

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE - RESOURCES AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

“Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil.”

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 261

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

- During times of conflict and suffering, we are reminded that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that we are called to be peace-makers.
- War has tremendous, tragic human costs on all sides. Our faith calls us to be compassionate and care for all those who are suffering.
- Sadly, we live in a world in which there are many places of conflict, tension and war. Try to remember that this war may trigger feelings of sadness or anxiety for those who have suffered war and violence in other parts of the world.
- There are families in our schools who come from both Russian and Ukrainian backgrounds, and we do not want anyone to feel marginalized. We need to remember that people are not responsible for actions taken by their governments.
- There are also many military families in our schools. Please keep in mind those who may be deployed to Eastern Europe in the near future.
- When discussing this war at home, try to focus on facts in a way that suits the development and age of your child. Take a look at multiple sources of information and focus on facts instead of opinions about what might happen.

NOTICING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENTS

How students react to events like the conflict in Ukraine will vary. Some things to think about include:

- Developmental stage and age
- Physical or emotional connection to the event
- Prior experience with traumatic situations

Reactions can last for days and sometimes weeks, and will subside over time. Help your child talk through feelings and reassure them that they are safe and protected. Help them to gain perspective.

Common reactions may include sadness, anxiety, fatigue, lack of focus, anger or irritability, social distancing, physical complaints, and absenteeism.

Consider reviewing [Resources and Information for Parents/Guardians](#) on our website, as well as the [“My Mental Health and Well-Being” website](#) for students.

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HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Adults help students understand the importance of treating all people with dignity. This situation provides us with the opportunity to model compassion and acceptance through our words and behaviour.

We encourage children and youth to explore their feelings about prejudice and hate. This helps prevent further harm and presents a powerful opportunity for our young people to learn. For more tips about discussing the war and helping young people manage strong thoughts and feelings, we have prepared a resource, [Supporting Students in Response to War and Conflict](#).

PRAYING

"Prayer unites us." Pope Francis

As a faith-based community, prayer has a crucial role in our response to tragedy. It helps ground us and when we pray together, it is already the beginning of action. The [Prayer for the People of Ukraine document](#) provides a number of different age-appropriate prayers and hymns which families may wish to use.

ACTION

Prayer and empathy lead to action. Action is an important component of processing tragedy. Some ideas for action include:

- Praying as family
- Having open discussions
- [Social actions](#), including advocating for peace and demonstrating solidarity with those who are suffering or in need
- Charitable giving (Almsgiving), especially during this Lenten season, for example.
 1. [Canadian Red Cross](#) (Note: donations will be matched by the [Government of Canada](#))
 2. [Development & Peace](#)

Please note: the above links are provided for information and convenience only; the SMCDSD does not endorse any particular organization or group. If you are considering making a donation, please take the time to learn about the organization(s) you may wish to support. To ensure funds are being used appropriately, be particularly cautious of campaigns promoted on social media.

***"Use your voice for kindness, your ears for compassion, your hands for charity,
your mind for truth, and your heart for love."***

– Anonymous