and relaxation techniques Can help you relax, lowers stress and a deep breathe sends a message to your brain to calm down.</p> <p>PE Helps to improve your child's overall</p>	<p>Opportunity for non-verbal communication ie. diary, whiteboard, letter writing, toolkit for writing Enabling children to recognise their emotions and communicate with themselves or an adult in a non-verbal way.</p> <p>Worry boxes/dolls Children can express their worries to their worry dolls/monsters and when they go to bed at night, put them under their pillow/next to their bed and by the morning, their worries will be gone. A good tool to encourage children to talk about their emotions.</p> <p>Brain junk Another form of non-verbal communication. Children can write down all their worries or concerns, scrumple them up and pop them in the bin.</p> <p>Fresh start Recognising that the behaviour has changed and a new start can begin</p> <p>Mindful Minutes A time in the day where they can have calm, meditation and mindfulness practice can see children reduce stress and anxiety.</p> <p>Positive Pondering (always start with the positive thought about your day) Asking your children about their school day by beginning to ask about something that made them proud or happy today. Talking about positive experiences through the day can have a lasting impact throughout the evening, once the school day has finished.</p>	<p>Fresh start Recognising that the behaviour has changed and a new start can begin</p> <p>Kindness spotters Encourages children to look for kind things that happen throughout the day. This enables children to foster positive thinking.</p> <p>Mindfulness A time in the day where they can have calm, meditation and mindfulness practice can see children reduce stress and anxiety.</p> <p>Brain junk Another form of non-verbal communication. Children can write down all their worries or concerns, scrumple them up and pop them in the bin.</p> <p>Have you filled your Bucket? A guide to daily happiness. A lovely story that encourages positive behaviour as children can see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation and love. Bucket filling and dipping are effective metaphors for understanding the effects of our actions and words on the well being of others and ourselves.</p> <p>The Huge Bag of Worries story A reassuring picture book encouraging children to open up about their fears and anxieties to help manage their feelings.</p> <p>The Colour Monster story One day, Colour Monster wakes up feeling very confused. His emotions are all over the place; he feels angry, happy, calm, sad and scared all at once! To help him, a little girl shows him what each feeling means through</p>

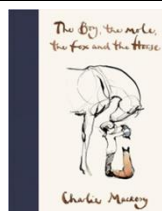
<p>helping them to reach their own solutions and coping strategies.</p>		<p>health and fitness and their mental health and cognitive development. By doing exercise, children are more likely to concentrate and maintain focus.</p> <p>Forest School</p> <p>Is centred around consistently setting children up to achieve through tasks and learning opportunities that build confidence, promote raised levels of self-esteem, nurture cooperative skills and recognise they can succeed again and again, in turn all building resilience.</p>		<p>colour. A gentle exploration of feelings for young and old alike.</p> <p>Random acts of kindness</p> <p>Designed to encourage acts of generosity big and small. Teaching children about kindness encourages positive thinking, improves mental health and well-being, increased feelings of gratitude. Linking with anti-bullying, children foster positive behaviour and help to create warm and inclusive school environments.</p> <p>Gratitude diary/jar</p> <p>Helps children to develop a practice that keeps them accountable for developing appreciation and enjoying the happier aspects of the day. Focusing on what we have to be grateful for enables us to not only become more positive people—but has been proven to lowers stress, give us more energy and improves sleep.</p>
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Books to support Building Resilience

In addition to the above techniques, there are many stories available that are suitable for children that support the growth and development of their Mental Health and Wellbeing and promoting Resilience. These can be read by the children, alongside an adult or read to them by an adult.

Books for all ages (grown ups too!)

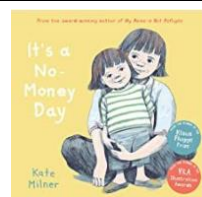
The Boy, The Mole, The Fox and the Horse; Charlie Mackesy (Ebury Press)



Enter the world of Charlie's four unlikely friends, discover their story, their fears and their most important life lessons.

The conversations of the boy, the mole, the fox and the horse have been shared thousands of times online, recreated in school art classes and hung on hospital walls. Published in October 2019 and perfect consolation and inspiration for these strange times.

It's A No Money Day; Kate Milner (Barrington Stoke)



This beautifully understated picture book lays out in very simple terms a day in the life of a mother and child who use the local food bank.

Sensitively portrayed and gently uplifting, the family find the joy in little things on a challenging day. This is an ideal text to promote empathy and resilience and particularly in the current situation nationally, to share and discuss with all ages.

You Are Awesome; Mathew Syed (Hachette)



If you believe you can't do something, the chances are you won't try. But what if you really could get better at maths, or sport or exams? In fact, what if you could excel at anything you put your mind to?

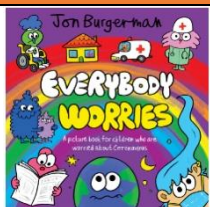
You Are Awesome can help you do just that, inspiring and empowering young readers to find the confidence to realise their potential. Matthew Syed uses examples of successful people from Mozart to Serena Williams to demonstrate that success really is earned rather than given, and that talent can be acquired. With hard work and determination, practice and self-belief, and, most importantly, a Growth Mindset, there's no reason why anyone can't achieve anything.

Books for ages 4 – 7 years

Everybody Worries; Jon Burgerman (Oxford Owl free ebook)

<https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/books>

In this bright and friendly picture book, children learn that it's okay to worry about coronavirus. Fun rhyming couplets keep the tone gentle and supportive, and you will find plenty of ideas for dealing with coronavirus in a positive way. *Everybody Worries* offers your child the reassuring message that this crisis will pass, we are there for them, and we will get through this together.



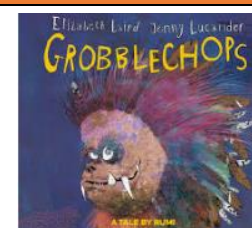
Small Things; Mel Tregonning (Allen & Unwin)

On the cusp of having everything slip from his grasp, a young boy has to find a way to rebuild his sense of self. An ordinary boy in an ordinary world. With no words, only illustrations, *Small Things* tells the story of a boy who feels alone with worries but who learns that help is always close by. An extraordinary story, told simply and with breath taking beauty, created in the last year of the author's life. Great for opening up dialogue about emotions and resilience.



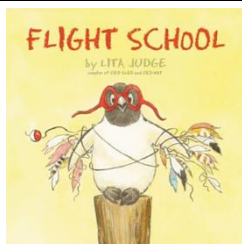
Gobblechops; Elizabeth Laird & Jenny Lucander (Tiny Owl Publishing)

Amir doesn't want to go to bed. He's afraid there might be a monster waiting in the dark. What if it has big teeth and growls like a lion? And even worse, what if the monster has a mum and dad too? This hilarious take on the classic monster-under-the-bed tale is accompanied by gorgeous illustrations from Finnish illustrator Jenny Lucander. A great way of showing that naming and discussing our fears makes them less scary.



Flight School; Lita Judge (Little Simon)

What happens when a bird has the body of a penguin but the soul of an eagle? After failing at flight school, a young penguin gets help from the other birds to realize his dream of soaring through the sky. The penguin is far from satisfied, however; he brings his friend the ostrich to flight school so that he too may experience the joy of flight. This wonderfully illustrated book teaches the important lesson that some goals can be accomplished only with the help of others and that we should not only pursue our own dreams but help others achieve theirs too.



Ruby's Worry: A Big Bright Feelings Book; Tom Percival (Bloomsbury Children's Books)

An excellent children's book that deals with anxiety. Ruby is a young child who develops a very small worry that slowly gets larger over time. It becomes so huge that it begins to overcrowd her happiness. At a park one day, she finds another child with a problem and feels compelled to speak to him. After talking with each other about their problems, they both begin to feel better.



Milo – A Moving Story; Tohby Riddle (Allen & Unwin)

A sweet and funny story about a city-dwelling dog, a time when everything goes wrong, a curious rescue and a surprising gift. Milo's life is almost entirely unremarkable. He lives in a solid kennel in an okay part of town. Every other day he has a job delivering parcels. Then Milo's life is turned upside down by a bad dream, an argument with his friend, followed by a strange wild storm that leaves him and his kennel in a precarious place. So begins Milo's surprisingly remarkable journey back to his friends. A beautifully written book by an Australian author, perfect for these times, to help children understand that change doesn't have to be scary.



The Most Magnificent Thing; Ashely Spires (Kids Can Press)

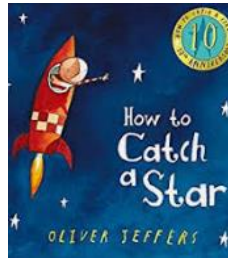
With her dog as an assistant, our unnamed protagonist sets out to make the most magnificent thing. After a lot of trial and error, however, she still cannot make the "MAGNIFICENT thing she has in her mind." She works more and more quickly, becoming angrier and angrier until, finally, she explodes in anger and quits. Dejected, she and her dog walk by her past efforts. For the first time, she notices the right aspects of all of the wrong things. Working slowly, she assembles her small successes into a thing that, while not the most magnificent thing, makes them both happy. This book explores that successful things are not always perfect or what we expect.



Shorter Texts aged 7 – 10 years.

How To Catch A Star; Oliver Jeffers (Harper Collins)

A tale of perseverance, following a boy who loves stars so much he decides to catch one of his own. After waiting, jumping and stretching, again and again, his dream still feels far away. Then, just when he's about to give up, he finds a star in an unexpected place. Big, open, colourful pages, shimmering with hope, will inspire readers to keep reaching for the skies in difficult times.



Worry Angels; Sita Brahmachari (Barrington Stoke)

Amy May knows about webs of worries – so many people she meets are caught in them, from her own artist dad to newly arrived refugee Rima and her family. By being brave enough to open up her own worry box, can Amy May help those around her to find a way forward? Illustrated by Jane Ray. An important, tender and vital story about dealing with and overcoming worry. More suited for children aged 8+.



Come With Me; Holly M McGhee (Penguin Random House)

In this thoughtful, beautiful story, a little girl is concerned by the stories of anger and hatred she sees on the news. Her parents take her out, modelling friendship, bravery, and compassion, until she feels empowered to go out herself. A salient reminder to parents and children of the small but important role we each play in making our world a better place. The book contains images which do not involve social distancing, so this could form part of the discussion around the text, about how we show compassion and respect to others while distanced from them.



Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide To Coping With Events in the News; Dawn Huebner PhD (Kingsley Publishers)

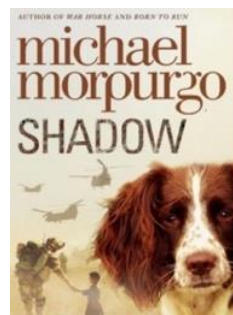
When children learn about something big and bad, their brains get busy trying to make sense of it. Where did it happen? Why did it happen? And especially, will it happen again? Something Bad Happened guides children and the adults who care about them through tough conversations about national and international tragedies. The non-specific term "bad thing" is used throughout, keeping this a flexible tool, and so children are never inadvertently exposed to events their parents have chosen not to share. Fear, sadness and uncertainty about the "bad thing" all are normalized, and immediately usable coping tools provided.



Longer fiction texts (ages 10+ years)

Shadow; Michael Morpurgo (Harper Collins)

A book about resilience in a time when the world as the characters knew it is falling apart; Aman and his mother flee from war-torn Afghanistan as refugees. Their fate is inextricably linked to a war dog called Shadow. A thought-provoking text for older readers.



Pixie Pushes On; Tamara Bundy (Penguin)

In this historical novel, set in the 1940s in America, Pixie deals with her problems – which include her beloved sister going into quarantine with polio – by lashing out at her classmates with rude nicknames. Then, when she starts to care for a runt lamb, the patience the job requires puts things in perspective. This is a sweet, funny book with a feisty heroine, and shows the value of not believing too strongly in your own bad luck.



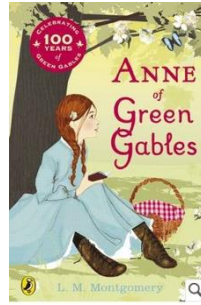
Like Nothing Amazing Ever Happened; Emily Blejwas (Delacorte Press)

Justin is a kid who feels like he'll never understand what's going on in his life. Since he lost his father, everyone he knows seems like a mystery to him, and he's frustrated at people acting like life is just fine when he knows it's not. In this American novel, set during the time of the Gulf War, Justin learns that time and space and memory are grander and weirder than he ever thought, and that small moments can hold big things, if you're paying attention. Just like his math teacher said, even when you think you have all the information, there will be more. There is always more. A book with a big heart and a hopeful spirit.



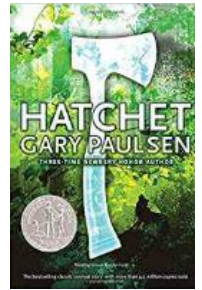
Anne of Green Gables; L M Montgomery (Penguin Random House)

A well-loved classic, written by Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery in 1908 but stands the test of time. Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert are waiting for an orphan boy to help with the work at Green Gables - but a skinny, red-haired girl turns up instead. Feisty and full of spirit, Anne Shirley charms her way into the Cuthberts' affection with her vivid imagination and constant chatter. It's not long before Anne finds herself in trouble, but soon it becomes impossible for the Cuthberts to imagine life without 'their' Anne - and for the people of Avonlea to recall what it was like before this wildly creative little girl whirled into town. A book with beautiful descriptions of the setting (Canada's Prince Edward Island) and brimming with hope in adversity and the importance of remaining true to yourself in difficult circumstances.



Hatchet; Gary Paulsen (Scholastic)

An inspirational survival story, which is testament to the triumph of the human spirit and the power of nature in the wild. 13-year-old Brian is on his way to visit his father when the tiny plane he's flying in crashes. The sole survivor, Brian is left completely alone in the Canadian wilderness with nothing but a hatchet. The book chronicles his mistakes and tiny triumphs as he manages to survive in the wilderness for 54 days. Most of all, Brian leaves behind the self-pity he has felt about his predicament as he summons the courage to stay alive. A story of survival and of transformation, this riveting book has sparked many a reader's interest in venturing into the wild.



Mental Health and Well-being Toolkit - Simple Relaxation and Breathing Techniques

Mindful breathing is helpful because it gives children, and adults alike, an anchor. Their **breath**, on which they can focus when they find themselves carried away by a stressful thought. Below are the breathing techniques that we are teaching children at Hoole Church of England Primary School. They are simple and easy to include in your daily routines at home too.

Finger Tracing:

Ask the children to hold out their hand in front of them. Model tracing round the outside of each finger with the finger from your other hand. Each time your fingers moves up, you breathe in slowly, once your finger moves back down your finger, you breathe out. This must be performed slowly.



Bubbles:

Imagine you are blowing bubbles of peace or happiness or love into the room. Take in a breath and imagine you have a pot of bubble liquid. Slowly and gently blow bubbles into the room. As you blow out the bubbles, imagine they are filled with peace and the whole room is filling up with peace.



Glass Boat:

Lie down on your tummy and just relax. Imagine you are lying on a boat and you can feel the warmth of the sun on your back. The boat has a glass floor and you can see through to the water. As you lie there, spend some time, enjoying watching the movement of the fish and sea creatures below you. Enjoy feeling relaxed as the boat gently sways from side to side.



Butterfly Breaths:

Lie down in a safe space and close your eyes. Imagine there is a butterfly on end of your nose. You feel the butterfly as you breathe in and out. Now it is on your chest as you breathe in and out and now on your stomach. Take in a deep breath into your stomach and watch the butterfly rise and fall with your stomach.



Colour Breathing:

Take in a breath and, as you breathe in, imagine you are breathing in the colour pink for love. Feel this colour touching all the parts of your body inside. Send it around your whole body. Now, as you breathe out, see if you can imagine breathing the colour into the room. Fill the room with the colour pink.

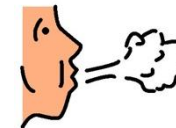


Quiet Listening:

Close your eyes and stay as still as possible. Spend some time listening to all the sounds inside the room. Stay very still and quiet and listen to any sounds outside the room. The stiller and quieter you are, the more you will be aware of the sounds around you.



<p><u>Smiling Heart:</u> Close your eyes and take a deep breath in through your nose, slowly, and out through your mouth. Put your hand on your chest and spend a few moments feeling calm and relaxed. Now, Imagine that you have a smile in your heart. Watch how you start to have loving feelings. Can you send that smile up to your face? Let your mouth smile gently. Breathe in and out and rest there for a few moments. Now open your eyes and see how different you feel.</p>	<p><u>Magic Dust:</u> Sit comfortably and take in a deep breath. As you breathe in, feel as if you are breathing in magic fairy dust. Now, gently blow out the fairy dust into the air and imagine the room is being filled with fairy dust. Keep breathing out and blowing more fairy dust around the room. Begin to wonder what the dust may do to others, what magical places might it take them to?</p>	<p><u>Three Mindful Breaths:</u> Stop whatever you are doing and sit or stand with your back fairly straight, rather than slouched. Take a deep breath from your belly area, breathing in through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth, with an 'ahhhh' sound'. As you breathe out, imagine you are releasing any stress and tension from your body and your mind. Do this 3 times.</p>
<p><u>Worry Bubbles:</u> Explain to the children: "Sometimes worry feels like little bubbles inside our mind. We can feel worry in our tummies, in our brains, or pretty much anywhere inside our bodies. Open a bottle of bubbles. Think about the worry that is bothering you and picture that you are blowing the worry into the bubble as you blow a bubble. Picture the worry inside the bubble. Watch it float away and pop, carrying the worry far, far from you. Know that the worry has popped and is outside of you now, unable to bother you anymore. Keep blowing bubbles until you feel calmer and more relaxed.</p>	<p><u>FOFBOC</u> (Feet On Floor, Bottoms on Chairs): Close your eyes and sit comfortably with your back straight. As you sit there, spend some time observing your breathing. Feel the in-breath and watch what happens when you breathe back out. As you sit there, try to make the breaths longer. Take in a longer in-breath and then breathe out slowly and gently. As you breathe out, feel as if all your worries and problems are blowing away, leaving you feel relaxed and calm. Repeat this a couple more times.</p>	<p><u>Shining Shells:</u> Sit on the floor with your spine straight, legs out in front of you and your arms in the air. Imagine you are an oyster shell on the beach and, as you breathe out, bend forward from the waist and try to touch your toes. If you can't reach your toes comfortably, just touch your legs or ankles. Can you close the oyster shell tight? If not, that's OK: just keep breathing and stretching. Breathe in and, as you breathe out, stretch a little further. Do this three more times, until you are ready to open the oyster shell and lift your arms up again.</p>
<p><u>Bus Stop:</u> Sitting comfortably, close eyes and imagine you are standing at a bus stop, waiting for the bus. A bus is arriving with your problem written on the front, are you going to get on it or watch it go by? You're waiting for the next bus, this one has a happy thought written on the bus, are you going to get on it or watch it go by? Let the problems pass by and run with the happy thoughts.</p>		



This guide has provided you with many useful techniques that we would recommend using at home. Mirroring the strategies that we use in schools will enable to consistent approach between home and school and will support your child's needs.

If you have any concerns about your child's mental health and wellbeing or need further support in developing and building their resilience, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.

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