

Tom Riddell

Knox Academy | Head Pupil Manifesto



Who?

For the past five years Knox Academy has provided me with the opportunities and support I've needed to grow and develop; not only as a student but as a young adult. For this I will be eternally grateful.

And so, I feel it is only right that I give back to the school and make it my duty to ensure that each and every pupil has a positive and fulfilling school experience.

For the majority of my time at Knox I have been part of the Pupil Council/Parliament. This opened my eyes to the effectiveness of student representation. I learned that it is essential to the success of this school that every voice is heard no matter who they are or what they have to say. Here I developed invaluable skills in communication and teamwork. Being able to put forward ideas and opinions from my peers to leadership, and carrying through on promises became second nature. I believe that Knox has also helped me become more confident, positive and grounded as a person.

Together we foster a nurturing environment and it's my opinion that this is where our school is unique. We aim high, we don't pull each other down and we look beyond ourselves because...

We are Knox Academy.

Why?

A strong head pupil should not only know how to lead but also how to delegate, they must be self-aware, empathic and respectful. Because of the experiences I've gained from Knox and outside of school I believe I have these qualities.

Through captaining hockey at a regional level, I have developed key skills in communication and delegation, providing direction and support to teammates in high pressure situations, vital for any successful head pupil.

My 'front of house' work at Winton Castle has only broadened my skill set. The need for high standards and a keen attention to detail is essential and is something I strive to incorporate into my schoolwork and personal life.

During my time performing -tap dancing and playing piano- I have proven to myself that I can overcome nerves and deliver a professional performance; a key attribute of any head pupil and invaluable to the leadership team.

I believe the combination of these skills as well as my passion for our school would make me a committed head pupil, role model and ambassador for Knox Academy.

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What would I do?

Kickstart the "One School for all" campaign to further the school's inclusivity and positivity

Support BGE to National course transition through S6 course ambassadors



Implement a post Covid-19 strategy to combat the "hidden mental health pandemic"

Encourage student creativity and increase community engagement through the "Knox Academy Showcase"

#voteTomRiddell

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One school for all

Inclusivity is key to having an enjoyable and positive experience at school and although we have come a long way during my time at Knox, we can always do more to create a safer and more welcoming environment for all students. This is why I would introduce the “One school for all” campaign, working with bodies across the school community: pupil learning team, LGBT+ allies group and the pupil parliament as well as staff at Meadow Park to develop a more accepting and empowering school environment. The overarching aim of the campaign is to ensure every student feels confident and happy with who they are and receives without question equal opportunity to allow them to achieve their fullest potential whilst at Knox Academy

The Knox Academy showcase

For our creative students there is limited opportunity to show off their work to friends and family –especially for those in exam years sending work off to the SQA-. Therefore, I believe it would be beneficial to students to run a “degree show” style event each year: The “Knox Academy Showcase”. Initially we would hold exhibitions for the community from classes in the Expressive Arts department such as art, photography, drama & dance and design & manufacture with the hope to expand throughout the school and Meadow Park. This would provide students with the opportunity to show off the hard work they have put in year-round as well as allowing us to engage better with the community in a positive and informal fashion.

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Post Covid-19 mental health strategy

The Covid-19 pandemic has posed a new and serious threat to the country's mental health and it is evident that those most vulnerable to the psychological impacts of the pandemic are teenagers. To combat this complex and worrying issue I would first and foremost raise awareness of the new challenges one might face moving back into a more "normal" lifestyle. For many people there is a new-found anxiety returning to school and social life and this is something that a lot of people are not equipped to deal with on their own. Initially the most effective way of raising awareness would be through assemblies and students' SE classes where they would be informed of the "hidden mental health pandemic". This would open a much-needed dialogue between students and staff providing a safe and understanding space for support as well as reducing the stigma around talking about our feelings. Building on this I would intend to make full use of our specially trained mental health staff to setup and facilitate student support groups.

S6 course ambassadors

Looking back at my own transition from S3 to S4 I now realise what a huge and important step this is. By appointing course ambassadors from S6 who have taken a subject from National 5 to Advanced Higher, S3s would have the opportunity to discuss all subject options with someone who has been in their position before. This would take place at a coursing style event before subjects are chosen. The role of the ambassador(s) would then continue throughout the year where termly meetings could take place for now S4 students to have the opportunity to meet with their course ambassador(s) to talk over any issues or difficulties they are having within the subject and get the support they need.