

February 26, 2022

Dear DPCDSB Families:

As a DPCDSB community, we come together in unity and pray for peace in Ukraine. As events continue to unfold, we continue to be attentive to the students in our care and do our best to provide the supports required to help them deal with this traumatic issue. We know that many of our students have family connections to Ukraine and many others will have questions about what is occurring.

We know that, while it is important for students to be aware of world events, it is equally important that they are presented with information in a manner which is age appropriate, fully informed, and safe. We strive to ensure that classroom discussions and/or lessons are appropriate for the grade, and maturity level of students.

Students may wish to discuss what they are seeing and hearing, and we want to make space for them to do so. However, sharing live or still footage, media coverage of the events in Ukraine is not appropriate for all students. We know that conversations about the situation in Ukraine also take place at home and we wanted to provide you, as parents/guardians and caregivers, access to some of the tips and strategies that we have at our disposal in our schools. Perhaps you may find them useful to support conversations you may be having with your children in this regard.

Please note the following *General Principles to Support Students during a Crisis*:

- Consistent routines are comforting to children during times of uncertainty.
- Acknowledging this will be challenging; remain calm and neutral.
- **Limit access to media coverage of the events because these may be overwhelming for children and youth.**
- Validate your children's feelings and concerns. They may feel anger, sadness, worry, helplessness and other difficult emotions. Help them find healthy ways to express these emotions.
- Identify ways to practice self-care. Family and individual prayers, deep breathing, or a moment of silence are some strategies that can help. Consider music, art, and physical activity as well. For additional information about self-care strategies for children, please see the resource from School Mental Health Ontario [Self Care 101](#).
- Immediate resources that may be of assistance are:
 - Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text "CONNECT" to 686868
 - EveryMind crisis response in Peel Region: 416-410-8615 (0-18 years of age)
 - [How to Help Students After Tragic Events](#) (from School Mental Health Ontario)
- For additional coping strategies, please see [Resilience strategies](#).

As always, our schools are available to help. If you require assistance outside of the above resources, please do not hesitate to contact your child's school.

We continue to pray together as a faith community.

Marianne Mazzorato, Ed.D.
Director of Education

Extraordinary lives start with a great Catholic education.

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister.

Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman.

Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen

PRAYER FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE

God of hope,

You gave us the power to choose.

It is within our power to choose peace,

To choose friendship and not fighting

To choose love and not hatred

Let us trust in God,

so that we can live in joy and hope

We pray for your guidance to help us choose

to become a people who live in harmony.

We ask this in the name of your son,

Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen