



29 September 2021

To: Directors of Education

Protecting schools and pupils from misleading information

We are aware of increased reports of Scottish schools and their pupils being targeted with misleading information about the Covid vaccination programme. Of particular concern is that head teachers have reportedly been targeted by hoax letters with misinformation about the vaccine programme, which include a fake NHS logo and a “consent checklist” to share with students.

Other forms of misinformation being received include:

- Materials questioning the safety of the COVID vaccine
- Material questioning the consent process
- Pseudo legal ‘cease and desist’ letters
- Petitions
- Leaflets

Many of these are freely available for download on Anti Vaccination websites and are circulating within Scotland’s schools, having been emailed to local authorities and secondary schools.

Please do not forward any of these materials to parents or children. Reliable sources of information are our own local Health Board, NHS Inform, Scottish Government website or other authorised sources like Public Health Scotland who will send you the necessary information regarding any NHS vaccines and publish advice on their websites and social media.

Head teachers should notify the police by phoning 101 if they become aware of campaigners targeting their schools or pupils, or 999 in an emergency. Keeping the police informed will help a proportionate response to any disruptive activity targeted at the Covid-19 vaccination programme, staff, parents and children. Similarly if staff or pupils receive social media posts, texts, or emails that contain an element of threat these should be reported to the police on 101 who will assess them for criminality.

Schools should already have a security policy in place, based on a security risk assessment and that in the event of a protest or disruptive activity outside a school, or if schools knew a protest was planned, they should alert the School Age Immunisation Service provider, their local authority and contact police on 101 to discuss the best way to manage the situation.

Part of the Scottish Government Vaccine Security Team’s role is to monitor and share misinformation. It would be helpful if examples could be sent to vaccinesecurity@gov.scot



Access to Trusted Vaccine Information

A wide range of information to support all aspects of the COVID immunisation programme is available at www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccineyoungpeople to make sure that individuals, or those giving consent on their behalf, have enough information to enable them to make a decision before they give consent.

UK Chief Medical Officers consider education one of the most important drivers of improved public and mental health and that reducing disruption to education will also reduce public and mental health harm. Additionally there has been national communication to parents from Professor Jason Leitch the National Clinical Director [here](#), issued on 16 September.

We recognise vaccination is a personal choice, and Ministers support head teachers, schools, local authorities and partners in helping parents, carers and young people reach an informed choice – based on trusted information – on vaccination.

Please see the separate ANNEX supplied with this letter, for examples of documentation relating to the anti-vax campaign.

Relevant media articles:

[Schools warn about hoax anti-vaccine letters - BBC News](#)

[Fake vaccine consent forms circulating in Welsh schools - Wales OnlineCovid: Warning over fake vaccine consent form for schools | Tes](#)

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2237475-covid-19-news-younger-children-in-england-less-willing-to-get-vaccine/#ixzz77qD9tR2R>

Vaccine Operational Policy Division
Scottish Government

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