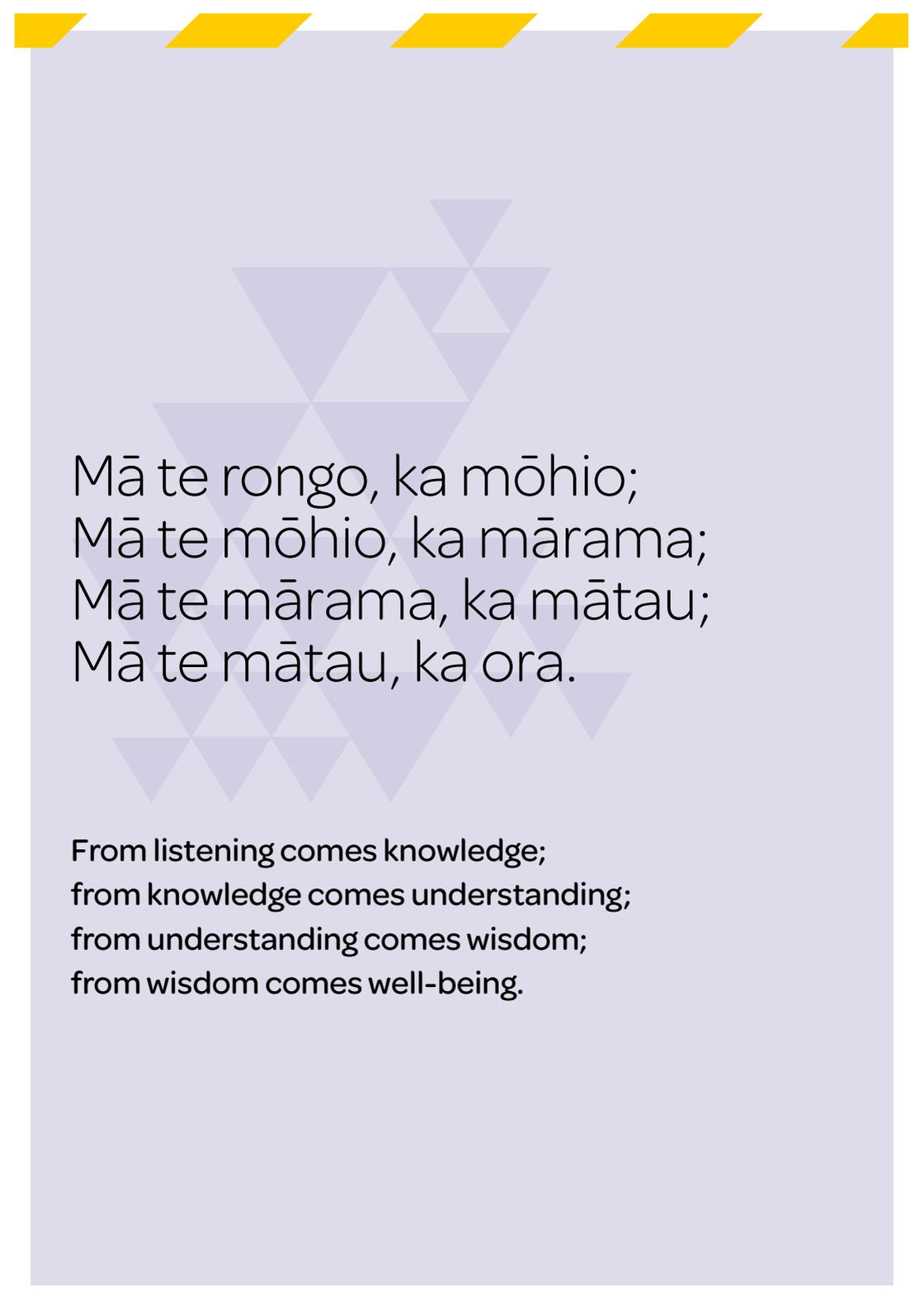




# COVID-19 vaccination: Responding to false and misleading information and scams.

## **A guide for school communities**



Mā te rongō, ka mōhio;  
Mā te mōhio, ka mārama;  
Mā te mārama, ka mātau;  
Mā te mātau, ka ora.

From listening comes knowledge;  
from knowledge comes understanding;  
from understanding comes wisdom;  
from wisdom comes well-being.

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This guide will assist you in responding to COVID-19 vaccination concerns and where to go to get the facts.

# Get the facts

Getting vaccinated is a personal choice that everyone will make to protect themselves and their whānau. Get the facts to make the right decision for you.

Misleading information may not be obvious. Use reliable sources to double check the facts.

In Aotearoa the below sources provide accurate and reliable information:

- Ministry of Health – [Health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz)
- Unite Against COVID-19 – [Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)
- Local district health boards (DHBs) – full list of DHB websites by searching '*district health boards*' on [Ministry of Health](https://www.health.govt.nz) main website as above.
- Trusted information in te reo Māori and English can be found at [Karawhiua.nz](https://www.karawhiua.nz)
- The Immunisation Advisory Centre – [Immune.org.nz](https://www.immune.org.nz)
- Your GP, pharmacist, iwi health provider or other health professional.

Resources and information detailing aspects of the vaccine and the roll out can be found on the above websites and social media accounts of these sources.

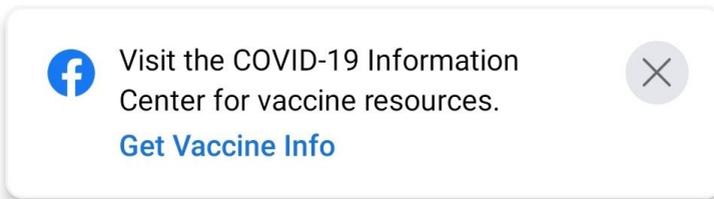


# Take care what you share

## Not all information online is accurate.

We can quickly and subconsciously accept news that aligns with our beliefs and negatively react to information that is different. It's important to take time and reflect when reading something about the COVID-19 vaccine, before acting.

Social media companies typically use algorithms to pick up false and misleading information. They may have a flag or small message on certain posts advising that the information is related to COVID-19 and will link you to a trusted source.



*Facebook COVID-19 information message*



*Instagram COVID-19 information message*

These aren't 100% foolproof. It's important to remain vigilant with the information shared or posted online.

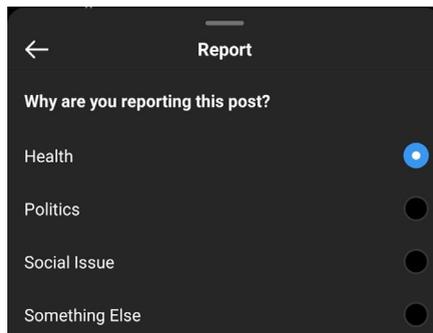
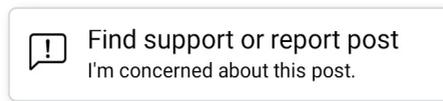
Always cross-check and review COVID-19 vaccine information by using the reliable sources outlined in this guide.

# Report it

Any false or misleading information such as leaflets, publications or websites can be reported to CERT NZ – [Cert.govt.nz/report-covid-19-vaccine-scams-or-misinformation/](https://cert.govt.nz/report-covid-19-vaccine-scams-or-misinformation/) or call **0800 2378 69**. CERT NZ is the central coordination point for public reports of misinformation. They refer reports to other government agencies who address any issues raised.

The public can report what they believe to be false or misleading information seen on social media to the respective social media platform e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc. These platforms will have buttons or forms through which you can report this information.

You can find more information on how to report to specific social media platforms at [Covid19.govt.nz/report-misinformation](https://covid19.govt.nz/report-misinformation)



*Examples of social media reporting tools*

If a person or group is threatening violence towards others, report it to the Police by calling **105** (or **111** in an emergency).

# Discussing false and misleading information with others

You may need to engage with someone or a group who are spreading false and misleading information within your community or online.

It's easy to feel compelled to go and directly confront them. This is not the ideal approach and it may not always be obvious to them what information isn't true or factual.



Here are some tips on how you might address the situation:

- **Check if the information is false.** You can do this by going to reliable sources mentioned earlier, to check the facts.
- **Acknowledge their concerns and fears.**
- **Don't mock them for having fears or vaccine concerns.**
- **Decide if it is best to engage directly.** It may be best to send them a message or talk to them privately about what they have said. If they have posted on social media and are getting a lot of interest you may want to report it to the platform. You have the option to remain anonymous.
- **Try to find areas you can both agree on.** If the person you are engaging with gets defensive and you feel that it is no longer constructive, it may be best not to proceed.
- **Share accurate resources.** If we share accurate, verified information we might encourage others to do the same. In some cases it may not be possible to convince the person sharing misinformation to change their view, but calmly offering accurate information may shift the perspectives of others observing the interactions.

# COVID-19 vaccine scams

Scammers look for ways to trick people into sharing their personal or financial details, especially via phone and email.

Here is advice you can give:

- **You will never be asked to pay for the vaccine** or pay to secure your place in the queue.
- **Official information about the vaccine** will come from a trusted provider of health content ([see page 2](#))
- **You will never be asked for personal information via text or email.** If you see, it report it to CERT NZ at [Cert.govt.nz/covidscams](https://cert.govt.nz/covidscams) and don't reply to the message.
- **If you receive an email, phone call or SMS asking for financial details in regards to the vaccine it will be a scam.** Report it to [CERT NZ](#) immediately.
- **A health worker will never come to your home to give you the vaccine, unless arranged with you beforehand.**
- **When you're eligible for your vaccination you will receive a text from the Ministry of Health.**
  - If you are unsure if a text message about your COVID-19 vaccine appointment is legitimate, contact your healthcare provider directly, or call the COVID-19 Vaccination Healthline on **0800 28 29 26**.
  - You will then be invited to book your vaccine at <https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/>
  - You can expect to see an informational landing page <https://bookmyvaccine.nz/>
  - Note: any webpage that does not come from the above should be reported to [CERT NZ](#).
- **If you see something about the vaccine that doesn't seem right,** report it to [CERT NZ](#) or call **0800 2378 69**.

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **What are the different kinds of false and misleading information?**

- **Misinformation** – false but not created with the intention of causing harm (e.g. misleading vaccine information shared with good intent).
- **Disinformation** – false and deliberately created to harm (e.g. ideologies and theories purposely giving misleading or dated vaccine information).
- **Malinformation** – based on reality, but is used to inflict harm on a person, organisation or country (e.g. leaks of private information that has been changed).

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## **Why do people or organisations try to spread false or misleading information?**

Not all false information is spread on purpose but some is. People may spread false information to cause confusion and division and undermine our ability to respond to COVID-19 by taking advantage of people's concerns or questions of the COVID-19 vaccine – sometimes for financial, personal or political gain.

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## **How is false and misleading information being spread?**

False information can be spread through a range of different channels, including social media, traditional media (television, radio and print), pamphlets, posters and letterbox drops, as well as through word of mouth. Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook and YouTube) are the most common means of disseminating vaccine misinformation and disinformation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

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## **We are seeing false or misleading information spreading in our school community, what do we do about it?**

If there is a growing concern about specific false or misleading information undermining the COVID-19 response then raise it to [CERT NZ](#) and give as much detail as possible. They will ensure that it is passed on to the appropriate agency.

You can also report false or misleading information to social media platforms ([see page 4](#)).

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## **What is the impact of false or misleading information spreading?**

There are many false and misleading news stories related to medical treatments including COVID-19 vaccines. Trusting these false stories could lead you to make decisions that may be harmful to your health and the health of your whānau.





Together, let's rise above false  
and misleading information