GREATER MANCHESTER

POETIC DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

LAUNCH
HUMAN RIGHTS DAY
10TH DECEMBER 2021
HOME, MANCHESTER
Introduction

Message of support: Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

Articles 1 – 30 and Poetic Responses

About Us

Acknowledgements
We are proud to present this inaugural Greater Manchester Poetic Declaration of Human Rights.

Inspired by the Poetic Declaration, where poets from around the world wrote poems for each of the Articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a unique body of work commissioned by Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights UK and led by UK Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, this Declaration has been created by young people from across Greater Manchester - each of whom wrote their own poems in response to the 30 Articles of the UDHR.

Created with artists, teachers and activists the programme took students, teachers and schools on a creative, experiential learning journey to create their own Poetic Universal Declaration of Human Rights: a powerful statement and vision of the future they want to build.

We hope this Greater Manchester Poetic Declaration of Human Rights will inspire everyone across the region and beyond, to celebrate a bold and powerful response to the UDHR, as told by learners from Primary, Secondary and SEN schools. Civic and civil society organisations and individuals can take this Declaration and plan events, recitals and gatherings so that this work moves others to engage with the UDHR in creative and compelling ways and through your events the powerful voices of our young people serve to create human rights change in every part of Greater Manchester.

Sughra Ahmed
Director of Education
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights UK

Saul Argent
Cultural Education Manager
Curious Minds
The 30 Articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are everything that Greater Manchester strives to achieve for every single one of its people. It is all encompassing, as is the region, and reiterates the importance of equality for all. The eclectic, diverse communities are what make Greater Manchester such a unique, creative, and inspiring region and I am proud to support this expression of their vision of human rights.

The launch of the Greater Manchester Poetic Declaration of Human Rights helps us articulate Greater Manchester’s distinctive cultural voice and ambition and shines a light on our incredibly thoughtful and creative children and young people from across the region.

Our young people are the future of Greater Manchester, and the building blocks upon which we can continue to make this place a fair, equal, and safe space for our people. I am inspired by their words in this Greater Manchester Poetic Declaration of Human Rights and hope they continue to create positive change across our communities.

My hope is that the people of Greater Manchester take this Declaration and make it their own and to celebrate it throughout local communities. I want it to spark discussion, inspire debate and create conversation.

Greater Manchester, this is your Poetic Declaration, composed by your children and young people. Let it educate, influence, and inspire so that we create human rights change, everywhere.

Andy Burnham
Mayor of Greater Manchester
We Are All Born Free & Equal.
We are all born free. We all have our own thoughts and ideas.
We should all be treated in the same way.

Who we want to be

At school, we are the same.
Same clothes; same rules.
No one is different,
But on the inside no one is the same.

If everyone was the same
I think life would be dull.
A colourless world;
An opinionless world of darkness.
Our lifeless faces staring back at each other
In silence.

Outside this pit of darkness
Is our very own selves
Our true colours.

You are the artist of your own life
Don’t let anyone else take the paint brush.

The Valley Leadership Academy

Don’t Discriminate.
These rights belong to everybody, whatever our differences.

Just Because...

Just because I’m poor
And I’m not rich
Doesn’t mean I want more.

Just because I’m not from here
And I have different color skin
Doesn’t mean I can’t be your peer.

Just because I don’t speak your words
And I’m from a different country
Doesn’t mean I can’t be as free as birds.

Just because I have a different mind
And I act Differently
Doesn’t mean I can’t be kind.

Just because I have different beliefs
And I wear hijab
Doesn’t mean I can’t achieve.

I might be different, an odd key
That’s just the unique me
WE ALL WANT PEACE!

St Winifred’s RC Primary
Freedom is...
Respect in yourself.
Elegant in yourself.
Equality in everybody.
Daring to enjoy freedom.
Magical if you achieve freedom.

Bamford Academy

We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

Let there be freedom
So heavy chains become warm blankets
And hard metal bars bend like soft rubber
Let caged birds break free of their prisons, and soar into the distance
Let their golden feathers become quills which spill
The ink of a thousand stories
So fears melt away.

Let there be belonging
So children have a place to call home
Let a mother hold her child, without fear of being sent away
Let children run back home without feeling insecure
Let tears fall on soil to form new plants where they can grow to become much more
Let the teardrops from a little girl fade away as she sees her home come back together
Let refugees live the life of another citizen, without breaking down.

Let there be equality
So that all races can live happily
Joining hands and singing in harmony
So that people can walk without worry
And so that innocence doesn’t have to be buried
So that black, brown, white can live together
And stay together in peace.

Let there be better treatment
So the cows can be free to roam the fields
So the horses on farms can be free of their work
So the whips can be burnt in a fire of worries
So people can be as free as the waves in the sea
So people can walk the streets with no fear
So people can be free of torture.

Let the people be born free
Let the children run around the fields free
So parents can go to work and put food on the table
So people can have their own hopes and dreams
Let happiness flow through children
So people can have their own opinion.

Let there be relaxation
So babies can sleep calmly at night
And unicorns can gallop in a child’s dream
So children can go to school feeling happy
And adults can lay on the soft white clouds, looking out at the ocean
Let the soft pillow sink you into a deep sleep with a shhhhhhhhh shhhhhhh
Shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh

Manchester High School for Girls Prep
Let there be education, and not abduction

I saw on an advert that some girls in Africa were kidnapped. They were little girls.

Let there be education and not abduction. Girls should have education and no wrong intentions. No abuse.

I sometimes think about this at night before I go to sleep.

Let there be education.

Lily Lane Primary School

You have the right

You have the right to be respected.
To be treated equally,
To be true to yourself,
To control your life of liberty,
You have the right to be admired.
To be treated as a person in the eyes of the law,
To refuse to let yourself down,
To deny manipulation,
To unwrap your inner self,
You have the right to be heard and for people to listen to your every word.
To trace your steps and make the world return to its welcoming state,
To count stars and build the future,
To feel the rain-drops roll down your skin,
You have the right to be the best,
finest and outstanding person you can be.
Make our world change forever,
We are a team, we work together.

St Philip’s CE Primary School
We’re All Equal Before the Law.
The law is the same for everyone. It must treat us all fairly.

Justice is power
Understanding the laws
Silencing the negative
Together we are strong
Individuals standing up for themselves and others
Clearing out the bad
Equal in our fight

St Margaret Mary’s RC Primary School

I Want Justice

Let there be justice
So, everyone can have freedom and be respected
And live life with rights and love our differences
So, we can be protected and treated well
And possibilities can never end for peace, harmony, and love.

Let there be a fair life
So, everyone can have warm clothes
And we can live a life without worrying about medical bills
So, people have someone to talk to if they are nervous or have worries.

Let there be a decent world
So, we can see how stunning our common home is
And we open our door with clean air through our nose
So, we can stop all fossil fuels and end pollution in oceans
And we can live a happy life knowing God is taking care of us.

Christ the King RC Primary School

Your Human Rights are Protected by Law.
We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.
Dystopia

I am shut
Behind thick walls
A suffocating mask
Behind closed doors.

No one would believe
A world controlled
By something no one could see.
A world strangled
By a cough and a sigh.

Little did we know.

The Valley Leadership Academy

10

The Right to Trial.

If we are put on trial this should be in public.
The people who try us should not let anyone tell them what to do.

PeaceMaker

I am a peacemaker
I am the peace in a new world
I am the free bird in equality
I am the encourager of humanity.

I am a peacemaker
I am the peace in all the rights
I am the freedom in the air flying like the kites
I am the peace that will make everyone happy

I am a peacemaker
I am the freedom that makes sure people are well
I am the peace that doesn’t scare anyone like a bell
I am the rights that makes people equal because

Abraham Moss Community School (Primary)
I was accused of murder
I got arrested that day,
I was sent straight to jail.
I wish to go back to my family
They’re as important to me as gold,
But no I’m stuck in this prison cell,
Eating cold soup out of a bowl.
I was accused of murder,
I didn’t hurt a soul,
I have to go back to my family.
This cell,
So dark,
So cold.

Stockport Grammar School

The right of privacy is very important,
People can take it away,
It is a very fragile thing,
A right that everyone should have,
But not everyone has…

People can rob it from you,
People can give it to you,
You could feel angry,
Or you could feel sad,
You might share,
Information with your kin,
And still be private,
Or it could be private just to you,
A right that everyone should have,
But not everyone has…

You living your high life,
High up in the clouds,
When people are on the ground,
With nothing,
No rights as not everyone has them…

Stockport Grammar School
Freedom to Move.
We all have the right to go where we want in our own country and to travel as we wish.

What really matters?

Size. Shape.
None of it matters.
Colour. Race.
None of it matters.
Travelling thousands of miles,
They find a million ways to endure and
To seek refuge from unspeakable perils.
If only their lives could change when they step foot
on
A single grain of sand.

But,
Shy smiles are challenged,
Innocent questions are ignored.
They wonder how blind mankind can be
To what really matters.

The Valley Leadership Academy

Drowning

Hiding away is easier
Than standing up and
Not being heard.
I cannot go to school
I am invisible to all.

Flames overthrow what was home
In bare feet
Running into the shadows.
Aircraft swallow all noise but
I must remain silent.

Walking through broken towns
Cries from every corner
Family members left
In a pit of fire, I see
As I walk 5000 miles more.

England.
At last. Yet it’s not home.
Don’t break the silence
Even though you’re drowning.

Drowning in a vacuum of sorrow.

The Valley Leadership Academy
Equality is fairness. Like a marathon runner, it won’t stop running.
Equality is like the soulful tune of a harp plucking at the strings of your heart.
Equality is a bright light guiding the way.
Equality is freedom and it should be your friend.
Equality is Rosa Parks who stood up for the rights of others.
Equality mourns until the sweet melody of justice is heard by all.

St Margaret Mary’s RC Primary School
Lost & Nowhere to Go

Torn apart,
all alone.
Kept in silence.
All on my own.

My skin was peeling,
As I hid my feelings.
To bear witness,
Too afraid to speak.

I felt so weak
I was so scared
No right to exist
No right to talk.

I could barely even walk,
Too exhausted to talk
Too tired to fight
Running for days.
Missing home
Where could I possibly go?

The Valley Leadership Academy

Freedom of Thought.
We all have the right to believe in what we want to believe,
to have a religion, or to change it if we want.

they say
Controlled and silenced,
"Keep your thoughts to yourself"
They say. They say. They say. They say.

Broken and breaking,
"Keep it in, who knows who you may hurt"
They say.

In love and adored,
"Keep it, who cares about your love struck self"
They say.

They say.

But my heart goes out to those afraid,
"Keep it together," they say,

Though really, you’re falling apart.

My heart goes out to those in silence,
"Keep your mouth shut they say,

At the same time you beg for them to stop.

My heart goes out to those in a love trance,
"Keep it in" they say,

While your heart dances and twirls.

They say.

Suffering and hurt,
"Keep it to yourself, words mean nothing from the poor"
They say.

Accused and afraid, "Keep it, no one will believe you anyway" They say.

Mesmerized and at one,
"Keep it quiet, you’ll cut someone with that"

They say.

They say.

They say. And my heart goes out to those with cracks,
"Keep it to yourself" they say, When you should let it all out.

My heart goes out to those ‘sleeping rough, ‘Keep yourself to yourself’ they say, So that when you’re in trouble, you become a fighter.

Stockport Grammar

19 Freedom of Expression.
We all have the right to make up our own minds, to think what we like, to say what we think, and to share our ideas with other people.

I am a community of ideas
Express and share thoughts from our mind
It’s our right

Abraham Moss Community School (Primary)

The Right to Public Assembly. We all have the right to meet our friends and to work together in peace to defend our rights. Nobody can make us join a group if we don’t want to.

20 My Life Of Peace

What does peace feel like?
Peace feels like a warm blanket on a cold night

What does peace taste like?
Peace tastes like the very first meal after a fast

What does peace look like?
Peace looks like the sunset on a warm summer’s night

What does peace smell like?
Peace smells like a nice warm bubble bath with smelling soap on a cold winter’s night

What does peace sound like?
Peace sounds like a satisfying autumn leaf crunching on the floor of the dry meadow.

Christ the King RC Primary School
It’s like I’m in a glass box
Nothing to do, nowhere to go
Watching on while everyone else has fun
And I’m just trying to play, trying to run
I, Mary Lee, am a victim of theft
Why should men have more rights than me?
All these restrictions and rules I truly hate
Why can’t Britain just wipe a clean slate?

All I want to do is vote
I just want my voice to be heard
But I, Mary Lee, have been put on mute
and just because I don’t wear a suit

It’s like I’m in a glass box
and I’ve been silenced
I just want to be heard
And to fly and play like a bird

Stockport Grammar School
Right to Rest

All humans should have the Right to Rest
If we have to put it to the test.
Even though we have to work
that doesn’t mean to have to be a jerk
Every human shall relax and chillax
TO THE MAX

St Winifred’s RC Primary

Food

Fish and chips is my favourite treat
Oranges are good to eat
Other fruit is just as good you see
Delicious and healthy food is the best right for me!

Delamere School

The Right to Play.
We all have the right to work and rest.

Our rainbow rights
The right to be you
Explore, play, be safe, look after the world

Poetic canvases
Of hearts and red glitter
Say you are amazing, outstanding and kind

This is me
I am loved
I am fun
I am funny
I am unique

Breaking news
I have right to an opinion
My words flutter like butterfly wings
I own my thoughts
Personal, individual, not factual,
negative or positive

I like the forest
I like Ladywood
It is golden
I like playing with my friends
It is a blessing

I have a right to friends
A right to join in
Because love wins

Our hands come together like feathers on a flamingo

The Right to Education. Education is a right. Primary school should be free. We should learn about the United Nations and how to get on with others. Our parents can choose what we learn.
A New Legacy

I am a new legacy
I am a new legacy forming under the sea
I am the undiscovered peace in humanity
I am the inspirer of the new legacy
I am the inspiration of new minds
I am the enjoyment in education
I am the new generation of education
I am a new legacy
I am the new population of humanity
I am the inspiring new generation
I am the new legacy.

Abraham Moss Community School (Primary)

Copyright. Copyright is a special law that protects one’s own artistic creations and writings; others cannot make copies without permission. We all have the right to our own way of life and to enjoy the good things that art, science and learning bring.

I have a right to play
It makes me feel safe and happy
Like planting yellow flowers
Like sitting under a colourful umbrella
Like moulding playdough
Like reading my favourite book

I have a right to explore
Like smelling a flower for the first time
Or eating an orange
Discovering new things like a goldfish in the sea

I have a right to be safe
When I’m online or when I’m with my friends
When I’m at home or when I’m at school
Teachers, the police, family – they can all keep us safe

We have a right to care for the world
Recycle, look after the animals, turn our lights off
Put things in the bin, look after plants and trees, keep the seas clean

Our rights are a gallery of handmade posters ready for everyone to see how colourful we can be
We hope you like it.

Ladywood School
Nobody has a right to hurt us. If it was something you could taste, it would be the sweet taste of escaping the land of torture. If it was something you can smell, it would be the reeking scent of bodies not been deodorised. If it was something you see, it would be the pain in the people’s eyes of suffering. If it was something you could touch, it would be peace in your body of being set free. If it was a sound it would be the cheer of celebration.

st mary’s deane

30

No One Can Take Away Your Human Rights.

Nobody has a right to hurt us
If it was something you could taste
it would be the sweet taste of escaping the land of torture.
If it was something you can smell,
it would be the reeking scent of bodies not been deodorised.
If it was something you see,
it would be the pain in the people’s eyes of suffering.
If it was something you could touch,
it would be peace in your body of being set free.
If it was a sound it would be the cheer of celebration.

St Mary’s Deane
ABOUT US

A collaboration between Curious Minds and Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights UK to draw together human rights and poetry so that young people can express their own poetic vision of the 30 Articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

CURIOUS MINDS

Curious Minds is dedicated to improving the lives of children and young people through great art and culture. Our vision is for a future where getting creative and experiencing brilliant arts and culture is a regular aspect of every child’s learning and leisure time.

Fuelled by curiosity, we work to make high-quality creative and cultural learning opportunities available to all children and young people, both in and out of school. We do this by connecting teachers and youth workers with artists and creative practitioners; giving them access to information, expertise, space and resources to facilitate collaboration and innovation in the field of creative and cultural education.

We are proud to have been serving the North West of England as Arts Council England’s Bridge Organisation since 2012.

ROBERT F. KENNEDY HUMAN RIGHTS UK

We exist to inspire and empower people to make decisions and take actions every day that will help make human rights a reality for all - to become ripples of hope in their communities and across the world.

In 1968, Robert F. Kennedy announced his candidacy for the Presidency of the United States. His campaign called on us to envision and work for a world in which the dignity of every human being is honoured and respected; in which we value one another and realise our own power to shape the future.

We are at a critical moment in British and global history. We need to nurture a culture that is built on our shared humanity. The universal concept of human rights that Robert F. Kennedy championed is essential to that effort.

Human rights – the best articulation and codification humanity has ever found for the fundamental interests of people – set out what society should deliver for people and can be a guide to be used and acted on in everyday decision-making, until they are made a reality for all.

And yet, we know that for many in the UK, human rights feel remote – they are for others but not for me. Demonstrating the relevance and importance of human rights is the challenge in front of us.

And so we deliver artistic, educational and cultural programmes that tell a relevant, local story of human rights and celebrate the countless organisations that do the incredible work of making human rights a reality to inspire and build long-term cultural change.
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- Delamere School
- Ladywood School
- Lily Lane Primary School
- Manchester High School for Girls Prep
- St Margaret Mary’s RC Primary School
- St Mary’s Deane
- St Philip’s CE Primary School
- St Winifred’s Primary School
- Stockport Grammar
- The Valley Leadership Academy

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  - Sughra Ahmed, *Director of Education, RFK*
  - Saul Argent, *Cultural Education Manager, Curious Minds*

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**HOME**

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