



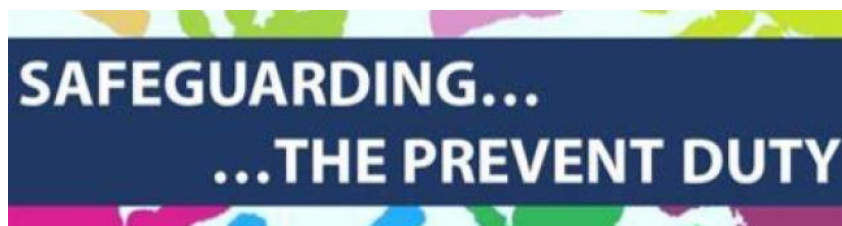
Launched in 2015 Children's Mental Health Week exists to empower, equip and give a voice to every child in the UK and this year's theme is 'My Voice Matters.' 1 in 6 children now have a diagnosable mental health condition.

Did you know? In the average primary school class, at least two children have suffered abuse or neglect which is why the NSPCC have developed the 'Speak out. Stay safe' programme which empowers staff to tackle difficult topics with their pupils and helps children understand:

- Abuse in all its forms and the signs of abuse
- Abuse is never a child's fault
- Sources of help available to them, including Childline

. For more information about the programme and how you can reinforce these messages at home, please visit: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/working-with-schools/>

Prevent is a government strategy designed to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorist or extremist causes. The Prevent Strategy covers all types of terrorism and extremism, including the extreme far-right wing and extreme religious groups. From July 2015 all schools have a duty to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism. This means we have a responsibility to protect children from extremism and violent views the same way we protect them from drugs or gang violence. The Prevent strategy is not just about discussing extremism itself, which may not be appropriate for younger children. It is also about teaching children the British Values: the Rule of Law, Democracy, Individual Liberty, Tolerance and Mutual respect. We do many age appropriate things in school to help students become positive, happy members of society.



What Children & Young People Need to Know about

FREE SPEECH

HATE SPEECH

Everyone in the UK has the right of "freedom of expression". That's the right to voice your opinions and share information and ideas with others. It's *not* the right to say whatever you want without regard for others' feelings and values. We all have a responsibility to use this right properly: being respectful and inclusive to those around us, rather than making offensive and threatening remarks. That's called 'hate speech' and knowing the difference is incredibly important.

Free speech is a person's legal right to share information, opinions and ideas without fear of retaliation, censorship or legal consequences. This freedom of expression is recognised in international human rights legislation, and here's what it does for us in our day-to-day lives ...

The Human Rights Act 1988 states that everyone has the right to express themselves freely – even if their views are unpopular and might offend others.

Freedom of expression encourages listening to others and allowing opposing views to be heard. It's important to respect someone's opinion, even if we disagree with it. Free speech lets us engage in meaningful discussions with people who feel differently.

Any concept could potentially offend someone. Galileo's theories were incredibly offensive to many at the time, while not everyone agrees with Darwin, even today. A frequent exchange of ideas is vitally important for a healthy society.

Free speech allows us to engage people we disagree with in a debate. The ability to challenge others' views is healthy – while having *ours* challenged helps us learn how to deal with criticism and think deeply about what we say and believe.

Freedom of expression includes the right *not* to do something, like not standing up for – or singing – the national anthem. Even though some people would find that offensive, it isn't illegal. By law, nobody can force you to say anything you don't want to.

Free speech is a powerful tool for change, justice and reform. Many modern UK rights – such as women being allowed to vote, decent working conditions or same-sex marriage – couldn't have been achieved without it.

Hate speech refers to any communication – like talking, texting or posting online – that negatively targets a group or an individual because they are perceived to be different in some way. Demoning and dehumanising statements, threats, identity-based insults, offensive name-calling and slurs would all count as hate speech. Here are some common forms it takes...

Targeting people or groups because of a protected characteristic – like race, gender identity, sexuality, nationality, religion or a disability – and verbally abusing them with slurs and name-calling. The Equality Act 2010 has more information on this.

Content that dehumanises people based on the same characteristics: referring to them as if they were animals, objects or other non-human entities, for example. Separating the target from other human beings is usually an attempt to justify the speaker's bigotry.

Calling for violence or hatred against certain people or groups and justifying and glorifying those actions. Suggesting that a certain group should be removed from society could be seen as a call to arms, for example – potentially putting people from that group in danger.

Claiming that specific types of people are physically, mentally or morally inferior (or even that they are criminals) to encourage others to view them in the same way. This kind of thinking is always incorrect – but can be incredibly harmful to the group in question.

Spreading damaging misinformation about a person or group that the speaker views as "different" – essentially, trying to turn others against them by lying. Someone might claim that a recent tragedy is the fault of this entire group, when this is simply not possible.

Promoting the segregation of certain groups, or discrimination against them, because of who they are. This has been illegal in the UK for a long time – but some people still try to promote the exclusion of others, which can cause a huge amount of distress.

Meet Our Expert

The Global Equality Collective is an online community for homes, schools and businesses, a collective of hundreds of subject matter experts in diversity, equality and inclusion, and the organisation behind the GEC app, the world's first app for diversity, equality and inclusion.

GLOBAL
EQUALITY
COLLECTIVE

The
National
College®

NOS
National
Online
Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

'Following Christ we reach our goals'