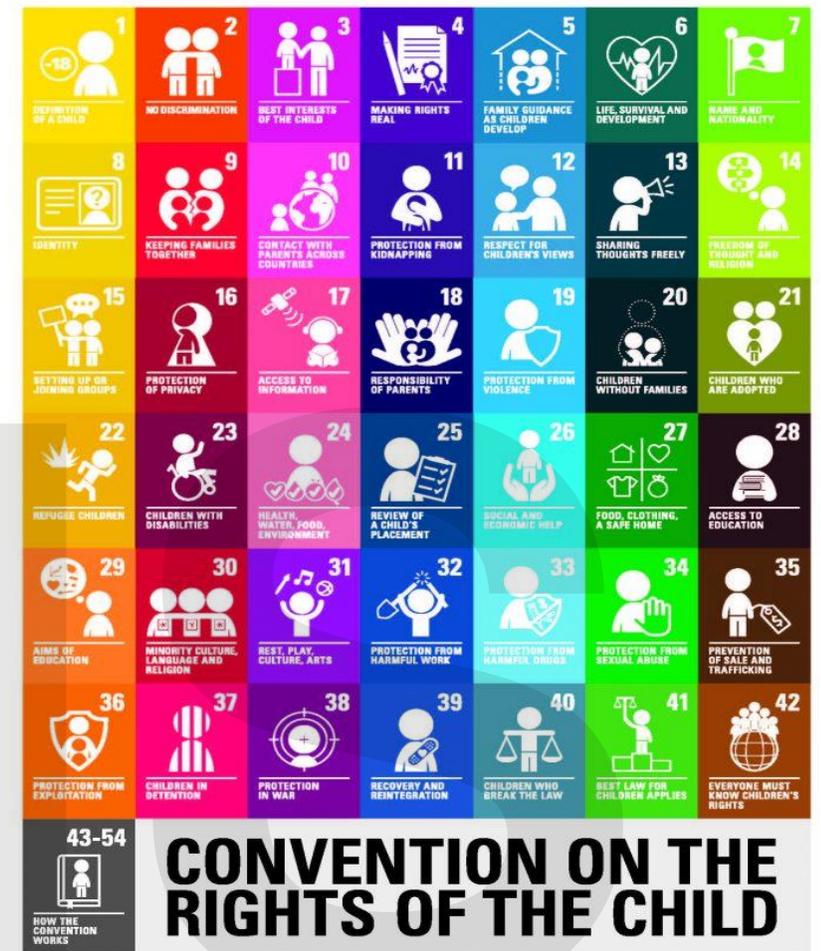


Have you wondered why these symbols are included on the first slide of every PSHE resource?

Well today we will find out!

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a list of rights that all children have.



Countries around the world have agreed to protect these rights.

Let us pray...

**Defend the weak and the fatherless;  
uphold the cause of the poor and the  
oppressed. Rescue the weak and the  
needy; deliver them from the hand of  
the wicked. —Psalm 82:3–4**

Dear Lord,  
Your Word is filled with  
accounts of miraculous  
protection. We claim  
that power for  
vulnerable children.  
Make Your little ones  
invisible to people who  
seek to exploit them.  
Whisper in the ears of  
the children to run and  
hide until the danger  
passes. Amen  
St Joseph, pray for us.

# What is the United Nations?



The **United Nations** (often called the **UN**) is an organisation that brings countries from all around the world together to talk about, and try to agree on, world issues.

It was set up in 1945 after World War II as a way of bringing people together and to avoid war. The UN provides different countries with a place to discuss issues and give their views on world issues.

A document called the **Charter of the United Nations** sets out the four main purposes of the UN:

- ✓ keeping worldwide peace and security
- ✓ bringing countries closer together
- ✓ helping them to solve international problems
- ✓ helping countries to meet common goals.

# What is UNICEF?



The United Nations is part of the UN System. This is made up of different organisations that look after particular issues and try to solve problems around the world.

For example:

- **FAO** - The **Food and Agriculture Organisation** aims to fight hunger, improve and farming.
- **WHO** - The **World Health Organisation** aims to improve public health, and to fight diseases.
- **UNESCO** - The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation** aims to improve education around the world and protect important cultural and historical places.

**UNICEF**, also known as the **United Nations Children's Fund**, aims to save, protect and improve children's lives. UNICEF is the UN organisation with the job of protecting the rights of every child, everywhere in the world.

What rights  
do you think  
children  
have?



### Know your rights?

Under Article 42 of the Convention, governments make a commitment to educate all children and adults about child rights.

Yet a 2021 YouGov poll found that 83 per cent of British children felt they know little or nothing about their own rights. Meanwhile only 16 per cent of British adults knew that children have more rights than adults do.

Ignorance of rights puts children and young people at greater risk of abuse, discrimination and exploitation.

Knowledge is key. Knowledge empowers children to feel part of an international community and to claim their rights, for themselves and others.



Everyone has human rights, but children also have child rights. These are vital extra protections from birth to the age of majority (age 18 in the UK). Child rights come mostly through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, the most ratified human rights treaty in the world. By ratifying this Convention, governments agree that for any society to be strong, its children need to flourish.

Child rights include the freedom to speak out and express opinions, as well as rights to equality, health, education, a clean environment, a safe place to live and protection from all kinds of harm.

## What's the problem?

There is often a huge gap between a child's rights in principle, and what happens in practice.

There are about 2.3 billion children in the world, nearly a third of the total human population. Their rights are violated every day. Children and young people are exposed to rights violations because they are dependent on adults, which can heighten risk. Children are likely to form the group at highest risk of poverty, malnourishment and abuse, and are often disproportionately impacted by human rights crises.

In 2019, for example, one in six children globally were living in extreme poverty, putting them at greater risk of domestic violence, child labour, sexual exploitation, teenage pregnancy and child marriage. This number rose significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

# What is the UNCRC?

[Watch clip:](#)  
[Bing Videos](#)

In 1989 the United Nations Convention Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was created to protect the rights of children. It is a very specific list of all the things children need. The UNCRC explains that all children everywhere have the same human rights as adults, as well as extra rights that they need so that they can learn, grow, play, develop and reach their full potential.

Over 196 countries, including the UK in 1991, have ratified the convention. The only country not to do so is the United States. This is because the US government believed that the convention would undermine the ideology of the United States.

## **How does the UNCRC work?**

The UNCRC has been agreed to by more countries than any other human rights treaty.

Governments can use it as a guide to create laws and make decisions in their countries that will protect and provide for children.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is a group of experts who check whether all the countries that have signed up to the treaty are doing what they can to support children. The committee write reports on how countries are doing and tell them things they could be doing better to deliver the rights of children

# What rights does the UNCRC give?

There are 54 articles included in the UNCRC, all dealing with different children's rights. Each and every one is vital to the wellbeing of children and they are all equally important. These articles cover all aspects of children's lives and try to ensure they are safe and protected.

## **Role of adults to protect children's rights**

All adults who deal with children have the responsibility of making sure the UNCRC is followed. The UNCRC protects children. It does not give children the right to do whatever they want.

The UNCRC supports parents and guardians in giving children the best possible future. It is up to all of us to continue to protect the rights of the child and make sure that all children have the chance to thrive

# What Are Children's Rights?

Children's rights are a collection of human rights that afford children and minors (people younger than 18) special protections, basic human rights and freedoms. Children's rights include their right to:

- Association with both biological parents
- Universal state-funded education
- Health care
- Physical protection
- Access to food
- Protection of their civil rights
- Freedom from discrimination based on gender, race, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity

# What Does the UNCRC Do?

Within its 54 articles, there are several key principles that aim to protect the rights of children:

## Civil Rights

- Right to a nationality and name
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of thought
- Access to information
- Right not to be tortured or ill-treated

## Violence against Children

- Right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect
- Protection from inhumane treatment
- Recovery from trauma
- Protection from any form of sexual exploitation

## Watch

- [Guide: What rights do children have? - BBC Newsround](#)

## Family Environment

- Right to contact with both parents
- Right to live with both parents
- Right to be reunited with parents if a child is separated from them
- Right to alternative care provisions if necessary

## Education, Leisure and Culture

- Right to play
- Right to education
- Right to leisure and opportunities to participate in cultural activities and the arts

## Special Protection

- Protect the rights of refugee children
- Protect the rights of children affected by wars and armed conflicts
- Protect the rights of children within the juvenile justice system
- Protect the rights of children who have been deprived of their liberty
- Protect the rights of children who suffered from exploitation



## Examples of the articles included in the UNCRC are:

**Article 4:** Implementation of the Convention. Governments of countries who agree to the convention must do everything in their power to ensure that all children enjoy their rights by passing laws and creating systems to protect their rights.

**Article 13:** Freedom of Expression. Every child has the right to express their thoughts and opinions as well as have access to all kinds of information legally.

**Article 28:** Right to Education. Every child has the right to education. There must be access to free primary education and different types of secondary education available to every child.

**Article 30:** Children from minority or indigenous groups. Children have the right to learn and use the language of their family as well as practice customs, traditions and religions regardless if they are shared by the majority of the people living in their country.



## In class

- ❑ **Discuss** what kind of impact the UNCRC has had for children in the UK and other countries.
- ❑ **Think** about what protections you have as a result of the UK agreeing to the UNCRC.

## Further learning:

[UNICEF: UN Convention of Child Rights](#)

[UNICEF: Misconceptions of Child Rights](#)

### **Take the child rights course**

Find out more by taking our [free introductory child rights course](#), for educators, other adults and interested young people. It is online, takes 90 minutes, and includes interviews with child activists.

**TO SEEK FURTHER SUPPORT OR ADVICE IN SCHOOL  
PLEASE SEE A TRUSTED ADULT**