

# SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING



Issue 4



The Sutton Academy

**With the recent conflict in Ukraine hitting the headlines, we would like to offer some practical advice and guidance on how to support your children with any worries/concerns or questions that they may have. When conflict or war makes the headlines, it can cause feelings such as fear, sadness, anger and anxiety wherever you live.**

## **Tips on how to approach the conversation with your child to provide them with support and comfort:**

### **1. Find out what they know and how they feel**

Choose a time and place where you can bring it up naturally. This will help your child to feel more comfortable talking freely.

Find out what your child knows. Some children might know little about what is happening and not be interested in talking about it, but others might be worrying in silence. Children can discover the news in many ways, so it's important to check in on what they're seeing and hearing. It's an opportunity to reassure them and potentially correct any inaccurate information they might have come across whether online, on TV, at school or from friends.

It's important not to minimize or dismiss their concerns. If they ask a question that might seem extreme to you, such as "Are we all going to die?", reassure them that is not going to happen, but also try to find out what they have heard and why they are worried about that happening. If you can understand where the worry is coming from, you are more likely to be able to reassure them.



### **2. Keep it calm and age appropriate**

Children have a right to know what's going on in the world, but adults also have a responsibility to keep them safe from distress. You know your child best. Use age-appropriate language, watch their reactions, and be sensitive to their level of anxiety.

It is normal if you feel sad or worried about what is happening as well. But keep in mind that kids take their emotional cues from adults, so try not to overshare any fears with your child. Speak calmly and be mindful of your body language, such as facial expressions.

As much as you can, reassure your children that they are safe from any danger. Remind them that many people are working hard around the world to stop the conflict and find peace.

### **3. Spread compassion, not stigma**

Conflict can often bring with it prejudice and discrimination, whether against a people or country. When talking to your children, avoid labels like "bad people" or "evil" and instead use it as an opportunity to encourage compassion, such as for the families forced to flee their homes.



### **4. Focus on the helpers**

It's important for children to know that people are helping each other with acts of courage and kindness. Find positive stories, such as the first responders assisting people, or young people calling for peace.



### **5. Close conversations with care**

As you end your conversation, it's important to make sure that you are not leaving your child in a state of distress. Try to assess their level of anxiety by watching their body language, considering whether they're using their usual tone of voice and watching their breathing.

Remind them that you care and that you're there to listen and support whenever they're feeling worried.

**\*\*We are collecting donations for Ukrainian refugees, please drop any items off at main reception\*\***

*Urgently required items: Flasks - Sleeping bags - Bandages - Wet wipes - Sanitary pads/tampons - First aid kits - Tooth brushes - Toothpaste - Roll on deodorant - Bars of soap.*

As always, if you have any issues around your child's mental health and well-being, please contact a member of the safeguarding team, or your child's Head of Year.

