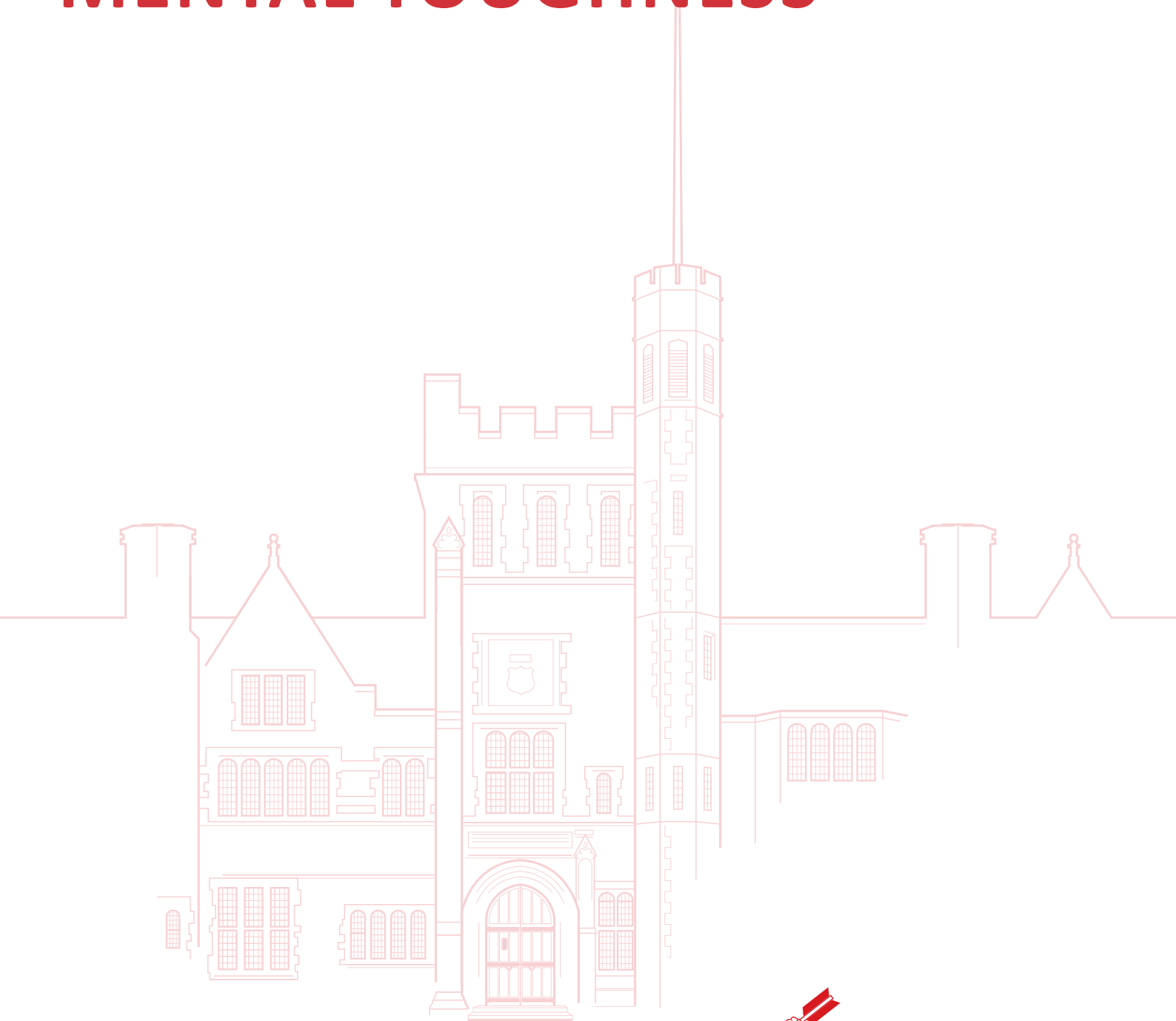
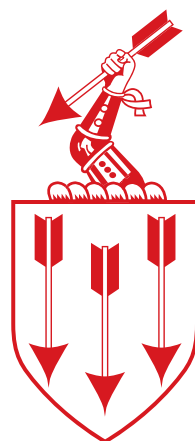


INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER AND MENTAL TOUGHNESS



2017-2018



KING
HENRY VIII
SCHOOL



Last year saw the school have an underlying focus on Developing Intellectual Character. We see this as supporting our main aims of allowing the young people to be the best that they can be in whatever activity they choose. We believe that children are not bound by any predetermined limit in a particular discipline. Instead, we believe that hard work will be rewarded by improvement and eventual success. Hard work is much more significant than any innate ability (which many believe is not fixed in any case).

Mental Toughness

The concept of Intellectual Character is closely linked to 'Mental Toughness'. Mental Toughness has been the subject of significant research in recent years and it is becoming increasingly apparent that Mental Toughness is more significant to a person's success than IQ. Indeed, non-cognitive traits associated with Mental Toughness such as delayed gratification, self discipline and a positive attitude of mind, can actively increase IQ scores if developed over time.

Mental Toughness is a personality trait which determines, in large part, how individuals respond to stress, pressure, challenge, and change, irrespective of prevailing circumstances.

Unfortunately, stress, pressure, challenge, and change are ever present in our modern life. Of course, we can limit the exposure of children to these aspects of life. This might be advantageous but some exposure may be out of our control, and having no exposure to these aspects may not be the best preparation for adult life. We must also prepare children, by developing Mental Toughness and Intellectual Character, to deal positively with these facets of a modern and successful life.

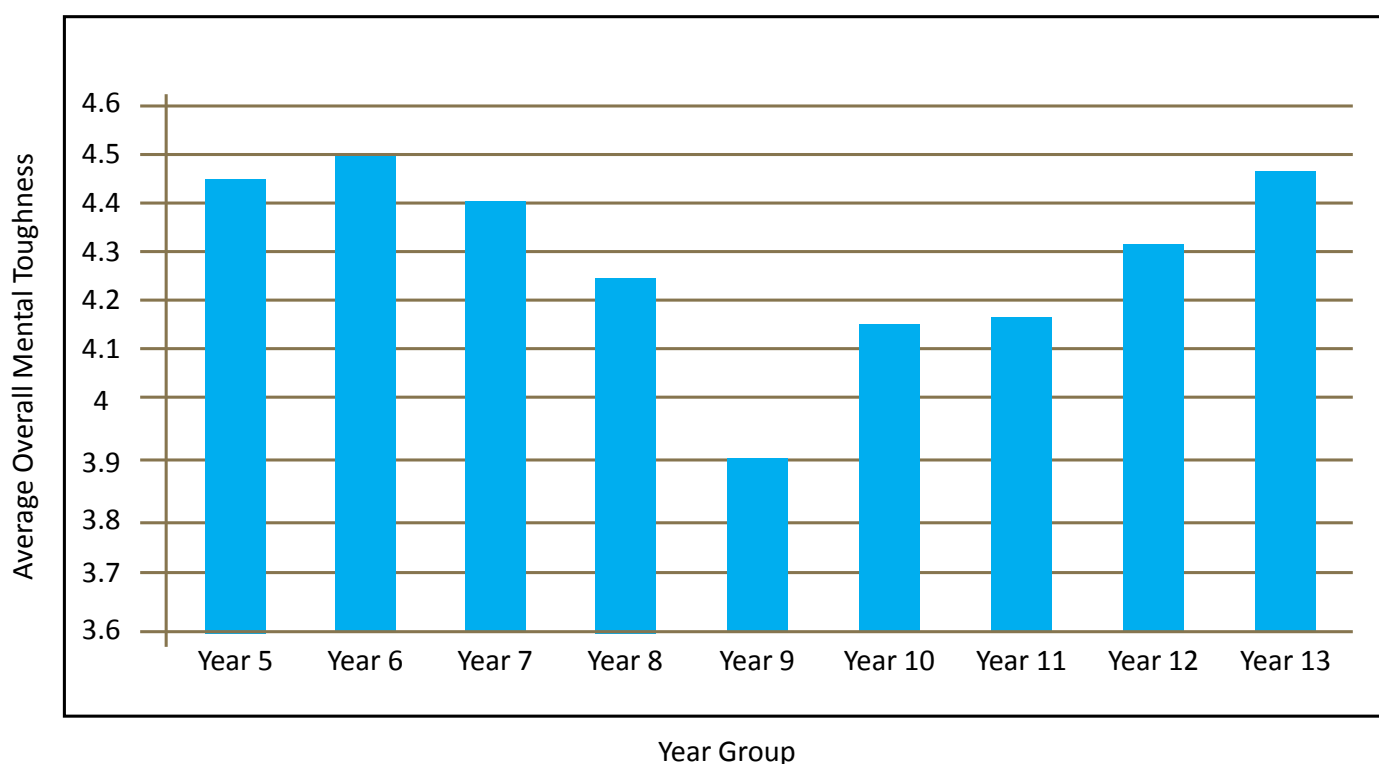
Research has shown that having greater Mental Toughness can increase academic attainment, school attendance, classroom behaviour, and the ability to maintain positive peer relationships.

Mental Toughness Through Adolescence

Mental Toughness through adolescence is known to dip as children feel less in control, have a greater awareness of the challenges that they may face, and lack confidence in their own identity and position in life.

Recent research tested thousands of children across the country to establish the level of their Mental Toughness. Participants from age 9 to age 18 were given assessments designed to determine their Mental Toughness on a scale of 1 to 10. A score of 10 representing a child with greatest Mental Toughness. The graph below shows the average score for Mental Toughness across children in each school year group.

Overall Mental Toughness



Rather than children having a linear progression of Mental Toughness through adolescence, it shows that children actually lose Mental Toughness through Years 5 – 9. Even in Year 13, when children are 18 Years old, they have not regained the Mental Toughness that they once had at 10 years old, when in Year 6.

Of course, in a Senior School, we have to support children who are experiencing this 'dip' in Mental Toughness and help them find a positive path through this difficult time in their development.

Developing Mental Toughness

There is much that can be done, and this theme will remain throughout the coming academic year when we look at some of these ideas in more detail.

Some things are easily implemented at home and are worthy of a mention now as they centre around a more general approach to organisation and interaction.

These include:

- Getting enough sleep
- Maintaining healthy levels of exercise
- Praising effort
- Celebrating achievement
- Looking at failure as a learning experience to future success

You will gain more detail on specific aspects associated with developing Mental Toughness that we may use in school as the year proceeds, but these include:

- Visualising success
- Employing rational thought through logical analysis
- Setting achievable goals with measurable tasks and timescales
- Increasing self awareness
- Developing self discipline through delayed gratification and patience
- Making a plan and sticking to it
- Having the confidence to convince yourself that it can be done

One thing that is consistently shown in all research is the importance of hard work. Success is not the privilege of the talented but the reward of those that work hard.

Intellectual Character

Our current focus on Developing Intellectual Character is entirely consistent with the aim of improving Mental Toughness. Parents will be aware that last year we chose to consider, more carefully, the aspects of aspiration, persistence, curiosity, initiative and resilience.

In addition to enhancing our understanding of Mental Toughness, we will again take a specific look at other aspects of Intellectual Character. The staff at King Henry VIII School have identified 4 further aspects of intellectual character that are significant. Together with resilience (a significant characteristic that we will retain) we will prioritise these aspects to create most improvement within the intellectual character of our children.

The aspects on which the School will focus in the coming year are:

Collaboration Empathy Reflection Focus Resilience

Whilst much of what we do will continue to broadly help build intellectual character, we will take each of the above aspects in turn, one every half term for the first five half terms of the coming academic year. You can expect to hear more about each aspect as assemblies, displays and lessons in the coming year. Parents will be sent a separate leaflet at the start of each half term with some greater detail on how they might help their child develop each aspect at home.

Jason Slack
Headmaster

Collaboration

The capacity to work productively with other people, to pool talents and build collective solutions. Being collaborative involves an understanding of when to seek help from, and when to support other people, and to judge effectively when to speak up and when to compromise.



‘Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.’ - Henry Ford

‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’
- African Proverb

‘Those who have learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.’ - Charles Darwin

Collaborating isn’t necessarily easy. It can involve skills such as compromise and patience that don’t always come easy to adolescents. However, the best teams don’t always include the best players (think of Leicester City or the recent 4 x 100m World Champions from Team GB). Being part of a productive team allows for individuals to perform above the level that they might otherwise achieve.



Empathy



Empathy

Empathy is a willingness to listen to others, to value and try to understand their position, feelings and points of view.

‘I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.’ - Maya Angelou

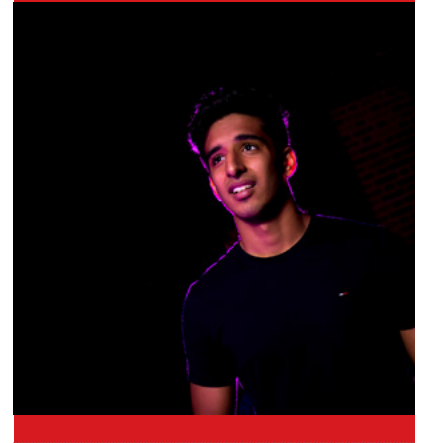
‘Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding.’
- Albert Einstein

‘Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in their place.’ Proverb

Promoting empathy leads to greater individual and community health. Having empathy also reduces negative factors such as depression, anger and aggression. In turn this can lead to improved attitudes towards school and create a more effective academic experience.



Reflection



Reflection

This promotes an inclination to review, to ponder, and to consider methods and approaches that have been tried; to analyse both successes and failures with a view to growing one's potential.

'You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards.' - Steve Jobs

'Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh the thinks you can think up if only you try!' - Dr Seuss

I'm aware of weaknesses and THE BEAST WITHIN.' - Michael Fassbender

Reflecting on work enhances its meaning. Reflecting on experiences encourages insight and complex learning. We foster our own growth when we control our learning, so some reflection is best done alone. Reflection is also enhanced, however, when we ponder our learning with others.

Focus

The willingness to be careful, accurate and thorough. It involves paying attention to detail and avoiding silly mistakes. Concentration is central to maintaining good focus and becoming absorbed in what one is doing.



‘Concentrate all your thoughts upon the work at hand. The sun’s rays do not burn until brought to a focus.’ - Alexander Graham Bell

‘Success isn’t always about greatness. It’s about consistency. Consistent hard work leads to success. Greatness will come.’ - Dwayne Johnson

‘Always remember, your focus determines your reality.’ - George Lucas

The strength of our focus determines the degree to which we are susceptible to distraction. The less focus we have, the more distracted we will be. And when we are distracted, our purpose is compromised. Having a lot on your mind, feeling sleep deprived or hungry, or just being bored, are just some of the many things that can compromise concentration and rob a pupil of the motivation and ability to learn new information. Staying organised, maintaining good notes, and being prepared all aid focus. Slouching, surrounding yourself with distractions and being negative all detract from focus.

Resilience

The instinct, sense of balance and humour to deal positively with failure. Resilient people recognise that everyone stumbles but that successful people deal better with this and use difficulties as a learning experience and opportunity for a new direction.

‘The only people who never fail are those who never try.’
- Ilke Chase

‘You simply have to put one foot in front of the other and keep going.’
- George Lucas

‘I hated every minute of training, but I said, ‘Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.’ - Muhammad Ali



Resilience is that indefinable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes. Psychologists have identified some of the factors that make someone resilient, among them a positive attitude, optimism, the ability to regulate emotions, and the ability to see failure as a form of helpful feedback. Even after misfortune, resilient people are blessed with such an outlook that they are able to change course and soldier on. Successful people in all walks of life are able to recall disappointment and failure but it did not stop them from giving up on a dream. JK Rowling was rejected an incredible 12 times before a publisher decided to give her a deal on the Harry Potter books.



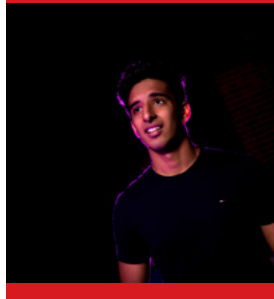
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