

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations in 1948 states in Article 19:

‘Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.’

In fact, as we know, our freedom of speech is not without limits. We have rights but we also have responsibilities. It is against the law to make a ‘hoax’ phone call to the police that a bomb is about to explode in a theatre or concert hall when there is no bomb because the resulting panic might put people’s lives in danger. There are laws in many countries against ‘hate speech’ which protect sectors of the population. In school, a pupil who uses bad language or insults a teacher is punished. Most of us accept these limits and probably most of us approve of them. Discuss these examples with the class.

### CLASSROOM/ASSEMBLY ACTIVITY

- Split the class into three groups and hold a debate on the three different viewpoints (pp 88–9) on how the media should report or not on terrorism with each group taking one of the points of view.
- Discuss the motivations for the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks with the class. In Unit 2, pupils were asked to think about things they most cherished/treasured. Ask them to choose the most important item and imagine that it has been (a) ridiculed, (b) dismissed and (c) misrepresented. How would they feel? What action could be taken to rectify the situation? Ask them to discuss possible ways of resolving this with a friend.
- Discuss how pupils reacted to hearing about the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks. Some may feel that the journalists were quite right to make fun of whatever they liked, and that no beliefs or individuals should be considered too sacred. Others might say that we can utterly disapprove of the attacks *at the same time* as thinking that the journalists on *Charlie Hebdo* were showing great disrespect for Islam and were wrong to publish them. Just because we condemn the attacks does not necessarily mean we think the cartoons should have been published.

### OPTIONAL ACTIVITY FOR OLDER PUPILS

Ask pupils if they think TV news should show everything that a camera captures on film, or whether certain shots (ie of people suffering, injured or dead) should not be shown or whether the media should not give out certain information. Are there things that the public (ie us) should not be told at all?