

Wednesday 1 July 2020

"Life's up and downs provide windows of opportunity to determine your values and goals. Think of using all obstacles as stepping stones to build the life you want." (Marsha Sinetar - Pioneering educator and author).

Dear Blackfen students

In her email to you this week, Ms Minnis wrote about the importance of opening of windows and creating those opportunities for yourselves. Of course, windows are one of those things that have multiple uses. When I arrive in school in the morning at this time of the year, the first thing I do is to pull the blinds and open the windows in my office. I do this to let the light flood into my office and to let allow fresh air to come in. The cool, fresh, early morning air naturally replaces the warm, stale, previous day's air that has been shut in since the day before. By 8.00 on a normal school day, the fresh air is replaced by the wonderful sound of young voices as you arrive at school and meet and greet your friends. My office windows, as you know, face onto the food cube quad, which means that the vast majority of you walk past my window on your way to meet friends and to go to your lessons. The windows offer some of you with a chance to check on your uniform and your hair as the windows also have a mirror like quality and you can use them to make sure you are ready for the day.

Later in the day, as the sun shines brightly in and as I have all manners of meetings in my office, I "block" out the window by pulling the blinds. The window is closed to minimise sound. Covering the window, like drawing your curtains at home, makes the room more private and in some ways more safe and secure. As lunchtime starts I look through the window again to see you queuing to purchase food or sitting on the benches talking with friends while eating your lunch. It is an everyday scene that I have missed very much.

How many times have you been on holiday or to someone else's house and looked out of the window and thought, wow, what a view? The view might be of the sea, a lake, a mountain, across a cityscape or over a field of farm animals. We don't always appreciate the view of the world our windows offer us. Our window may look over a back garden, yard or walkway or a street or a car park or a row of shops or a main road or a school field or local park. If you look out for only 10 minutes during the day, so many things will probably happen in that view during that time. I know that I only have to glance out of my office window for a few minutes and, like watching a film, something else and something different is happening. In the eerie silence of the evening, sometimes I will look out to see a fox enjoying the undisturbed peace and quiet that a school without students offers.

Sometimes, particularly recently, we look through our windows and things seem very bleak. On other occasions, things are brighter and seem more positive. Life is full of ups and downs and our continued journey is full of obstacles. These ups and downs are experiences which shape the sort of people we are and we become. However, the key is to see obstacles as a challenge and aim to overcome these obstacles and use these as stepping stones on your journey.

What is the view from your window showing you today? What does the world look like from where you are standing? How will you use the experiences of the last few months to shape your future life values and goals?

With my best wishes to you , your family and your friends at this time.

Matthew Brown