

SUMMERHILL GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

1) To provide choices and opportunities that allow children to develop at their own pace and to follow their own interests.

Summerhill does not aim to produce specific types of young people, with specific, assessed skills or knowledge, but aims to provide an environment in which children can define who they are and what they want to be.

2) To allow children to be free from compulsory or imposed assessment, allowing them to develop their own goals and sense of achievement.

Children should be free from the pressure to conform to artificial standards of success based on predominant theories of child learning and academic achievement.

3) To allow children to be completely free to play as much as they like.

Creative and imaginative play is an essential part of childhood and development. Spontaneous, natural play should not be undermined or redirected by adults into a “learning experience” for children. Play belongs to the child.

4) To allow children to experience the full range of feelings free from the judgement and intervention of an adult.

Freedom to make decisions always involves risk and requires the possibility of negative outcomes. Apparently negative consequences such as boredom, stress, anger, disappointment and failure are a necessary part of individual development.

5) To allow children to live in a community that supports them and that they are responsible for: in which they have the freedom, without licence, to be themselves, and have the power to change community life, through the democratic process.

All individuals create their own set of values based on the community within which they live. Summerhill is a community which takes responsibility for itself. Problems are discussed and resolved through openness, democracy and social action. All members of the community, adults and children, irrespective of age, are equal in terms of this process.