

Your rights at school



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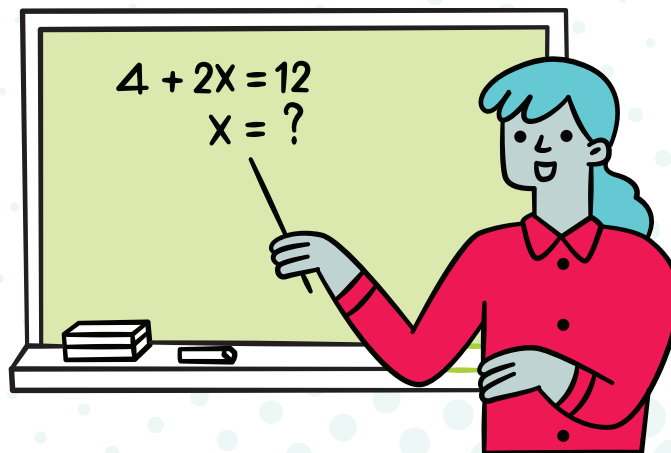
If you go to a public school in Nova Scotia, you have rights. You also have responsibilities to school staff and other students. This includes

- ▶ respecting the rights of others
- ▶ avoiding all types of violence or racism
- ▶ following school rules

At the end of this section is a list of places you can go for help, called Resources.

Nova Scotia's **Provincial School Code of Conduct Policy** is for all public schools in Nova Scotia. Your school might also have more rules and its own code of conduct. You can look at your school's Code of Conduct or Student Handbook to see what rules you have to follow.

Everyone between ages 5 and 16 has to go to school in Nova Scotia. If your parents or guardian teach you at home, they have to follow certain guidelines and courses.



EDUCATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Everyone has the right to feel safe at school. This includes physical, mental, and emotional safety. No school can discriminate against you because of race, religion, gender identity, mental illness, or disability. That's against the law.

Students have the right to the support they need at school. Some examples of things your school has to provide are:

- ▶ classrooms, hallways, and washrooms everyone can use
- ▶ a classroom support person for students who need extra help
- ▶ learning materials that respect Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian history
- ▶ classes and technology that help students with learning disabilities succeed

SEARCHES AT SCHOOL

If you are at school or a school event and a teacher, vice principal, or principal thinks you have broken a school rule, they can search you or your things. They have to believe that a search will help them find out the truth. And they have to have a good reason to believe it.

That reason might be information they get from other students or from a teacher or staff person. This could include things like:

- ▶ seeing or hearing something that makes them think you have broken a school rule
- ▶ smelling drugs or alcohol on you or your things
- ▶ someone saying they saw a weapon in your bag or your locker

You have a right not to be searched without a reason. They can't search your clothes or pockets, your backpack, or your locker.

You do not have to take off your clothes to be searched, but you might be asked to take off your shoes or a sweater or jacket. If they are searching your clothes, it should be in private and the person doing the search should be someone who identifies as the same gender as you.

DISCIPLINE AT SCHOOL

If you break school rules, you might lose privileges like going to dances or sports games. You might also get detention or be suspended from classes if your behaviour makes it harder for the teacher to teach or for students to learn or if it could harm someone else or damage school property.

Schools are not allowed to punish you by:

- ▶ slapping or hitting you
- ▶ punishing a whole group
- ▶ taking you out of a course for not going to class
- ▶ lowering your mark or grade
- ▶ giving you extra school work

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Breaking school rules can get you suspended, even if it's outside of school hours, say if you are at a school event, like a dance or sports game. You can also be suspended for breaking rules if you are on or beside school property, like at a school bus stop or on a school bus.

You can also be suspended if you are not on school property or at a school event if the way you are acting could hurt another student or a staff person. This can include things like cyberbullying or fighting.

A vice principal or principal can suspend you for up to 10 days. They have to give you a written reason for being suspended. If you don't think you should have been suspended, you or your parent or guardian can ask the school board or regional education centre to look at your suspension. They must do it within 5 days of when you get the written reason for being suspended.

You can't be expelled or suspended for more than 10 days without the school board or regional centre for education agreeing in writing. If this happens, they have to help you find other ways to continue your education.

[You can read more about what you can do if you are suspended or expelled here.](#)



Resources

A Place to Belong

Positive, after-school experience for youth aged 5-16

- ▶ novascotia.ca/coms/families/prevention-and-early-intervention/a-place-to-belong.html

Autism Nova Scotia

- ▶ 1-877-544-4495

Child and Youth Programs

- ▶ www.autismnovascotia.ca/programs-services/children-and-youth

Family Resource Centres

- ▶ Search for a centre in your area at novascotia.ca/coms/families/prevention-and-early-intervention/family-resource-centres.html

Halifax Public Libraries

Programs, safe space, technology, and learning support for children, youth, and families

- ▶ www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

LOVE Nova Scotia

Youth programs and one-on-one support

- ▶ www.lovenovascotia.ca

Native Council of Nova Scotia Education and Student Services

- ▶ Toll free: 1-800-565-4372
- ▶ Direct: (902) 895-1523
- ▶ Email: education@ncns.ca
- ▶ Website: www.ncns.ca

NS Human Rights Commission

Help solving disagreements or filing a complaint about discrimination

- ▶ 1-877-269-7699
- ▶ humanrights.novascotia.ca/contact-us

NS Youth Outreach Program

Support for youth who are at risk of experiencing or committing sexual violence and who are in temporary or permanent care

- ▶ novascotia.ca/coms/families/prevention-and-early-intervention/youth-outreach-program.html

Phoenix Youth Programs

Supporting youth aged 11-21

- ▶ phoenixyouth.ca/who-we-are

RiseUp

Text service for Black youth powered by Kids Help Phone

- ▶ Text RISE to 686868

SchoolsPlus

Mentoring, homework clubs, mental health support, food support, youth groups, and more

- ▶ [List of participating schools](#)

The Youth Project

Support and resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth

- ▶ (902) 429-5429
- ▶ carmel@youthproject.ns.ca