



# ALLiES eGuide

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle - Staff

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**The pedagogy is meant to encourage positivity, joy and love as the prevailing spirit in the interaction among staff and in all relations with children and parents, as well as all others who are involved with the school.**

The second principle concerns the adults at school. It sets clear objectives for the staff members regarding conduct and manners, and is a personal commitment by everyone to do their best, and resolve to become better human beings. This, in fact, often makes the difference between whether new staff feels at home at a school or not – such is the commitment! The reason why we set this second principle is rather simple. The fragile and defenseless souls of children deserve nothing but the best, and the careless behavior of an adult can have serious consequences. The Positivity Rule is, in addition to this, both a recognition of and a defense against the negative sides of a feminine culture that can become apparent where only one of the genders is active, as has been the case in working with children.

Positivity shall therefore be the ground rule that guides interaction among staff, as well as how teachers deal with their protégées - the children and their families - with a warm smile, and words full of respect and courtesy. Furthermore, the teachers must always show positivity when communicating with those connected with the school, and credit them in advance with an amicable character. Whether inside the school's premises or outside, we strive for positive thinking and smiling faces.

Another side of this coin is to be straightforward and assertive when necessary, but without negativity or subversive attitudes. In that sense, the positively inclined teacher deals with issues firmly and safely, and says what needs to be said in a clear and dignified manner in order to direct events onto their best course.

A number of factors in the organization and methodology are well-suited to ensure that these positive traits are at the forefront. Among those are:

- The staff honors the attitude that all people are responsible for their lives at all times, have a choice in all situations and can change anything they want if they decide to do so. Every individual chooses her/his thoughts, attitudes, feelings and demeanor at each moment – we simply are what we choose and practice. Working at this kind of school includes a commitment to crediting others with the best beforehand and then giving both themselves and others the best in return, in a responsible way.
- All staff members strive to greet both children and grown ups with a smile and friendly words. They offer their assistance, and let everyone who comes to a school feel that everyone there is willing and capable of solving anyone's problems. It does not matter who; everyone is entitled to receive the same respect and politeness. In this way, the employees create the warm and positive culture that should be characteristic of all schools. "One smile can darkness into daylight





turn", as is said in a poem by the well known Icelandic poet from the past, Einar Benediktsson.

- Staff members opt for a constructive and kind choice of words when communicating with children, among themselves or when giving information to parents. They emphasize this especially when dealing with a difficult situation, where it is most important to show honesty and prudence in one's conduct.
- The schools have to establish clear rules on discussions within the school. The staff will always make for a responsible and solution-directed discussion. It is not acceptable to talk about children, their families or other staff members in a negative manner. Accordingly, staff members are careful not to say anything about a colleague that they would not say to that same person's face. The same respect is expected in all other conversations, for instance about national affairs or expression of opinions about other schools or school policies, as the Hjallastefnan schools respect diversity and different views on any issue.
- Responsibility and honesty is emphasized, as well as a positive attitude. This leads to clear and well-functioning communication channels, as detailed duty cycles are in place regarding where staff members can seek solutions to problems, or get suggestions about where improvements can take place. Such comments are always well received, as a good school is not one that never makes mistakes but one that always wants to improve, and therefore receives all comments gladly.
- The staff members put an emphasis on discerning what is and isn't their concern. In that way, everyone respects their work by dealing only with what is on their own agenda and not meddling with what belongs to others in words or action, except if the welfare of the child is at stake, or if proceedings are going very contrary to the vision of the school. If a staff member interferes with other people's affairs, then things will be discussed directly and openly, or senior management will be sought to resolve the case.
- There is a clear distinction between personal and professional life, and staff members leave their own personal lives at home. The school will, naturally, make a point of showing understanding and support to its employees, so that they may enjoy a rich private life. The personal needs of staff members may not, however, go against the interests of the protégés of the school, and it is the responsibility of the school's managers to see that does not happen.
- The school practices fairness and good justice towards its staff members. The school will not discriminate in any way because of gender, race, skin color, religion, political opinions, sexual preference, cultural factors or social standing of any kind. If language problems arise that inhibit an employee in daily work, then the school will take the initiative to find a suitable language course for those employees.
- Equality will be practiced for employees in all fields, including salary and other employment terms, career advancement and job conditions. Staff members have direct access to management to air their concerns on any issue, and they are expected to seek answers and solutions within the school before contacting other parties.
- Song, laughter and movement is prominent at school, and joyful work characterizes all the schooldays with active participation of children and instructors. This emphasis on positivity is further stipulated in the gender-focused curriculum of Hjallastefnan. It belongs to the mid-section of individual training, which revolves around training the qualities of positivity, joy, straightforwardness and assertiveness.