



## Help for teachers and families to talk to pupils about Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how to help them avoid misinformation

Russia's invasion of Ukraine is distressing and concerning, and we understand children and young people may have questions or be seeking reassurance. We know that schools are well placed to talk to pupils about the images they are seeing and help them navigate the concepts and issues this brings up but we're also aware that it raises issues some schools and teachers may never have encountered before.



**Our children are constantly absorbing things they read, see and hear and it's completely natural for them to be picking up on the situation in Ukraine and feeling anxious and also asking questions about what is going on.**

"Children and young people have experienced an incredibly difficult two years due to the pandemic, and now they are faced with an even more uncertain world with the threat of conflict and war. It is important that we don't avoid talking to our children about what is going on, but you might want to try to moderate their exposure to constant rolling news and updates."

Support for children and young people:-

**Give them the basics and don't avoid the conversation** – Listen to their worries and provide honest answers to their questions about what is going on, don't overcomplicate your responses and try to give details at an age-appropriate level. Don't avoid answering their questions about the situation as this could promote more anxiety, but keep to basic facts.

**Ensure they feel supported and safe** – It's important to help children understand the level of threat to them and their friends and family. Explain this is happening in Ukraine, a different country and show this if necessary using a globe or map.

**Manage your own feelings** - Try to deal with your own feelings of stress and distress in a way that it is managed as children will be sensitive to your reactions.

**Avoid exposure to a constant stream of news** – Be mindful of whether you have the radio or TV on all day, as children will be absorbing news without us realising it. Try to build in 'breaks' from the news, for example, if you are picking up your children from school, turn off the radio or make sure it isn't on a news station to provide a break from the constant exposure to worrying rolling news cycles.

**Watch where they are getting their news** – We know that fake news is an issue, particularly on social media sites so be mindful of what children are absorbing and where they are getting it. Ensure they understand that not everything they see on social media sites is true, and they know what reliable sources of news they can access.

**Seek advice and support if you are concerned about a child** – School staff and educational psychologists can offer specific advice and support if you feel that your child is becoming overly anxious and distressed. Providing support and reassurance and diverting their thoughts through engagement in pleasurable activities can help.

**They may be more than 1,000 miles away, but the thoughts of young Ukrainians and Russians living in the UK are firmly with their families back home.**

