



Head Pupil Manifesto 2019 - Sophie Charbonnier

Why you should vote for me

There are twelve amazing candidates up for the role of Head Pupil this year so why should you vote for me?

The past five years at Knox Academy have definitely shaped me into the ambitious and confident student that I am today. As a result of this, it would be a privilege to have the opportunity to give back to the school and to be involved in moving the school forward over the next year. As Head Pupil, my goal would be to ensure that the pupils coming to Knox Academy after me will have the opportunity to perform to their full potential.

I am already aware that high school isn't exactly a walk in the park and the education system isn't always for everyone. Exam stress, falling out with friends and other personal struggles are all inevitable parts of school but with the right support and guidance, these issues can be dealt with properly or made easier. My policies will aim to make Knox Academy a place where everyone has a chance to succeed no matter what path they choose.

How I embody the school values

Ambition

I would consider myself an ambitious person in life, and not just academically. I would love to think that some of my enthusiasm has rubbed off on those who know me. I am currently completing my Gold DofE as well as progressing through music examinations with viola and piano. On top of keeping up with school work and extracurricular, I also work as a waitress in a local cafe most weekends. My motivation to succeed and time management skills will be key to fulfilling my policies. If I am voted into the pupil leadership team I will hopefully be able to contribute in some way to make Knox Academy an even better place to learn.



Respect

I believe that this is one of the most important school values because if we don't appreciate and consider those around us, then it becomes even harder to achieve our own personal goals. Despite working hard independently to succeed at Knox Academy, working with teachers and students is just as important. Support from staff and encouragement from my fellow pupils have both been fundamental to my learning experience at school.

I work with the general public when I volunteer and when I go to work. These jobs have allowed me to gain more experience working with colleagues and strangers thus improving my communication and cooperation with others. Respecting everyone and their ideas is a key life skill to have regardless of what path you take in the future.

Community





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I have been involved in the school for the past five years in many different ways. Thanks to Knox Academy, I started playing hockey and have been a part of the school team since S1. I have also been involved in two schools and two regional orchestras which wouldn't have happened without the school giving me that opportunity which allowed me to socialise with pupils from other parts of East Lothian and improve on my cooperation skills.

As part of my Duke of Edinburgh's Award, I started volunteering over two years ago which led me to work in two local charity shops and participate in hockey coaching. I also spent a week last summer at East Lothian Special Needs Playscheme (ELSNP) where I worked with three children who had a range of disabilities. Working with the public and younger children has allowed me to develop my people skills and become more approachable.

Working with someone while knowing you are benefiting their life in a certain way is incredibly rewarding. It has made me more selfless and has given me a better outlook on life. In general, volunteering has allowed me to not only give back to the school and the community but also better myself as a person.

My policies

- **Monthly Pupil Survey:** Improving communication in school
- **Knox Academy's first Model United Nations Conference**
- **Exam preparation for S3/4:** Making students exam ready
- **Wellbeing Week:** Encouraging a happier and healthier place to learn
- **Expanding the School's Eco Relations**

Monthly Pupil Survey

At the moment, we have an excellent pupil leadership team which encourages communication between a group of students and teachers. Despite this, I believe more of an effort needs to be made to get students' feelings and ideas across to the teachers and management team. A monthly survey which would be sent around to registration classes would encourage pupils to openly discuss their current feelings about Knox Academy. It could be done by the teacher or as an anonymous online questionnaire. This would allow not only those pupils that are put forward for the leadership team but also others that aren't part of it to express their views and have them listened to. This would hopefully better represent all the pupils at Knox Academy, especially demographics that may feel as though they are left out or not listened to by the school. Involving and listening to *all* pupils would allow Knox Academy to become more inclusive and perform to its full potential.

Knox Academy Model United Nations Conference

Before I explain this policy, there are probably a few people reading this that are wondering "What is Model UN?".

It is where students from many different schools act as delegates from the countries that are part of the UN and take part in mock committees. For just under a year, I have been a part of Knox Academy's Model UN group which was started up by Mr Miller, and I have been lucky enough to attend two conferences so far.



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"But doesn't this only involve a small number of people in the school, Sophie?" I hear you ask.

The reason I would work so hard to make this event happen is that there is a chance for everyone to get involved. Running a conference would involve a lot of pupil participation as well as a wide range of skills being required making it cross-curricular. The art department could get involved to design the rooms, Computing could create a video for the assembly, music could perform at the closing ceremony, the list is endless.



Knox Academy could then give their own pupils and pupils from other schools an educational experience as well as allowing the school to gain more contacts for future events. The pupils involved would have the chance to make new friends from outside of Knox Academy as well as gain social skills and confidence that will help them throughout their life.

I can honestly say that being a part of the school's Model UN group has been one of the best things I have done since coming to Knox Academy. The skill set that I have acquired is phenomenal on top of the friends that I have made and the knowledge that I have acquired about how part of the world is run. Being able to pass this experience on to my fellow pupils would allow me to leave school next year with the knowledge that I made a difference to someone's time here at Knox Academy.

Exam preparation for S3/4

The idea of exams is scary and the workload that comes along with them can be extremely overwhelming. I believe that if those taking exams are made more aware of what they are and what they involve, they can have a more relaxed approach to preparing for them.



I would like to introduce a group of S6 students who could help with subject choice and preparation for the first year of exams. These pupils would be available to answer any questions and to give support to those with worries. We would firstly meet with the students as a group allowing them to voice any concerns and then the seniors would give them some general advice. If "one to one" help is needed, pupils would then have the chance to talk to S6s on their own and so the seniors would be able to provide more personal support and advice on the issue/s. Students may also be guided towards teachers or other support that is inside or outwith the school. If possible, an online anonymous question and answer service could be provided, to allow others a chance to get help even if they don't feel confident enough to ask for it themselves.

This system of support from senior pupils would let younger students receive first-hand information from those who have recently gone through exams and so setting them up for success in their own academic journey.

Wellbeing Week





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As you are already aware, we now have an Eco-week which is planned to happen annually. This has been an amazing way of educating students on environmental issues as well as forcing many to think about their own personal impact on the planet.

Despite the school's approach to mental and physical wellbeing improving, I believe we need to emphasise it more. Simply educating students on the problems faced by young people isn't enough – we need to focus on the school's wellbeing as a whole too. Having a week dedicated to this would not only raise people's awareness of current issues faced by pupils but also allow them to find solutions and advice if they need it. It would consist of assemblies on how we can collectively improve our mental and physical health, videos for registration classes, and lunchtime activities to help educate students.

After all, exams are important but how can we learn if our minds and bodies aren't healthy?

Expanding the School's Eco Relations

After getting in contact with Friends of the Earth East Lothian who are running a Climate Change cafe on the 22nd of June, they are willing to get the pupils of Knox Academy more involved in the climate movement. Working with local groups like Friends of the Earth East Lothian would encourage pupil participation when it comes to important issues as well as simultaneously raising awareness.



As a student of Knox Academy, I am very proud of the Eco-Committee that Miss Laudi initiated after she first started teaching here. I believe that the pupils and the school as a whole would greatly benefit from having more outside connections with environmental organisations in order to expand the influence of the Eco-Committee. Friends of the Earth East Lothian is just a start as I would like to build partnerships with other groups in the local area in order to further our already amazing approach to environmental issues here at Knox Academy.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read my manifesto and I hope you will consider voting for me in the Head Pupil elections at Knox Academy, 2019.

Thank you.