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## SUNNYMEDE JUNIOR SCHOOL

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4<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you in response to the current conflict in Ukraine.

As you know, many children have access to social media at home, listen to the news and get information from a number of sources. This means that many of our pupils are aware of the above conflict and have heard lots of different information, some of which has understandably concerned them. Others may have been largely if not fully unaware of the current conflict.

It is exactly two years this month since we were hit with a global pandemic that has affected our children (and, indeed, us as adults) and some of the freedoms that they had previously enjoyed. Just as we were starting to emerge from this pandemic, we suddenly find ourselves acutely aware of conflict in Europe, which I know has once again unsettled many of us.

As a school, members of staff have had questions from children and have overheard conversations between children over the past week. Whilst we, as a school, cannot ignore the current situation, and do not want to ignore children's questions, we also want to protect their wellbeing as much as we can. As a staff, we have discussed how we should respond to any questions or concerns from children. I also spoke to a group of Year six parents earlier this week about how we planned to respond and they supported the approach we are taking. I thought I would share with you, hopefully for your own peace of mind, this approach that we are currently adopting IF a member of staff is asked about what is happening in Ukraine:

The staff will explain that there is, indeed, a war some distance away from us on the other side of Europe and that a larger country has invaded a smaller country. We, as a country, are not directly at war with the larger country but are supporting the smaller country with advice, provision, first aid, places to evacuate and sanctions placed on the larger country. Please note that we have made no reference to providing weapons / military objects etc. to Ukraine. We know there have been children watching some concerning information on Tik Tok and on other platforms, so we will also talk to the children about the fact that 'propaganda' is used in wartime and this can lead to lots of information that may or may not be true. We do know some of the absolute facts, of course, as the images clearly show the horrific impact of the conflict on civilians and also troops from both countries. However, we feel we need a way to try and reassure children about some of the information they are accessing about nuclear weapons being used against European countries.

We will explain that the range of information is from different sources and not all reliable. This means that it can be difficult for people to know the detail or full facts, particularly in relation to nuclear threats. We do want our children to avoid worrying specifically about some of the media coverage specifically related to this. We will explain, in the same way as we talk about online safety, that not everything they read or hear is true.

We do appreciate that this may seem quite a simplistic response but we have very young children in the school. If a child continues to show anxiety or has a number of more difficult or probing questions, I have asked that the member of staff contacts you as their parent, as we fully believe it is for you to make decisions about the level of information you want them to be aware of. I do hope it is helpful for you to know the approach we are taking but please do feel free to contact me to discuss. Of course, our responses may have to evolve over time, should the conflict continue, though I very much hope that a peaceful resolution might be found imminently.

Should you, however, wish to talk to your child in a bit more depth about the current conflict, the Department for Education has put together a blog to support families and gives a range of advice that you may or may not wish to use. The blog can be found by following this link: [https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/25/help-for-teachers-and-families-to-talk-to-pupils-about-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-how-to-help-them-avoid-misinformation/?utm\\_source=JARVIS&utm\\_campaign=f6eccc04e4-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2022\\_03\\_04\\_08\\_07&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_afe2f6e1a8-f6eccc04e4-49677342](https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/02/25/help-for-teachers-and-families-to-talk-to-pupils-about-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-how-to-help-them-avoid-misinformation/?utm_source=JARVIS&utm_campaign=f6eccc04e4-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2022_03_04_08_07&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_afe2f6e1a8-f6eccc04e4-49677342)

In response to the current conflict, we feel that we would like to support the Ukrainian community in some way. We are aware of a number of local agencies and charities acting as hubs to collect provisions that can be sent to Ukraine to support its residents. We appreciate that some people might like to make a donation but may not be able to get to these hubs themselves so we are offering the opportunity for parents to deliver them directly to our school. We will then co-ordinate taking them to one of the local agencies. One of the agencies is UK Aid and there is a link here: <https://www.uk-aid.org/>. They are only collecting very specific items listed on their website. However, at the end of this letter is a longer list with a wider variety of items that other agencies are collecting. Items from either list can be brought in and we will sort them to send to the appropriate agency.

We are communicating directly to you as parents about this rather than the children, as we know that some of our children are still unaware of the situation. If the teachers were to talk about this collection openly in class, it would mean that all children would then be aware of what is happening and this may not be appropriate for some. We feel that it must be the parent's choice. If, therefore, you wish to donate and are happy to discuss what you are doing with your child, please feel free to do so and send in any parcels with them in a carrier bag (they can leave this on a table in the main school reception when they come into school). However, those items with a \* must only be brought in by an adult. Alternatively, if you do not wish your child to be aware, please feel free to bring items to the school yourself at any time.

Whilst actual provisions will benefit, it is also starting to be widely reported that monetary donations are in many ways even more helpful. We cannot take in monetary donations but please follow this link to the Red Cross website appeal page if you are interested: [https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-crisis-appeal?c\\_code=175151&c\\_source=google&c\\_name=Ukraine%20Crisis%20Appeal&adg=&c\\_creative=brand&c\\_medium=cpc&gclid=CjwKCAiAjoeRBhAJEiwAYY3nDNh4CnbKEFT34KU8xqVlfl2D6nhe2KzDFYuXqZUKFD1mb\\_GXEhQfRRoCPwAQAvD\\_BwE](https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-crisis-appeal?c_code=175151&c_source=google&c_name=Ukraine%20Crisis%20Appeal&adg=&c_creative=brand&c_medium=cpc&gclid=CjwKCAiAjoeRBhAJEiwAYY3nDNh4CnbKEFT34KU8xqVlfl2D6nhe2KzDFYuXqZUKFD1mb_GXEhQfRRoCPwAQAvD_BwE)

Of course, there is no obligation whatsoever to make any monetary or other donation but we wanted to make it as easy as possible for families to be a part of our global response as possible.

I would like to reassure you that, whilst the children are here in school, we will continue to ensure they work hard, have fun experiences and enjoy being part of their own school community. An example of this was World Book Day yesterday and I will send a separate Parentmail following on from this.

On a final note, I am sure you will join me in hoping and praying for a resolution and peace as soon as possible.

Thank you to you all for taking the time to read this. Stay safe.

Kind regards.



Mrs Branch  
Headteacher

**TOILETRIES**

- Sanitary towels and tampons
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Wet wipes
- Body wash
- Packets of tissues

**FIRST AID:**

- First aid kits
- Bandages / Field bandages / bandages of different types and widths
- Strong paracetamol \*
- Ibuprofen\*
- Water purification tablets\*
- Antiseptic cream\*
- Cold and flu treatment\*
- Cough syrup\*
- Vapour rub\*
- Antiseptic wipes\*
- Hand gel
- Bandages
- Sterile dressings
- Surgical tape
- Wound closure strips

**FOOD / DRNK**

- 3 in 1 coffee sachets
- Cuppa soups
- Tinned food
- Dried pasta

**CLOTHING (only the specific items below, not just general clothing)**

- Thermal clothing
- Socks
- Belts
- Fleeces / warm jumpers
- Hiking / walking boots size 43/44+
- Snoods – black
- Black gloves and fingerless gloves

**BABY ITEMS**

- Baby bottles
- Wet wipes
- Nappies
- Milk cartons / powder

**OTHER ITEMS**

- Sleeping bags
- Yoga mats / sleeping mats
- Reading glasses
- Dog / cat food

