

# HEAD PUPIL MANIFESTO

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## ABOUT ME

Since joining Knox Academy five years ago, I've watched myself grow in confidence and gain skills which I am able to use in school and will be able to continue to use out with school for the rest of my life. Throughout these years I have received a great amount of support in school from my teachers and peers; as someone who came to Knox with little to no confidence I have always valued this support very much. Additionally I feel as though I have always been encouraged to try new things in all aspects of the school whether that has been through my subjects or some extra curriculums. This has also benefited me greatly as some of things I love the most today are things I never would've seen myself doing five years ago as an S1. I believe that due to the opportunities and support I've received from Knox, I am the person I am today. Furthermore, I feel that since my time at Knox Academy is nearing an end, running for head pupil would be the perfect opportunity to give back to the school and teachers that have built me up as a person throughout my time at Knox. I would love to be given the chance to do what Knox has done for me, for others.

## WHAT COULD I BRING TO THE ROLE?

I believe that a head pupil should have a good sense of community, responsibility, commitment and kindness. Throughout my time at Knox I have taken up many different roles within and out with school that allow me to demonstrate these qualities. For example, I volunteered for tots and teens where I spent a morning every week in the playgroup in Knox looking after very young children. With this came huge responsibility, but being a very patient and caring person made this easier as I was able to understand their emotions and what they needed even if they weren't exactly able to tell me directly. I believe that these qualities would also help me in a role such as head pupil. Since June 2018, I have had a part time job in a very busy Cafe in Haddington. I had worked almost every single week since then up until the pandemic. I worked all the way through my N5s and Highers. This job has taught me many things but one of the most important things I've learnt from it is how much I enjoy helping people and making a difference even if it is just a small one. The busy nature of the cafe really taught me how to work well under pressure and how to remain level headed in stressful situations.

This job has shown me a great sense of community as I've built up meaningful relationships with regular customers and this is something I would also hope to do within school if elected. In 2019 I joined the senior girls netball team, this was something that was quite out of my comfort zone and despite the team not playing competitively - my confidence was built up so much. The team has taught me how to work even better in a group setting and always ensure that everybody is included and nobody is left out. I believe that qualities such as these are essential to being part of the leadership team as everybody's opinions and feelings matter and need to be voiced not just within the leadership team but within the school as a whole.

## MY POLICIES

Before writing my manifesto, I spoke to friends and members of the school community to gain a better understanding of what the other students of Knox Academy feel is important to them.

From these responses I gathered numerous suggestions which I have compiled into my manifesto policies. These policies are based on what my fellow pupils believe are relevant to what is happening right now and what we could implement into the school community to help everybody.

## CHARITIES COMMITTEE

Knox Academy has shown great support to many charities across the community and country such as the work for Poppy Scotland and The East Lothian Foodbank. When asking people what they'd like to see happen in the school for 2020/2021, I found that there was a common theme. Many people said they'd like to see more support in the school for different charities. Charities such as those who support LGBTQ+ matters and charities in support of the Black Lives Matter movement were particularly popular amongst many other deserving charities.

As somebody who has volunteered for local charities before I realise the importance of doing your bit to help. If elected, I would strive to create a charity committee which would consist of a group of pupils from all year groups who would meet every month or every few months to discuss and research different charities. We would gather information about each charity and share it with the rest of the school, we would then come to a conclusion as to which charity the school would like to focus on for that month/two months. We would find ways in which we are able to support this charity. The support from the school to the charities would come in many different forms such as not only donations of money through bake sales, quiz nights or raffles, but donations of time from us whether that be through volunteering etc (which would be beneficial to pupils too, to get a new experience and gain new skills through helping others).

## EXAM SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

Another topic which came up a lot in the responses from my peers was that they'd like to see an increase in support for pupils in Knox who will be sitting exams. Everybody copes with the stress of exams differently, some finding it more difficult than others. I was the first person in my family to sit exams and stay on to do highers and now advanced highers, I found the process so difficult, despite the encouragement from my family and teachers I did still struggle with revision and built up a lot of anxiety towards exams.

However what I would like to do if elected would be to have a group of senior pupils willing to support the younger year groups when it comes to revision techniques and taking care of their mental wellbeing when it comes to exams and studying for them. I believe that something like this would have benefitted me when it came to starting my N5s. This group of senior pupils could support the younger pupils in many ways such as coming into core classes for S3's and S4's to talk to them about how to revise, encourage different techniques and how to take care of themselves during the exam diet early on.

Another way the seniors could support the younger pupils would be to have a system where if these pupils were struggling with anything in particular, they could speak to their guidance teacher who would pair them up with an S6 who would be able to help them with a certain subject they are struggling with and provide them with ways that could help them with that certain subject. I feel that this would make pupils feel slightly more at ease about their subjects and help to grow their confidence.

## SUPPORT FOR YOUNGER PUPILS STRUGGLING TO GET BACK INTO A SCHOOL ROUTINE

When August comes around, we will have missed many months of school. This means many of us will find it difficult to get back into our usual routine as opposed to waking up later and staying inside all day. However I think that particularly the younger students may find it even harder to get back into a routine and concentrate in classes. Our new S1's may struggle to settle in with the excitement of starting a new school and meeting new people mixed with seeing their existing friends again after a few months. Although the new S1s are likely to have buddies with them for the first little while, I believe that the S1-3s could benefit from a bit of help at the start of the new school year from older pupils.

We could provide them with help with their school work for the first few weeks back at school at perhaps lunch time until they've gained back confidence and caught back up with their work and feel happy to be back at school working as they would have before.

# ENSURE THAT NECESSARY HYGINE PRECAUTIONS ARE CARRIED OUT

Following the pandemic, I know that when we return to school in august everyone will be more aware of the steps to basic hygiene that should be followed. This means that school life may not be the swift turn back to normality that we hope for. This could mean certain things will have to be done differently this year. If elected I would try to ensure that Knox Academy is a safe place to learn in.

We should ensure that things such as hand sanitiser are available in classrooms or we will encourage pupils to bring their own.

Big events within the school that we all love may have to be done differently this year, if they are allowed to happen at all, such as the christmas dance. If it is safe for it to take place, it may be a good idea to split the event up by year group, for example, a senior dance and a junior dance. However if it isn't able to be carried out at all, we could try to arrange a spring dance in place of it, if it was safe to do so.

## TIMELINE OF MY POLICES

Here is the timeline in which if elected I would hope to have carried out my polices by:

### **Support for younger pupils struggling to get back into a school routine:**

I would like to carry out this policy in the first few weeks of school to support the younger years as quickly as possible.

### **Ensuring necessary hygiene precautions are carried out:**

I would like for this too to be carried out within the first few weeks of school and for it to carry on throughout the school year.

### **Charities committee:**

I would like to have this up and running by around september/october.

### **Exam support for pupils:**

I would like to have this started by around october in order to help as many pupils in time for prelims.

I believe that my manifesto polices would benefit all people in the school and that I have created realistic polices which could be carried out in the timeline above. Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto.