



THE FOUNDATIONS · POST 2

Meet the compass

Four ideas that hold up all the rest.

THE RIGHTS COMPASS

Helping children navigate their rights



The four principles

The Convention contains many different rights. Four articles are recognised as its General Principles. Every other right should be understood with these four in mind.

- **Non-discrimination** Article 2
- **Best interests** Article 3
- **Life, survival and development** Article 6
- **Participation** Article 12

Learn these four and you have a way to think about all the others.



What it doesn't mean

“Best interests” does not mean “what the adult thinks is best”.

The four principles work together. One doesn't simply override the others.

In practice, adults sometimes decide what is best for a child without asking the child at all.

Article 3 and Article 12 belong together. What is best for you should be worked out with you.



Where you'll see the four

- Who you are doesn't mean you get fewer rights than another child.
- A decision about your school or your health puts you first.
- You get the extra help you need to learn and to grow.
- Someone asks what you think before a rule is changed.



AGES 6–8

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“There are four big ideas. Every child has the same rights. Grown-ups think about what is best for you. You get to grow up safe. And you get a say.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Ask them about something that happened today.
Were they asked what they thought about it?



AGES 9–11

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“Every right is read through four ideas: fairness, your best interests, your growing up, and your say.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Take one decision made at home this week and check it against all four.



AGES 12–14

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“The four aren’t extra rights. They are the lens the other rights are read through. If a decision seems to go against one of them, that’s something worth questioning.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Ask which of the four gets missed most often at their school, and what would change if it did not.



AGES 15–17

FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND TEACHERS

How to explain it

WORDS THAT WORK

“The four General Principles are a way of interrogating decisions about children: who might be disadvantaged, whose interests were considered, what the decision means for development, and whether the child’s views were given due weight.”

TRY THIS TOGETHER

Take a real decision they are facing and test it against all four before they respond to it.



Four questions for any decision about you

Was I treated differently from another child?

ARTICLE 2

Was what is best for me actually thought about?

ARTICLE 3

Does this help me grow, or hold me back?

ARTICLE 6

Was I asked?

ARTICLE 12

If any answer is no, that is worth saying out loud.



**If something is wrong,
you don't have to sort it out alone.**

Tell an adult you trust — a parent, carer, teacher,
school nurse, or your school's safeguarding lead.

**Or call Childline free on 0800 1111, any time. They
will listen.**

This account can't respond to anything happening to you,
and can't keep anything secret.

Next week: meet the Convention