

Bramsche, 02.03.2022

Dear parents, dear guardians,

We are all shocked and worried by the war in Ukraine. It is the same for us adults at school, probably you at home and certainly our children and teenagers.

The situation is especially difficult for children from families with roots in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. We feel with you and your families.

At school, we are addressing the issue at various levels, trying to inform everyone in an age-appropriate way, but also taking the children's and young people's feelings seriously and giving them space. It is also matter of concern to us to promote the idea of peace and a peaceful coexistence. Our feelings are especially compassionate with regard to the children from Ukraine and Russia. We want to resolve conflicts constructively and peacefully, as we have been practicing in many projects for a long time.

Nevertheless, you will probably be confronted with questions, worries and fears of your children, especially at home. As a counselling team, we would like to give you some ideas in this letter on how you can support your children in this situation in order to minimize the emotional burden.

- **Create opportunities where it is easy for your children to voice their concerns.**

This can be a conversation "on the edge of the bed," on a walk, or what is often quite good for difficult conversations: on a car ride. Take your children's concerns seriously and ask about them with interest. This will help you to understand your child's feelings better and respond well to them.

- **Give answers to the children's questions and do not avoid the topic.**

You may ask yourself how far you should go in your answer: Children usually have a good sense of how to protect themselves. They don't ask about what they don't want to know. So answer what was specifically asked about, but no more. If your child wants to know more, he or she will keep asking.

- **If you don't have answers to all the questions, feel free to admit that.**

You may be able to find out some background information about the war together with your child on the Internet on sites that provide information suitable for children. Links to these sites can be found below.

- **Be honest: You may also express your own concerns.**
However, if possible, try not to pass on extreme fears and remain calm and objective. Also keep the child's age in mind. The younger the child, the more cautious the conversation needs to be.
- **Watch the news together with your child.**
Children are easily overwhelmed by adult news. Younger children should therefore watch only children's news programs if possible and be accompanied. Older children can watch the regular adult newscasts, but it is also good for them if adults are present and can talk to them about it afterwards.
- **Be vigilant against fake news.**
False reports are often transported via messenger and social networks in particular. These exacerbate fears and conflicts. Check the truth of the messages on these channels particularly critically (see Internet links below).
- **Make sure you have media breaks. Two hours "media-free" before sleep would be optimal.**
Try not to leave the TV on all day with "war reports", make sure you take breaks to relax. If you urgently want to keep up to date yourself and want to leave the TV on, then send the children to play in the street, with friends or to do sports.

In the appendix you will find an extensive collection of links on the subject. It is sorted by target and age groups. In each case, we have deliberately given a variety of links. This reflects the breadth of information available in a free press. If you or your children would like to contact the counselling team for support you can contact us via the following e-mail addresses:

Sabrina Bendig (Schulsozialarbeiterin): sabrina.bendig@greselius.net

Ulf Heinecke (Beratungslehrer): ulf.heinecke@greselius.net

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Silke Bochow (Schulseelsorgerin): silke.bochow@greselius.net

All the best to you and your families and kind regards,

Sabrina Bendig, Ulf Heinecke, Anna Renard und Silke Bochow

APPENDIX

Collection of useful German links about the conflict in Ukraine sorted by target groups

Information for adults:

Talking with children about war: „Daddy, are we all going to die?“

My father experienced war as a child and couldn't talk about it. I've experienced war as a reporter and didn't want to talk about it. Now my children have questions about war. What do I say?:

<https://www.spiegel.de/familie/mit-kindern-ueber-krieg-sprechen-papi-muessen-wir-alle-sterben-a-c9f73b7f-5ee1-4c40-a4a5-ab4d4a6a49b6>

Ukraine: How do we talk about war with children?

Ukraine is nearer to our house than Sylt is: How do we talk about war with our children if it is no longer a distant happening? Magazin-SCHULE-author Mathias Brüggemeier's thoughts:

<https://www.magazin-schule.de/magazin/ukraine-wie-reden-wir-mit-kindern-ueber-den-krieg/>

Recognizing fake news:

<http://www.webhelm.de/fake-news-erkennen/>

Fake news about the Ukraine crisis and expert facts in comparison:

<http://www.mimikama.at/ukraine-krise/desinformation-russland-ukraine/>

A selection of information on the internet appropriate for children:

for younger children (including primary school):

- <https://www.schau-hin.info/news/krieg-in-der-ukraine-kinder-mit-nachrichten-nicht-allein-lassen>
- <https://www.kika.de/kika-aktuell/kika-aktuell-angriff-auf-die-ukraine-eure-fragen-100.html>
- <https://www.wdrmaus.de/extras/mausthemen/ukraine/index.php5>

for older children

When news unsettles you, whether war, attacks or natural disasters:

Many things reported in the news are sad or can even scare us. Here you can find tips how to cope with that:

<https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/wenn-euch-nachrichten-angst-machen--100.html>

Information about the Ukraine as a country

<https://www.kinderweltreise.de/kontinente/europa/ukraine/daten-fakten/>

Hanisauland "Politics For You Special": Ukraine

<https://www.hanisauland.de/wissen/spezial/politik/laenderdossier/laenderdossier-alphabetisch/laender-u/laenderdossier-land-ukraine/>This is why the Ukraine war has started:

<https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/konflikt-ostukraine-einfach-erklaert-100.html>

The jitter, scared, jelly knees? – What we can do against our fear:

<https://kinder.wdr.de/tv/neuneinhalb/av/video-bammel-schiss-weiche-knie--was-wir-gegen-angst-tun-koennen-100.html>

Conflict in the Ukraine – What's happening there?

What's happening in Ukraine at the moment and how are the people there coping? Gesa and the pupils of a school in Oberhausen wanted to find out.

<https://kinder.wdr.de/tv/neuneinhalb/av/video-konflikt-in-der-ukraine--was-ist-da-los-102.html>

“logo! erklärt”: Influence of Russia on its neighbouring countries:

<https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/einfluss-russland-einfach-erklaert-100.html>

Russia's view on the Ukraine conflict

Russia's president Putin has sent soldiers into the East of Ukraine. Many fear an escalation of the conflict. But why is Putin doing all this? That's what's explained here:

<https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/ukraine-konflikt-putin-einfach-erklaert-100.html>

Attack on Ukraine

Collected articles on “ZDF logo!”

<https://www.zdf.de/kinder/logo/>

Ukraine konflikt

Collected articles on “9 1/2”

<https://kinder.wdr.de/tv/neuneinhalb/>

War in Ukraine

“WDR 5 Kinderradio KiRaKa” – children's radio

<https://kinder.wdr.de/radio/kiraka/nachrichten/klicker/Krieg-ukraine-100.html>

for youths age 14+

Videos (content network by ARD and ZDF with contents for 14-29 year olds)

Russia attacks Ukraine! The consequences:

<https://youtu.be/mNwRnTF-Jdk>

The Ukraine conflict: The history behind it.

<https://youtu.be/CWhoALa6bTU>

NATO vs. Russia: This is what a war would be like

<https://youtu.be/qowsHwEBjoA>

What happens if a nuclear war breaks out:

https://youtu.be/AGdFG7_iDbQ

Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg (State Centre for Political Education)

Ukraine war– war in Europe

Ukraine conflict 2021/22 – backgrounds – analyses

<https://www.lpb-bw.de/ukrainekonflikt>