



ALLiES eGuide

6th Principle - Communal

Discipline is motivated and conducted in a positive and warm way, and yet at the same time firmly and straightforwardly. Through exactness and firmness, one's personal discipline will become the path to safety and freedom for all, in calmness and peace within the school community and later on in responsible participation in a democratic society.

Teaching behaviour is based on the theory that discipline is simply about following rules that are well known, clear and easily understood, and are administered by a just and determined person who is self-consistent in the process. Through repeated practice – direct training in good conduct in an orderly environment – the child gains experience and skills which s/he can transfer into self-discipline. Thus, the child gains command over her/his own circumstances; the child can control her/himself! This training is an essential prerequisite for prosperity in a society where responsible manners and participation of every individual by the correct rules is the basis for real democracy.

Discipline provides safety to children and ensures the rights of everyone. Discipline will also provide freedom, because in a disciplined school environment, the teacher can loosen the grip on her/his reins when that is applicable. Instead, the teacher can give them to the students, further their self-discipline. In addition, discipline gives personal calmness and peace and lessens the risk of tension, stress and fear, which can provoke violence and bullying.

The teaching of behaviour must be honest. It requires that the teacher show authority in order to cope with firmly managing the students with positivity and loving kindness. Anything else would be a betrayal of the children, who are at a stage of social receptivity and need to practice taming their personal will, the basic force that they carry in their character and will use to cope with life. Such training is a requirement for the use of will as a positive impetus, instead of running wild in power struggles with one's surroundings. That could lead to the adult not being able to handle her/his role, or that the will of the child is broken down through excessive control or harsh treatment. In that case, the child cannot train his/her own positive exertion of will under firm but loving tutelage.

The teaching of good behaviour is based on the following factors, among others:

- The fundamental emphasis is on preventing dissent and bad behavior. Materials and objects are provided so that either there are sufficient amounts for everyone, or it is easy to exchange them to increase the likelihood that everyone will cope amiably with the situation. The times of day or situations that cause trouble are reconsidered, and changed after analyzing the nature of the problem, until satisfactory results are reached.
- There are clear rules regarding conduct and personal dealings. Some of them are permanent, and everyone is supposed to follow them, while other rules are determined in a collaboration between the children and grown ups, and learned and discussed. Rules can be changed, and in the older departments, the children are taught how that is implemented. Their opinions are





sought systematically on the justice and rightness of the rules.

- The teachers motivate the children in a decisive way to show positive conduct and interactions through compliments, and by focusing attention on everything that is well done and going well. For that purpose, the teachers accumulate a collection of kind words of compliments and encouraging words (see further about positivity in the gender-focused curriculum). Kind touch is used along with this when giving them the positive message.
- Teachers will react swiftly and with fairness when a rule is broken, sending a clear message and acting in an appropriate way. This can range from tangible messages given to individual children, to open discussions. Care is also taken to change the situation that led to the mistake in conduct.
- If disciplining of some kind is necessary, the child is never moved to some special place. Instead, a teacher deals with the matter with the child. If the same reaction is needed repeatedly, then that is a sign that the method is not working. In that case, the method has to be reconsidered so that other, more successful ways can be found.
- Never say never! Teachers avoid using negative "not" messages that direct the attention towards mistakes. Instead, they train themselves to send a clear message about everything, with the attention being on opportunities and success.
- The outer setting and operational framework is grounded in the guidance of behaviour. The settings show clearly where furniture, play material and smaller objects should be placed. There are markings on the floor to show without doubt where all objects are supposed to be, from the smallest to the largest. Areas are defined, even every child's play area, if necessary. Closets are compartmentalized and carefully labeled both inside and out. All objects of any size are labeled with their owner's names, and have their place that is marked too.
- The same methods are used to show what kind of behaviour is required, as in how children can follow the visible and tangible traffic rules at school. Traffic arrows that guide right-hand traffic are stuck on the floor. There are glued or painted markings in the children's communal areas to show each child's area, as well as places for waiting lines, where the children gather when they are moving to another area.
- The teachers steer the traffic around the school's premises, utilizing waiting lines of various types to ensure that transporting the children from one place to another takes place in a disciplined and noiseless way. The teachers will not leave their group, whether it is in group work or play time supervision, inside or outside the school.
- When managing a group of pupils, the teachers will typically offer choices so that they can avoid direct conflict against the children's will, especially in fields that are considered to apply to the human sanction of each child. They are never coerced when it comes to food or clothing for example, but the possibility to choose between options used instead.
- A child that behaves in a challenging way is not automatically removed from the group → the system is changed until a solution is found
- Specific emphasis is on not allowing treatment that hurts others – this is apparent in everything. The problem is targeted as soon as it appears: it is analyzed until the reason for the problem is found, and then the solution for the problem is researched until balance is reached
- The opportunity to choose between options is offered regularly during the day. Children in all age groups are given the chance to practice their will and decide on play or study for the next section. The choice takes place in a selection meeting where they practice three basic essentials: To know their will, to explain it in a positive way and finally to deal with the situation if they don't have their way this time, and they have to settle for some other option.
- Teachers will seek the opinion of the children regarding the school. For instance, the children participate in forming a plan for the group work, and also in influencing the menu or submitting





their comments about the operations. They are also asked to talk about how they feel personally and about the school, for example, how relations with other children were during the choice hours, or how they felt when they arrived at school that morning.

- Human rights are respected; everyone has a right for his/her "own name, own space, own things".
- Learning a sense of community proceeds on the steps of communality: I am okay, you are okay, we are okay. When children learn to respect themselves, they learn to respect others, which is the basis for respecting one's community.

