

IDENTIFYING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION ONLINE

Being online can be an extremely positive and rewarding experience. However, it is important that you help your children understand that unfortunately not everything they see, hear, read or experience online is real, positive or respectful.



Here is my guide to help you develop your child's understanding of online misinformation and disinformation and how to react should they encounter it.

Foster Critical Thinking:



Cultivate your children's critical thinking abilities. Encourage them to question, analyse, and evaluate information before accepting it.

Source Evaluation:



Teach your children the importance of assessing sources. Guide them to rely on reputable platforms such as established news organisations, government websites and academic institutions. Urge caution with personal blogs and unfamiliar sites.





Webpage Scrutiny:

Encourage your children to assess website credibility. Professional design and user-friendly websites typically indicate authenticity and reliability.



Fact Verification:

Instil the habit of fact-checking before sharing or believing information. Check to see whether other websites are saying the same thing.



Sensationalism Awareness:

Educate your children about clickbait (attention-grabbing headlines that can be misleading). Teach them to delve into the full content before forming conclusions.



Check the date:

Stress the importance of checking when the information was published. Outdated information may no longer be relevant or accurate.



Bias:

Help your child understand that some information online may be very one-sided or biased. Try to find information that is factual and from different points of view.



Cross-Reference:

Encourage your children to check information from several reputable sources. Only using one source increases the risk of misinformation or disinformation.



Media content:

Help your children to question pictures and videos. It is easy to manipulate and edit media. Encourage your children to question everything they see and hear online.



Promote Open Dialogue:

Establish an environment where your children feel comfortable discussing their online lives. Encourage them to ask for your help, and to talk to you when they feel uncertain, confused or worried.