

Responding to false and misleading information about the COVID-19 vaccination programme: Advice to Headteachers, Teachers and Parents

**Background**

Over the past month, some schools and headteachers have received letters or emails which feature **false or misleading information (misinformation)** about the safety, efficacy and purpose of the COVID-19 vaccination program. There have also been reports of leafleting activity outside of school gates.

**What Schools Can Do**

False and misleading information (misinformation) about the COVID-19 vaccination programme can be confusing or alarming for staff, children and parents alike, and it can be difficult to know how to respond. Headteachers and teachers are advised:

* **Not to engage directly**: misinformation narratives and tactics flourish when they are responded to.
* **Acknowledge receipt**: if a response is needed, simply acknowledge receipt of concerns.
* **Reassure**: acknowledge the concerns for wellbeing and emphasise and refer to the latest scientific guidance on the issue. Some helpful links include:
	+ The WHO Mythbusters [Page](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters)
	+ The [Check Before You Share](https://dcmsblog.uk/check-before-you-share-toolkit/) Toolkit

**Further Resources**

There are a range of resources available to help children and adults understand these issues including:

* [BBC Teach](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/fake-news-teacher-resources/zfv7kty): Fake News, Teaching Resources
* [Go Viral:](https://www.goviralgame.com/en) Learn about some of the most common strategies used to spread false and misleading information
* [Internet Matters](https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/fake-news-and-misinformation-advice-hub/find-the-fake/choose-quiz/%20https%3A//www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zmvdd6f): a quiz to spot false information
* [BBC Bitesize](http://size/articles/zmvdd6f):How to talk to your kids about fake news
* [Ofcom resource page](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/media-literacy-research/coronavirus-resources): Combatting COVID-19 Misinformation

For accurate and up to date information on Covid-19 vaccines, visit the NHS website: Coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)