



彌陀學校

MEE TOH SCHOOL

21 EDGEDALE PLAINS SINGAPORE 828867

TEL: 6489 3326 FAX: 6489 3243

Website: <http://www.meetoh.moe.edu.sg>

Email: meetoh_sch@moe.edu.sg

Dear Parents,

Good day. As we nurture the hearts and minds of our young learners in our Mee Toh Family, I want to reflect deeply on the value of **care** in this *Keeping in Touch with Parents* issue. Three weeks ago, I had an assembly talk with our lovely children highlighting that they should *show kindness and empathy through their thoughts, words and actions, as well as demonstrating care and concern for their family, school, community, Singapore and the World, without any expectation of a reward or reciprocation*. Yesterday (24 April 2025) during our morning assembly, the whole school celebrated a caring act demonstrated by four students who came forward to help a cyclist who had fallen from his bicycle outside school. It was a heartwarming act, and I want to take this opportunity to thank their parents and teachers for inculcating the value of care in our children, especially in showing care and concern for others and the willingness to help those in need.

Let me start with a short story with a twist from what is mentioned above: I am always reminded of a story that many of us may have heard – the tale of a butterfly that could not fly. There was a man who came across a butterfly struggling to emerge from its cocoon. The kind-hearted observer, moved by compassion, decided to help the butterfly by gently cutting open the cocoon. The butterfly emerged from its cocoon with ease, but in doing so, it developed a pair of weak wings. Unfortunately, the butterfly could not fly anymore. What the man did not realise was that the struggle the butterfly had to go through naturally was necessary; it was how the butterfly developed the strength it needed for flight. In other words, this was nature's way of strengthening the butterfly's wings so that it could fly.

My reflection:

Am I robbing my children of the opportunity to develop resilience and future life skills?

In our roles as educators (as well as parents), it is natural that we want to shield our children from discomfort, failure, hardship, or even falling down. Yet, in doing so, we may inadvertently rob them of the very experiences that can help them to build resilience, independence and confidence. When we were young, it was common for us to be injured after a fall, where we merely cleaned our wounds and moved on. Do we see the same resilience in our current generation of young children? Recently, our school playground, which was closed for several years, was opened for our children to play in. Thus far, I am pleased to share that our children have been playing safely and respectfully, and we have had no injuries. Many thanks to our teachers and parents for briefing and engaging our children on the right behaviour at the playground.

We will be rethinking the way we do things here; to see if we can gradually remove the presence of teachers during recess, corridor or gate duties so that teachers can have more time to rest, reflect, mark their students' assignments and prepare their lessons. This change will also give our children greater responsibility for taking care of themselves and others. Studies have shown that students tend to be more careful and mindful when there is no teachers' supervision, and they will take responsibility and ownership of their own safety and well-being. Through this process, they develop independence and confidence, rather than developing learned helplessness or being a crybaby. This gradual release of responsibility to our children is necessary *if we care about them and want them to become like the*

Vision : Touching Souls, Challenging Minds

Mission : To maximise students' potential and develop in them a passion for life-long learning guided by compassion, conscience, purity and righteousness.

Motto : Compassion, Conscience, Purity, Righteousness

愿景 : 净化心灵, 挑战思维

使命 : 以校训慈、良、清、直为指引, 激发终身学习之热忱, 务必人尽其才。

校训 : 慈、良、清、直

butterflies who will take flight in the future, rather than being like strawberries that are easily bruised and need to be protected in bubble-wrap or who always need to be rescued or told what to do.

We cannot always be there to bubble wrap our children to prevent them from falling down or to step in to solve their disagreements. This is indeed my dilemma as their principal who loves them. I am not suggesting that we should completely ignore the challenges faced by our children during recess or at school, but rather that we should be watching from a distance, yet offering encouragement and support when they show resilience, manage struggles or discomfort, or resolve disagreements. These are important life skills that our children will need in order to navigate life when they leave Mee Toh.

It's not easy being a parent in Singapore

Here in Singapore, many of us are raising one or two children. Naturally, we want to protect them and give them the best. Sometimes, in trying to ease their struggles, we may unintentionally prevent them from developing self-awareness, resilience, conflict-management, independence, and problem-solving skills. It is equally important to be mindful of how we respond when our children fall short. In some homes, the pressure to succeed can lead to harsh discipline—even caning—as a response to mistakes or failure. While the intention may be to teach, it often creates fear rather than understanding. *Children learn best when they feel safe, supported, and valued—not just for their achievements, but for their efforts and growth. This approach is about developing their growth mindset.*

Finding the middle way

Let us aim for a **balanced approach**: one that offers *care without overprotection, and guidance without fear*. When we allow our children to face challenges, make mistakes, and learn from them—with our steady support, they will grow into confident and resilient individuals. As educators, we want to work hand-in-hand with you to nurture our precious children:

- **Let our child take small risks:** Allow them to try things on their own—even if they struggle or fail at first. It could be packing their own bag or resolving a disagreement with a friend.
- **Encourage responsibility:** Give them age-appropriate chores or let them manage their own homework schedule. These small tasks build ownership and confidence.
- **Be a calm guide during failure:** When they fall short, help them reflect. Ask, *“What can we learn from this?”* instead of stepping in immediately or scolding out of frustration.
- **Celebrate effort, not just results:** Praise their kindness, their courage to try and their ability to show resilience—these are the qualities that last beyond test scores.
- **Communicate openly with the school:** If your child is facing challenges, work with us. We are here to listen, understand, and support—not to judge. However, please do not get too emotional and start to threaten us that you will enlist the help of the Police or even MOE. This will not help both parties. *Let us work together amicably to arrive at a win-win solution that will help our children learn and become confident and resilient individuals. Butterflies that can take flight with confidence and resilience.*

Let us, together, raise our children in our Mee Toh Family to be not only well-prepared for success and the future, but also strong in character with compassionate hearts – becoming persons of character who are good and useful citizens for tomorrow.

Partnering with you,

Kelvin Tay / Principal

Email: tay_hsien_chuan_kelvin@schools.gov.sg