**What is the Make Your Mark ballot?**

Later this school year Members of UK Youth Parliament will come together to debate and decide, at our meeting in the House of Commons, the most important issue to campaign on for the year ahead. The UK Youth Parliament is the only other group of people that is allowed to sit in the House of Commons. This vote will prioritise the issues for the debate in the House of Commons (subject to a vote by MPs and Covid restrictions), but the debate must include at least 2 UK wide topics due to the devolved nature of UK democracy.

There are 2 votes on the ballot paper this year (1 vote on UK/Devolved topics and 1on Local topics). The top local topic will go on the MK Youth Ballot issues paper for February 2021 which will include more specific local issues. You can also tell us of any other local issue that are raised in discussions.

**What is the UK Youth Parliament?** Run by young people for young people, The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their voice in creative ways to bring about social change. The UKYP is made up of over 300 MYPs (Members of Youth Parliament), who are elected by their peers in youth elections throughout the UK. Once elected, MYPs organise events and projects, run campaigns and influence decision makers on the issues which matter most to young people.

MK has 2 Members of Youth Parliament who work as part of MK Youth Cabinet (MKYCAB) and have been working on the issues voted on last year, End Knife Crime and Climate Change, along with Feeling Safe in MK and Affordable things to do, (more info on MKYCAB’s [website](http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/YCAB))

**Who can vote in Make Your Mark?**

Young people aged between 11-18 can take part. We are looking for as many young people to debate and vote on the issues as possible.

**What does my school/college/youth group need to do?**

We need as many of your young people to take part in the ballot as possible. Just follow these simple steps:

1. Go thought this issue
2. Get students to discuss the issues
3. Get as many young people to vote as possible. You can do this through a show of hands
4. Total up the results and record on the tally sheet below
5. Return to the member of staff coordinating the vote

**Who makes decisions about what issues?**

Decisions that affect things like your education, healthcare and transport are made by different groups of people depending on where you live in the UK. The power to make some decisions is shared between the UK Parliament in London, the Scottish Parliament, the Assemblies in Northern Ireland and Wales, and some Mayors in England **(Devolved issues).** However, other decisions that affect all of the UK can only be made by the UK Parliament in London **(UK issues).**

**Each 11-18 year old gets 2 votes: 1 UK Topic and 1 Local Topic**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UK/Devolved Topics** | **Tally of Votes** | **Total** |
| **1.   Support Our Mental Health** - More money should be given for young people’s mental health. We should be offered mental health support in schools and ensure that teachers know about mental health. (Devolved topic) |  |  |
| **2.   Free University** - We should invest in the young people of today by providing free university. The alternative is that young people will suffer financial hardship and not reach their full potential. (Devolved topic) |  |  |
| **3.   Tackle Child Poverty** - We have a responsibility to end the system trapping 1 in 4 young people in poverty. No child has caused poverty, and they should be able to thrive. (Devolved topic) |  |  |
| **4.   Stop Plastic Pollution** - If we do not take action now, it is predicted that waste plastics will outweigh fish in our oceans by 2050. Let’s reduce single-use and non-essential plastics. (Devolved topic) |  |  |
| **5.   Increase Racial Awareness in the Curriculum** - In order to build a better future together we need to teach our young people the truth about the racism in past. The curriculum should tell the truth about racism. (Devolved topic) |  |  |
| **6.   Take Action on the Climate Emergency** - we should transform society and the economy to be green and sustainable to tackle the climate and ecological crisis. Let’s protect the planet and our future. (UK wide topic) |  |  |
| **7.   Votes at 16** - The voting age must be lowered to 16. At 16 we can join the army and get married; we should be allowed to elect those who represent us. (UK wide topic) |  |  |
| **8.   Tackle Discrimination and Hate Crime in the UK** - Discrimination has been allowed to flourish for too long in the UK. The government should help us to tackle hate crime and ensure it is punished appropriately. (UK wide topic) |  |  |
| **9.   Include Young People in the Plan for Covid-19 Recovery** - Include us in planning for our future. Young people’s mental health, the green recovery, education and employment should be central to Covid-19 recovery. We must be involved in the conversation. (UK wide topic) |  |  |
| **10. Protect Human Rights** - The Human Rights of all, and especially of young people, need to be protected. The UK is proud of its history of protecting human rights and this must continue. (UK wide topic) |  |  |

**Each 11-18 year old gets 2 votes: 1 UK Topic and 1 Local Topic**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Topics** | **Tally of Votes** | **Total** |
| **1.   Access to training and jobs**- because of Covid some jobs will change, others that exist now might not exist in the future. All young people need to have the right training opportunities to get jobs in the future. |  |  |
| **2.   Young people’s voice should be heard in creating local services**- even though under 18s can’t vote they should be included in decision affecting them. |  |  |
| **3.   Leisure and culture**- art, sport and music are great for our mental and physical health. Lots of services which give young people an opportunity to take part in leisure and culture are at risk of closing. |  |  |
| **4.   End the health postcode lottery** - in some parts of the country people live longer and are healthier than others. This isn’t fair and should be fixed |  |  |
| **5.   Improve places to go, and things to do for young people**- Young people should be involved in deciding what youth activities and services should be available |  |  |
| **6.   Access to technology and broadband for learning –** more learning is happening remotely, people can assume that young people have access to tech and broadband. If learning becomes a mixture of classroom and online then all young people will need the right technology and broadband |  |  |
| **7.   Childhood obesity and food poverty**- healthy food should be cheaper and more easily available |  |  |
| **8.   Homelessness**- Covid might make renting and owning a home less secure, so plans should be in place and money available to ensure people/families aren’t made homeless |  |  |
| **9.   Domestic Violence**- lockdown has meant that many people have been trapped in homes that are dangerous for them. Families, and especially young people, could have faced more violence in 2020 |  |  |
| **10. Transport**- post-covid our need to travel will change. We should review big investment in national transport schemes and look if this money should be spent more locally. |  |  |

**Please feel free to add any other MK specific issues that students raise in your discussions here but do not vote on them.**