

STATEMENT ON UKRAINE

We support and will always stand by the children, families and people of Ukraine, and all of those who have become victims of this unfolding tragedy.

First of all, we stress the values and key purpose of Azbuka: a British independent bilingual primary school and nursery situated in London, a megapolis that brings together so many different people from around the world.

We are a small charity and work exclusively for the families of our community without operational support from either Russian or British governments.

Azbuka offers children the chance to grow, learn, achieve and thrive in a safe, Russian-English bilingual educational environment, secure in their multicultural identity, enjoying a broad culture-rich creative and academically stimulating curriculum and achieving their full potential as unique individuals, caring friends and responsible citizens.

To be able to speak in more than one language and exposed to different cultures is a true gift to any child, family, community, country and the world at large.

People from mixed families and those brought up in a multilingual environment would never argue for conflict and war, but rather for understanding, love and friendship. This is the true miracle which reflects the unique benefits of a bilingual education embracing any languages and is the pedagogy we and a growing number of bilingual schools have promoted for over many years. That cause is needed more than ever today – for Ukraine, Russia and Britain.

We believe that the children who have completed our programme can show us the way forward and teach us to be better people.

These are Azbuka's values and we will remain strongly committed to them.

We strongly condemn war and aggression in all its forms, and more particularly, the current military conflict between Russia and Ukraine. We call on the world's leaders to end fighting and ensure that those in Ukraine can start to heal following the pain that has been inflicted on them.

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Azbuka is an international school. We have children, parents, teachers and governors who represent many languages and cultures: Russian, English, Ukrainian, French, Swedish, Portuguese, Turkish, Bulgarian, Moldovan, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Chinese (among others).

Ukraine and Russia share a similar language and culture, and many families at Azbuka have connections and ties in both countries. Our multinational community, especially families and teachers with family members in Ukraine, are in shock about this personal tragedy. They are grieving. The school is grieving.

As with any grieving family, we would ask for respect for their privacy. We ask for respect of our space so that we can continue to apply the principles and guidelines to teach and protect our children, parents and teachers.

We seek to protect them from the horrors of the current conflict as much as we can, and to allow them to study and play in the small oasis of peace we represent.

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Despite our modest size and resources, in these tragic times Azbuka is seeking to make a real difference by helping innocent children and families caught in this conflict by:

- * supporting refugees, creating school places and fundraising for bursaries for children coming from Ukraine, whether they speak Ukrainian, Russian or both

- * Supporting the Ukrainian language in the curriculum by engaging Azbuka Ukrainian teachers and volunteers

- * Extending our multilingual pedagogy by offering Ukrainian as a third family language through special clubs and lessons

Bringing people together when everything is being torn apart, helping to rebuild bridges when they are being destroyed – these aims are at the very heart of Azbuka School.

From now on - and perhaps for years to come - there will be few places where Ukrainian, Russian and British children have the opportunity to learn and play harmoniously in their languages and cultures.

Azbuka is now a school where these children can grow and thrive side by side in peace.

Out of the darkness will come the light.

Governors of the AZBUKA Foundation