



Monday 7th March 2022

Dear Families,

How to respond to our children about what is happening in the Ukraine

There is no 'one way' approach when having conversations about the current conflict, because of the age of our children, what they have heard so far and the community in which they belong/live.

It is important that this subject matter is treated with sensitivity and understanding of what children need to know, weighed against what they are hearing from other sources. Children may be getting information from unreliable, unfiltered social media outlets. Children will see and hear about it on their smartphones or hear about it in the playground from other children. Social Media, including TikTok, unfortunately is saturated with inappropriate content that is terrifying. I would recommend that any parent shield their child/young person from social media, as much as is possible.

Children may overhear us adults talking about it and the same applies in the home. We need to be mindful of our audience and 'listening ears'. Children will formulate their own response based on ours so we need to make sure that we allow the children to talk and at the same time provide them with information from accurate sources.

Children of all ages will also feel more worried when they think that no one is willing to talk about things that are worrying to them – they will think that it is too scary or upsetting to talk about, which then adds to their worries.

We have already had some of our Year 6 children make comparisons with World War Two having just learnt about that war. This could be an appropriate time to share concern or potential fears and worries in a context that is based on fact. Avoid asking the children why they are worried. Children often struggle to understand their emotions, which can lead to further anxiety. Instead, ask them questions to help them work out solutions to their worries.

There is, however, a delicate balance between informing children and feeding into their anxieties by talking about it too much.

Listen to what they're asking, and don't give more information than they are asking for. We can sometimes be guilty of oversharing, which isn't necessarily helpful. If you don't know all of the answers to their questions, don't be afraid to say you don't know and perhaps then take this opportunity to discuss a possible response with a Senior Leader that does feel confident in providing a response.

We need to tell anxious children that the world has been in situations like this before and they have been resolved. We also need to emphasise how far away this conflict is to them. It is important to make sure they know they are safe and that what is happening is not in the country that they are living in – perhaps showing them on a map or globe, so they can grasp the distance. Again, just be aware that whilst they are in a safer place, family members might not be. Do reassure them that family members responsible for them will be making sure that plans are put in place to keep family members safe.

Providing reassurance is important.

We must use this opportunity to remind the children of the different communities that make up our wonderful school and the reason it is wonderful is because we:

Value the different children, staff and families that we work and learn with

Listen to each other

Enjoy learning with each other



Celebrate who we are and our identity-what makes us who we are

Respect each other's belongings and feelings

We share and take turns

We look to find ways to resolve conflict

We understand our responsibilities-we know what is right and we know what is wrong.

We have typically watched CBBC Newsround with the older children but I have asked the staff to make sure that they have watched it beforehand so that they know what the children will be seeing. We certainly won't be watching it as often.

We will certainly be keeping a close eye on the children during these times and if you need any support from us, please ask.

Thank you,

Mrs Bull

Chief Executive Headteacher