



CALGARY ARTS ACADEMY

POLICY MANUAL

DEMOCRATIC DISCIPLINE

Democracy is defined in the Encarta Dictionary as an activity “*characterized by free and equal participation in government or in the decision-making processes of an organization or group.*” The concept of Democratic Discipline comes from a philosophy that, in a democratic institution, everybody has a voice in establishing the rules of behaviour and the consequences for their maintenance.

Democratic discipline may be better understood as discipline strategies as demonstrated in a democratic classroom. Students feel valued and trusted when they are provided with choices in classroom policies and learning procedures. This principle applies just as effectively to the establishment of behaviour and disciplinary measures. If discipline is handled with the same mutual respect as with other classroom activities, it can be a valuable and constructive part of a student’s educational experience.

In a democratic classroom the school encourages self-discipline, responsibility, decision-making and independence, but unacceptable behaviour will occur and must be addressed. The system proposed by ‘democratic discipline is the use of natural and logical consequences rather than reward and punishment. Students are responsible for their own behaviour and make decisions, and then are held accountable for the consequences of those decisions. Consequences are immediate, logical outcomes of student decisions rather than punishments that are far removed from the student’s actions. They are applied in a firm and friendly manner by teachers who respect both themselves and the student, but do not necessarily accept the actions or decisions of the same student. The most effective consequences are those which have been formulated in advance with student input and collaboration.

Parents and volunteers will be provided with orientation and training in the principles and language of Democratic Discipline on a regular basis, and the school’s expectation is that the principles of the program will be applied by all adults in contact with the student.

Dinkmeyer, D., Ph. D, McKay, Gary D., Ph. D., and Dinkmeyer, D. Jr., Ph. D., *Systematic Training for Effective Teaching*. Circle Pines, Minn: AGS Inc., 1980