



**BANBURY  
CROSSROADS  
SCHOOL** EST. 1979

## **What We Do and Why We Do That**

*The following points delineate that:*

- ▶ At Banbury, one of our major goals is to address the needs of individual students.
- ▶ We want these individuals to develop autonomy. Self-sufficiency is imperative for our graduates when they emerge from school after Grade 12. That is the time they immediately become responsible for all malleable aspects of their adult lives, including their education, their career, their family, their emotional and physical health, their social behaviour, their recreation, and so on. They will need to consciously acknowledge the power they do exert over their own lives so that they can utilize it to make decisions rationally, morally, responsibly, and independently.
- ▶ Mutual respect is involved in our belief that healthy children in any culture are internally motivated to master their environment, which means that it is reasonable to trust their willingness to put energy into their learning;
- ▶ Therefore, at Banbury, students develop skills in goal identification, time management and organization, implementation of plans, self-assessment, decision-making, and adapting to change. They become autonomous;
- ▶ Individual students also live in a social world. They need to balance their own rights to pursue their goals with the recognition that they need to honour the rights of others to do the same. In this way, our students and alumni will be well-prepared to contribute to, and participate constructively within, their democratic culture, which is based upon the concept of liberty combined with responsibility;
- ▶ Mutual respect is the necessary underlying value of a healthy democracy, and it is this attitude, in practice, that makes Banbury's whole system work;
- ▶ Mutual respect is involved in our belief that healthy children in any culture are internally motivated to master their environment, which means that it is reasonable to trust their willingness to put energy into their learning;

- ▶ If we are going to be respectful to students, we must let them work on material that is at their level, proceed at their own pace, and design flexible, personally-appropriate schedules;
- ▶ Student-paced learning, in turn, allows learning to mastery;
- ▶ Learning to mastery is preferable to just “covering” the curriculum; quality and depth of learning are more important than quantity;
- ▶ Multi-aged classrooms are necessary for student-paced learning so that children are not socially penalized by being ahead or behind their peers academically. This multi-aging is more reflective of the real world. It offers opportunities for leadership, peer learning, empathy, and confidence in dealing with people of a variety of ages;
- ▶ In such a multi-aged setting with an individual-focused atmosphere, a lecture-based and teacher-paced instruction method does not work. Instead, we use tutorial-based instruction suited to individual needs, abilities, and motivation. Continual individualized planning, support, and feedback are given to individuals and small groups, with periodic mini-lectures;
- ▶ This method is highly demanding of teacher attention, so we need small groups, (usually around 10 students to 1 teacher, with 12:1 being a maximum) in each class. This helps teachers to spend the time that each student needs to learn according to their individual needs;
- ▶ In small classes, it is practical for teachers to promote experiential learning for their students, through relevant discussions, kinaesthetic inquiry, and intrinsically-motivated, personal interest projects;
- ▶ Within these small classes, teachers have the TIME to interact meaningfully with their students within a social and emotional framework. Enduring and trusting mentoring relationships can evolve. These social connections with peers and mentors exert the most significant positive influence upon the learning of students;
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