

## Handout 2.1: Highlights from the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

|                                    | Highlights   | Examples   |
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| Fundamental Rights                 | Fundamental rights include the freedom of conscience and religion*; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression including freedom of the press and other media**; freedom of peaceful assembly***; and freedom of association****.  | You cannot be punished for your religious beliefs.   |
| Democratic Rights                  | Democratic rights include the right for every Canadian, 18 years of age or older, to vote in an election, to be a candidate in an election and the requirement that governments hold elections at least every five years and that these governments meet at least once per year. | You can run for political office and vote when you turn 18.                                |
| Mobility Rights                    | Mobility rights include the right of every Canadian to choose to live and work in any province or territory in Canada. Linked to this is the right that Canadians have to live in, leave, or re-enter Canada whenever they choose.   | You can visit another country and come back when you choose.                               |
| Legal Rights                       | Legal rights include the guarantee that Canadians, when arrested, must be told of their right to see a lawyer and must be tried within a reasonable amount of time. Canadians are also guaranteed the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.                         | You will receive a fair trial if you are accused of a crime.                               |
| Equality Rights                    | Equality rights include the right for any Canadian not to be discriminated against on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical ability.   | You cannot be excluded from an activity because of a disability.                           |
| Official Languages of Canada       | This includes the right for all Canadians to use either English or French in communications with Canada's federal government and some of Canada's provincial governments.  | You can send a letter to your MP in English or French.                                     |
| Minority Language Education Rights | This includes the right for French or English minorities in every province and territory to be educated in their own language.   | You can attend an English or French school based on your language anywhere in the country. |

\* This means that Canadians are free to worship the religion of their choice or not to worship at all.

\*\* This means that unless the media report something that is untrue, the media cannot be prevented from reporting anything that happens inside Canada.

\*\*\* This means that Canadians can meet as a group in private or public provided that the meeting is non-violent and peaceful.

\*\*\*\* This means that Canadians have the right to associate or befriend anyone they choose and the government does not have the right to limit these associations.