

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# HUMAN RIGHTS FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

## WHAT IS A HUMAN RIGHTS FRIENDLY SCHOOL (HRFS)?

A HRFS is a community that practises and promotes human rights values in all aspects of school life and beyond.

HRFS make a commitment to teaching:

**ABOUT human rights** so that the school community understands what they are and why they are important

**THROUGH human rights** so that the school becomes a model of excellence in human rights practice

**FOR human rights** so that all members of the school community know their rights and learn to protect the rights of others

HRFS take a whole-school approach. This means that human rights principles are applied to four aspects of school life: governance, relationships, curriculum and environment.

When human rights come into the classroom, onto the playground and into the hearts and minds of young people, attitudes and behaviours begin to change. Children, teachers and other school community members learn together how to live human rights and responsibilities.

Inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity are core principles of human rights. When these principles start to direct the thoughts and actions of the school community, little room is left for bullying and discrimination: we relate to one another, not as rich or poor, dark or fair, passed or failed, but as human beings made equal by the rights we share. Members of HRFS communities act, speak out and stand-up for their rights. They recognize and live up to their responsibilities by respecting the rights of others.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HRFS?

HRFS create a culture of human rights that gives students, teachers and other members of the school community a meaningful voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Amnesty International's experience has shown that building a culture of human rights benefits schools by:

- Improving student attitudes toward learning
- Enriching relationships between students, teachers and other staff
- Encouraging all members of the school community to treat each other with respect
- Empowering teachers to include important local issues in the curriculum
- Teaching students how to participate in school and society as responsible people

The HRFS approach opens up doors for teaching staff to give voice to their experience and insight, strengthen relationships with other educators, and develop new professional skills. HRFS, provide unique opportunities for teachers to become leaders in their field.

## HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY SCHOOL TO BECOME HUMAN RIGHTS FRIENDLY?

Teachers at HRFS cultivate the skills needed by the leaders of today and tomorrow. They help by providing opportunities for capacity-building and skill development for everyone in school communities and beyond.

You can get involved by:

- Participating in teacher training sessions to learn more about the HRFS approach
- Looking through the HRFS Toolkit available online
- Encouraging students to play an active and co-operative role in classroom learning
- Supporting human rights campaigns and other activities led by your school
- Asking your nearest Amnesty International office about how to get started at your school

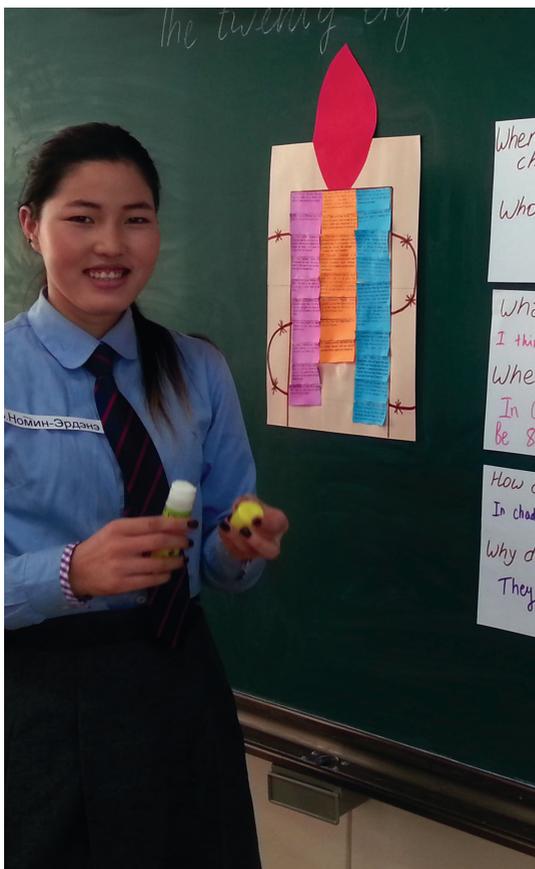
If you have any ideas about how your school can take action to become more human rights friendly, please share them with us. See back cover for contact details.



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**Image:** HRFS repackage meeting Nairobi  
© Amnesty International

**Cover Image:** Stop Bullying Training  
© Amnesty International Portugal



**Image:** HRFS activity at the Joint Secondary School in Ulaanbaatar  
© Amnesty International Mongolia.

## MONGOLIA

Before developing a vision statement for their school, Mongolia-India Joint School in Ulaanbaatar organized two training sessions for teachers in partnership with Amnesty International Mongolia. The teachers then held awareness-raising activities in the classroom to collect students' opinions of the school vision. Students and teachers worked together to develop a vision for their HRFS. Before finalizing the vision statement, the whole-school community was consulted and was given the opportunity to comment. During the opening ceremony at the beginning of the new school year, the school's director presented and welcomed the new vision.

## HOW CAN I FIND OUT MORE?

Contact your school, or your nearest Amnesty International office:

You can find your local **Amnesty International office** by searching for your country here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/>

**Regional Office** contacts are here:  
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/about-us/contact/>

**See also:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/human-rights-friendly-schools/>