

Good evening families, loved ones, teaching and support staff and, of course, our grade 6 graduates for 2025. Welcome to the culmination of seven years of learning, playing, building temporary cubbies and long lasting memories. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Hannah Reid and for eight more school days, I have the incredible honour of calling myself the principal of these glorious humans.

Today is a day of celebration, a day full of pride, joy, and reflection. As the principal of this school, I've had the privilege of watching each of you grow from the very first day you walked through these doors to today, your graduation day. I remember when many of you were so small, full of wonder and curiosity, nervous but excited to begin your school journey. And now, look at you—sitting here as confident, bright, and talented young people ready to take on the world!

It has been an incredible journey watching you all develop not only as students but as individuals. You've learned so much over the years—how to read and write, how to solve math problems, and how to explore the world around you. But more importantly, you've learned about friendship, teamwork, respect, and kindness. You've made mistakes, and you've learned from them. You've faced challenges and found the strength to overcome them. And with each step, you've grown into the amazing people you are today.

It's not just the academic lessons that have been important—it's the life lessons you've learned here. You've learned to help one another, to be good friends, to share, and to listen. You've learned that working together makes us stronger, and that with hard work and determination, there is nothing you cannot achieve. These lessons are the foundation for your future, and I am so proud of each and every one of you for embracing them with open hearts.

Before I address our graduates, I would like to take a moment to thank the incredible teachers who have guided you along the way. Not just our superb senior teachers, but all the educators who have poured their hearts and souls into helping each of you become the best version of yourselves. Teachers, thank you for your dedication, your patience, and your unwavering belief in these students.

To the families and loved ones here today, thank you for your unwavering support. You've been there every step of the way, cheering them on, helping them through the tough moments, and

celebrating their successes. Today is as much a celebration of your love and support as it is of our students' achievements.

Our graduates... As your principal I have had the honour of claiming you as my (mostly) captive audience for many years and tonight I will take advantage of this one more time; to offer you some life advice that you didn't ask for but will hopefully remember. So here it is— unsolicited, slightly unpolished, and delivered with the utmost of love.

1. Embrace the Joy of Being Wrong

You are all incredible little humans with endless talent and potential. At some point, you're going to fail. Gloriously. Publicly. Repeatedly. Failure is not a bug in the system; it's a sign of life. Being wrong teaches you things that success never will—like humility, adaptability, and how to laugh at yourself when the universe is already doing it for you. Please remember that being wrong can sometimes be so right.

2. Don't Follow Your Passion Blindly

Passion is a bit like a toddler—it's loud, demanding, and prone to tantrums when ignored. But blindly following your passion without context or balance can lead you into unhelpful places, or keep you turning circles on the spot. Instead, explore. Try new things and drag your passion along for the ride. Passion doesn't always have to steer the ship— sometimes it's enough that it keeps you afloat.

3. Be Kind, Even When it's Difficult

We often speak of kindness at BNWPS, but outside of our carefully formed BNW bubble, kindness is sometimes underrated. It can be seen as the soft option in a world obsessed with hustle and grind. But here's the secret: being kind when it's inconvenient or uncomfortable is one of the strongest, most courageous things you can do. Kindness doesn't mean agreeing with everyone or letting people walk all over you; it means speaking out and standing out, it means remembering that every living being has their own life story they are right in the middle of. Kindness is how you handle a fragile situation, how you treat someone who challenges you, how you hold someone's heart when they trust you with it, and how you speak to yourself on the days when your reflection in the mirror feels like

a stranger. Be kind. Always and to everyone. If people aren't kind in return there is likely a reason and your kindness might be the thing that helps them find their way.

4. Fingerprints Are Unique, and So Are You

Fingerprints are remarkable things. Each of you has a set that is completely, undeniably yours. They're proof that the universe contains endless possibilities. But fingerprints are more than identifiers—they are reminders of the marks we leave on everyone we meet and everything we touch. Nobody else can touch the world exactly the way you do. That's both beautiful and terrifying, but it's also your superpower. Use it. Leave good marks everywhere - every chance you get.

5. Don't Let the Big Stuff Crush the Small Stuff

You're the oldest you have ever been and while I look across at you tonight looking so grown up, I reflect on how many of you I have known since you were just babies and that makes me feel the oldest I have ever been. But you all have what I hope to be long and full lives ahead of you. I want to warn you that life may feel overwhelming sometimes. The big stuff in life doesn't come around very often, but can easily loom large. If we always have our eyes on the big stuff, we can miss all the small stuff. The stuff that makes each and every day special, joyful and puts the world into perspective. The small stuff—the sound of a cat purring, the way laughter bounces around a room, the comforting cuddle from someone you love—that's where life really happens. You kids are experts at focusing on the small stuff, please don't ever lose that.

6. Learn the Value of Nothingness

Life is hectic - sometimes unnecessarily so. Some people will tell you to be more productive, to move faster and achieve more with less. But taking time for space and quiet increases your capacity to live and to thrive. Nothingness is not laziness but it also doesn't live on a screen. Nothingness is where ideas are born. It's disconnecting from devices and lying in a park, staring at the clouds, and realizing that one looks like a llama doing yoga. It's sitting on a bus, looking out the window and watching the many different worlds that bounce around you, each with its own human inside. Take time for those moments. They're not a waste; they're breath between words and the food for your creativity.

7. Be Thankful

None of you would be here tonight if it weren't for the people in your family who have cared for and nurtured you along the way. The people who have pointed out where you've gone wrong so you can learn, the people who have dragged you along to new places or made you try new things to expand your passions, the people who made you eat your vegetables and have reminded you to be kind, even when you didn't want to, the people who have left their mark on you in a way that no one else ever could, the people who have given you small joys like cuddles and allowed you space to stare at the sky. Thank these people every day, and when you become teenagers and they're driving you crazy, thank them even more. They do it because they love you and for that, we cannot be anything but thankful.

In Closing

Graduates, I am no expert in life, so please take this advice as you will. I don't know the life you will lead - you are each unique, ridiculous, and beautifully unfinished. I do know that each of you have left your mark on this school and our community, and I have no doubt you will continue to do so as you move forward.

This is not the end of your journey; it's just the beginning. There will be new friends, new experiences, and even bigger dreams to chase. I want to congratulate you all and to remind you all that no matter where life takes you, I will always be cheering you on. As you step into secondary school and beyond, be kind. Be gentle. Be curious. Marvel at yourself, your friends and the world around you, enjoy the small stuff as much as the big. Laugh at anyone who tries to put you in a box, because you were not made to be in a box. You're a fingerprint, a melody, you are your own story. Go out there and touch the world. Leave it better, brighter, and more ridiculous than you found it.

Can everyone please join me by putting your hands together as we congratulate our grade 6 graduates for 2025. Thank you.