

Appendix 1

Declaration on the Rights of School Refusing Children

Preamble

We, the children, have specific personality characteristics.

However, most school refusing children experience harm caused by people who cannot understand our worries and pain regarding social values that say that attending official school is natural.

We declare that all adults should appeal for our rights. We ask adults, especially parents and teachers, to hear our voices, and respect our thoughts, sense of values, and our best interest. We appeal through this declaration to change the society to one in which all school refusing children and children who suffer while going to school can choose to live and learn in ways that match their own personality.

1. Right to education

We have the right to education. We have the right to decide whether we would go to school or not. Compulsory education means that the government and guardians must propose to all children to access education. Compulsory education does not mean that children go to school.

2. Right to learn

We have the right to learn in ways fitted to ourselves. Learning is knowing something by our will not by compulsion. We learn a lot of things in our life.

3. Right to choose the way we learn and grow up

We have the right to decide where and how we learn and grow up (for example, school, free school, free space, home education). Please do not force the thinking that going to school is natural to children.

4. Right to take a rest safely

We have the right to take a rest safely. Please assure that we can take a rest in a place where we can be safe, and do not make us go to school or other places against our will.

5. Right to live as we are

We have inherent personality. Do not let children compete or compare each other.

We decide the pace and the way we live by ourselves.

6. Right not to be discriminated

We are respected without discrimination of any kind, and irrespective of school refusal, handicap, school scores, ability, age, sex, appearance, nationality, family background, etc. For example, please do not restrict the relationship among children caused by the prejudice that a son or daughter may become school refusing child if he/she plays with school refusing children.

7. Right to be assured of government financial support

We have the right to be assured by government of financial support in the same manner with children who go to school.

For example, school refusing children who belonged to free school or free space can use the season ticket for students whose age ranges from primary school to secondary school. However, upon reaching secondary school age, if he/she does not belong to official secondary school, he/she cannot apply for this service. We ask all adults to change the system to ensure that all children are equally assured of government financial support.

8. Right to grow up safely and be protected against all forms of abuse

We have the right to grow up safely and be protected against abuse caused by school refusal. Adults must not allow any kind of punishment, abuse, and forced admission to hospital on the children.

9. Right to privacy

Adults must not interfere with our privacy. For example, the following are interferences with our privacy: a) Teachers calling on us without our agreement and phoning us repeatedly irrespective of time to persuade us to go to school again; b) Parents talking with our teacher about us without our agreement. First of all, please listen to our views regarding all matters affecting us and respect them.

10. Right to be accepted as an equal personality

Adults must recognize us as having equal existence and act together to assure the rights of the child in school, society and daily life. We need a relationship and an environment where we can express our views as they are.

11. Right to a way of life of school refusing child

Adults should respect how school refusing children live. At first, please face us to understand what school refusal is.

12. Respect the rights of others

We respect the rights and freedom of others.

13. Right to learn the rights of the child

We have the right to learn our rights. The government and adults should assure the opportunity for children to learn the rights of the child. We can judge whether the rights of the child are assured or not by ourselves.

Adopted by all children and youth participants in the Twentieth Nationwide Conference on Considering School Refusal, 23 August 2009, Tokyo, Japan.