

Courageous Advocacy at St. Luke's

Intent

Courageous Advocacy is the act of speaking out against an issue of injustice, often on behalf of those whose voice is not heard.

Within the context of St. Luke's School Courageous Advocacy is closely linked to our vision, values and aims, all of which have been generated from Micah 6:8 which asks the question, 'what does the Lord require of you?' The answer is, 'to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8).

The following document explains the theological underpinning of our vision statement.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qggH2ZM9TvqUTbAK9vHVbv9Ki1Bp4pwQt9NtQ_naj8I/edit

At St. Luke's we believe that Courageous Advocacy begins with being informed about an issue, however it must move beyond knowledge to understanding, having a voice and taking action. Within this we are careful to remain age-appropriate and politically impartial. At St. Luke's we recognise that it requires a sense of courage and resilience to believe that you can make a change to local and global injustice.

The main document which guides our practice at St. Luke's is:

Courageous Advocacy

Caroline Weir Global Neighbours Programme Coordinator Christian Aid with an Introduction by Derek Holloway School Character and SIAMS Development Manager Church of England Education Office May 2021

https://cofefoundation.contentfiles.net/media/assets/file/courageous-advocacy-_Nov13_YLda1AP.pdf

Implementation

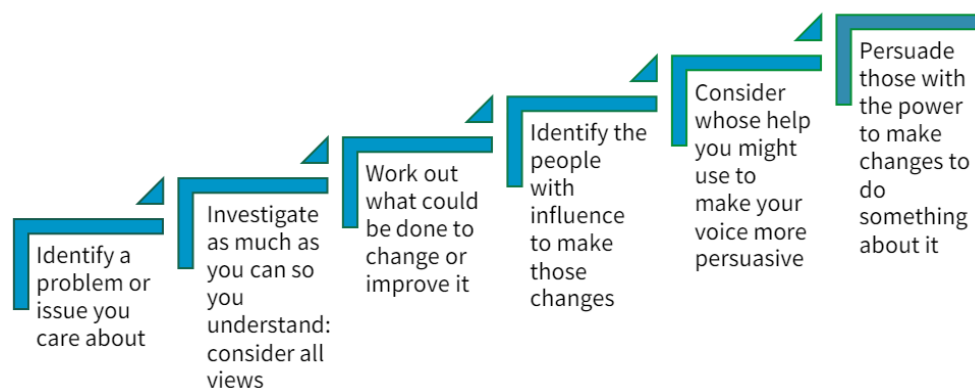
At St. Luke's we have sought to identify issues or concerns that have arisen from within the pupil body and the local community. These concerns have often been motivated by personal experiences and have generated a degree of anxiety and sadness. In response we have endeavoured to frame Courageous Advocacy in terms of hope and aspiration, creating a sense of confidence regarding change. We have also sought to move beyond personal and local concerns to consider wider global aspects.

St. Luke's has worked hard to embed Courageous Advocacy into both curricular, and extracurricular activities. We have also embedded it into our times of Collective Worship. In addition we have created committees or focus groups around the key areas to maintain momentum. These are the Justice Committee, the Eco Committee and the Food Group. These committees or groups are democratically elected and represent the whole school.

The key areas of concern currently being addressed within St. Luke’s are Education4Change (which focuses on racism and prejudice), ecological or environmental change and damage, homelessness, food poverty and more recently gender equality.

The following diagrams used for guidance and tracking are taken from the key document highlighted above.

A set of simple steps like the ones below may prove a useful guide for pupils:



Types of courageous advocacy

There are so many different forms that advocacy can take, but they can be broadly grouped into certain types:

1.	Awareness raising	<i>The whole school took part in The Climate Coalition’s ‘Show the Love’ campaign. Pupils assembled on the school field in the shape of a huge heart and used a drone to take an aerial picture. They tweeted this picture and sent it out with a press release to local media.</i>
2.	Community influencing	<i>The school holds an open assembly at the end of each term. The pupils themselves give a presentation on an issue that they care about – with appeals for wider community action.</i>
3.	Lifestyle changes	<i>Single-use plastic bottles are banned in school and each pupil is provided with a refillable bottle to use. More water fountains are installed around school.</i>
4.	Consumer power	<i>When the school boiler needs to be replaced, senior leaders agree that they should opt for a much greener biomass boiler. There is an initial outlay, but costs will be recuperated over time. The financial and ethical case is made for this and agreement sought.</i>
5.	Engaging with decision-makers	<i>After finding out about the plight of refugees, pupils write to the local MP, appealing to her to ensure that more is done to tackle the refugee crisis.</i>

Impact

At St. Luke’s Courageous Advocacy encourages our pupils to think widely and deeply about issues. It gives them the opportunity, in line with our model of spirituality, to ‘wonder’ about

local and global issues, asking the why questions; it allows them to 'reflect' and then 'take action'.

Courageous Advocacy empowers our pupils to understand political processes and their own rights and responsibilities in society. This breaks the cycle of anxiety and sadness and replaces it with creativity and hope as pupils aspire to find solutions, (personal/local or global) that will bring about change.

Through the work done in Courageous Advocacy our pupils are able to identify where power is located and how decisions are made, they are also able to express themselves confidently and articulately with decision makers and others.

Our pupils are the biggest indicators of the impact of Courageous Advocacy, they are passionate, readily and confidently engaging with challenges that they encounter.

As a school we amend our curriculum, policy and procedures in order to support the work covered in Courageous Advocacy and this helps to embed new principles and develop character.