

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

In the past week, we have seen a dramatic reality and impact in Ukraine and surrounding countries. These events may be deeply upsetting for many students, families, and staff members, particularly those who may have loved ones in Ukraine and surrounding countries.

Our thoughts are with all of those impacted at this time. These are difficult conversations and it is important to acknowledge that our community includes members who may be from the various countries involved in this conflict or individuals with lived experience with war or conflict.

Schools are places for students and staff to receive support, a calm environment, a connection to caring adults or peers, and to have conversations if they are prepared to do so.

How can you talk to your children about the war in Ukraine?

- If your child is very young and has not heard anything about this, there is no need to force the topic on them.
- If your child has made comments, or asked questions about the war start by asking them what they have heard about the war.
- *Validate their feelings while stressing their safety.*
- Correct any misunderstandings, but don't overshare or go into too many details.
- Use this conversation as *an opportunity to practice empathy*, stress that the war in Ukraine is the desire of one man, not the population of Russia.
- Reassure your child by explaining that there is a physical distance between us and that they are safe.
- Reassure your child by explaining that there are people in charge who are doing everything to help Ukraine, stop the war from escalating, and that they're safe.
- **Lead by example**, stay calm about the situation and your children will be calm about it too.
- Limit the news on the TV when your children are around, especially if there are images of violence
- If they see the news, follow it up with a reassuring explanation of events.
- For older children, finding child friendly news could be a good option if they care about staying informed.
- If you don't know an answer to a question, use it as an opportunity to research it together and find information.
- Encourage children to ask questions and help them practice critical thinking skills by supporting them to find answers from reliable sources, as opposed to relying on TikTok or Facebook for information.
- **Taking action** in this situation might alleviate anxiety, help support the refugees where and how you can.
- Practice empathy and international mindedness by looking for compassionate ways to take action and help.

Resources for further reading:

1. <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/how-talk-your-children-about-conflict-and-war>
2. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/ways-to-help-ukraine-conflict/>

Thank you for your cooperation.
Team AIS