

Wellbeing at High Lane Primary



At High Lane, we nurture the children's respect for others and we are aware of the growing number of children (and adults) who are struggling to make sense of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There are children who have many questions, and others who may simply be seeking some kind of reassurance based on the stories they've heard and/or the images they've seen.

How to talk about conflict with children

Ane Lemche, a psychologist and child counsellor with Save the Children, recommends the following points:

1. Make time and really listen to your child's concerns when they want to talk
2. Tailor the conversation to your child – be careful not to over-explain or go into too much detail as this can cause unnecessary anxiety
3. Validate their feelings – it is perfectly normal for anyone to feel unsure and seek feelings of safety. Try not to dismiss worries or feelings.
4. Reassure your child that adults across the world are working together to help – help your child feel safe and supported

In addition to this, it is important to remain **factual** about the situation. **Newsround**, **First News** and **Sky News' FYI** are all developed with a younger audience in mind so the information provided is usually at the right level for most children*. It might help to watch information from one of these sources with your children together so that your child can ask any questions, but they are not exposed to things that are too upsetting or difficult to understand.

*Please remember to watch any online content first to check it's suitable for your children and won't cause unnecessary distress.

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Whilst sharing age-appropriate news with your child might help, it may also help to minimise their exposure to constant news streams. If your child is feeling particularly anxious, it might be handy to reflect on how they might come into contact with news stories on a daily basis – do they have the news on during breakfast? Is the news on the radio when the children get into the car? Making subtle changes might help to provide a little relief for your child.

Supporting our wider community

During this time, it is important to highlight to children the need for sensitivity. Although we are fortunate that High Lane Primary is a tight-knit community and many of us know one another well, we do not always know who has friends or relatives who have been deeply affected by the conflict in Ukraine. Similarly, it is also important to dispel negativity towards those who come from Russia. During all times of conflict, it is important to remind children that such acts are led by a minority and often a majority within the country are against conflict and do not share the same beliefs so it is important to not make generalisations about a nation.

Support from Primary Jigsaw

Helen and Sally at Primary Jigsaw have provided a wonderful, 45-minute webinar introducing the concept of emotion coaching to support anxious children. Although this is only a snapshot of strategies, there are several points that might be helpful to consider with your own children if they are feeling particularly anxious. Found at: <https://www.behavioursupportservice.co.uk/training/>



As always, if you are concerned about your child's wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher.