



Worcestershire County Council
HINDLIP C.E. FIRST SCHOOL
Droitwich Road, Fernhill Heath, Worcester, WR3 8RJ
Tel. 01905 453455
e-mail: office@hindlipfirst.worcs.sch.uk
Website: hindlipfirst.worcs.sch.uk
Executive Head: Mr Gromski



15th March 2022

Dear Parents,

I know that everyone's thoughts and prayers are with the citizens of the Ukraine at the moment. Sadly, our children are going to be increasingly exposed to what is happening via the news, TV, Radio, Social Media etc.

The children are starting to talk about the war in Ukraine and whilst this is not yet a huge issue in school, or hopefully at home, we wanted to share some useful information/advice with you.

Listen to their concerns and thoughts

We can't control everything children hear, and in the absence of the truth they will piece snippets together and create their own narrative. Open conversations will help you to deal with the exaggerations and panic that can develop, especially for older children with access to social media and WhatsApp groups.

Ask what they have heard and how they are feeling, and listen to their responses. Validate their feelings. None of us like to be told to calm down or to stop worrying. The feelings are real and being allowed to express those helps them feel understood. Provide a safe space for children to ask questions and share fears.

Active listening involves giving children our full attention, repeating back what they have said to ensure we understand their point of view. How we respond will obviously depend on their age and emotional maturity. Be honest but reassuring at the appropriate level. Younger children require safety messages, while older children and adolescents tend to need facts and context.

Help them feel safe

Children need to see the world as safe and predictable. Experiences of trauma, or even images of trauma, can make the world feel an uncontrollable and unpredictable place. Look out for signs of fear or worry that they may not be willing or able to express.

We can't (and shouldn't) hide what is happening in the world, but we can limit the exposure by monitoring internet usage (depending on age) and not having constant news in the background on tv and radio. It might help to show a map of the world to demonstrate how far away the fighting is.

BBC Newsround have produced a short programme explaining to children what is happening in Ukraine.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/60554258>

This resource will be useful to watch with children to provide factual information if they are confused and are seeking information about the conflict. Allow time after watching this for children to ask any questions they may have. If children feel they have an understanding of what is happening, and confusion is reduced, they are less likely to feel anxious. Ensure that you provide simple factual information at an age-

appropriate level. A good guide for this is to be guided by the questions children are asking; if they're asking, they need information.

At the moment we are **not** delivering specific assemblies, lessons etc. on this issue but will review the need for this, if the wellbeing and anxiety of the children deteriorates to the point where this becomes necessary. This could be on an individual, small group, class or whole school basis as appropriate.

As always, if you have any worries or questions then please speak to your child's teacher.

Warm regards

Mr Gromski