

# Tackling fake news & misinformation:

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*Advice to support children and young people*

Get support to help children develop their digital literacy and critical thinking to spot the difference between fact and fiction online.



## What is fake news?

Fake news is the spreading of news stories online that are **invented, distort the facts**, or are not news at all, but made to look as if they are.

## Why do people create it?

Those who create fake news may be looking to get people to click on the link **to promote advertising, encourage people to buy something or persuade them** to support a point of view.

There are also times when news organisations may make a mistake and print something which is **later revealed to be untrue**.

## Growth of fake news

Although fake news has always existed, **increasingly those creating 'fake news' are making it more difficult to spot**. At times even well-established news organisations find themselves reporting on stories based on false information due to the nature of the online world.

**With so much information coming from a wide range of sources, it can be hard to know which are trustworthy.**



# 2 in 5

(43%) of 12-15s who go online said they had seen something online or on social media they thought was fake news

Source: Ofcom children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes 2018

## How can fake news impact children and young people?

- It can lead children and young people to believe something about the world that **can have a negative impact on their wellbeing**
- Fake news sometimes **may target minority groups and spread hate** which can have real world consequences
- **It can cause children to be confused** about what they see online and anxious about being misled to believe something that isn't true



## Strategies to help children develop critical and digital literacy

### Talk to them:

Children rely more on their family than social media for their news **so talk to them about what is going on.** It's also helpful to talk about how the information they see online is created so they have a better understanding of the intentions behind it.



### Read:

**Many people share stories they don't actually read.** Encourage children to read beyond the headline and if they do spot something, not to share it but to help set the record straight.

### Check:

**Share quick and easy ways to check the reliability of information.**

This could be doing a search to double check who the author is and how credible they are, seeing if the information is available on reputable sites and using good fact-checking websites to get more information.

It's also worth talking to them about spam, and the possibility that some of the adverts that they come across might also be fake.

### Get Involved:

Digital literacy is about participation. Teach children to be **honest, vigilant and creative digital citizens.**