

Ladies and Gentlemen, boys and girls,

Good evening

My name is Sarah Stewart, and I stand here on the cusp of leaving this hallowed institution which is St Ninian's High School, looking forward to prom, this Friday, and Caritas Awards and Graduation, the following week, to round off what has truly been a remarkable 6 years of faith, fun and friendship.

I have been asked to offer my tips tonight on how to give yourself the best chance of "success" while at St Ninians High School so here goes with my personal and humble suggestions:

1. Firstly - Get involved. St Ninians offers an extensive variety of extracurricular clubs and activities for all tastes and talents. Personally, most of my time was spent in the gym halls and on the football pitches, playing for and captaining the netball and football teams. Sport at St Ninians has gifted me opportunities which I am incredibly privileged to have experienced, the ultimate highlight having played at Hampden Park in the Scottish Cup Final. If your strengths lie out with the sporting world however, perhaps you'll find your home in the art, Sci-Fi, chemistry, debating, chess or drama clubs, perhaps in the symphony orchestra or even in the 'Thank Taylor it's Friday' club (aka Taylor Swift club) to name only a few. There is genuinely something for everyone. "Do not be afraid" to dive in and give things a go. Seek and you will find your God-given gifts in abundance and if an old friend won't join you, I can guarantee a new friend will be waiting for you once you get there.
2. Secondly - Build virtuous habits and stay organised to ensure academic success. Virtues will become lifelong friends too and the earlier we start to build and nurture them the better. Transitioning from Primary 7 to S1 can be a challenging experience. From 1 teacher in 1 classroom to 11 different teachers in 11 different classrooms, with homework for each subject, might seem daunting but it's great fun and you'll adapt very quickly. Using your homework diary daily ensures that homework is ordered and completed in good time. Be punctual to class, with all the necessary supplies and be eager and ready to learn. S1 is a great opportunity to broaden your studies in previously unexplored subjects, so make sure you embrace all that's taught as this will really help when choosing your subjects at the end of first year. Whatever your personal subject strengths, it is always important to put your best academic foot forward because hard work and endeavour reflect a virtuous character, and we should strive for the virtues at all costs.
3. And finally, treasure the Faith life on offer in the school which is the rock on which we stand. Everything we do in St Ninian's is Centred on Christ. Pope Benedict the 16th said, "The purpose of a Catholic Education is help us to grow in holiness and to become saints of the 21st Century." So, my final piece of advice would be to immerse yourself in the faith life of the school. Holy

Mass in our Oratory allows you to perfectly sanctify your day. The Oratory offers a quiet, sacred space to reflect, reset, and bring your intentions to God before, or indeed during, the busyness of the day. And to all families, come along to everything as families and build a faith-filled community rooted in the 3 things that truly last, as Jesus told us, Faith, Hope and Love.

Thank you and good luck to each one of you! Enjoy every second because it will go in a flash!