

CHILD FRIENDLY JUSTICE



Kummissarju għat-Tfal
Commissioner for Children



LEGAL AID
MALTA

LESSON PLAN 1

The **Office of the Commissioner for Children** works to promote and protect the rights of all children, as outlined in the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In collaboration with the **Legal Aid Malta Agency**, the Office is raising awareness about children's rights within the justice system.

Children may come into contact with the justice system in different ways, whether as victims, witnesses, or when accused of a crime. In every case, children's rights must be respected. They must be given the support they need, treated fairly, and protected from harm.

The justice system can often be intimidating and confusing for children. Many find themselves in situations they do not fully understand, and without the right support, this experience can be overwhelming. In response to this, the Office of the Commissioner for Children and the Legal Aid Malta Agency have developed this **Child-friendly Justice Toolkit** to promote a justice system that upholds the rights and needs of every child.

The toolkit includes:

- A series of **four educational videos** that explain key aspects of the justice system in a way that is accessible and engaging for children.
- Two lesson plans designed to accompany the videos and encourage classroom discussion on children's rights.



This toolkit is built on the **core principles** as outlined by the Council of Europe. All justice processes involving children must be:

- **Accessible** – ensuring all children can seek and obtain help and support.
- **Age-appropriate** – using language and approaches that children can understand.
- **Speedy** – reducing delays that can negatively impact children's well-being.
- **Diligent** – treating every case involving a child with care and professionalism.
- **Adapted to and focused** on the needs of the child – prioritising the child's best interests.
- **Respecting** the right to due process – guaranteeing fairness, legal safeguards and action in a timely manner.
- **Respecting** the right to participate in and to understand the proceedings – empowering children to be heard and to meaningfully engage.
- **Respecting** the right to private and family life – protecting children's privacy and supporting family involvement where appropriate.
- **Respecting** the right to integrity and dignity – ensuring every child is treated with respect, safety, and compassion.

The Office of the Commissioner for Children expresses sincere thanks to all educators for their continued support in promoting children's rights.

LESSON PLAN CHILD FRIENDLY JUSTICE



Level: year 1 to year 11

Timing: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Resources: Videos, A4 sheets, colours/markers

1 - Learning Outcomes:



- ✓ **Identify** key children's rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- ✓ **Define** "child-friendly justice" and discuss its significance.
- ✓ **Analyse** ways children's rights can be protected and identify sources of support.

2 - Learning Intention:



- ✓ I can discuss children's rights when they come into contact with the justice system.

3 - Success Criteria:



- ✓ I can **describe** children's rights and why they are important.
- ✓ I can **explain** why child-friendly justice matters.
- ✓ I can **name** at least two organisations or agencies that help protect children's rights.

4 - Keywords:



Rights
Justice
Case Participants

5 - Introduction: 15 minutes



- ✓ Start the lesson by **writing** the word 'rights' on the board.
- ✓ **Brainstorm** ideas to see what students understand by the word 'rights'.
- ✓ You can either give them sticky notes to write on and they put on the board or simply invite them to come out and write their **ideas** on the board.
- ✓ Give students the **definition** of Children's Rights: Children's rights are the things that every child under 18 should have to fulfil their needs. These include the right to be safe, go to school, have enough food, be cared for by a family, be healthy, and to rest and play. Children also have the right to be involved in decisions taken by adults. Children can be victims, witnesses or commit a crime, they have specific rights in these situations (you can prepare this definition on a laminated card or put it up on the interactive whiteboard).
- ✓ Show Video entitled UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Activity 1 - Child-Friendly Justice: 10 minutes

In order to introduce the concept of being just, present students with examples of everyday situations which may occur which may require consequences. Some examples are provided in Annex 1.

- ✓ **Ask** your students to work in pairs or small groups and provide them with the scenarios of your choice.
- ✓ **Ask** your students to discuss the scenarios and to discuss "What would be a just/fair way to act?"
- ✓ **Ask** your students to share their ideas with the whole class.

Activity 2 - Video: 10 minutes

- ✓ **Show** Video entitled Justice System until second 35.
- ✓ **Process** the video as you go along.
 - What rights do you think children have in these situations?
 - How do you think children should be treated?

Discussion: 20 minutes

- ✓ **Ask** your students to once again work in their pairs/ group to discuss the following:
 - What makes children feel safe and respected?
 - What would make it hard for a child to speak in front of adults in authority?
 - How should adults listen to children in serious situations?

- Should children have the same rules as adults? Why?
- What might stop a child from speaking up in an important situation?
- ✓ Ask each group to share some of their ideas in the whole group.
- ✓ Show the rest of the video.

Conclusion:

Recap the **key points**, child-friendly justice means listening to children, protecting them, making sure they understand what is happening, and treating them with respect.

- ✓ What did we **learn** today?
- ✓ Why is it important that justice systems understand **children's needs**?
- ✓ Give **one word** that describes how they would want to feel if they were part of a justice process.

Follow-up Activity (Optional)

Child- friendly Justice Cloud – provide students with a blank A4 sheet of paper and ask them to draw a picture or a symbol which promotes children's rights in the justice system. Provide a space in the classroom and hang the pictures/symbols close to each other. Invite students to walk around, look at each other's ideas, and then come back together to discuss.

Annex 1

Scenarios

Scenario 1: The Missing Pencil

Alex notices that their pencil is missing from their desk. They think Jamie might have taken it.

Scenario 2: Excluded from the Game

A new student, Sam, wants to join a football game at break, but some students say, "No, only friends can play."

Scenario 3: Homework Help

Maria sees that her classmate is struggling with a homework problem. She could ignore it or help.

Scenario 4: Broken Window

A ball accidentally breaks the classroom window. The students who were playing nearby are worried about getting in trouble.

Scenario 5: Unequal Snack Sharing

During a class party, some students get bigger slices of cake than others.

Scenario 6: Online Rumour

Someone shares an untrue story about a student on social media. Many classmates have seen it.