NP15.1 Policy and Process for the Award for a Bursary by the Newton Bursary Fund

General

Newton Prep was founded in 1991. It is an inclusive community with children from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures. Today there are over 650 boys and girls in the School and at any one time between 12 and 15 pupils receive financial assistance from the Newton Bursary Fund (the "Fund"), some of whom pay fees of less than £100 per year.

This policy covers the Parents' relationship with both the School and the Fund and was drawn up with input from the Fund's Trustees.

Since the School's foundation, its Chairman and Head have been committed to broadening access to the School by offering eligible parents means-tested, financial assistance with the payment of school fees. Such financial assistance is known as a bursary. A bursary is a reduction of fees of up to 99%. The level of bursary award depends on the financial, compassionate or other relevant circumstances of the applicants.

Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Trustees of the Newton Bursary Fund, which was established as a registered charity (no. 1013843) in 1991. The Trustees (described in more detail below) will calculate an initial award level in relation to a family's financial and other circumstances (e.g. their savings, investments and realisable assets, as well as their income, the size of their family, any other dependents and like factors). Bursaries are subject to an annual review of parental means; and in subsequent years, awards may be varied upwards or downwards, depending on changes to a particular family's circumstances. In order to be considered for a bursary, a child must have done well in the School's academic assessments, usually achieving scores that would place them in the top half of the relevant year group at the School.

The Fund is fortunate to have significant funds, designated to widen access to the School, and in most years it has been able to satisfy all applications for bursary support from parents of children accepted by the School. Bursaries are available to children entering the Upper School i.e., typically into Years 3 to 6 but also, by exception, to children going into Year 2. Bursaries awarded in Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 are reviewed annually but are normally valid until the end of Year 6. The awards will be reviewed for pupils who plan to stay at Newton Prep for Years 7 and 8; bursarial assistance may continue into Years 7 and 8 provided the conditions stipulated by the Newton Bursary Fund are met. Bursaries awarded in Year 7 are valid for two years, until the end of Year 8.

Requests for a bursary usually fall into two categories:

- Applicants to the School where parents are unable to fund school fees (in full or in part) and where entrance to the School is contingent on success in the relevant School test or exam.

- Existing pupils where a change in parents' circumstances **after the point of entry** has resulted in an inability to pay school fees in full or in part and would result in the child being withdrawn part way through a critical stage of their education.

New Applicants to the School

Information about Bursaries

Information for prospective parents about the possibility of gaining means-tested financial support with the payment of the School's fees is included in the School's Admissions Policy and on the School's website. Further information may also be obtained from parent tours and from:

- The School's Head of Admissions on 020 7720 4091 extension 1207 or admissions@newtonprep.co.uk and from
- The School's Bursar, on 020 7720 4091 extension 1204 or Bursar@newtonprep.co.uk.

The Bursary Application Process

Children must be applying to join the School for a place in any year from 3 to 7 inclusive, and, in exceptional circumstances, Year 2. Parents may register their child at any time up to 9th September of the year before entry.

For those late to the registration process, we operate a waiting list system.

Late applications will reduce the likelihood of an award being made.

To register your child for admission to Newton Prep with bursary support, please complete the Registration Form from the School's website:

http://www.newtonprepschool.co.uk/1089/admissions/registration-process

For more information about registration and bursaries, please contact the Head of Admissions, Mrs. Lucy Dickson (contact details above).

Bursaries are awarded at the discretion of the Trustees of the Newton Bursary Fund, the chair of whom is a past parent and who include the Head, Chairman of the School Council, Co-Chair of the PTA (a current parent), a past pupil and a past parent. As Clerk to the Fund's Trustees, the Bursar is responsible for the management and coordination of the process by which bursary applications are considered.

- Step One: Parents seeking a bursary are required to complete the Bursary Application Form.

This form is intended to establish whether the household has sufficient means to pay all, some or none of the required school fees. The form, which requests details of assets and borrowings and income and expenditure, must be accompanied by full documentary evidence to support the application. The completed form, together with the necessary documentary evidence, must be submitted to the Bursar.

- Step Two: All applications will be subject to a home visit (see Annex A) completed by the Chair of the Fund (or another Trustee) and e representative from the Bursary in order to ensure the information has been correctly interpreted.

- Step Three: The Bursar collates all the information about an application. This includes financial details together with the information gathered about the prospective pupil at the assessment and interview stage. An initial recommendation is prepared by the Bursar for consideration by the Fund's Trustees but the application is discussed in full by the Trustees and a final decision is reached.

- Step Four: Parents are notified in writing of the Trustees' decision.

- Step Five: Parents offered a bursary are then required to sign a letter accepting the offer and agreeing to any conditions relating to the bursary.

Prospective parents should not assume that an initial bursary award will continue throughout their child's time at Newton as parental means are subject to annual review. However, where there are no material changes in financial circumstances, parents can assume that the level of award will not change greatly from year to year.

The Case for Assistance

The Fund's Trustees consider a number of factors when making the decision about whether to make a bursary award.

The level of the bursary required is not influenced by the academic ability of the child but by the extent of financial need. Each case is assessed on its own merits and the Bursar recommends the level of award required to enable the child to come to the School. The Trustees have a duty to ensure that the Fund's charitable monies are allocated appropriately. As well as current earnings and expenditure, other factors which will be considered in determining the level of award required will include:

- The ability to maximise the financial position or earning power of the family. For example, where there are two partners, we would expect both to be earning unless one is prevented from doing so through incapacity, the need to care for children under school age or other dependents, or the requirements of their partner's work.

- Opportunities to release any capital. Significant capital savings and investments would be expected to be used for the payment of school fees, as would significant equity values in properties (unless these are in the family home).

- Contributions to household costs by other family members, or any adults (e.g. step-parents, godparents) unrelated to the child or from any other source.

- Where fees are being paid to other schools (or universities) we will take these outgoings into account. There is an expectation that bursary applications, where possible, will have been made to other educational establishments in respect of siblings so that the burden of school fees is shared among institutions.

- Acknowledging that others might have a different view, the Trustees consider that the following, for example, may not be consistent with the receipt of a bursary:
    - Frequent or expensive holidays;
    - Luxury cars;
    - Owning a significant number of high value items;
    - Investment in significant home improvements;
    - Higher than average non-contractual pension contributions;
    - A second property/land holding; or
    - Failure to honour payments in respect of school fees payable to other educational establishments.

Awards of financial assistance to one child do not necessarily guarantee awards to siblings already in the School or subsequently admitted to the School. The Fund's Trustees are sympathetic to changes in family circumstances arising from illness or bereavement but any application submitted for these reasons is means-tested in the same way as any other award.

Having established financial need, the Trustees then have to allocate the bursary funds available among the applicants. The Trustees will make awards that enable children to come to Newton Prep, rather than dividing the funds available between the applicants and expecting parents to fund the shortfall.

Existing Pupils

Change in Family/Financial Circumstances

Parents with a child at the School who experience an unexpected change in their family or financial circumstances after the point of entry may apply for a bursary explaining their situation (also see the School's Hardship Policy). Parents will be required to complete a Bursary Application Form. All applications will be dealt with in exactly the same manner as set out in the Bursary Application Process. Parents requiring financial assistance with the payment of school fees should in the first instance request a meeting with the Head and Bursar to discuss the issues. The Head's PA will arrange the meeting. Please email her at hmpa@newtonprep.co.uk or call 020 7720 4091 extension 1203.

The Fund's Trustees are unlikely to take a sympathetic view of applications received in respect of a child already at the School where it becomes apparent that fees could never have been afforded and no previous bursary application has been submitted.

Annual Review

Bursary awards are reviewed in the Autumn term each year. Current recipients of bursaries will be asked to provide an update on their financial circumstances. Awards may be varied upwards or downwards depending on parental circumstances. Parents can assume that an award will not change greatly from year to year unless there has been a significant change in their finances.

The Fund’s Trustees also have the discretion to withdraw an award not only where a child's progress, attitude or behaviour has been unsatisfactory but also where the parents have failed to notify the school of a significant improvement in their financial circumstances.

Confidentiality

The School and the Fund’s Trustees respect the confidentiality of bursary awards made to families; recipients are expected to do likewise.

Annex:

A. The Home Visit

Linked policies:

1. Admissions Policy
2. Hardship Policy

Accessing the Policy: This policy is also available in various formats to allow everyone to access it e.g. hard copy, enlarged print version, braille etc. Please contact the Bursar to request a copy of this policy in an alternative form.

Review and Update Process

Member(s) of staff responsible for update	Bursar (both for the School and as Clerk to the Trustees of the Newton Bursary Fund)
Sub-Committee responsible for review	Head of the Trustees of the Newton Bursary Fund
Last review by the Trustees	January 2024
Agreed by the Trustees	March 2024
Next review by Trustees	June 2025

Annex A – The Home Visit

The Fund's Trustees require a formal visit to be made to the family homes of all applicants for bursary assistance before the initial offer of financial support can be made. There are several reasons for this policy:

- First, it gives the Trustees the opportunity to discuss all the various papers that have been sent to you in relation to your application for financial support in informal and relaxed surroundings so that you understand the system thoroughly. Bursary holders are important to the school. The commitment and support of the pupil's family is very important to the Trustees and the School.

- The Trustees need to make sure that both parents and/or carers understand how the means-testing system works. Every school is different, and at Newton Prep we want you to understand exactly what contributions you may be required to make on top of your child's bursary. School fees historically increase at a faster rate than inflation. Can you afford realistically your contribution over the next 7 years?

- Papers can be checked and additional information found relatively easily.

- Trustees can ask you additional questions based upon your family's circumstances.

- Importantly, the information presented on paper can be seen in its proper context.

- There is an opportunity to reassure you, as parents, that the process of allocating financial support will be entirely confidential – known only by the Head, the Deputy Head in charge of senior school transfer (who will need to be aware of children who will require a bursary-funded secondary school place), the Bursar and the Fund's Trustees. The teaching staff does not know which pupils receive bursaries.

- The limitations to the Fund's financial support can be explained. For example, the support for school trips given to bursary holders (which may be subject to an annual cap) is restricted to trips with genuine educational or pastoral value, such as Geography field trips, language exchanges or end of year trips as opposed to a ski trip. Many families of bursary holders are surprised to be told that parents who pay the full fees may well limit their child's take-up of expensive foreign trips.

- The Fund's Trustees will ask you if you have also applied for grants from outside trusts or bodies. Any support from a third party will be taken into account in calculating the level of our support.

- The home visit is concerned solely with the circumstances of the parents or carers. There is no need for your child to become involved; indeed, it is best if they are not present.