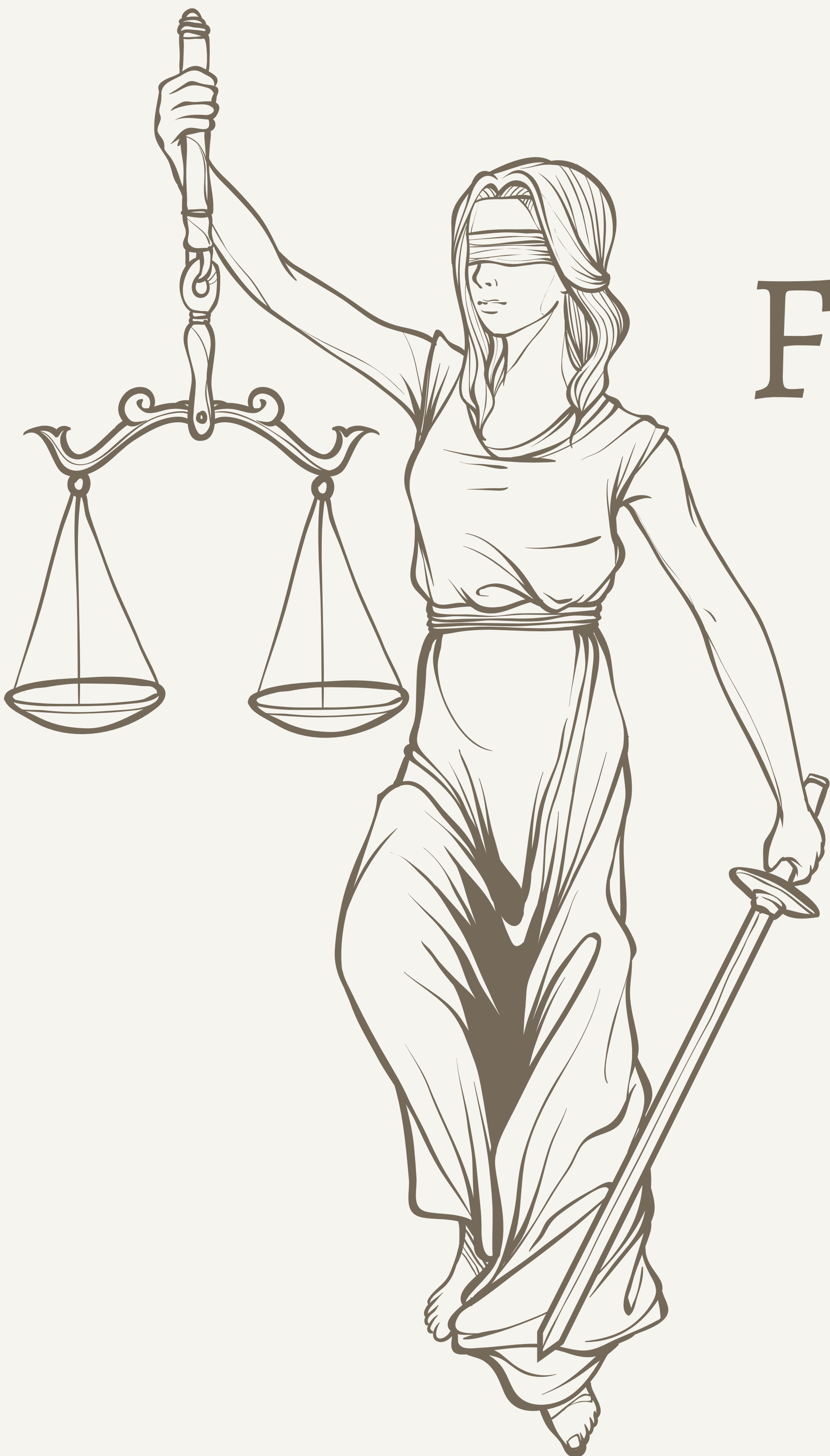


LESSON 13: FREEDOMS & DECISIONS

Law & Citizenship Course • *Ghid practic de educație juridică - „Elevul și legea”* • Judecător Cristi Danileț



FREE TO ACT



You can share opinions, form clubs, hold peaceful meetings, practice a faith, and request public data — as long as you respect safety rules and other people's dignity.

LESSON CONTENTS

PART 1

SPEECH & RESPECT

What free expression allows — and the limits on threats, hate, and defamation

PART 2

GROUPS & PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY

How to start clubs, organize meetings or protests, and keep them lawful and safe

PART 3

STUDENT VOICE IN DECISIONS

Elections, the Student Council, and practical ways to raise issues that get solved

PART 4

BELIEF & CONSCIENCE

Freedom of thought and religion — choosing, changing, or opting out without pressure

PART 5

REVIEW & PRACTICE

Quiz, key concepts, and reflection tasks — review what you've learned and apply it

LAW & CITIZENSHIP COURSE

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN IN THIS CHAPTER

In this chapter, you'll explore how **freedom** connects with **responsibility**. Having rights doesn't mean doing anything you want — it means using your voice and choices **within fair limits** that protect others too. You'll see how laws guarantee **freedom of expression, belief, association, and access to information**, but also how these rights can be **restricted** when they harm **dignity, order, or safety**. You'll learn that each decision — from speaking online to joining a group — carries both **power** and **consequences**. By the end, you should be able to explain why **liberty needs limits**, how to **use your freedoms responsibly**, and how to **take part in decisions** that affect your community.

HOW FREEDOM OF SPEECH ACTUALLY WORKS

FREE TO SPEAK

WHY LIMITS KEEP SPEECH FAIR FOR EVERYONE

Freedom of speech means you can **express ideas, criticize,** and **ask questions** — but **not to harm, threaten,** or **humiliate** others. A democratic society protects your **right to speak** and others' **right to feel safe**. The law stops **hate, lies,** or **incitement** because words have impact — they can **inform** or **wound**. **Respectful dialogue** builds trust and helps solve problems without violence. **Using your voice** responsibly keeps freedom real for everyone.



Warm-Up Activity



Think of a time when someone's words online or in person made a difference — positive or negative. What was said, and how did it affect others?

Speak boldly, act peacefully.

WHY DO WE HAVE RULES?

Freedom of association and assembly lets you **join others**, **speak out**, and **be heard**. Rules don't silence you; they make space for everyone's voice. **Time-place-manner limits** (routes, hours, sound levels) **prevent chaos**, **keep emergency lanes open**, and **protect bystanders**.

Peaceful behavior is essential: **no threats**, **no damage**, **no weapons**. When organizers **plan**, **inform authorities**, and **respect instructions**, your message travels farther — and rights stay safe for all.

At School & Community



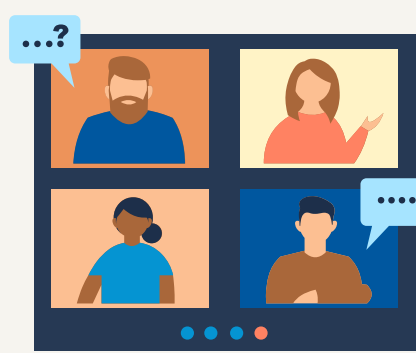
Start a club or meeting by setting a purpose, basic rules, and a timetable. Elect a coordinator, keep minutes, and work with a teacher.

Peaceful, Not Violent



Chant, hold signs, and persuade — don't intimidate. No pushing, throwing objects, or hate speech. If a crowd turns tense, step back and de-escalate.

Online Organizing



Share times and rules clearly. Verify information, and protect participants' data.



Roles & Contact

Name an organizer to liaise with police or city hall. Use marshals/stewards to guide groups, keep crossings open, and help if someone needs first aid.

In Public Spaces



For marches or rallies, notify the local authorities. Agree on route and schedule, keep paths clear, and leave room for wheelchairs and strollers.

After the Event



Clean the area, thank helpers, note any incidents, and file a short report. Learning what worked keeps future actions lawful and effective.

Imagine and Reflect

Plan a lawful student rally about a real issue. In 2–3 sentences, list: who is the organizer and what roles you assign; what authorities you inform and why; one rule you'll use to keep it peaceful and accessible.

WHO DOES WHAT IN SCHOOL

Rulemaking



Rulemaking Bodies

- **School Board & Teachers' Council** — adopt the school regulations, timetable, and policies on safety, conduct, and activities.
- **Student Council** — proposes rules that affect students (events, clubs) and must be consulted before changes that impact student life.

Administration



Administration & Teachers

- **Principal & Administration** — apply rules, manage schedules and resources, approve events, and ensure safety.
- **Class Teachers** — put policies into practice in classes and trips; record attendance and incidents; follow accommodation plans.

Disciplinary



Disciplinary & Mediation Bodies

- **Disciplinary Committee / Mediation Panel** — interpret rules, hear both sides, and decide proportional measures (warning, reparation, community tasks).

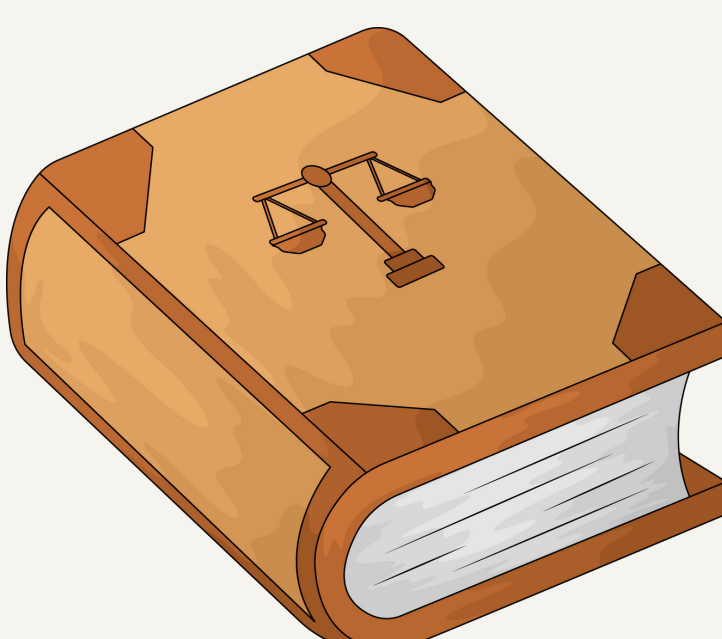
Escalate



Where to Escalate

- **School Inspectorate** — checks if the school followed the law and its own regulations.
- **Children's Ombudsperson / NGOs** — advise and defend students' rights when procedures are ignored or abuse occurs.

Key terms



Mini-Glossary

- **Student Council** = elected students who represent peers and initiate proposals.
- **Proportional Sanction** = consequence matching the behavior, focused on learning.

BELIEFS, CONSCIENCE & CHOICE

A person's **freedom of thought and belief** is the root of all other freedoms. It protects what you **think**, **value**, and **choose** — whether about **faith**, **philosophy**, or **life decisions**. No one may force, punish, or reward you for your beliefs, nor demand that you share theirs. This right also covers the **freedom to change religion, to have none**, or **to act according to your conscience**, as long as this **does not harm others** or **restrict their own rights**.



BELIEFS AND REASON

Belief is what you hold true; conscience is your inner guide about right and wrong. Together, they shape personal integrity and moral choices.

FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

You may follow any religion, another, or none. Coercion, mockery, or forcing participation in rituals violates the right to freedom of conscience.

RESPECTING DIFFERENCE

Protecting someone's right to believe differently does not mean agreeing with them; it means allowing peaceful coexistence.

WHY IT MATTERS

Belief and conscience safeguard inner freedom — the space where identity, thought, and dignity grow. When people think freely, societies progress without fear.

HOW CONSCIENCE GUIDES DECISIONS

Notice the Conflict

You face a moral or value-based decision — something feels wrong, unfair, or harmful. Recognize it instead of ignoring it.



Identify the moral question

Gather Perspective

Seek facts before reacting. Ask how your action might affect others. Discuss respectfully with people who think differently.



Seek facts and other views

Reflect & Decide

Compare options with your principles. Does this choice respect others' dignity and your own values?



Values and respect

Act with Integrity

Once you decide, follow through consistently — even if it's unpopular. Avoid revenge or hypocrisy.



Stand by your choice

Take Responsibility

If your choice causes harm, admit it and repair it. Learning from errors keeps conscience alive.



Learn and grow

So what for me?

Freedom of conscience means you decide what's right, but never in isolation. It's not the loudest voice that's correct, but the one that listens to reason and empathy.

Try it: Think of a decision you made that affected someone else — a friend, a classmate, a stranger. What guided you? Would you choose differently now, knowing what you know?

QUIZ — Lesson 13

Check what you've learned about how democracy and laws work. Read each question carefully and choose the correct answer.



- 1** Which sentence best captures free expression in a democracy?
 - a) Say anything without limits
 - b) Speak freely, but not to threaten, incite violence, or defame
 - c) Only approved opinions are allowed
- 2** Which is a legitimate time–place–manner rule for a protest?
 - a) Banning a protest because the message is unpopular
 - b) Allowing the protest but moving it from a highway to a nearby square
 - c) Prohibiting all protests in the city
- 3** What's the difference between offense and unlawful incitement?
 - a) Offense hurts feelings; incitement urges imminent violence
 - b) Offense is criminal; incitement isn't
 - c) There's no legal difference
- 4** Two groups want the same square at the same time. What's the fair solution?
 - a) Permit one, and direct the other to a nearby place/time for safety
 - b) Cancel both gatherings
 - c) Allow both without any separation
- 5** Which action uses the right of association responsibly?
 - a) Forming a club
 - b) Forcing classmates to join
 - c) Banning other clubs from meeting
- 6** At school, what is a lawful response to hate speech or threats?
 - a) Discipline after a fair process and safety measures
 - b) Ignore it
 - c) Punish the whole class
- 7** A student post wrongly accuses a teacher of a crime. Which rule applies?
 - a) Prior restraint
 - b) Defamation
 - c) It's opinion, so never a problem
- 8** What makes a Student Council decision valid?
 - a) A poll on social media
 - b) Quorum and a recorded vote on the agenda item
 - c) Approval from the most popular student
- 9** Which request is a proper use of access to public information?
 - a) "Send the school's budget categories and totals for this year."
 - b) "Explain why you chose that teacher."
 - c) "Give me all private emails between students."
- 10** Freedom of conscience means you may...
 - a) Choose or change beliefs and ask for reasonable accommodation
 - b) Impose your faith on classmates
 - c) Skip any rule whenever you cite conscience

QUIZ — Lesson 13

ANSWER KEY



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KEY CONCEPTS FROM LESSON 13



TIME-PLACE-MANNER RULE

Neutral limits (when/where/how), not on message; used to keep events safe and orderly.



VIEWPOINT NEUTRALITY

Authorities can't favor or punish a side because of its opinion.



PRIOR RESTRAINT (BAN IN ADVANCE)

Stopping speech before it happens is almost never allowed; remedies come after unlawful speech.



DEFAMATION

False statements of fact that harm reputation; opinions/hyperbole are protected.



PUBLIC FORUM

Streets, squares, campus areas open to expression under neutral rules; different from private spaces.



NOTICE VS. PERMIT

Some gatherings need only notify; large events may need a permit for safety logistics.



COUNTER-PROTESTS

Allowed, but must be kept separate in time/space to protect both groups.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members should abstain when they or friends benefit.



STUDENT COUNCIL MANDATE

Represents students; works through agenda, quorum, minutes, and majority/consensus votes.



CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Respect for beliefs through reasonable accommodation that doesn't harm others' rights.