

# Developing a Humanist Ethos in Uganda Schools



# Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the American Humanist Association's Center for Education for giving permission for us to use their *TEN Commitments of Living Humanist Values* as the framework for the following materials.

The activities were written or adapted by Steve Hurd, Chair of Uganda Humanist Schools Trust for the Organisation for Humanist Schools of Uganda.

*For more on humanism, visit the [American Humanist Association](#) website and the [AHA Center for Education](#) website, where you can access self-guided online courses like the [Introduction to Humanism](#).*

*Other useful resources for teachers, students and parents can be found on the Humanists UK website: <https://humanists.uk/education/>.*

## Humanist Vision



The Future is theirs...

[To the Teachers' Materials...](#)

**Humanism encourages us all to make the most of the one life we know we have – to be good to ourselves and to care for others. Humans depend on the natural world and are responsible for conserving it for generations to come. As humanists, we do best to live an ethical life, to respect science and base our actions on reason, evidence and compassion. We value all human beings equally.**

### What is Humanism?

(Adapted from the 2003 *Humanist Manifesto III* of the American Humanist Association.)

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives that combine personal fulfilment with the greater good of humanity.

The life stance of Humanism is guided by reason, inspired by compassion, and informed by experience. It encourages followers to live life well and fully. It evolved through the ages and continues to develop through the efforts of thoughtful people who recognize that values and ideals are subject to change as knowledge and understanding advances.

The principles below are shared by Humanists but they should not be read a set of rules that are fixed for all time. As the world changes Humanists are prepared to adapt their thinking.

**Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis.** Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies. Humanists are inquisitive and excited by new thinking and developments in all fields of human endeavour; in the arts, science, technology and understanding our innermost selves.

**Humans are an integral part of nature. We have evolved alongside other plants and animals over many millions of years.** Humanists recognise that change is ever present in an evolving world eco-system and the need to adapt our thinking and actions to meet whatever future challenges emerge.

**Ethical values are derived from thoughtful evaluation of the consequences of our actions.** Humanists ground values in human welfare, shaped by human circumstances, interests, and concerns. These values extend to the global ecosystem and beyond. Humanists are committed to treating each person as having inherent worth and dignity, and to making informed choices in a context of freedom consistent with responsibility.

**Life's fulfilment emerges from individual participation in the service of humane ideals.** Humanists aim for fullest possible personal and social development and animate their lives with a deep sense of purpose. They

find wonder and awe in the joys and beauties of human existence, its challenges and tragedies, and even in the inevitability and finality of death. Humanists rely on the rich heritage of human culture and the life stance of Humanism to provide comfort in times of want and encouragement in times of plenty.

**Humans are social by nature and find meaning in relationships.**

Humanists long for and strive toward a world of mutual care and concern, free of cruelty and its consequences, where differences are resolved cooperatively without resorting to violence. The joining of individuality with interdependence enriches lives, encourages individuals to enrich the lives of others, and inspires the hope of attaining peace, justice, and opportunity for all. **Working to benefit society maximizes individual happiness.** Progressive cultures have worked to free humanity from the brutalities of mere survival and to reduce suffering, improve society, and develop global community. Seeking to minimize the inequities of circumstance and ability, Humanists support a just distribution of nature's resources and the fruits of human effort so that as many as possible can enjoy a good life.

Humanists are concerned for the well-being of all, committed to diversity and respecting those with differing yet humane views. Humanists work to uphold the equal enjoyment of human rights and civil liberties in an open, secular society. They maintain it is a civic duty to participate in the democratic process, and a planetary duty to protect nature's integrity, diversity, and beauty in a secure, sustainable manner. Thus, engaged in the flow of life, Humanists aspire to this vision with the informed conviction that humanity has the ability to progress toward its highest ideals. A Humanist believes responsibility for our lives and the kind of world in which we live is ours and ours alone.

*A humanist is someone who does the right thing  
even though he/she knows that no one is watching.*

***Dick McMahan, New York humanist, 2004***



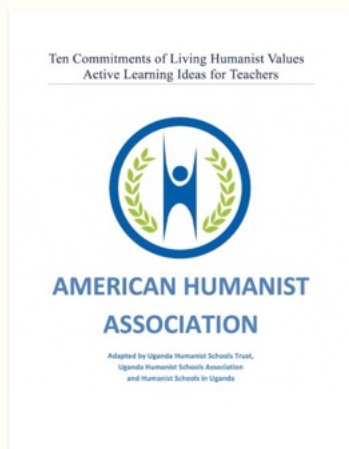
## Ten Commitments: Active Learning Ideas for Teachers



Building a hand-washing station for a local family

To download "Active Learning Ideas for Teachers Booklet"

click image below...



**Key competencies: empathy, team work, listening, expressing ideas clearly, problem solving, discussion, practical skills, communicating with adults other than teachers, community action**

### The Learning Activities

The materials in this section are designed to allow young people to work together to develop a range of competencies while applying humanist values in their day-to-day lives. Using these materials as a guide, children will learn how they can have a positive impact on society and become active local and global citizens.

Some activities are simple and brief while others are ongoing and may be more challenging. We recommend that teachers or adult helpers provide support in expanding on the concepts.

To access activities please click on each image...

<p>THE <b>TEN</b> COMMITMENTS LIVING HUMANIST VALUES humanistcommitments.org</p>	<p><b>ALTRUISM</b> I will help others in need without hoping for rewards.</p> 	<p><b>CRITICAL THINKING</b> I will practice good judgement by asking questions and thinking for myself.</p> 
<p><b>EMPATHY</b> I will consider other people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences.</p> 	<p><b>ENVIRONMENTALISM</b> I will take care of the Earth and the life on it.</p> 	<p><b>ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT</b> I will always focus on becoming a better person.</p> 
<p><b>GLOBAL AWARENESS</b> I will be a good neighbor to the people who share the Earth with me and help make the world a better place for everyone.</p> 	<p><b>HUMILITY</b> I will be aware of my strengths and weaknesses, and appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of others.</p> 	<p><b>PEACE &amp; SOCIAL JUSTICE</b> I will help people solve problems and handle disagreements in ways that are fair for everyone.</p> 
<p><b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> I will be a good person—even when no one is looking—and own the consequences of my actions.</p> 	<p><b>SERVICE &amp; PARTICIPATION</b> I will help my community in ways that let me get to know the people I'm helping.</p> 	

# Altruism



***I will help others without hoping for rewards for myself***

Altruism is the selfless ability and willingness to help others without expecting reward, recognition, or support in return. Humans demonstrate altruistic behaviour because we are social beings who depend on each other. Parents take care of babies until they can fend for themselves, just as you may care for a sibling or grandparent who needs assistance. When we behave altruistically, we increase each other's chances to survive and thrive. We build a stronger society.

## **Activity 1 – Family**

List the ways members of your family act altruistically towards each other (i.e. do things that make the lives of others in the family better and raise their morale.) When you see your family members acting altruistically, don't forget to thank them for what they do. Are there some things you could do to make your family life better for other members?

## **Activity 2 – School**

List acts of altruism that you have seen in school, by other children/students, by teachers and other staff. When you see acts of altruism, don't forget to acknowledge them and say thank you. Is there something you could do that would help to make your school better?

## **Activity 3 – Community**

Are there some simple things that could be done in your community around the school, that would improve life for people? Students in one school decided they would visit frail, old people to see what they could do to help them? Is there something you could arrange with your school friends?

## Critical Thinking



***I will practice good judgment by asking questions and thinking for myself.***

We must observe, report, experiment, and analyse the information around us to understand what is reliable knowledge and what is not. Thinking critically allows us to reason our way to good judgments and effective solutions to the problems we face, instead of making assumptions or misrepresenting opinion as fact. It's important to raise clear questions, "like who, what, when, where, why, and how?" to gather information and evaluate answers. Critical thinkers learn how to process, share and challenge ideas, and consider the consequences. This process forms the basis of the scientific method. One of the fundamental skills in critical thinking is the ability to separate statements of fact from statements of opinion.

A **Statement of Fact** is a piece of information about the world. A statement of fact can be proven to be right or wrong by looking at the evidence. The following are both statements of fact:

*Uganda is home to the largest number of Mountain Gorillas in the World.* (This is a factual statement which is sometimes true and sometimes false. At the moment half the world's Mountain Gorillas are thought to live in Uganda. Because gorillas move across borders, there are sometimes more in the Congo or Rwanda. The point is we can settle whether this statement of fact is True or False this year by getting evidence from counting them!) A **Statement of Opinion** is an expression of a person's belief. There are two sorts of opinions:

- a. Opinions about Facts.** When people express an opinion about what is factually correct, the opinion can be proven to be right or wrong by checking it against *reliable* evidence. Note the use of the very important word *reliable*. We have a problem in the world when some people spread fake facts because they want to mislead people into believing a particular point of view. When people quote facts, you need to ask: Where did you get that information? Did it come from a trusted source? A trusted source might be an article written by an expert in the field.
- b. Opinions about Values.** Some disagreements cannot easily be settled by facts because they are based on people's deeply held beliefs or values.

## TWO VIEWS ON POVERTY

**Person 1** *We should all do our best to help those poorer and less fortunate than ourselves.* This is based on the belief that a good society is one that takes responsibility for helping its neediest members.

**Person 2** *The poor would not be poor if they worked harder. It is up to the poor to help themselves.* This is based on the belief that we each determine our own destiny by how hard we work.

The two opinions above are based on their different beliefs or values. It is not obvious how you could settle the disagreement between those two people by obtaining more evidence. One person believes in a society where each person cares for their neighbour. The other person believes that we should each take personal responsibility for our own lives. **Activity 1 – Fact or Opinion** Which of the following are:

**Statements of Fact** (Do you think it is true or false? How could you make sure?)

**Statements of Opinion** (Is it an opinion based on Fact or one based on Values?)

1. The tallest animal is the Giraffe.
2. Sweet potatoes contain more Vitamin C than cassava.
3. Maize is a better crop than millet.
4. Insects and spiders are invertebrates.
5. Finding a snake in my bedroom would be a frightening experience.
6. An adult human's skeleton has 206 bones.
7. Ostriches are unable to fly, but they can run very fast.
8. The blue whale is the largest animal ever to exist.
9. Colds are caused by different kinds of viruses.
10. There are thirty days in April.
11. It's a bad idea to talk to people about politics and religion.
12. Babies should be born in hospitals rather than at home.
13. Nelson Mandela was a Humanist.
14. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west.

## Classroom Debate

Organise a classroom debate on the motion:

This house believes that: *The poor would not be poor if they worked harder. It is up to the poor to help themselves.*

In preparing the debate consider both Humanist values and what evidence might cause people to change their minds. Remember to apply critical thinking. Critical thinking is an important part of determining the validity of an argument. Is the argument based on facts or opinions?





# Empathy

**I will consider other people's thoughts, feelings and experiences and imagine what life is like as if I were in their position.**

## Activity 1 – Water Line

Imagine you are standing in line to get water from a pump or standpipe and a young fit girl comes along and asks if she could go in front of you. Do you let her? Now, suppose you know that her mother and father have died, and she lives with her grandmother who is old and frail. The girl has to do all the household chores, tend the garden and look after three siblings. Would this make you more likely to let her go ahead of you?

Do you show empathy and imagine how you would feel in her position? Who else might you allow to go ahead of you in the line?

*The point about **empathy** is that you consider other people's thoughts, feelings, and circumstances and try to imagine yourself living their lives.* In many ways, empathy is the first step to ethical behaviour as it allows us to respond compassionately to the suffering of others and exercise good judgment when our actions may affect someone else. Understanding another's perspective is not only critical to building better personal relationships, but also makes us better citizens in our local and global communities. Empathy promotes tolerance, consideration, and compassion amongst us all. If you are to be empathetic towards someone you need to carefully observe their mood and listen carefully and with interest when they tell you about the things that concern them.

## Activity 2 – Active Listening

In order to understand another's perspective you must first learn about them. Sensitive questioning and active listening are the key to this understanding. Active listening is the act of listening to understand rather than to reply or rebut. There are several key parts to active listening:

- You must concentrate on not talking while the other person is talking. Be sure to pay attention and to look directly at the speaker.
- Be sure you are listening to the other person talking, instead of preparing your reply.
- Make sure you are paying attention to how the person is behaving.
- Be aware of the body language of the other person.
- Let the other person know that you're listening, for example, by nodding your head or reacting to what they said.
- When the other person stops talking, try to paraphrase or translate what they said. This technique helps to ensure there is a clear understanding.
- Try to recognise the individual's feelings for example by saying: *You sound angry.* or *You seem to be upset.*

Practice active listening with someone, using the guidelines above. The topic is not important, but it should not be so trivial as to be unimportant. This can take place between you and a friend or an adult that you feel safe with. Discuss at least three points or aspects of the topic (ex: sharing a story, giving opinions, or discussing facts). Think carefully about what you learned about the person's point of view.

- What was their emotional state (angry, frustrated, bored, or happy)?
- What did you learn about them that you didn't know before?
- Do you feel different about the person or subject now than you did before the active listening session?

## Activity 3 – Settling Disputes

Think of one example of something that causes people to argue (to have disputes) in each of the following settings:

(a) in your family, (b) in school, (c) in your community.

Explain how you could use **active listening** and **empathy** to defuse (calm down) each situation?

# Environment



## ***I will take care of the Earth and the life on it.***

Humanists believe everyone can and should play a role in caring for the Earth and its inhabitants. We depend on our planet to sustain us with its precious resources, such as clean air and water, plants and creatures of all kinds, including the insects that pollinate our crops. Our planet's ecosystems need us to be good stewards, to take responsibility and limit human impact. To maintain biodiversity and the balance of nature we must accept that other species have every right to exist alongside us and we need to research their needs and mutual dependence.

### **Activity 1 – Observing the Natural World**

Before we can take care of the natural environment around us, we need knowledge of it. By taking the trouble to find out the names of plants and creatures, we can begin to notice them and to understand their needs and the pressures they are under.

In the area around your school or where you live, make a list of:

Trees, Birds, Butterflies, Animals (including fish and amphibians)

Persuade your school to get hold of books so that you can find out their names and keep a record of when you see them: date, season, time of day, in rain or sunshine. Think about starting a Natural History Club. Compile an inventory (a list) of the birds and animals in your area. If you do this every month, you may see how the pattern of sightings changes according to what flowers and trees are fruiting or crops are ripening.

### **Activity 2 – Supporting the Natural Environment**

Look out for threats to your local environment.

- What happens to waste plastic? Do people dispose of waste safely?
- What happens to dirty water and other fluids? Is it kept away from streams with clean drinking water? Are toilets placed so they will not contaminate the water supply?
- Are trees being cut down when they should not be? If so, could you arrange a working party to plant replacement trees?

Sometimes there are conflicts between nature and wildlife. Monkeys and birds eat crops. Can you work with the community and Wildlife Authority rangers to find solutions that work for humans and animals? At the same time, you could find out how you might get a job conserving wildlife with Uganda Wildlife Authority.

## Ethics



***I will always try to do what is right and to become a better person.***

Ethical development refers to how we train ourselves to do the right thing in different circumstances. It is a never-ending process that requires us to consider carefully when we make choices, their effect on other people and the environment. Fairness, cooperation, telling the truth, and sharing are examples of good ethical development. New challenges and concerns arise as times change and different factors need to be recognised. We should continually think and adapt with the goal of becoming better human beings.

### Activity 1 – Picking Mangoes

You and a friend go to climb a tree to pick mangoes on a shamba close to the school, even though you know it is out of bounds. Your friend falls and breaks an arm. What will you do? Will you go to the farmer for help, even though you know you should not have been on the land? Do you go off to hospital with your friend or leave him and go back to school? Do you admit at school what has happened, even though you could be in trouble?

**Discuss the options in a group.** Do you all agree about what is right? Is it better to lie about what happened or to tell the truth and face the consequences? Have you experienced a situation where you were unsure where to turn for help or were scared about telling the truth to someone because they may get mad?

### Activity 2 – Treating the Sick

Your local hospital is lacking sufficient trained doctors and nurses and is also short of medicines and equipment. They cannot treat everyone, so who should they choose to help?

- Should they work on a *first come-first served* basis and see the patients in turn as they come to the hospital. Once the hospital is full the rest do not get treated.
- Should they examine everyone quickly and choose to treat those people who they think are (a) in the greatest danger to their health, or (b) most likely to recover. The latter may mean helping the young and neglecting the old.

- Should richer people with money be able to buy treatment and leave those with no money to go without?

Doctors have to make decisions like this all the time. What should a caring doctor do when:

- the patient's disease is (a) curable, or (b) incurable?
- the patient is a relative or friend of the doctor?

# Global Awareness



***I will be a good neighbour to the people who share the Earth with me and help make the world a better place for everyone.***

Collaboration among the nations and peoples of the world helps them to solve problems that are bigger than one country can solve on its own. In some things, actions by one country affect people in other countries. This means that countries are inter-dependent and must work together to find solutions.

## Activity 1 – Water Resources in the River Nile Basin

Access to adequate water for drinking and for agriculture is a great problem in many countries. World population is still growing, and this means that more people are drawing on the same water resources. The River Nile has existed for 30 million years. The flow of water from Lake Victoria into the White Nile at Jinja is fairly constant throughout the year, due to the Equatorial climate in the Lake Victoria basin. Water from Lake Tana in Ethiopia into the Blue Nile varies greatly between the wet and dry seasons. This means that the flow of water from Khartoum in Sudan to Alexandria in Egypt, varies according to the season. The flow of water is also reducing due to building new dams in Uganda, e.g. at Bujagali, and in Ethiopia, at Tisisat Falls, which hold the water back for use by the people upstream. As more water is used in Uganda and Ethiopia, less is available for the people of Sudan and Egypt. This is a growing source of tension among the countries that share the Nile Basin.

**Group work:** Discuss how the changes above could affect the economy and living standards of Sudan and Egypt. Can you see any political dangers from this? What steps could be taken to prevent future conflict between the nations gaining water and those losing water? Which of the international organisations to which Uganda belongs might be able to help resolve the disagreements over water? You might study this issue further in Geography.



## Activity 2 – Global Issues

Identify some global issues that have implications for all countries on planet Earth.

Go to your library or the Internet. Find and read articles from other countries publications on the issue chosen. These could be magazine articles, newspaper articles, blogs, or other public media. Does what you read differ from what you hear on Ugandan radio, TV and in newspapers? Choose one of the issues. Study it together in groups or as a class and apply the principles of critical thinking, empathy, altruism and any of the other *Ten Humanist Commitments* that you think are relevant.

**Topics to consider:** the climate emergency, habitat destruction and the loss of biodiversity, global pandemics, religious or racial intolerance, inequality in income and wealth within nations and between nations, the use of drugs, migration of people between countries, loss of democracy and free speech.

# Humility

Thank you!



***I will be aware of my strengths and weaknesses and recognise what others have to offer.***

People with humility are humble and do not exaggerate their own importance. They are always willing to step back and give other people a chance to shine. Humble people are willing to help out with a lowly task when they see someone else needing help.

Humility requires acknowledging that humans have limitations in what we know and can do. Each of us must be aware of what we can do well and when we need to seek help from others with different abilities. Humility involves setting aside personal pride and overcoming our egos to seek help from others. Humble people are grateful for the abilities they have but they also appreciate what others have to offer. In being humble, we recognize our own value in relation to others. We are neither better nor worse than anyone else, just different from others. This means we all benefit by cooperating and combining our strengths.

## **Activity 1 – Spread Appreciation**

Write and give a Thank You letter, or go and thank personally, people you appreciate for the special contribution they make to your life at home, in school or in the community. You could write to a family member who takes care of you, a teacher who helps you learn, a friend who is kind to you, a person who makes a big contribution to your community, or someone who works hard without enough acknowledgment. Write down some circumstances when it would be good for you to ask more help from others.

In what other ways could you show your appreciation when people help you?

## **Activity 2 – Being a Gracious Loser**

Imagine you worked very hard on a project or took part in a sporting event, but you lost. What could you say to the winner(s) to congratulate their victory and show that you're not a sore loser?

## Peace and Social Justice



***I will help people solve problems and disagreements in ways that are fair and avoid conflict.***

Peace and Social Justice can promote the human rights of all people and understanding among all nations, cultural and religious groups.

The Legal and Justice system of each country is set up to provide a fair and impartial system to:

- Protect people from physical attack - so people can move around and carry out their business without fear.
- Protect people from robbery and theft - so they can feel private property is safe.
- Protect people from cheating - so when you make a deal with someone they stick to the agreement.

Good law relies on the application of critical thinking, empathy and altruism. Justice is based on thoughtful conflict resolution. It aims to repair wrongs in a fair way and create an equitable society. By working together, we can help protect the human rights of everyone.

### **Activity – The Stolen Chicken**

An older child is caught stealing a chicken.

What do you think about that? What do you think should happen?

Suppose later you find out that the child's father died, his father's family took over their house and his mother and younger siblings have been struggling to survive ever since.

Compare these two solutions:

- A. The Legal Remedy:** If the child is brought to Court, they may be found guilty. They could then be sent for a period in a Rehabilitation Centre. How will this affect the family?
- B. The Village Council:** A case like this was brought before a village court in Northern Tanzania. The Village Council called in the child's relatives. This included the father's family and the mother's family. The Council asked why the relatives had not stepped in to help the mother when the father died. They instructed the father's family to let the mother and children move back to their family home, which had land around where she could grow crops. The family were told to pay the farmer whose chicken was stolen.

Which solution do you think is more Just?

NOTE: The word Just means a solution guided by truth, reason and fairness.

# Responsibility



**I will be a good person even when no one is looking. I will take responsibility for my actions. Being responsible is being capable of being trusted to do something or to take care of something or someone.**

Every day, each of us makes choices. These choices, large and small, all have consequences for us and for the world around us. Moral responsibility involves taking the initiative to do something that needs to be done and being accountable for its success or failure. Although we all live in a society with various cultural values, expectations, codes of conduct, and social rules, we all decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. Being a responsible person involves constant attention to what is right and accepting the blame or praise for our own actions.

## **Activity 1 – My responsibilities**

Explain your own responsibilities and how you carry them out. These may be in your family, in your community, in your school, or other places where you are involved. Why is it important to be able to rely on people to do their duty?

## **Activity 2 – Having a responsible job**

In groups of 2 or 3 find someone who has a position of responsibility in your community and find out what they must do and what motivates them to do a good job. Some people you might talk with include: a teacher, a nurse or midwife, a community leader, a policeman or askari, a cook, a carpenter, a farmer, a mother, a father, or someone else of your choice.

## **Activity 3 – Taking on a new responsibility**

Get together a group of students with a common interest and set up a club in your school.

Hold a meeting to decide the objectives of the club.

Choose a name for it. Plan a first meeting. Monitor how well it does. Some clubs you might consider, if you do not already have them in your school, are:

•First Aid, Natural History, Bird watching, *Gardening, Choir, •Reading Group, Computers, Sports, Debating, World Affairs.*

But you might have a much better idea!

# Community Service



***I will help my community and get to know the people I am helping.***

Service and participation mean putting our values into action to help our community. If we think critically and talk to people, we can work out the best ways to have a positive impact on our communities and society as a whole. When we help others, we also get to know more about their lives. This helps to foster friendship and a good community feeling.

When we engage in service to the community it doesn't just make the recipients better off. Those who serve develop new skills, experiences, and personal satisfaction.

*One of the best ways to be happy is to make other people happy!*

Engaging in service to benefit others enriches everyone's lives.

## **Activity – Humanist Club**

Most Humanist Schools have a Humanist Club. The clubs are partly a social activity which brings people together to discuss Humanism and to debate the big things that are happening in the country and the world.

Humanist groups have fun going out to help their communities. The work they do helps the school to become respected in the community. People can see that the school is encouraging its students to be responsible and to care for the people in the area.

Try to come up with a new project to help your community.

If you need ideas, these are some examples of what other schools have done:

- Making hand-washing stations next to the toilet of a needy family.
- Making washrooms.
- Making drying racks for cooking pots and clothes.
- Providing education to the community on health and hygiene.
- Cutting grass to deter snakes.
- Picking up litter.
- Providing entertainment in the village with song and dance.

*Small acts when multiplied by millions of people can transform the world.*

Howard Zinn



# Amsterdam Declaration on International Humanism

Humanism is the outcome of a long tradition of free thought that has inspired many of the world's great thinkers and creative artists and gave rise to science itself.

**The fundamentals of modern Humanism are as follows:**

**1. Humanism is ethical.** It affirms the worth, dignity and autonomy of the individual and the right of every human being to the greatest possible freedom compatible with the rights of others. Humanists have a duty of care to all of humanity including future generations. Humanists believe that morality is an intrinsic part of human nature based on understanding and a concern for others, needing no external sanction.

**2. Humanism is rational.** It seeks to use science creatively, not destructively. Humanists believe that the solutions to the world's problems lie in human thought and action rather than divine intervention. Humanism advocates the application of the methods of science and free inquiry to the problems of human welfare. But Humanists also believe that the application of science and technology must be tempered by human values. Science gives us the means but human values must propose the ends.

**3. Humanism supports democracy and human rights.** Humanism aims at the fullest possible development of every human being. It holds that democracy and human development are matters of right. The principles of democracy and human rights can be applied to many human relationships and are not restricted to methods of government.

**4. Humanism insists that personal liberty must be combined with social responsibility.** Humanism ventures to build a world on the idea of the free person responsible to society and recognises our dependence on and responsibility for the natural world. Humanism is undogmatic, imposing no creed upon its adherents. It is thus committed to education free from indoctrination.

**5. Humanism values artistic creativity and imagination and recognises the transforming power of art.** Humanism affirms the importance of literature, music, and the visual and performing arts for personal development and fulfilment.

**6. Humanism is a life stance aiming at the maximum possible fulfilment** through the cultivation of ethical and creative living and offers an ethical and rational means of addressing the challenges of our times.

*“Humanism can be a way of life for everyone everywhere.”*

# Humanist Schools' Mission

The Humanist Schools believe they have a duty of care to every student, who has the right to expect:

1. The highest standard of education providing knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for success in the modern world.
2. A happy and purposeful schooling with abundant opportunities for personal development.
3. Teachers who strive hard to develop the capabilities of every student.
4. A safe, disciplined and caring environment, which is free from physical and verbal abuse.
5. Teachers and students who work together in mutual respect.

## SCHOOL VALUES

**Every Humanist school aims to promote the following values:**

1. **DIGNITY:** Proclaim the natural dignity and worth of all human beings
2. **RESPECT:** Respect the life and property of others
3. **TOLERANCE:** Be tolerant of others beliefs and life styles
4. **SHARING:** Share with those less fortunate and assist those in need
5. **COLLABORATION:** Work cooperatively with others to achieve shared goals
6. **RATIONALITY:** Use Reason, Logic and Science to solve life's problems.
7. **CONSERVATION:** Conserve and improve the Earth's natural environment.
8. **NON-VIOLENCE:** Resolve differences and conflicts peacefully
9. **DEMOCRACY:** Respect democracy and human rights
10. **EDUCATION:** Use every opportunity to develop one's knowledge and talents

## PLEDGE MADE BY TEACHERS IN HUMANIST SCHOOLS

In accepting a teaching position at this Humanist school, I agree to uphold the school's aims and agree that, always, I will:

- Work to create a tolerant, caring community based on mutual respect.
- Refrain from all forms of physical and verbal violence towards students.
- Teach with *creativity and variety*
- Understand that students learn through *enquiry and action*
- Use only *positive discipline*
- Promote student *self-esteem and pride* in their school and community
- Recognise that *every child matters*

Signed by Teacher:

Date:

Each school has a **Humanist counsellor** whose task is to encourage students to become active citizens by:

- Organising debates on issues of human interest.
- Facilitating a club for children to promote humanist activities.
- Promoting the celebration of important days in human achievement.
- Arranging charitable activities in the local community.
- Mobilising students and staff to protect the local environment.

The Humanist Counsellor is a member of the school's disciplinary committee.