**Misinformation - Parent Guide**

Everything you need to know about fake news and critical thinking

**What is misinformation?**

Misinformation is content that is deliberately misleading, to make you react or believe something that is untrue.

It is sometimes known as fake news – and it can appear in many different forms online.

**What does misinformation look like?**

It can be inaccurate articles, manipulated images and videos, fake quotes, or posts and comments that twist the truth. For example, false claims and conspiracy theories about Covid-19 cures and anti-vaccination protests or extreme political posts.

It makes it harder to spot what’s true and what’s not – especially for children.

**How can I help my child avoid misinformation?**

Help them practice [critical thinking](https://parentzone.org.uk/article/critical-thinking-online-parents-guide). This is a process of questioning what you look at online – and what it is trying to do.

Your child should consider the source. Is it a website they know? Does the web address look right? Is there anything odd about it?

It is good to check reliable sources, like the BBC, or fact-checking websites. Encourage your child to find at least one reliable source for the information they see.

**What else should I consider?**

Misinformation on social media can also be in a post or a comment in a chat forum. Challenge your child to question what someone is saying and why they are saying it.

Even if it supports something your child believes, it doesn’t mean it is true.

**What can I do if I find misinformation online?**

Some online platforms are now doing more to notify users when a source is unidentified or contains misinformation. Help your child explore reporting functions on the platforms they use. Some social media now have a false information option when reporting a post.

**Anything else I should know?**

Misinformation can be manipulating and upsetting. Encourage your child to come to you if they feel worried or unsure about anything they have seen.

Fostering their critical thinking is a key part of [digital resilience](https://www.parents.parentzone.org.uk/morearticles/digital-resilience-a-parents-guide), so be open and discuss the risks together.

**More Info**

[Watch Parent Zone’s two-minute video guide to fake news](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGmQldITyNw)

[Listen to the latest Tech Shock podcast by Parent Zone](https://parentzone.org.uk/tech-shock-parent-zone-podcast)