



WOLVERHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
Woden Avenue, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 1PW
Telephone: (01902) 556350 Email: office@wodensfield.org
Headteacher: Mrs. S. Walker

Ref: SW

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Talking to Children and Young People about the current conflict in Ukraine

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is almost impossible to avoid the news and coverage of the conflict currently taking place in the Ukraine. Children across the school have expressed concerns and also shown compassion and care for the children and families that they have seen on the News.

Children do not always talk about what is worrying them but may be trying to make sense of this information by themselves, and in the absence of factual information, imagining situations to be far worse than they are. Every child is different, and whilst some may be concerned, others are not worried at all.

As a school we are endeavouring to keep a balance for all children. We share News Round and Picture News items daily in class. These resources enable children to talk about what is happening in Ukraine, process difficult emotions and also discuss strategies that they can use if they are feeling scared or worried. Staff are also able to address any misinformation that the children may have and also encourage compassionate views towards others.

Below are some of the strategies for talking to children about the current situation that we are using in school. The advice is taken from *Talking to Children about War* from the charity Barnardos.

Keep calm. Check in with yourself and how are you currently feeling. When you are feeling anxious, children can notice this and begin to feel stressed too. If needed, take some time to calm.

Talk to children. We instinctively want to protect children from things that might frighten them; however not talking about something can make children more scared. If children are already talking about the war, encourage them to tell you what they have heard and ask them how they are feeling. If children are showing no interest, leave them be.

Answer questions. Answer children's questions in language they will understand with a level of information appropriate to their age. Avoid sharing too much information as this can be overwhelming. If you do not have all the answers, that is ok. Tell the child you will let them know when you know.

Create a safe environment. Children need to feel safe and secure. Limit children's exposure to news reports and discuss your own worries outside of children's earshot.



Reassure them. Young children often personalise situations and may perceive the danger to be closer to home. Let them know that although war is very serious, they do not need to worry about it happening in their neighbourhood. Tell them you understand how they are feeling and reassure them that they are safe and that you are there to take care of them. It is important, however, to be realistic and not to promise that no one will get hurt.

Help children find ways to express themselves. Some children may not be able to talk about their thoughts or feelings but can be supported to make sense of the world through play.

Do something positive. Encourage children to engage in activities where they can feel helpful such as drawing pictures to send to children who are living in affected areas.

Avoid stereotyping groups of people by nationality and challenge hateful talk.

Further information relating to talking about the conflict:

[How to talk to children about the invasion of Ukraine, and why those conversations are important \(theconversation.com\)](https://theconversation.com/how-to-talk-to-children-about-the-invasion-of-ukraine-and-why-those-conversations-are-important)

BBC article with advice from a range of professionals [Ukraine conflict: How to help yourself, your kids, and others - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-57144444)

Guardian article with advice from a range of professionals [‘A delicate balance’: experts’ tips on dealing with Ukraine anxiety in children | Children | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/children/2022/mar/24/a-delicate-balance-experts-tips-on-dealing-with-ukraine-anxiety-in-children)

We hope you find this information helpful and reassuring. If you require any further information please email headteacher@wodensfield.org

Yours sincerely



S. Walker (Mrs)
Headteacher

