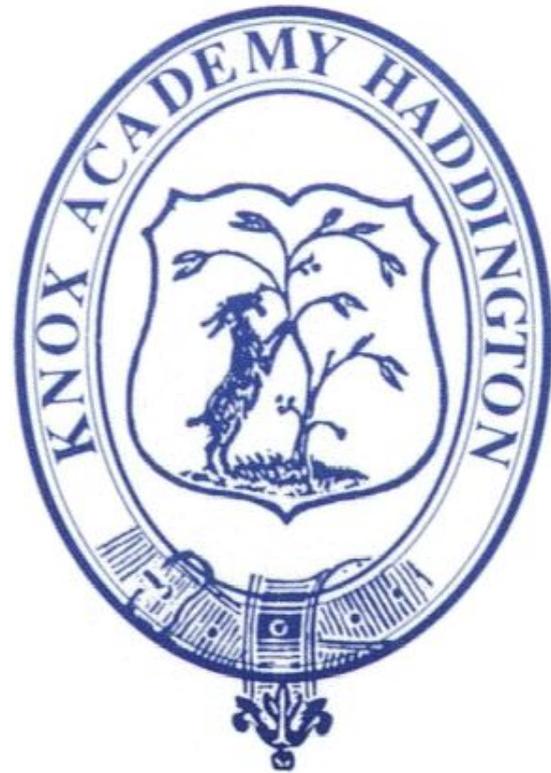


MANIFESTO 2017/18

HEAD PUPIL

ALEXANDRA COOKSON



Why Choose Me?

For the last third of my life, Knox Academy has been my second home. Knox has helped me through probably the most difficult time of my life, not just with school but my teenage years and the drama that comes along with it. I am so truly grateful for the friends I have made and for the abundance of opportunities this great school has offered me, and for this, I want to offer something back.

I believe that being house captain of Garleton and on the pupil council last year has given me a real insight into the main issues that my fellow students have. It has also given me the opportunity to see just a slither of what being head pupil may involve, such as leading the pupil council meetings, conducting many meetings with the PTA and head of faculties, and being the pupil voice for the whole of the school. I believe I possess many of the qualities needed to be an effective and caring head pupil, such as good time management skills, reliability, honesty and fair-mindedness.

From an early age, I have always been a sporty person and I believe this has shown and taught me the importance of teamwork and leadership. Last year, I was elected hockey captain for the school team which immediately made me step up and become the leading figure the team needed. This role gave me the opportunity to further develop my leadership skills by taking responsibility for the team. In this role, I was successful in growing the team's enthusiasm and confidence which then lead the team to win multiple matches against many of our local rivals.

For the past two years, I have been one of the junior volunteer hockey coaches working with the Haddington Junior Hockey Team. I have thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of coaching these young people and being able to pass on the skills that I have learned from playing myself. I would like to believe that they have shown me that enthusiasm and passion are two qualities everyone can benefit from, whether you're in a leading role or just going about your day-to-day life.

This Summer, I will be volunteering at the East Lothian Playscheme, where children with additional needs such as autism and down syndrome are cared for in a relaxing and caring environment away from their parents. I believe this experience will make me more aware of the challenges faced by the families of children with these conditions. I hope that this, in turn, will help me to become a more selfless person with more empathy towards others who are less fortunate than myself.

PROMISES

Dress Code

Last year at pupil council meetings, one of the main topics that came up again and again, were the issues surrounding dress code. Some students believe that dress code is too strict whereas others think it's too lenient. I believe a way to combat this issue is to have a dress down day on the final Friday of every month for all students that have had no more than one dress code during the time between each of the specified days. I believe this will encourage many more students to wear full dress code (which the school and teachers so desperately want) which will bring about fewer arguments. Pupils should be made to feel proud to wear a smart school uniform that helps to promote a strong identity and team based ethos.

School Community

From the start of my life at Knox, I have felt that I have been part of its small but precious community. I have been able to freely express my thoughts and opinions and express myself as a person. Saying this, not all students have had the same positive experience that I have had, whether that's through self-expression or their individuality. I strongly believe that everyone should feel part of this community, no matter what personal struggles they may be coping with, such as their sexuality or gender identification. I believe a way to help make these individuals feel more confident and comfortable around the school is to hold a 'diversity day', where everyone comes to school dressed in the colours that they believe expresses their own unique personality. We could then follow this by having a colour run at the end of the day, with all money raised going to an LGBT charity that provides support and advice to these young people that struggle to come to terms with who they may be. I believe showing support and acceptance will help these individuals feel less like outsiders and more integrated within this greatly diverse school.

S6 Help

As an S6 shortly applying for university, I still don't know exactly what I want to do, whether that is going down the medical or biological sciences route. I believe the school should not only help us apply for university through UCAS but also help us pick the right course that would best fit our abilities and suit our personalities. My proposal is that every student in S6 should have a one-to-one meeting with their guidance teacher, with or without their parents, before they pick their courses for university. Speaking to past pupils, they believe that they would have greatly benefitted from this approach. You sometimes need to hear an honest opinion about yourself from people other than your parents because their opinions are likely to be somewhat biased.

S1 Sports

Coming into S1 for me was quite a scary time since I was the only one from my school going to Knox which meant I hardly knew anyone. If it wasn't for the sports that I did, I don't believe I would have become so close with some of my greatest friends. It is also proven that playing a sport reduces the chance of developing mental illness disorders. I believe that a healthy body promotes a healthy mind, and so I aim to put forward the idea that every S1 pupil should be encouraged to take on an extracurricular team sport, such as hockey, rugby or basketball. Playing sport also helps you to develop some of the necessary life skills required to be able to function successfully in society, such as teamwork and tolerance.

Summary

It would be an honour and a privilege to undertake the role of head pupil at Knox Academy. I hope to be able to develop an even tighter knit school community by making all who attend more accepting and tolerant of each other, no matter what challenges I might be confronted with. Without each other, we couldn't have achieved half of what we already have. We are a school of individuals with many talents, but I hope to be able to bring these talents together to create a stronger team for the future benefit of the school and its students.