# EXPLORING THE WORLD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Did you know that there's a law in our province that protects your human rights? Let's explore it together!

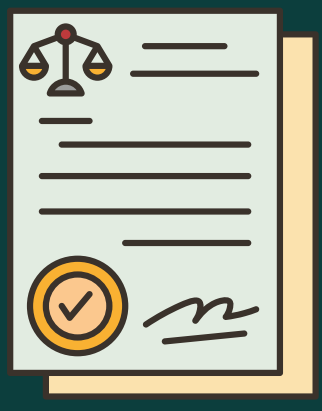
The New Brunswick Human Rights Act (Act) is a special law in the province that protects New Brunswickers from unfair treatment, which we call discrimination. The Act's main job is to make sure that every person, no matter how they look, who they are, and where they are from, is treated fairly and with respect. This means that nobody can be treated unfairly because of characteristics like their race, gender, religion, or disability. In this way, the Act helps create spaces where everyone can be themselves without facing unfair treatment.

## What are human rights and how are they protected in our province?

Think of human rights as an important set of rules that tell us "Let's treat everyone with respect because we are all human!" The most important part of this concept is to understand that every single person is valuable and deserves fair and respectful treatment.

These rules help people understand and promote fairness, equality, and respect in our communities. They also help break down barriers for people who have experienced unfair treatment when applying for a job, shopping, going to school, or looking for a house because of their colour, place of origin, ancestry, family status, or other protected characteristics.

Human rights law ensures that everyone is treated with fairness and dignity and has equal access to opportunities in different areas of their lives.



## The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

If you ever feel that you are being treated unfairly because of your race, gender, disability, religion, age, or any other protected characteristic, the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission (Commission) can help you! The Commission is the provincial organization that ensures that the human rights of New Brunswickers are respected.

You can tell the Commission about your situation by filing a complaint and they will review it. This process is known as the compliance process. The Commission acts like an investigator, looking into the details of your situation like a detective to understand what happened.

When looking at complaints, the Commission remains impartial. This means that the Commission doesn't take sides. Sometimes, the Commission tries to resolve a situation through a process known as mediation, where both sides find a solution they agree on.

If needed, the Commission might send a complaint to a Labour and Employment Board. The Board is a team of independent legal experts who take a closer look at the situation, examine the details, and make a decision that is fair and respects everyone's rights.

If the Board finds that discrimination happened, they can order certain actions to make things right for the person who was treated unfairly. These are known as remedies. For example, the Board can order apologies, changes in behavior, rules, or practices, or even compensation to make up for the harm caused.

The Commission's compliance system is a legal process that makes sure everyone follows the rules set by the Human Rights Act. If someone experiences unfair treatment, the process can help them receive justice and compensation for what they went through.

## What characteristics are protected in New Brunswick?

The Act has 16 protected characteristics, known as grounds of discrimination. This means that it is against the law to treat someone differently or unfairly because of any of the following identities or personal characteristics:

- Race
- Colour
- National Origin
- Ancestry
- Place of Origin
- Creed or Religion
- Age
- Physical Disability
- Mental Disability
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity or Expression
- Social Condition
- Political Belief or Activity

The Act also protects New Brunswickers against sexual harassment and reprisal. Reprisal happens when you experience unfair treatment because you participated in the complaint process.

## What do these protected grounds mean?

The protected grounds represent different part of who we are, also known as our personal identities, that are important to protect and respect. Protecting these grounds means making sure everyone is treated fairly and kindly, no matter who they are.

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|---|---|
| Race | Means belonging to a certain group of people who share similar backgrounds, like being Black, White, Asian, Indigenous, and others. |
| Colour | Means the colour of a person's skin. |
| National Origin | Means the country where a person is born like Canada, Nigeria, Ecuador, Syria, etc. |
| Ancestry | Means being related to or born into a group that shares similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds, such as First Nations, Anglophones, Acadians, Latinos, and more. |
| Place of origin | Means the place where a person is born, like a country or a province/state like New Brunswick, Ontario, etc. |

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|---|---|
| Creed or religion | Means a person's beliefs and practices, including their faith or religion, like Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and others. It can also include a deeply held belief, like being vegan (not eating products that come from animals). |
| Age | Means how old a person is, whether they're a child, a young adult, or a senior. |
| Physical disability | Includes challenges people may face with their bodies because of things like injuries, illnesses, or conditions they are born with. Some examples include back problems, diabetes (a condition that affects how your body processes sugar), problems with your heart, cancer, and other types of conditions |
| Mental disability | Includes challenges some people face with their thoughts, feelings, learning, or understanding. This includes conditions like a developmental disability, such as Down Syndrome, which might affect how someone learns and understands things. It also includes mental illnesses, like depression or anxiety, which may make it difficult for people to do everyday tasks. Mental disability also includes conditions like dyslexia or ADHD, which make learning more challenging. |
| Marital status | Includes whether someone is married, single, widowed (lost their spouse), divorced (no longer married), or in a common-law relationship (living together like a married couple). It also includes being married to a certain person and/or taking care of a spouse. |
| Family status | Means your family situation. This includes having or not having kids, and being related to family members, like your parents, siblings, or grandparents. Family status also includes taking care of your family, like taking a family member to the doctor when they're sick. |
| Sex | Means whether someone is born a boy or a girl. It also includes situations related to being pregnant (having a baby), the possibility of becoming pregnant and anything related to being pregnant (like breastfeeding a baby). |
| Sexual orientation | Means the type of people someone has feelings for or loves. This could include liking people of the same gender (example: gay or lesbian), both genders (example: bisexual), the opposite gender (heterosexual) or other. |
| Gender identity or expression | Gender identity means how someone personally feels about their gender, like feeling like a man, a woman, both, neither, or as a non-binary or 2 Spirit person. Someone's gender identity might be different than the sex they are assigned or labelled as when they are born. For example, someone might be born as a boy, but might identify as a girl when they grow up.<br><br>Gender expression means how someone shows their gender to others through their behaviour, dress, looks, name, or pronouns (like he/him, she/her, they/them). |
| Social condition | Means the money a person gets from their job, the kind of job they do, or how much education they have or school they've finished (example: having a high school certificate). For example, people who receive money from the government to help them live (social assistance) are protected under this ground. |
| Political belief or activity | Means a person's political beliefs or participation in political activities. It includes things like joining a political party (Liberal, Green, Conservative, etc.), speaking out for things they believe in, going to protests, running for a position in the government, or helping a candidate during elections. |

## The Act protects you from discrimination

- when you rent an apartment (housing).
- when you go shopping or eat at a restaurant (services).
- when you go to school (services).
- when you apply or are interviewed for a job (employment).
- when you are part of a union (business or trade association).

## Inclusion in Schools

Think of your school like a sports team where every student is an important player. The Act encourages schools to to make sure no one feels left out. It's like having a team where each player brings something special to the game!

This way, we learn from each other and from our differences, and make sure our schools are strong and supportive teams where everyone can feel welcome and included.

## What are my rights as a student?

As a student, your human rights are protected in a variety of ways. Let's explore what that means for you and your friends:

### Fair treatment for everyone: right to an environment free of harassment or discrimination

This means you have the right to be treated fairly, regardless of your background or protected characteristic. If someone treats you unfairly, excludes you or makes fun of you because of your race, religion, disability, gender identity, or any protected characteristic, the Act can step in to ensure you have a respectful learning environment.

### Supporting students' needs: right to accommodations

In school, you have the right to receive additional supports that meet your needs. Accommodations are tools that help you navigate your learning journey and make it easier for you to learn in a way that considers your specific needs. For example, if you need more time on a test because you learn and read at your own pace due to a learning disability, the school has a responsibility to give you that support! Schools are also responsible for providing other types of support like providing quiet spaces for prayers, accommodating special diets for religious reasons, offering gender-neutral bathrooms, and more, to meet the diverse needs of students.

### A safe space for everyone: right to be free from bullying

Bullying has no place in a respectful school community! The Act ensures your right to be free from bullying, for example, if someone picks on you because of your religion, race, disability, or nationality. If someone is bullying you because of a protected characteristic, your school has the responsibility to stop the bullying and maintain a safe and inclusive school environment for you and everyone at the school.

**If the school is not protecting your human rights, you or your parents can contact the Commission.**

## What are my responsibilities as a student?

It's important to understand that rights come with responsibilities. Just like you have the right to be treated fairly and with respect, you also have a duty to treat others fairly and respectfully. By respecting the rights of your classmates, you help create a friendly and welcoming school where everyone feels valued, safe, and able to do their best. Let's explore what your responsibilities are at school:

### Promoting a safe environment: Responsibility to stop bullying

Bullying is never acceptable in a respectful school community! It's your responsibility to ensure that everyone feels safe and included in the classroom. If you see someone being bullied because of their nationality, ancestry, gender identity or other characteristic, it's important to speak up and take action to stop the bullying. As a student who respects others' human rights, it's important to never join in unfair or bullying behaviour towards your classmates. By being kind and respectful to others, you help create a school where everyone feels valued and can learn without fear.

### Respecting everyone's dignity: Responsibility to create an environment free of harassment or discrimination

It's important to treat everyone fairly, regardless of their background or protected characteristic. This means you shouldn't treat others unfairly, exclude them, or make fun of them because of their family status, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic.

As an important member of your student community, you have a responsibility to contribute to a respectful learning environment where everyone feels valued and included.

### Supporting your classmates: Responsibility to respect accommodations

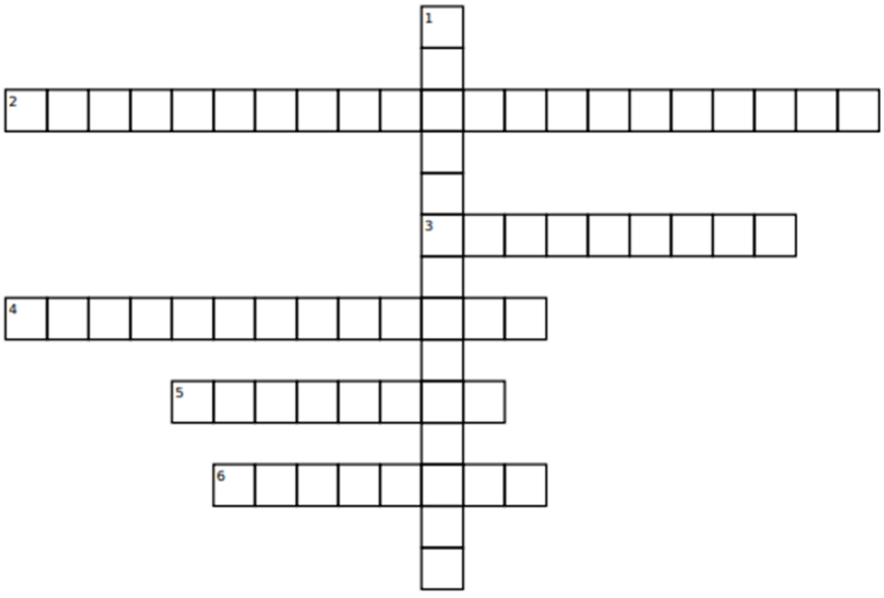
At school, it's your responsibility to support and respect your classmates who have accommodations. These accommodations are important to their success and well-being in the learning environment. By respecting their accommodations, you're helping to create an inclusive atmosphere where all students can succeed academically and socially.

Your understanding and support contribute to a positive school culture where everyone feels valued and empowered to reach their full potential. Respecting an accommodation means not making comments or jokes about an accommodation that someone else is receiving or saying that it's unfair. Accommodations are used to help everyone succeed and have equal opportunities at school!

# ACTIVITIES: LET'S EXPLORE THE WORLD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Human Rights Crossword:

1. Complete the crossword puzzle using the clues provided.
2. Once you have discovered the words, create a glossary and write down your own definitions for each term based on your understanding.
3. Share your definitions with a partner or the class to discuss and learn from each other's perspectives.



# ACTIVITIES: LET'S EXPLORE THE WORLD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Clues

### Down:

1. This happens when someone is treated differently or unfairly because of a protected characteristic like their ancestry, family status or disability.

### Across:

2. If you ever feel you're being treated unfairly because of your race, gender, or other protected characteristic, this organization can help you.

3. This concept encourages schools to include everyone in all school activities to ensure no one feels left out.

4. These additional supports help students in their learning journey and make it easier for them to learn in a way that considers their specific needs.

5. This happens when your face unfair treatment because you filed a complaint or helped the Commission with someone else's complaint.

6. This behaviour has no place in a respectful school community and includes behaviours like making fun of someone because of their disability or national origin, etc.

## Let's use the new concepts we have learned!

**Use the words in the word bank below to complete the following sentences. After you are done, add these new words to your glossary and create your own definitions for these terms.**

1. It's everyone's _____ to respect each other's rights.
2. Sandra has a learning disability, and the school is offering her an _____. She has an Educational Assistant that supports her during her classes.
3. Sometimes, the Commission can resolve complaints through _____ by helping both sides find a solution together.
4. Race, physical disability, family status and gender identity are all examples of _____.
5. If you think someone treated you unfairly, you can make a _____ with the Commission.
6. People's beliefs and practices, like going to church, praying, or wearing certain clothes like a hijab, are part of their _____.
7. The _____ is a team of experts who can make a decision on a complaint.
8. The _____ is a special law in New Brunswick that protects your rights as a student.
9. People who face challenges with their bodies due to an injury, illness or birth condition might have a _____.

### Word Bank:

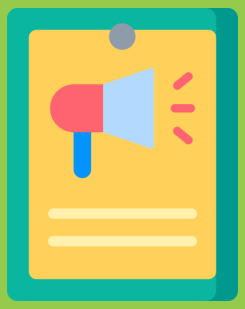
- Human Rights Act.
- Complaint
- Physical disability
- Mediation
- Accommodation
- Labour and Employment Board
- Responsibility
- Religion
- Protected grounds

# ACTIVITIES: LET'S EXPLORE THE WORLD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**What do human rights mean to you? Write a few sentences and share them with the class.**

## Human Rights Poster Challenge

Create posters to raise awareness about human rights in your school or community! Use what you've learned about the Human Rights Act in your designs.



## Human Rights Comic Book

Illustrate and narrate a comic book strip that highlights the importance of respecting human rights in various everyday situations at school, in the workplace, etc.


## Getting to know local human rights superheroes!

Research local human rights heroes who have made significant contributions to human rights in New Brunswick. They can include historical figures, activists, or community leaders.

Present your local hero in class and be creative! You can draw your hero, create a PowerPoint presentation, make a video or a song, etc.

Hint: You can look up the Commission's "New Brunswick Human Rights Award Recipients" webpage to learn more about human rights trailblazers in our province!

# ACTIVITIES: LET'S EXPLORE THE WORLD OF HUMAN RIGHTS

## Let's learn from each other! Grab a friend and take turns interviewing each other. Share your conversation with the class.

- Can you think of a story, movie, or book where characters faced challenges related to their human rights? What happened?
- Why do you think it's important for schools to actively stop and prevent bullying, especially when it's related to protected characteristics?
- If you could add a new human right to the Human Rights Act specifically for students, what would it be and why?
- Why do you think it's important for students to learn about their human rights?
- In what ways can students contribute to making sure our school is a safe space for everyone, following the Human Rights Act?
- If you could create a project to teach others in our school about human rights, what would it be and how would you do it?

## Creating a class Human Rights Charter

With all your new knowledge on human rights, your class can now create its very own Human Rights Charter! In small groups, you will brainstorm the different elements you would like to include in your Charter for respectful behaviour in the classroom. Each group will share their ideas with the class to reach an agreement on what to include in the Charter.

After reviewing and making any necessary changes, you'll officially adopt the document as a class, guiding your actions to make your classroom a place of respect and inclusion! Reflect on this experience and come up with a plan to follow your Human Rights Charter throughout the school year.

## Let's brainstorm together: What initiatives could we start in our school to ensure it's more inclusive and welcoming to all students?

**Visit the Commission's website and social media to access resources, learn more about your human rights, and stay connected with the latest updates and initiatives on human rights in the province!**

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