

What Matters To Us At Knox Academy

*** **AMBITION** *** **RESPECT** *** **COMMUNITY** ***

A consultation on school values was carried out during December 2017. Staff, parents and carers were invited to respond to an online questionnaire, while pupils were asked to share their thoughts during an extended registration. All register classes gave a response; 40 parents responded; 32 staff responded. The same three questions were asked of everyone:

- Q1 What values are important at Knox Academy?
- Q2 What can we do in school to promote and celebrate these values in our everyday practice?
- Q3 What do you think is the purpose of education?

Respondents were also given the opportunity to add any further comments if they wished. Pupils, parents and staff were very clear that the values of **ambition**, **respect** and **community** matter to us at Knox Academy. Below is a bit more detail about why each of these matter, as well as a selection of responses to the other questions in the consultation.

Q1 What values are important at Knox Academy?

AMBITION

A common theme in the consultation was the importance of being **ambitious** and placing a high value on learning. It was pleasing to see this mentioned by so many respondents. Staff and parents must have high aspirations for our young people if we are to encourage those high aspirations in the pupils themselves. Tying in with **ambition**, respondents also mentioned:

- ✓ giving it your all; trying your hardest; strive to learn; hard work; effort; perseverance; determination; resilience; achieve the best you can; aspirational; ready for learning; commitment to learning; constant learning; excellence for all.

RESPECT

Being **respectful** to each other and to our environment is something that we already talk about a lot at Knox Academy: **respect** is at the heart of the warm, positive relationships in our school community. It was very pleasing, then, to see that almost every respondent considered **respect** to be one of their top values. Tying in with **respect**, respondents also mentioned:

- ✓ kindness; manners; courtesy; friendship; getting along; being helpful; fairness; don't be judgemental.

COMMUNITY

The sense of community at Knox Academy has always been strong, both within the school itself and in our links with the wider Haddington area community. There is no doubt that this is valued by respondents, as many commented on this. Tying in with **community**, respondents also mentioned:

- ✓ inclusive; sense of belonging; large educational family; teamwork; sharing and celebrating our successes together; everyone is equal.

Q2 What can we do in school to promote and celebrate these values in our everyday practice?

Pupils

- ✓ Update the PSE programme to include values explicitly
- ✓ Have values assemblies
- ✓ S6 team deliver presentation on values
- ✓ Change the merit/demerit system
- ✓ Make more of the House system to build identity and sense of community
- ✓ Teachers talk about values more, incorporate them into class work
- ✓ Have rewards for carrying out values, not merits
- ✓ Big signs and posters

Parents and Carers

- ✓ Reward good behaviour, not just academic achievement
- ✓ Celebrate success in assemblies, updates, website
- ✓ Make values language part of the culture, part of everyday conversation
- ✓ Staff model behaviours
- ✓ Promote values in assemblies
- ✓ Be firm, fair and consistent with behaviour
- ✓ Challenge inappropriate behaviour
- ✓ Focus on behaviour to encourage respect
- ✓ Compassion and support for those finding it difficult to live up to values
- ✓ More opportunities for collaboration and co-operation
- ✓ Encourage leadership in all pupils
- ✓ Encourage growth mindset
- ✓ Promote gender equality
- ✓ Local community projects; volunteering to develop new skills
- ✓ Guest speakers
- ✓ Support good mental health in and outwith curriculum

Staff

- ✓ Be aspirational for all pupils
- ✓ Attainment for all agenda at the centre; needs explicit leadership
- ✓ Celebrate positive behaviour and pupils who demonstrate values
- ✓ Talk about values at every opportunity, including in curriculum; integrate into our everyday language
- ✓ Embed restorative relationships to foster good relationships
- ✓ Support one another
- ✓ House groups foster sense of belonging
- ✓ Tasks/challenges for register classes as part of House identity
- ✓ Give ownership back to pupils: get them to come up with events etc to celebrate success
- ✓ Celebrate success more; lots of praise
- ✓ Displays of pupil achievements
- ✓ Get wider achievement information from parents
- ✓ Interesting, engaging lessons
- ✓ Rights Respecting Schools values
- ✓ Focus weeks on different aspects of the values, tied to assemblies and class work
- ✓ Model behaviours and values
- ✓ Positive news stories in local press
- ✓ Constantly encourage pupils to believe in their own abilities

Q3 What do you think is the purpose of education?

Pupils

- ✓ Job; good career; opportunities for later life; educate future workforce; good grades; university; money
- ✓ Develop understanding and knowledge; be smart; make informed decisions; understand how things work and have power to change them
- ✓ Develop skills, e.g. time management and team work; improve communication skills
- ✓ Learn from our mistakes; develop/grow as a person; live life to the fullest, have purpose; speak for yourself; challenge yourself; learn to keep yourself safe; be independent
- ✓ Make world better place; learn how to treat people; improve society; respect other people's views, cultures, beliefs; help the community; lead as generation of adults; support those who need it; create responsible citizens; be nice; learn morals; promote equality and tolerance; encourage acceptance of others; expand understanding, knowledge and perception of social/political/economic world

Parents and Carers

- ✓ Give young people good start in life and learning; fit YP for future career; give YP skills for future education and jobs; ensure YP are at set standard for 3 Rs; ensure individual reaches full potential; stretch YP to be best they can be; literate; bring out academic and creative best; good career; means to an end, bridge to achieve future potential
- ✓ Challenge and excite; encourage YP to question and learn; stretch imagination; teach how to question and discover to open up possibilities; expand knowledge so YP can help, understand and create; develop minds, teach YP to think for themselves; instil basis of lifelong learning
- ✓ Equip YP with life skills; produce well-rounded human beings with self-worth to realise potential; independent; encourage individuality; create all-round confident and educated individuals who respect others; become tolerant individual; how to integrate, communicate and work with others; build confidence
- ✓ Give YP knowledge including social values; reinforce values of home; inspire YP to help others and improve the world; illustrate how to be part of community; contribute to wider community in positive way; more involved with community; become positive members of society; be a resource
- ✓ Provide choices, opportunities; look at other ways of developing YP outside the box; expand horizons

Staff

- ✓ Enable YP to achieve qualifications; encourage YP to be ambitious; give opportunities to achieve, improve and progress themselves; open future pathways; build experience for chosen profession; promotion of each YP's academic needs and abilities; help YP realise their ambitions; prepare for workplace; qualifications, knowledge and understanding → certification; fulfil potential
- ✓ Prepare YP to engage with world and think critically; prepare YP for future, whatever it brings; allow YP to thrive in safe, positive environment → resilient and motivated; give YP knowledge, skills, optimism and resilience → thrive and be happy; equip YP with transferable skills; produce confident individuals who can problem-solve; produce resilient young adults; guide YP to be well-rounded, responsible, confident and happy adults; build vital social, mental and emotional skills; interpersonal skills; skills, values and attributes → happy and productive members of society; build resourcefulness, resilience, ambition; develop ability to critically evaluate → desire to seek improvement; build resilient individuals to deal with situations and seek resolution
- ✓ Foster love of learning; open minds; inspire, encourage and challenge YP in learning; learn to learn
- ✓ Encourage YP to be caring citizens; provide YP with real view of world; make positive contribution; produce responsible adults who can add to society; growing appreciation of selves, community and their place in it; teach about world, achievements and history of humanity; provide emotional and mental tools to discover world; socialisation, becoming part of society, passing on cultural and societal values, norms and traditions; prepare YP to become balanced citizens, able to cope in outside world
- ✓ Offer opportunities regardless of barriers; encourage YP to expand horizons; inclusion, integration

Q4 Any additional comments

Parents and Carers

Positive

- ✓ Staff very caring, willing to go above and beyond
- ✓ Keep up the great work you all do
- ✓ Thank you to everyone who makes the effort to provide a decent education for my children
- ✓ Parents are fully supportive of staff
- ✓ Hard work and dedication of staff is appreciated
- ✓ Extra study sessions after school are much appreciated
- ✓ Very pleased with the school so far
- ✓ School is well on its way to achieving these values
- ✓ Learning process for achieving is great
- ✓ Expecting high achievement breeds high achievement
- ✓ Knox Academy is already working on pupils' views
- ✓ Appreciate flexibility in subject choice
- ✓ Love involvement of local community projects
- ✓ Number of fun days and trips show that good behaviour is rewarded

Negatives/Suggestions for Improvement

- ✓ Need to encourage YP to read suitable age-relevant books, including classics
- ✓ Not enough homework; little marking of homework; more consistency in homework needed
- ✓ Not enough exam practice or learning how to revise
- ✓ Provide more opportunities for S1 to work in cross-class groups
- ✓ Challenge the uniform code more
- ✓ There is an element in the school with no interest/respect for values; lack of respect in some relationships
- ✓ Low-level indiscipline in some classes
- ✓ Have a 3-strike rule so YP learn consequences to their actions
- ✓ Knox Academy has different rules for different YP
- ✓ Head Teacher's updates show the school is proud of sports and charity work; YP who are just well-behaved and good academically don't attract notice. Could there be a better balance?
- ✓ Don't let all pupils out at lunch; offer more healthy food
- ✓ Would be good to see Knox Academy at the heart of the local community, respected and valued by all
- ✓ Survey questions not particularly clear; in future, include someone with professional experience in framing questions

I would like to pass on my sincere thanks to all pupils, parents, carers and staff who took the time to respond to this consultation on our school values and what matters to the Knox Academy community. Whilst only a selection of your comments is included here, please be assured that all your responses are being taken into account as we shape the way forward for our 4 Key Priorities:

- Deliver high quality teaching and learning
- Support the needs of all learners
- Foster an ethos of ambition
- Provide leadership opportunities for all.

Lauren Rodger, Head Teacher
February 2018