

# Donald Bathgate 2019 Head Pupil Manifesto



Head  
pupil

## **About me**

Since my First Year at Knox Academy I have always looked to be involved in the leadership team, this school has given me an incredible amount of support over the six years I have attended and I see being involved in the leadership team as the perfect way to Return such a large favour.

I'm a passionate believer that Knox can always be improving and I believe with my proposals for changes and strong leadership skills that I am the right pupil to bring about these improvements.

The challenging role of head pupil requires several skills many of which I believe I possess. One of my most important qualities is my confidence in leading, I am always willing to tackle the role of leadership whether it be in a classroom situation or outside in activities such as rugby. I have always been involved in the role of leadership in rugby whether it be as captain or as a vice-captain. Being in these roles in rugby has allowed me to improve my skills in areas such as motivating individuals and cooperation within a team setting while still maintaining the role of leadership.

Since S1 I have sat in on the Pupil Council/Parliament every year I could and this has given me considerable experience with working with the Parliament as well as seeing the areas previous head pupils have succeeded and failed. I believe this will allow me to succeed where others have failed as I am aware of the challenges that have previously foiled other head pupils. The ability to utilise the Pupil Parliament is key to any head pupil being successful and my considerable experience sitting on the parliament will allow me to be effective in representing the wishes of the parliament as well as bringing about the required change.

A key aspect of the head pupil is the ability to be approachable to all as well as not being afraid to speak in front of people no matter what the situation. Delivering assemblies is a prime example of my ability to do this. I have given assemblies several times to the pupils of Knox Academy and gave an assembly to pupils at North Berwick High School when helping to get fellow candidate and friend of mine Angus Langlands elected to the Scottish Youth Parliament. This experience was one that ultimately challenged me and thrust me far out of my comfort zone. Overcoming this scary new experience has ultimately made me a stronger public speaker, more engaging with new situations and new people and most importantly a better candidate for head pupil.

I believe that a vote for me is a vote for change, a vote for policies that are achievable and aspirational and most importantly a vote for strong leadership that will represent pupils in the wider community as well as improving the school for pupils and staff alike.

## **Proposals**

### **1. House Games**

House pride has sadly been lost over the six years I have been at Knox Academy, this I believe is due to a lack of inter-house competition. The proposal of house games has been thrown around a lot in previous manifestos of candidates and I believe if it is properly implemented can be a policy that brings back the house pride lost and create greater inter-house competition. My house games would ideally run on the last Friday of each month with the 4 period day being split in half. The first two periods would be for the previous months winners rewards, the rewards will depend on the time of year and the wishes of the pupils involved. The rewards would be strictly limited to those who take an active role in the games throughout the year with those choosing to leave the school or use it as a

'free period' exempt from the rewards morning. The last two periods would be the 'games', this would hopefully involve quizzes and sporting events such as 5 a-side and possibly a 'dance-a-thon' or the like. The houses who score highest in the quiz and show excellent sporting prowess will be rewarded next month. This proposal, with the support of the school and teachers hopefully, will allow for pupils to succeed outside the classroom and gain house points as well as having a good time with classmates.

## **2. Pupil led study support**

Supported studies sessions run by teachers have been a fantastic help to all students during the stressful run-up to exams as well as being a fantastic opportunity to catch up on missed course work. These sessions are not always able to run daily and sometimes may only occur once a week. During exam time this may simply not be enough for certain pupils. I believe to overcome the unchangeable problem of teacher unavailability the role should be handed to students to organize study groups. These groups would ideally span all levels and be headed by 6th pupils who can, as well as study, potentially offer support to younger students within the sessions. The groups will allow senior pupils to involve themselves with younger students and offer benefits to those who are more comfortable studying with friends and allow them to further their knowledge outside class time.

## **3. Merit system revamp**

The merit system at Knox has sadly evolved into a system of punishment instead of the rewarding aims that are possible with it. Often pupils are threatened with demerits for dress code and other failures to meet classroom standards. To ensure a system that is used to its maximum potential a change is needed. As it is with many school matters I believe this process can be driven by pupils and teachers alike through focus groups involving pupils as well as teacher input on issues that could potentially arise. This new system of reward will hopefully encourage house pride and create a greater inter-house rivalry as merits will have more significance within the school.

## **4. A more effective and representative Pupil Parliament**

The former pupil council was sadly associated with mediocrity and failure to fully deliver change and act on suggestions from within. As a member of the Pupil Council I first hand experienced such failures and although strides were made to improve the running of the council/parliament last year further change is needed to create a group that can fully represent the pupils in the school. If I am elected I will set clear goals for the Parliament this year in what I want to achieve and what the pupils themselves wish to achieve, as well as slowly filtering out frequently recurring suggestions with no foreseeable solution e.g. dress code. The parliament I would head would be a far more open and inclusive Parliament with groups that were introduced last year, including Duke of Edinburgh and the LGBTQ+ group, coupled with new additions such as representatives from all faculties around the school to allow all the concerns of pupils in the school are heard.

## **5.LGBT Silver Charter Award**

The LGBT group is one of the newest at Knox but this does little to diminish the great impact this group can and hopefully will within the school community. The group is one of the most important in creating a Knox that supports all pupils and creates an inclusive school that promotes a positive message. This policy will be reliant on the fantastic work already carried out by the LGBT Scotland group as well as hopefully educating the whole school on an issue that is of significant importance, this will lead to a whole school drive in obtaining the Silver Charter and showing Knox to be at the forefront of inclusiveness within in schools.

## **6.Mentor/Buddy system**

The mentor system is a policy often talked about by past leadership candidates which have never truly been fulfilled. I see this as a great shame as first year can often be a daunting time for most and the greatest comfort can be advice and support from fellow pupils who have encountered such experiences and hopefully overcome these tough times. Such a system would also help create a strong link between the often separated senior phase students and broad general education pupils, helping to create a welcoming school and harbour the community spirit of Knox Academy. For such a policy to work fifth and sixth year pupils, who have applied, will be paired with first years, who have also applied, creating a personal relationship and offering much-needed advice to younger pupils. There are also several benefits for sixth year pupils including a fantastic opportunity to improve a CV.

**Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto and please vote Donald Bathgate for your Head Pupil!!**