

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about FREE SPEECH VS HATE SPEECH

Everyone has the right of 'freedom of expression.' This is the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It is not the right to say whatever you want. We all have a responsibility to use freedom of expression properly by not saying things that are grossly offensive or threatening, or encouraging hateful activity, thereby undermining the rights of others. Both online and offline, hate speech targets those who are different to the speaker in some way. Communication attacking or discriminating against groups and individuals (because of characteristics like race or religion) is hate speech, not free speech.

What is Free Speech?

Free speech is the principle that an individual is allowed to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship, or legal consequences. Here's why free speech is important...

The Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely and hold their own opinions – even if those views are unpopular and could offend others.



Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important that we respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it.

Any idea could potentially offend someone: Both Galileo and Darwin's theories, for example, were originally incredibly offensive to many. Freely exchanging ideas promotes progress.



The ability to challenge others' views – and have ours challenged, too – is healthy, as it helps us learn to deal with criticism and to think seriously about what we say and believe.



It's a powerful way to push for change. Many modern rights – such as women being allowed to vote, or decent working conditions – couldn't have been achieved without free speech.



Freedom of expression also includes the right not to do something: such as not standing up or singing for the national anthem, even though some people would deem that offensive.



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STOP HATE. START HERE

For further information and reporting:

Amnesty International:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/freedom-of-expression/>

True Vision:
https://www.report-it.org.uk/reporting_internet_hate_crime

Report Harmful Content:
<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/?lang=en>

What is Hate Speech?

Hate speech is any communication which displays prejudice against someone's identity. It can be derogatory, demonising and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs. Some common types of hate speech include...

Targeting people or groups because of their race, gender or gender identity, sexuality, nationality, religion or a disability.



Content which dehumanises individuals or groups based on those attributes, such as referring negatively to them as animals, inanimate objects or other non-human entities.



Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups, and justifying and glorifying these actions.



Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior, or even that they are criminals.



Promoting the exclusion or segregation of certain groups of people, or discrimination against them, because of who they are (e.g. their race or gender).



Making up or repeating insults about a person or group because something about their identity (for example, religious beliefs or a disability) is different to the person who's posting.

