

AUGSBURG FAIRVIEW ACADEMY

PRINCIPLES OF AUTHORITATIVE INSTRUCTION

Augsburg Fairview Academy ascribes to a conceptual framework called the “Circle of Courage.” This framework is based on Western psychology and the common practices of indigenous cultures throughout the world in the upbringing of young people. As such, AFA expects that its teachers and staff will be guided by certain principles of authoritative instruction and best practice. In addition to following the practices set out in the Academy's handbooks and policy statements, an AFA employee is also expected to understand and adhere to the principles of the “Circle of Courage” as described by Dr. Larry Brendtro and his colleagues in their books, *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future* (2001, Solution Tree) and *Troubled Children and Youth: Turning Problems Into Opportunities* (2004, Research Press). The Academy will provide copies of these books, at no charge, to each employee at the time of his or her employment and will offer continuing professional development to help faculty and staff master the strategies they represent.

The Academy's policies regarding instruction, student management, interpersonal relationships, and discipline are grounded on the following principles that apply to each and every member of the faculty or staff:

- My fundamental obligation is to do whatever it takes to make each student want to learn and, then, to satisfy that student's desire with meaningful opportunities to learn.
- I will honor the following code and do my best to help others to do the same:
*Be caring, kind, and honest to myself and others, always;
Do nothing that brings harm to myself or others, ever;
Take responsibility for any harm I cause and heal it.*
- I will seek to protect the safety, interests, rights, and dignity of everyone and will try to avoid even the appearance of being hurtful, demeaning, confrontational or blaming in what I say or do to anyone.
- When faced with challenging behavior, I will avoid being drawn into conflict or resorting to coercion to control behavior. I will, instead, be responsive to the problems underlying the behavior and provide positive support and guidance to help the person work through the issue at hand.
- I will be a role model of engaged learning: demonstrating for students the habits of mind that make it possible to acquire knowledge, understanding, and skills; and reinforcing for students the lifelong value to be gained by strengthening these habits.
- I will be a role model of good behavior: showing students, by word and deed, the virtues that they will need to practice in order to be successful citizens, parents, friends, neighbors, and workers for the rest of their lives.
- I will provide help and instruction that captures the interest of each student, to be highly engaged every time I interact with a student, and to demonstrate a high level of professionalism in the preparation, execution, and assessment of everything I do.
- I will make myself available to students and their families in order to build strong relationships and deal with issues or concerns as they occur.
- I will not give up on any student no matter how much the student may resist or how difficult the student's behavior may be.

I understand the principles stated above. While I am employed at the Academy, I will do my best to use them as a guide to meeting my responsibilities to the school; to its students, families, and community stakeholders; and to my colleagues. I acknowledge that failure to adhere to this commitment may be a significant consideration in future employment decisions by the Academy.

My signature on the primary contract to which this statement of principles is attached shall serve of proof of my agreement to be bound by these principles.

Revised on April 8th, 2013