



... where the whole school deals democratically with issues ...

To allow children to live in a community that supports them and that they are responsible for; in which they have the freedom 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. **Summerhill policy statement**

As a result of Neill's philosophy, I've got two fabulous, thoughtful, brilliant kids. I retain a strong sense of justice that I developed at Summerhill, a belief in the intrinsic worth of every person, a belief that every member of a community has a right to be heard. I'm a very good citizen. Tony Blair would be proud of me. **Ally ex-pupil**

Everything you say in the meeting counts and there are no grudges afterwards. **Eran pupil**

The meeting is important because you know what's going on and you are able to change things that you disagree with. **George pupil**

I go to the meetings so I know what is going on in the school and to sort out problems between people. **Charley pupil**

Obviously I don't agree with everything in the meeting but I can say if I don't like it. **Elli pupil**

I think the meeting at Summerhill is one of the core aspects of maintaining healthy social dynamics. The meetings provide a space in the busy community life where people can connect with the community as a whole to deal with all the practicalities, like a check up. As well as serving a practical purpose, it empowers kids to deal with their own issues and their own lives, and it's obvious what a unique learning experience that is. It could be argued that democratic participation is just an excuse to let kids rule the world, but I think it's about establishing and maintaining mutual respect between human beings. If there is a situation of mutual respect then there's nothing to be scared of.

Beth pupil

Pupil democracy isn't exactly new—look at Summerhill School, the Suffolk independent school that trail-blazed it decades ago. **Kids Rule Guardian Education. 24.10.2000**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child makes particular reference to children's rights to participate in decisions affecting them and Summerhill, through its very approach to education, embodies this right in a way that surpasses expectations. **Paulo David, Secretary UN Committee of Rights of the Child**

At Summerhill the pupils would fight to the death for their right to govern themselves. In my opinion, one weekly General School Meeting is of more value than a week's curriculum of school subjects. **A.S.Neill**



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