

# THE VISION OF BANBURY CROSSROADS SCHOOL

The students of Banbury will be self-motivated, intellectual achievers with a strong sense of self. Their empathetic, unwavering spirit will allow them to confidently embrace the challenges and opportunities encountered throughout life, ultimately to become compassionate, resilient and authentic leaders.



*“Our school values physical, creative and intellectual exploration and growth...”*

We believe that exploration and development should be part of every person's life experience. Our school is a reflection of this journey.

*“Children will find, in the eyes of the parents and teachers who raise them, mirrors in which they discover themselves.” - Dr. William Glasser*

Banbury Crossroads School is an independent day school limited to no more than 100 students from preschool to grade 12.



At our school, students explore and grow through a variety of means:

Engaging in learning opportunities that are active, rather than passive, and realized through movement, discussion, inquiry and discovery;

Examining the world outside them—culture, history, artistic and musical expression, scientific and mathematical theories, career needs, recreation and social interactions—and the world inside them—their talents, interests, strengths and weaknesses, motivations and driving principles by which they live;

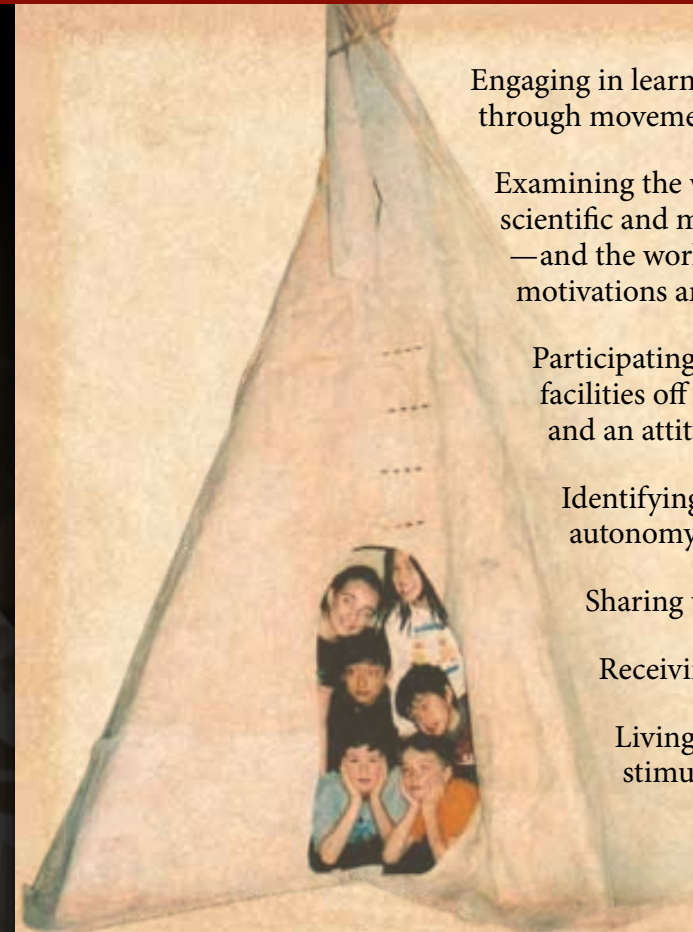
Participating in many physical education programs, using first class community facilities off campus to promote the development of individual athletic prowess and an attitude conducive to healthy recreation;

Identifying and drawing upon intrinsic motivational factors, in order to find joy, autonomy and meaning from learning;

Sharing the journey of discovery with caring teacher mentors, peers and family;

Receiving practical support for goal setting, self-discovery and perseverance; and

Living in a school environment that is safe, amiable and comfortable, as well as stimulating, so that they will be engaged and willing to take intellectual risks.



*“...that results from curiosity.”*

Children are innately curious and eager to master their environment. They exhibit energy and focus in achieving this intention. Curiosity and intrinsic motivation are the catalysts for students, teachers and parents to learn anything. Therefore, we can trust that our students will learn without coercion.



At Banbury Crossroads, we preserve the natural enthusiasm that curiosity produces in young children by:

utilizing kinesthetic activities, conversation and field trips to foster animated engagement and inquiry based learning—students asking their own questions, and directing the manner and pace of their investigation;

incorporating individual interests in our students’ curricular study, assignments, projects and optional classes;

encouraging choice for students in their time and space management;

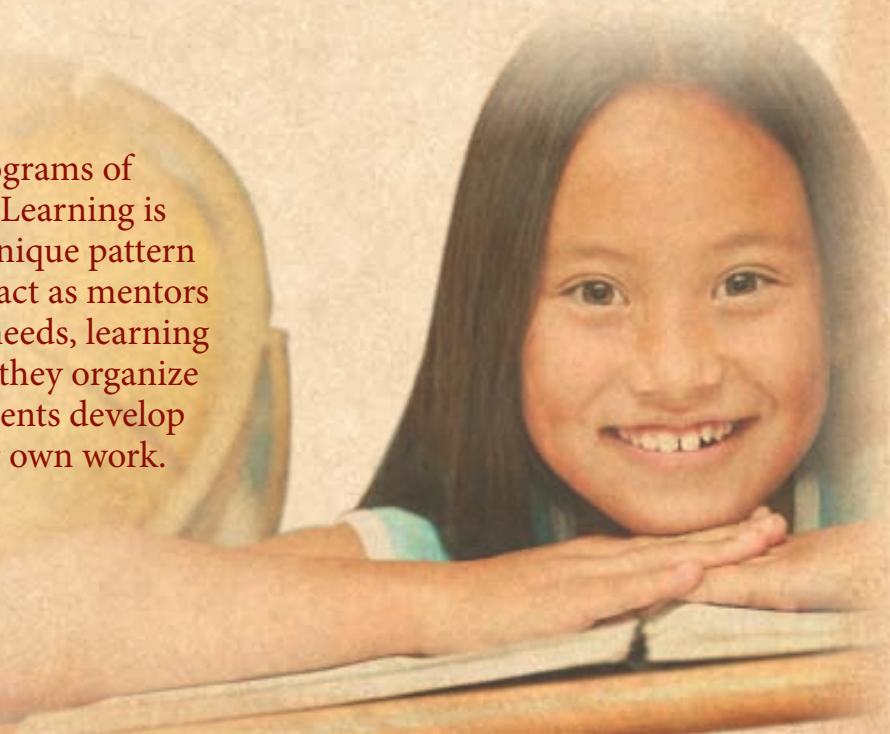
offering students instruction and optimistic support in a manner relevant to their motivation and ability;

responsively participating in discussions and presentations, to share the discoveries and insights that result from their work



*“We shall assist students in developing a standard of competence and pace of instruction to suit their own needs and abilities...”*

Banbury Crossroads follows the Alberta Programs of Study, and is an accredited independent school. Learning is achieved by all individuals through their own unique pattern of perception, motivation and timing. Teachers act as mentors for students as they uncover their own academic needs, learning style, interests and potential for growth, and as they organize their learning activities accordingly. Students develop finesse in assessing the quality of their own work.



Our “open classroom” concept is particularly apt for this interaction, because it allows:

active decision making by students in choice of worksite, subject matter and duration of study, and so that they may pace their work to their goals, abilities and interests;

the development of time management skills as they create their own schedules, set goals, assess progress, and if necessary, amend earlier plans;

low student-teacher ratios, so that teachers have time to mentor students, accommodate their learning styles, give remedial and enrichment assistance, and also offer continual feedback, tutorials and mini-lectures;

learning and personal expression through a variety of media and activities, rather than just pencil and paper, and the spoken word;

self-directed student-initiated learning, more than teacher-directed learning; and

parents to be engaged in ongoing communication and in learning activities, both informally and formally. We prepare three lengthy report cards per year that include anecdotal comments and curricular information. As well, we organize two parent/teacher/student meetings to discuss progress and reassess goals in a collaborative manner.



*“...so they can work to mastery in their academic courses.”*

**This is accomplished through:**

Banbury Crossroads operates with the belief that schooling is primarily about learning, not teaching. We do not use a teacher-paced, lecture-based approach within classes. Instead, we use a tutorial approach to encourage the learning process to proceed until knowledge and skills are mastered.

organizing classes with small numbers of students—approximately 10 to 12—so that teachers have time with each student to help them process the vast amount of information they encounter;

providing a multi-aged setting, where students are not socially penalized by being either ahead or behind their peers;

ensuring that students demonstrate competency at each stage of their academic work, before they proceed to the next stage—students may be in different grades in different subjects, depending upon pace of performance;

reducing performance anxiety by giving individualized instruction and mini lectures to small groups;

offering plenty of individual assistance and discussion regarding academic work;

down playing competition between students by not assigning marks until Grade 10—promoting learning for intrinsic reasons, so that students focus on their own personal development; and

creating a comfortable and peaceful environment in which students can concentrate and learn effectively.



*“We value a harmonious atmosphere...”*

**We foster these attributes through:**

One of our most outstanding attributes is that we exert tremendous energy to develop effective social skills and a harmonious environment. We want each member of our school community to develop a strong sense of self with an unwavering spirit of optimism. Self-responsibility, autonomy and resiliency are necessary for personal emotional health, and for providing citizens with the means to create a healthy democracy.



caring for the well-being and happiness of each student, as well as their growth in academic areas;

seeing conflict as a golden opportunity to develop honesty, tolerance, empathy, creative problem solving strategies, and communication and negotiation skills;

explaining to children their right to determine the course of their own lives, as long as they respect the rights of others to do the same;

organizing vertical age grouping to mirror the outside world that requires people of different ages to function together with compassion and trust; and

focusing upon mutual respect as our underlying principle.

*“...and encourage the students to create constructive social relationships with others.”*

Effective social functioning is attained through emotional and character development that underlines the importance of our interrelatedness. Happiness is reached through self-fulfillment and an optimistic attitude, and through appreciating small, lovely details in our environment and relationships.



Teachers are able to encourage such personal growth and connectedness by:

dealing with conflict constructively, through engaging students in individual and small group discussions, whereby adults may influence and convince them with intrinsic reasons for choosing positive behavior to facilitate social responsiveness and justice—thus, de-emphasizing the behaviorist method of punishment and rewards;

offering meaningful, trusting relationships with mentors to assist with developing effective logical and moral reasoning skills;

practicing effective and constructive communication and negotiation skills in interactions with students;

modelling kindness, good humour, flexibility, equanimity, gentleness and appreciation;

promoting community volunteerism and helpfulness within the school; and

persisting in their efforts to help children experience a balanced life with a broad range of interests and skills.

“...providing outstanding preparation for further learning and for life...”

### *What parents and others say about the school:*

“Every day he came home more excited about having found a great school. This accepting attitude of students in their early teens shows excellent life-skills modeling by the staff at the school and it is something I have appreciated over and over again... He will finish with a solid understanding of all the core subjects because of the school's insistence on mastery learning. He has appreciated the multi-age groupings because students can be working on multiple subjects at multiple grade levels and no-one feels they are in 'the wrong grade for their age'. They are just learning the next thing they need to learn.”

*Fenna, Parent*

“Diane's teaching methods encouraged children to think and grow outside the ordinary parameters of grades and other measured standards. Students were allowed to progress at their own speed of comprehension, employ critical-thinking skills, and follow their internal drives and desires, and were not kept back because of age restrictions. The low teacher-to-student ratios meant that instructors were always accessible and available for questions and individual attention. As an extra bonus, the younger kids were helped and tutored along by the older classmates... The vast majority of Diane's graduates have emerged as confident, well-adjusted adults who place a high value on the importance of education, and early introduction to real-life experiences and adventures. Our own girls are examples of successful individuals who possess high personal standards, confidence, integrity, manners, and are goal-oriented, all attributes of a combination of good parenting and exceptional education.”

*Ron and Joy, Parents*



“We appreciated the opportunity to have Casey and Corey receive their senior education at Banbury. We believe that the individual attention that they received from the teachers and others, as well as the leadership that Diane provided, was central to their success. Their achievements on their final exams, for example Casey 99% on his Math 30 final, and high marks all round for both Casey and Corey were a direct result of the teaching practices and one on one instruction they received at Banbury... We are proud to say that both our boys have gone on to higher education and were able to because they attended Banbury in their senior high school years. Casey has a dual degree in Naval Architecture and Ocean Engineering... Corey started his Bachelor of Sciences at Griffith University in Queensland, Australia for 2 years. He continued at the University of Calgary and is now completing a degree in Finance at the Mount Royal College.” - *Don & Jo-Ann, Parents*

“You have all learned something precious—there is a wonderful entrepreneurial and passionate undercurrent to your school. That undercurrent is recognized through the desire by those who work within this school to engage young people in developing a ‘spirit’ which is respectful and opens them to life-long learning and a ‘can-do’ attitude.”

*Terry Schlinker, Manager, Extension Education, Rosebud School of the Arts*

“You see, they have never known learning to be a chore. Their earliest school-lessons were in how to get help for their own learning agendas, rather than in how to follow someone else's agenda.... You've been empowering our girls to learn!” - *Pamela, Parent*

“We were all intermixed. We'd have several different ages and grades sitting at the same table, helping each other. We didn't get segregation, where you have to keep kids in their slots. Banbury is one of those rare little beams of light out there that provide an environment not only for kids who thrive, but for kids who have challenges.” - *Delaney, Former Student*

## What one of the graduates says about the school:

May, 2006

Significant.

I think that's the feeling that came to me when I was asked to write this letter. I wanted it to be, first and foremost, significant to communicate something great. To fill this page with words that would leave you with a wow; because, I was there in 1979 when Diane started Banbury Crossroads. It was my first school and perhaps the most important thing in my childhood, as something beyond the home. I wish I could write down how important a good school is...but I think that fundamentally it is a thing to be experienced. I don't think I can actually tell you what going to BCS was like...but it was significant for me, for the people that I was with, for my friends and family.

Choosing Banbury Crossroads is a good choice, because, I believe, that for Diane and the School, children exceed important and pass into treasured. I always felt valued as a student at BCS. It is rare to find an environment that treats children as adults in training, and not as lesser versions of adults. To treat a child as something that is important and something to be respected, unto itself, brings that something to be someone. Perhaps, even someone great. I loved going to that school mostly because of the environment which could be described as: loving, nurturing, open, outward-looking, and full of real life learning.

*“Children exceed important and pass into treasured.”*

*This letter is a pale and empty version of what I would like it to be, because I cannot write down eight years of collected experience on a single page, or even a stack of pages, and do it justice. I cannot let you know what it feels like to go to this school or to be in a long term relationship with it. I can say that it was significant for me, enough to drag me back across 3033 Km of dirt for the 25th Anniversary, and I still treasure it for what it was... great.*

*Respectfully and with Great affection  
Aaron A. Patella*



## OUR MISSION:

*"We at Banbury Crossroads treasure children as respected individuals, and meet their diverse needs within a safe, familial setting. We are passionately committed to incorporating innovative educational methods that foster intrinsic motivation, learning to mastery, self-responsibility and social competence."*



*...lighting the way*





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Banbury Crossroads School was formed in 1979 as a result of the creation of a non-profit society registered that same year.