

Centre for Digital Information Literacy in Schools

FAQs July 2025

1) What is the Centre for Digital Information Literacy in Schools?

The Centre for Digital Information Literacy in Schools is a new initiative launched by the National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) and supported by the Pears Foundation, in response to the growing challenge of online conspiracy, disinformation and misinformation in schools. The Centre will run a multi-year programme to equip educators - from trainee teachers to senior leaders and governors - with the knowledge, confidence, and tools to teach and lead effectively in an age of misinformation. This crucial work will embed critical thinking, psychological insight, and narrative resilience into teacher development at every level.

2) What is the programme?

The Centre for Digital Information Literacy, led by the NIoT with funding from the Pears Foundation, is launching a national multi-year programme to tackle online conspiracies, disinformation, and misinformation in schools. This initiative will develop and embed training across the teacher development pipeline—from trainees to senior leaders—to equip educators with the tools, confidence, and knowledge to lead in an age of misinformation. There will also be scope within this work to consider the impact of AI in teaching and teacher education as a closely related field to digital information literacy.

3) Why are we doing this?

Misinformation is increasingly shaping how young people understand the world. Teachers are often the first line of defence but feel underprepared. This programme addresses that gap by embedding research-informed, psychologically grounded training into teacher education and leadership development. It aims to build trust, critical thinking, and resilience in classrooms and communities.

4) What is the timeline for the multi-year programme?

The programme begins development in September 2025 and will run through 2029.

5) What is the Pears Foundation?

The Pears Foundation is a UK-based philanthropic foundation known for its long-term commitment to promoting truth, education, and social cohesion. Their work spans a wide range of sectors, including education, youth engagement, Holocaust education, and community development.

In the context of this programme, the Pears Foundation is not just a funder but a strategic partner. Their support enables the NIoT to develop, deliver, and evaluate a national programme that addresses the urgent challenge of online conspiracies and misinformation in schools.

The Foundation's values align closely with the goals of this initiative: to build trust, foster critical thinking, and strengthen the role of education in a democratic society. Their backing lends credibility, visibility, and sustainability to the programme, helping ensure that the work reaches educators and learners across the country and becomes embedded in the national teacher development infrastructure.

6) **Who is this for?**

The focus will begin at the primary level and extend through all educational phases, addressing the needs of each sector, including secondary schools, post-16 education, and special schools. The programme will support:

- Trainee teachers
- Early career teachers (ECTs)
- Mentors and lead mentors
- Middle and senior leaders
- Governors and trustees
- Teaching assistants and support staff
- Teacher educators and facilitators

7) **What are the expected outcomes?**

- Increased educator confidence and capability
- Improved pupil critical thinking and media literacy
- System-wide adoption of misinformation training
- A national conversation on trust and truth in education

8) **Will this affect NIoT's current programmes?**

Yes—positively. The programme is designed for national rollout, with materials and training embedded content will be embedded into existing ITE, ECT, and NPQ structures, enhancing rather than replacing current provision. It will be modular and adaptable to different school contexts. After the evaluation phase, all content will be made freely available to the wider sector and promoted to all teacher training and professional development providers. This includes a self-assessment tool and public-facing media to raise awareness and drive adoption.

9) **Why has the NIoT been chosen as a partner?**

Pears Foundation has a long-standing commitment to supporting impactful initiatives, including their recent work on the Online Conspiracies Commission. Separately, they chose to partner with the National Institute of Teaching (NIoT) following a proposal we submitted that aligns with their mission. As a national provider in teacher development, we outlined a multi-year programme designed to equip educators—from trainees to senior leaders—with the tools to navigate misinformation and conspiracy theories in schools. Our systemic approach, research capability and sector-wide reach made NIoT the natural choice for this partnership.

10) **Who is the lead for this work?**

The NIoT lead for this work is Pip Sanderson, Director of Teacher Development.

11) **Who can I contact for more information?**

For media enquiries, please contact media@niot.org.uk. For any other enquiries, please contact info@niot.org.uk.