



# Rules and Laws

When you go to school every day, you are expected to follow a set of rules the school has created. Rules are guidelines for a happy, healthy and safe environment for you to be in while you are at school.

Other names for rules can include; **requirements**, **directions**, or **commands**. They would have been developed and changed over time as members of the school community experience challenges in day to day activity and growth – this includes growth in ideas, as well as size!

Rules are set by individuals for the benefit of a particular group or organisation.



## Think about this

You are playing at lunchtime in an out of bounds area. This area is considered by the school as out of bounds probably because it's beyond the view of teacher supervision. That makes that particular area an unsafe place for students to play.

Have you broken a school rule by being in the out of bounds area?

**YES**

Can you say that you didn't know about that rule?

**NO**

As all students are clearly informed of the school's expectations for safe play. Probably quite regularly!

Are there consequences for any student who is found in an out of bounds area?

**ABSOLUTELY**

That's because the school created that rule to keep students safe in the first place.

Here's a question to consider Will you be arrested and taken off to goal for the same offence?

**NO**

This is because it is a **rule** and not a **law**

Whilst a set of rules is usually made for a particular group of people, such as a school; a law can cover a whole community, and the consequences for breaking a law can range from a warning to a more serious punishment, such as a custodial sentence – time in goal. The consequence will be determined by the **severity** of the offence.



## Here are some examples of laws in Australia relating to driving a motor vehicle

- ✧ Drivers must drive on the left side of the road
- ✧ Obey the speed direction signs
- ✧ You must always stop at a red traffic light
- ✧ Always give way to the right

## Who enforces the law?

The police enforce the law in a society. There are two levels of policing in Australia, the state level and the federal level. The State Police enforce and protect citizens within each state, and each state has their own police force organisation to manage.

The Federal Police protect citizens across all of Australia in a broad range of matters. However, both groups often work together to share information and support each other in maintaining the law of the land.



# How laws are made

Laws are created by a society's governing authority at state and federal level. They are made for keeping order in society.

To make a new law, it must be voted on in government and passed as a majority. That means everyone is required to agree on what the law will be and what consequences will occur if the new law is broken. Laws are not flexible, once a law is approved it cannot be easily changed (amended), unlike a rule that can frequently change according to circumstances. Any changes to a law must go through the whole process of a majority vote again.

Once a law is passed, it is then applied to everyone within the society for which it was made, including the law makers!

**This concept is called the 'rule of law' and it means that no-one is above the law.**

## Task 1

Below is a list of laws that were created for Australian society in the past. Research each one and determine why these laws were made, and if they are still current law today. Discuss which ones may need **amendment** (changes) to remain effective for our way of life today.



- 1 ➡ It's an offence to possess over 50kgs of potatoes on Western Australia without a permit
- 2 ➡ Taxi cabs in Queensland are required to carry a bale of hay in the trunk
- 3 ➡ You must have a neck to knee swimsuit in order to swim at the beach
- 4 ➡ It is illegal to leave your car keys inside an unattended vehicle

## Task 2

Explain how and why life has changed in the past, since the days of early settlement, and identify which aspects of the past have remained the same. Investigate which laws have remained the same for the past 200 years.



## Task 3

Think about the rules you are required to follow at school and compare them to the types of laws that apply in your local community. Complete the table below from your investigations and include any consequences (penalties) for as many as you can.

Rule

Law
