



Centering Human Rights in Your Leadership

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Learning Plan

- What is the connection between human rights and the school system?
- How is your leadership connected to protecting human rights?
 - What does it look like when human rights is embedded in your leadership?
- Applying the human rights lens to your obligations and decision making

What are 'human rights'?

- Human rights are fundamental rights and freedoms that belong to every person, ensuring dignity, equality and respect for all individuals (UNDHR)
 - Inherent
 - Inalienable
- Provincially *protected grounds* and *social areas* related to discrimination and harassment

70 YEARS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Commission on Human Rights
Human Rights and Equality Commission

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

ARTICLE 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

ARTICLE 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

ARTICLE 3
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

ARTICLE 4
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery or the trade in slaves shall be prohibited in all its forms.

ARTICLE 5
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

ARTICLE 6
Everyone has the right to be recognized as a person before the law.

ARTICLE 7
All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal treatment before the law.

ARTICLE 8
Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted by the constitution or law of the country.

ARTICLE 9
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

ARTICLE 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations, of any criminal charge against him, or of every matter that is judicial in nature.

ARTICLE 11
1. Everyone charged with a criminal offence shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law. 2. Rights of the accused shall include: (a) to be informed promptly of the charges against him; (b) to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of his defence; (c) to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing; (d) to be assisted by a lawyer if he lacks sufficient means to do so; (e) to examine, cross-examine and question the witnesses against him; (f) to have the free assistance of an interpreter if he cannot understand or speak the language used in court.

ARTICLE 12
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

ARTICLE 13
1. Everyone has the right to move freely and to reside in any country. 2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

ARTICLE 14
1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. 2. This right shall not be invoked in cases where the individual concerned is being sought for prosecution or punishment on account of actions of a political nature which are incompatible with the purposes of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 15
1. Everyone has the right to a nationality. 2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

ARTICLE 16
1. Everyone has the right to marry and to found a family, which is the natural right of all adults capable of marriage. 2. No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

ARTICLE 17
1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. 2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

ARTICLE 18
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief.

ARTICLE 19
1. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. 2. This right shall not be subject to abuse or restrictions, except such as are necessary for respect to the rights or reputation of others or for the protection of national security, public order, health or morals.

ARTICLE 20
1. Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and to associate with other individuals or organizations, in person or through representative institutions. 2. No one shall be compelled to belong to an association.

ARTICLE 21
1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. 3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed through periodic and genuine elections which shall be by secret ballot and shall ensure the free expression of the will of the voters.

ARTICLE 22
Everyone has the right to such social, economic and cultural conditions as are necessary for their well-being.

ARTICLE 23
1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection of employment, to higher pay for more complex labour, to unionization and to collective bargaining. 2. Everyone has the right to a fair and equitable wage. 3. Everyone has the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services, and to the right to security of employment. 4. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, and to paid vacation time.

ARTICLE 24
Everyone has the right to enjoy the fruits of culture and to participate in cultural life.

ARTICLE 25
1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and social services, and to the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. 2. Everyone has the right to education. 3. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and primary stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and vocational education shall be made generally accessible and higher education shall be open to all on the basis of merit. 4. The right of parents to ensure that their children receive a moral and religious education in accordance with their own convictions shall be respected.

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ARTICLE 27
1. Everyone has the right to take part in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. 2. Everyone has the right to education that shall enable him to take full advantage of cultural life and to promote his own and the cultural life of the community. 3. No one shall be subjected to discrimination in the enjoyment of these rights.

ARTICLE 28
The rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration are inseparable and indivisible from the right to development.

ARTICLE 29
1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. 2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject to limitations and restrictions determined by law. Such limitations and restrictions shall be such as to ensure that the recognition and the exercise of the rights and freedoms of any individual or group of individuals is not hampered or nullified.

ARTICLE 30
Nothing in this Declaration shall be interpreted as authorizing any state, group or individual to engage in any activity aimed at destroying any of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration.

Approved by the High Human Rights and Equality Commission, 10 December 2018.

THE IRISH TIMES

Commission on Human Rights
Human Rights and Equality Commission

What are your obligations?

- **Duty of protection**
 - **Freedom from harm**
 - **Active work for improvement**
- **Duty of accommodation**
 - **Address the systemic barrier**
 - **Point of undue hardship**
- **Competing human rights**

The *Code* prohibits actions that discriminate against people based on

Protected grounds are:

- Age
- Ancestry, colour, race
- Citizenship
- Ethnic origin
- Place of origin
- Creed
- Disability
- Family status
- Marital status (including single status)
- Gender identity, gender expression
- Receipt of public assistance (in housing only)
- Record of offences (in employment only)
- Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding)
- Sexual orientation.

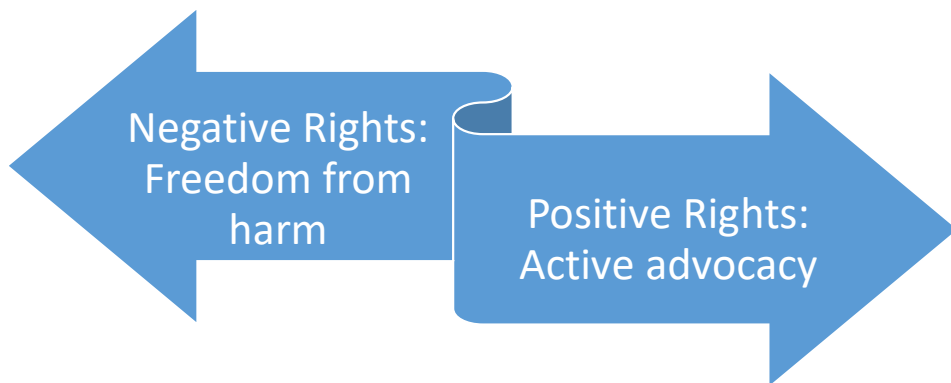
Protected social areas are:

- Accommodation (housing)
- Contracts
- Employment
- Goods, services and facilities
- Membership in unions, trade or professional associations.

- **Promote Inclusion & Belonging:** Teachers must create environments that respect diversity and nurture a positive sense of self, ensuring students feel safe and supported.
- **Prevent Discrimination:** Educators are required to prevent discrimination, harassment, and bullying based on protected grounds, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, and religion.
- **Apply the *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)*:** Teachers must apply pedagogical knowledge and abilities to create optimal learning for all students, adapting to individual needs.
- **Accommodate Student Needs:** Educators have a duty to accommodate students to the point of undue hardship, particularly for those with disabilities.
- **Manage Parental Rights and Exemptions:** Per Section 11.1 of the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, teachers must allow parents to remove their children from specific instruction on religion, human sexuality, or sexual orientation, provided they receive a written request.
- **Duty to Report Harm:** Teachers have an ethical and professional obligation to report suspected abuse or harm.
- **Adhere to Professional Conduct:** Teachers are accountable for their conduct (on and off duty) to respect the rights and welfare of students.

Educators must ensure they understand and fulfill these obligations to prevent discrimination and promote a safe and equitable environment, as described in the [Alberta Human Rights Commission](#) guide.

How do you approach the work?



Neutral policies often produce unequal access

What is an example of how you are preventing harm?

What is an example of how you are active in creating opportunity?

Are you good at one but struggle with the other?

What are your obligations?

A learning environment that is free from discriminatory conduct

- Remember that a poisoned environment can be created by conduct that does not take place in a classroom

- Outside of the classroom?
- Absent in the classroom?

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How do you approach the work?

Access to a field trip, with cost

Purchasing resources with diverse representation

Using preferred pronouns

Use of harmful language

Organization of a school event

Alternate programming during diversity events

What is the potential connection to human rights?

- Does it involve competing human rights?
- Is it connected to the core or the periphery?

Transactional or developmental?

Who and what are you centering in your decision making?

- Human rights or individual comfort?
- Student needs or adult preferences?
- Equity and rights seeking groups or the majority?

- Distributing your budgets
- Deciding on discipline
- Communicating to families
- Creating your email/screen/social media signatures
- Identifying your school action plan goals
- Engaging with land, territory or treaty acknowledgments
- Reviewing school climate, student census or achievement data
- Accessing support services
- Doing staff appraisals
- Distributing technology during school shut down
- (Re)Defining 'success'
- Sourcing, selecting and purchasing resources
- Determining dates for school events
- Recognizing and fostering leadership and mentorship
- Determining educational pathways

Connecting to Your Leadership

- **Whose needs were being centered?**
 - 'Needs' are prioritized over 'preferences'
 - Learning about other identities is not a violation of rights
- **Did you try and find a solution?**
 - Reasonable, not always perfect
- **A policy that treats everyone the same is probably not compliant with human rights**
- **We have a duty to actively remove barriers, not just prevent harm**
- **There is a UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (but not one for parents)**
 - What are the rights of children in your system vs the rights of parents?

Maintaining Focus



Practices

The practices are what we see

Policies

Purpose

The purpose comes from our foundational beliefs

- *Start with and stay focused on **purpose***
 - *The practices often become distractions and points of resistance without remembering the purpose*
- *Learn about and understand your **obligations** with respect to human rights*
- *Every day that we choose to do nothing is another day students face **harm***

What can educators do?

**CENTER THE NEEDS OF THE MOST
UNDER-REPRESENTED AND
UNDERSERVED**

ULead 2026: Embedding Human Rights in Your Leadership



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thank you



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