

Garden Fields J.M.I School

Townsend Drive
St. Albans
Herts
AL3 5RL
Telephone 01727 890440



Growing Hearts and Minds

Headteacher : Mr A. Farrugia

- ◆ E-mail : admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk
- ◆ Website : www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk



11th March 2022

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Governors,

I am sure that many of you at the moment are having difficult conversations with your children about the current war in the Ukraine and it is certainly something that children are talking about with our teaching team. Our Year 6's, as in previous years are learning about WW2 which is making it resonate even more.

We are very aware that this generation of children are growing up not just with a Pandemic but now also with the biggest war in Europe in recent history. One can't help but be worried by all of this.

I have been looking at lots of guidance around how to answer children's questions around the war and the general points coming out have been the following. Not that I am offering any easy solutions and of course it is entirely up to you how you deal with your children's questions!

1) Don't offer false reassurance

Young children need to trust us in difficult times – so it best not to just say that everyone will live happily ever after. However, we also don't want to instil our children with panic, hence point 2...

2) Control your own anxiety

Children may not understand the issues, but still pick up on adult anxiety, and may be frightened by remarks overheard, whether understood or not, so we need to model 'calmness'.

3) Manage exposure to the news cycle

Outright bans for older children in particular are themselves problematic and also difficult to achieve! The ability to evaluate news is an important life skill, but what we might expose a pupil in Reception to, compared to a child in Year 6, would of course need to be modified. One idea is to only listen to radio in the early evening and save television coverage for the evening when children are in bed. Visual imagery is what is most potentially traumatic for children. Even with radio however, there can be adult content, and for our younger children it may be necessary to switch off/change channel altogether.

4) Resilience in the face of challenge

Focus on now, what we have in the present rather than on the uncertainties of the future. What is possible now, what good things do we have at the moment? This advice comes from previous generations who have lived through wars and other crises.

You can find out a lot more about this area – it goes into a lot more dept and the academic research behind it - at:

<https://www.headteacher-update.com/best-practice-ezine/How-do-we-talk-about-Ukraine-Engaging-with-young-people-over-the-war/244870/>



Reach out for Refugees Day 21st March 2022

Local headteachers, teachers, support staff and school pupils have been looking at ways to support those in the Ukraine in the current crisis. In fact, a pupil at Skyswood School, on their school council, had the 'germ' of an idea which has grown and now a large number of St Albans schools have decided to mark Monday 21st as a special day in support of Herts for Refugees.

Obviously the plight of Ukrainian refugees is utmost in our minds at present but it is important to remember that the refugee crisis has always been with us – most recently with Afghanistan and Syria - before the present Ukrainian crisis.

Herts for Refugees are a local organisation who support vulnerable, displaced people from several countries and work closely as a charity with local partners to ensure that funds raised go to where they are most needed. The charity is run by a team of volunteers in order to keep costs at an absolute minimum and assure the maximum value from every donation.

If your children would like to wear a heart of some sort on the 21st March – e.g. a paper/card one as a token of support for refugees, they would be most welcome to. We will also have buckets available in the morning, as your children come in, where you can give donations. You may of course donate direct if you would prefer.

Our network of schools will all be donating all funds raised to the Herts for Refugees Just Giving Appeal <https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/ReachOutForRefugees>.

Netball Champions!



We will feature this story further in our end of term newsletter but I cannot wait until then to inform you of our netball team's amazing success last Saturday where they won the St Albans and District Tournament at the St Albans High School in Wheathampstead. Not only that, but our B team finished 3rd in their side of the competition too! More will follow about their success but in the meantime well done girls and your 'management team' of Miss Kirton and Miss Elson, with support from Miss Gallagher and Mrs Rowland!

Farewell Miss Hall

I'm afraid that Miss Hall, Teaching Assistant in Thames class and Hub play assistant, leaves us next Friday. Miss Hall has been a great support in her role over the last 4 years but has been offered a job as a communications assistant for a company that puts on running events. It is a great opportunity but we will miss you greatly Miss Hall!

Comic Relief Reminder

In the meantime, Comic Relief is on Friday 18th March and children are invited to wear non-uniform on a red theme (no dyed hair and face paint though please) on that day.

Have a good weekend everyone.

Mr Farrugia