

Social goals for E3

Social Objectives:

The diversity of E3 is certainly considered a strength, which is drawn upon on a daily basis. The awareness that the children have of the different cultural backgrounds, lifestyles and experiences of their classmates helps to promote a respect for others that underpins the ethos of all the teaching. This mutual respect is important because 4th and 5th grades is, for many children, a time when adolescence begins and children develop socially; naturally, guidance is needed to help the children to achieve personal development, group harmony and a respect of democracy. Class harmony is worked towards in many ways. Some of these include:

- An agreed set of class rules.
- The celebration of birthdays.
- A camp school trip every second year; children work together to cook, clean and generally "muck-in", as well as take part in fun activities, hikes, etc.
- An annual class play or "fællestime", developed and performed by the children in conjunction with the teacher. By working towards a mutual goal, children gain individual confidence as well as the sense of being a part of a successful team.
- A class magazine every two years (with the children as writers, editors, etc), again working towards a common goal.
- Varying group activities so that each child works with a range of other children.
- The regular changing of seating arrangements, fostering new friendships.
- Discussion to encourage mutual respect, where opinions and ideas are shared.
- The challenging of inappropriate behaviour, prejudice, stereotyping, etc.
- The reinforcement of behaviour that is inclusive, supportive, considerate, etc.
- Class meetings between the E3 teacher and parents where class issues can be raised and discussed. At the first class meeting, parent representatives are chosen to facilitate good communication between parents and staff at a class, house and whole school level. This may involve the representatives feeding back the contents of meetings to parents, gathering parental opinions and instigating class discussions on a whole school or class issue.
- Open dialogue between the teacher and parents through the above mentioned meetings, consultations and emails. Other messages may be given, along with academic content, in weekly plans.

When conflicts do arise, which they naturally do from time to time, the intimate nature of The Little House, coupled with this good, communicative relationship between teachers and parents, helps to create a positive environment of shared information.

Contact with the Danish section of the school is also encouraged. Creative classes (known as P-workshops) involve a mixture of children from both the Danish and International sections. Furthermore, E3 partakes in activities with its parallel classes in the Danish section; in the past, these have included fastelavn celebrations, a carnival and sports days.

E3 is made up of two age groups, with the younger half known as blue group and the older as red group, in keeping with the systems used in E1 and E2. The children are often together, working on similar tasks, which are differentiated as appropriate. For key skills such as reading and maths, the children are split, approximately according to their grade (4th and 5th). However, as mentioned, the children are together

whenever possible to promote the development of a strong social dynamic.

A little more about some of the above mentioned and other, related points:

- 1) Birthdays. To promote harmony and to avoid individual children feeling ostracised, the whole class must be invited to private birthday parties, not just select children. This policy in particular ensures that the same child or children are not always left out.
- 2) Food Club. This tradition is encouraged each year. It is parentally led and therefore at the first class meeting of each year, a parent or parents are encouraged to organise Food Club for the coming year. The class is split into smaller groups. Thereafter, groups function independently from each other. Each child in a specific group takes turns hosting an evening for the other children in their group, which includes eating and playing together. Groups are chosen in conjunction with the class teacher to ensure that children are encouraged to develop relationships with members of the class with whom they might not usually play.
- 3) Cross grade activities. The Little House is a close knit community. However, to encourage relationships across grades, at different points in the two year rolling programme (or curriculum), other classes are used as audiences or guests for project based exhibitions and class plays known as fællestime. Moreover, certain yearly activities involve the whole house, such as whole house trips, and holidays like Halloween and Christmas.
- 4) Student Council. The school has a student council in which The Little House participates, including E3 (timetable permitting). This body gives the students a democratic voice. Often, what the children discuss is brought before the teacher, pedagogs and leadership during Wednesday staff meetings, and the children's proposals are included in the agenda of these meetings.
- 5) Job charts. Children take responsibility for helping in the upkeep of the class on a rotating basis, involving such jobs as collecting milk, emptying bins, wiping the tables and sweeping the floors.
- 6) Play Dates. Play dates must involve individual children playing with a maximum of two other children in the class. This we have found as the most powerful way to help avoid the formation of cliques, to ensure that individual children aren't left out and to promote general harmony. With each grade containing on average 5 children of the same sex only, TLH is particularly susceptible to individual children feeling ostracised if this rule is not adhered to.
- 7) Parental Help. The children should be growing in their independence. However, the children in E3 are still relatively young and do need help organising themselves. Those children who thrive in E3 are those children that are organised! So please don't stop supporting your children too early, because they seem so much more grown up and independent than they used to be. Help that the children typically still might need includes the emptying and packing of school bags (calmly, the night before), ensuring that pencil cases remain stocked throughout the year, the creation of a homework chart to ensure that all homework is noted and completed in an efficient and sustainable way, arranging play dates/general time management and preparing for major events in the school calendar such as class plays (fællestime), camp school and school trips. In a social context, children that are well organised seem often to function better socially with their peers, to o.
- 8) School Start. During the summer holiday before school starts, you will receive a welcome letter including information about how to prepare for the coming year. Key dates may be mentioned too. Additionally, it is worth noting that there is a lot of bonding during the first few days between the children. Children also generally find their feet and become acquainted with class rules, their timetables and routines. Missing the first few days of a new school year, because you are still on holiday, does have consequences for your child during the first half and sometimes even the whole year. Also, your child can play no part in the process of selecting their P-workshop classes for the half year to come (see below). Similarly, missing the end of a school term to go on holiday can involve missing activities that, although unimportant arguably from an academic perspective, may be highly significant from a social one.

9) Punctuality. Turning up on time is another key facet of organisation and good routines (mentioned above). Lessons usually [start at 08.10](#) or 09.00. Occasional lateness due to, for example, train difficulties happens, but if children are repeatedly late then they may frequently miss lesson introductions. This can impact upon their understanding and affect how they thrive during the year.

10) Break Times. At our school, the bell rings twice a day, once at 09.00 and once at 12.10 after lunch. Lessons are 45 minutes long but there is some flexibility according to the nature of lesson or task. This means that if a task evolves in a positive direction, then room can be made for an expansion of the task, as appropriate. Moreover, room can be made for extended talks to ensure class harmony and address social needs.