

THE RULE OF LAW

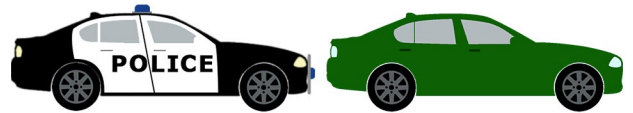
FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The rule of law is the idea that everyone in a community agrees to a set of written rules and then everyone, no matter who you are, has to follow the same rules. Everyone gets consequences if they break the law and a chance to defend themselves.



Nobody can make themselves the king or queen. Because everyone, no matter who you are, has to follow the law, there can't be a dictator or a monarch! Even the president has to follow the laws in

the Constitution. Those laws keep the president from changing the rules so they can stay in power longer. If anyone tries to take over the government, they are breaking the law and will get in trouble. This law makes sure that the people stay in charge of the government.



Everyone has to follow the same set of laws. There is one set of laws that applies to everyone, no matter who you are. For example, everyone has to follow the same traffic laws. It doesn't matter what job you have or what car you drive. If you are driving over the speed limit, the police can pull you over and you should get the same speeding ticket as everyone else. If the police aren't being fair about enforcing these laws, they can get in trouble.

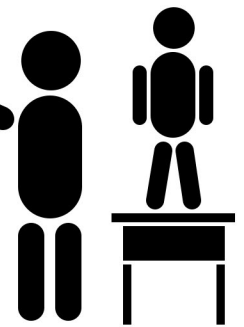
If someone says you broke the law, you have the chance to prove you didn't. If the government accuses you of committing a crime, you have a right to a trial. A trial is where you hire a



lawyer and go to court. A judge or jury listens to what you have to say and then decides if you are guilty. This makes sure that nobody gets put in prison without knowing why or for how long.

People are allowed to know what all the rules and laws are.

There is no such thing as a secret law! Every law is public information. People can't be punished for a law that isn't public BUT people are responsible for making sure they read them! For example, your teacher tells you the rules for your classroom and where they are. You need to remember them and read them. If you forget, there might be consequences.



HOW DOES THIS GET COMPLICATED?

Even if everyone is equal under the law, it can get expensive if you are accused of a crime. Rich people have an easier time hiring good lawyers and paying big fines than people who have less money.

