

# DECLARATION OF SCHOOL STUDENT RIGHTS



**OBESSU**

Organising Bureau of  
European School Student Unions

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# Towards School Student Rights

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This document must empower school students all over Europe to stand up against mistreatment and to engage in influencing the everyday life in school.

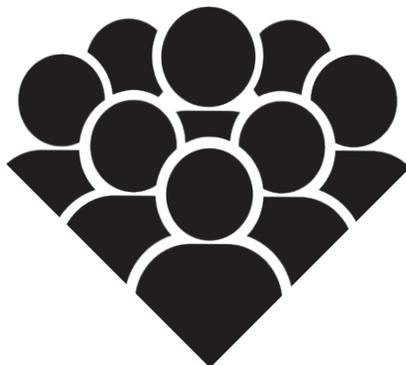
The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) proclaims this Declaration of School Student Rights as a common standard for all educational systems. As a matter of educational and social justice, the Declaration shall promote the effective observation and recognition of school student's rights by all actors of the educational community and wider society. This Declaration shall promote respect for school students and further the cause of school students in their struggle to realise and maintain their rightful place in school and in society.

Adopted in July 2006 by the General Assembly held in Ohrid, Macedonia.  
Modified at the OBESSU General Assembly, 22 – 23 July 2019, Madrid, Spain.



## THE RIGHT TO ASSOCIATION

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- 1.1** The right to associate at any level of education must be guaranteed by legislation.
- 1.2** In every school there should be a legally recognised student council, which has been democratically elected by school students. All students have the right to run for elections.
- 1.3** School students and school student associations should have the right to establish national school student organisations.
- 1.4** Finances, facilities and support should be provided by the school, as well as by the national and school authorities in question in order for school student associations and organisations to function properly. However, this shall never restrict the autonomy of the associations.
- 1.5** School student organisations at all levels of education should have the possibility to perform their activities during school days.
- 1.6** School students must have the right to assemble, strike, demonstrate and express their opinion both inside and outside the school. They must be able to do so freely and without sanctions.



# THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

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- 2.1** School students must be involved in the decision-making processes in all matters concerning their education. This must be guaranteed by legislation.
- 2.2** The power of decision making must not be concentrated in the hands of single individuals; decision-making bodies at all levels must be representative and democratic.
- 2.3** There must be an organ of collective decision making such as a school board where the decision-making process of a school is concerned.
- 2.4** School students must have some influence on the content of the lectures, the methods of teaching, curricula and books.
- 2.5** Students should be guaranteed proper, transparent evaluation of their work. Students have the right to universal and continuous assessment. Furthermore, school students should be given the opportunity to evaluate the teaching received.
- 2.6** School students must have equal influence as teachers have in the school decision-making processes.
- 2.7** School students have to be guaranteed sufficient time for learning and participation.



## THE RIGHT TO APPEAL



**3.1** School students should have the right to appeal against unfair treatment and have the right to demand disciplinary actions in case of such violations. The appeal should be handled by an impartial structure.

**3.2** Any appeal through internal or external channels should not cause any harm to the school student(s) appealing.



## CIVIL RIGHTS



- 4.1** Civil Rights must apply to all school students.
- 4.2** Education must be based upon mutual respect, understanding, democracy, tolerance and equality. School systems will promote the fight against discrimination in all forms, fascism and xenophobia. School students have the right to a safe learning environment.
- 4.3** Privacy of information concerning individual school students must be respected and used only with the student's explicit prior consent.
- 4.4** All school students must have access to an ombudsperson responsible for education.
- 4.5** School students must be protected from all kinds of exploitation.



# THE RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATION

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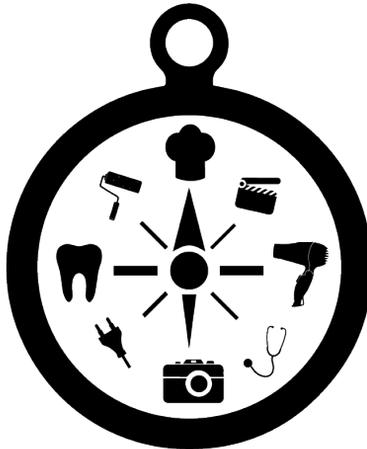
- 5.1** School students must have the right to high-quality, impartial education.
- 5.2** There should be quality assessment at all levels of education.
- 5.3** There should be no fees of any kind, upfront or hidden. Public secondary education should be funded by the state.
- 5.4** Vocational training should enable students to find a job responding to their qualifications and interests, while also shaping active citizens. Social partners should be consulted in the decision-making process concerning vocational training. Vocational training should leave flexibility in the choice of a further educational path.

- 5.5** Secondary education in general should provide students with the practical skills and preparation in order to enable them to bring the theory that they learn into practice in their further education and future working lives.
- 5.6** Schools should provide adequate materials and technologies necessary for studies, and should be funded to do so.
- 5.7** General secondary education, VET and apprenticeships should all include general civic education and opportunities to learn a language.
- 5.8** Schools must provide special measures and resources to compensate for any specific deficits due to shortcomings in the upbringing or previous education of school students. These should also be provided free of charge.
- 5.9** All parts of the secondary school systems are of equal importance and should have the same rights and the same status.
- 5.10** At the beginning of a school year the school board must give proof that new books must be used in the classes. The use of books must not be changed for reasons of economy but for educational reasons.
- 5.11** School students must have adequate and flexible timetables and study schedules throughout their education.



# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION & TRAINING

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**6.1** Vocational training should enable students to find a job responding to their qualifications and interests. Social partners should be consulted in the decision-making process concerning vocational training.

**6.2** The school is responsible for periods of training in external companies and must guarantee that they have a real formative objective. Students have the right to be informed at the beginning of the school year about the activities they are going to do and about the way in which they will be evaluated.

**6.3** Students have the right to have a course regarding the legislation, regulation, and the rights in the working environment and about safety in the workplace.

**6.4** Students doing practical work experience are not to be considered as replacements for employed workers.

**6.5** VET should leave flexibility in the later choice of an education path and career.



## THE RIGHT TO ACCESS EDUCATION

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- 7.1** There should be no technical, financial or sociocultural barriers to secondary education.
- 7.2** Entry to any type of higher education should be available to all who have completed secondary education. Higher education entrance criteria should be flexible and be aimed at encouraging access.
- 7.3** School students should not be required to specialize before they are fully aware of the importance and impact of their choice.
- 7.4** Facilities must be provided for disabled people enabling them to receive education on an equal basis with non-disabled students.
- 7.5** Any break taken during a learner's studies must be allowed without loss of any achieved study credits and without loss of the right to continue education.



# THE RIGHT TO MAINTAIN CULTURAL AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

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**8.1** Everyone should have the right to maintain their cultural heritage. School students speaking a minority language should be offered lessons in the language in question. Optional courses on minority language and culture should also be offered to students representing the majority population.

**8.2** The school must respect the individuality of school students. Equality in education shall not mean uniformity: students have to be allowed to develop their personal abilities and identities towards the direction they want to.



# THE RIGHT TO GENDER EQUALITY

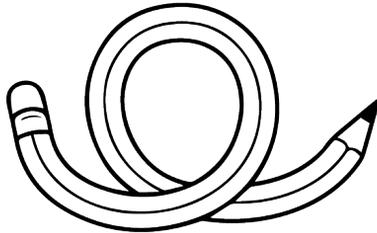
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- 9.1** Discrepancy in skills between school students because of gender specific socialization should be compensated by means of education. Schools must actively work for gender equality in society.
- 9.2** In order to achieve an education promoting gender equality, genders must not be presented as stereotypes in the educational process.
- 9.3** The staff at secondary schools must be hired due to competence and ability, with no regard to gender, religion, origin, sexual orientation etc. in order to offer school students a representative vision of our diverse societies.



# THE RIGHT TO A FLEXIBLE SCHOOL SYSTEM



**10.1** Educational authorities should give schools a flexible framework, yet still define concrete guidelines and minimum requirements.

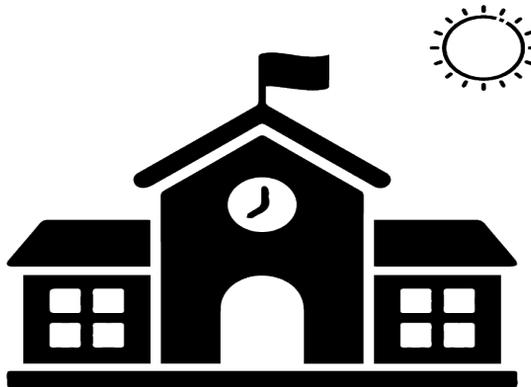
**10.2** Education and learning should not be regarded as occurring only during the years in school. The school system should adapt itself to serve the principle of lifelong learning. Students must be taught abilities and given facilities to actively seek information themselves and not only to receive knowledge passively through the teaching process.

**10.3** School students must have the right to receive education in the required form when they are absent from school due to illness or any other legitimate reasons.



# THE RIGHT TO A PROPER SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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**11.1** School students should have the right to be educated in an adequate learning environment. Legislation securing a good work environment should be applied to schools too.

**11.2** The social function of schools should be taken into account and cared for.

**11.3** School students must have the right to free insurance during school time and activities done within the educational programme. They must also have the right to free medical assistance when they get involved into an accident during school activities, this including practical work as a part of the education curriculum.



# THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE



**12.1** School students have the right to be adequately informed about their rights and possibilities as well as about the educational and participatory structures.

**12.2** All school students must be provided with proper guidance and orientation in all matters of their own concern. Social and psychological support should be provided within the schools.

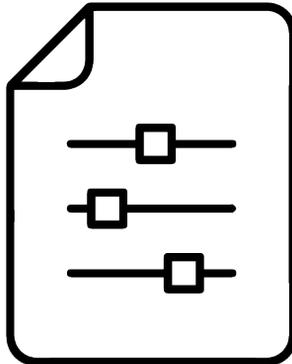
**12.3** School students should be informed about everything that is of relevance to their education and its procedures. Plans for each subject in the curriculum should be presented to the school students before the beginning of each term.

**12.4** School students have the right to access all kinds of information and knowledge without censorship or other limitations.



## INTERNAL REGULATIONS

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**13.1** In every school there shall be a set of internal regulations. The school board or the school community will decide upon the content of these rules. In unclear cases, the school board, not the headmaster or teachers, shall do the interpretation of the regulations.

**13.2** At the start of each school year, a written copy of these regulations will be distributed among all the students. Any changes made by the school board or the school community during the year will be handed out in the same way.



# THE RIGHT TO GLOBAL AND SOCIETY EDUCATION

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**14.1** School students have the right to receive education in areas that are of importance for understanding the world we live in, such as:

- Intercultural education
- Sex education
- Education promoting democratic participation in society
- Environmental education
- Tolerance and solidarity
- Social skills
- Diversity of gender and sexuality

## **Protection of the Declaration of School Student Right**

To ensure that the contents of this charter are properly used and that legislation concerning the rights of school students are being followed, it is of the greatest importance that there are supervising authorities at every level that are competent to take disciplinary actions against any party that is in violation.

[www.obessu.org](http://www.obessu.org)

OBESSU  
Rue de l'Industrie 10  
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium  
+32 2 893 2414



The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe. All Member Organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations.