**Extract from Bill of Rights Section 9: Right to equality**

**1. Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.**

Being equal before the law means all laws may not unfairly discriminate against anyone. Everyone is entitled to equal rights and freedoms. This also means there should be equal representation on legislative bodies (in other words, bodies that make our laws). In this way we can make sure that all the different needs of the people of the country are shown in the laws.

The right to 'equal protection before the law' means people have a right to the same opportunities and to have equal access to resources, which would allow them to be equal in the future.

**2. Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms**

The government must take active steps to change the inequalities of the past by passing laws that promote the achievement of equality. This is called affirmative action. Affirmative action means taking positive action to protect or help a person or group who has been prejudiced or disadvantaged in the past. People sometimes call this 'fair discrimination'. Section 8 of the Constitution allows affirmative action. It accepts that if we want to achieve equality it will be necessary to take positive steps to help undo the imbalances and disadvantages for individuals and groups that were caused by discrimination and oppression in the past. But, the circumstances of the person or group must justify the affirmative action.

**3. Neither the state nor any person can unfairly discriminate against someone, either directly or indirectly. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone.**