



Hardship Fund Policy

3rd St Neots (Wintringham) Scout Group is committed to ensuring finances are never a barrier to a young person taking part in Scouting, in accordance with the policies of the Scout Association, including the Association's Equal Opportunities Policy.

If a family is either unable to sign their child up to Scouting or is likely to have to remove their child from Scouting due to financial hardship, then this fund is designed to support them. It can help cover such things as:

- Termly Subs
- Activities, events and camps – including anything which requires an additional payment from the parent/carer over and above regular subs.
- Uniform - any item in the uniform category on Scout Store

Requirements

There are two criteria that need to be met for a young person to be eligible for the fund:

- The young person's family is experiencing financial hardship
- The young person shows a regular commitment to Scouting

Financial hardship

Evidence which can help make the best judgement of 'financial hardship' would be if a family is in receipt of one of the following:

- Free school meals
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- An income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit) and have an annual income that does not exceed £16,190
- Working tax credit
- Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- The Guarantee element of State Pension Credit

Young people and adults who are carers, or are considered 'looked after children' or previously looked after children would also be eligible.

Applications may also be considered in other cases, based on the family's personal circumstances, at the discretion of the Chair and Treasurer.

Commitment to Scouting

The applicant must show a regular commitment to the Group. The following is a minimum:

- Membership of the Scout Association
- Minimum 75% attendance throughout the previous term, confirmed by their relevant Section Leader. Special circumstances will be considered at the discretion of the Chair and Treasurer.
- In the case of members new to the Group, then regular attendance in the current term will be required or the support will be withdrawn.

Parental contribution

The grants are provided on a matched funding basis, i.e. the recipient must make a financial contribution alongside the Group's grant. In special circumstances, grants may be made without matching funding, at the discretion of the Chair and Treasurer.

Procedure

Applications for hardship funds should be made by the young person's parents, guardians or carers using the Hardship Application Form. This is available from the Treasurer by emailing treasurer@3rdstneotsscoutgroup.co.uk

Forms can be handwritten or completed electronically, however as the form needs to be signed, the signature page should be scanned and emailed, with the rest of the completed form.

The application will be considered by the Treasurer and evidence of the young person's commitment to Scouting will be obtained from the Section Team Leader. The Treasurer will decide whether the support should be granted and at what level and will communicate this to the parents, guardians or carers. In some cases, agreement may be sought from the Chair or the Lead Volunteer.

The Treasurer will report the total value of grants given at each Trustee Team meeting.

Support will be granted on an event-by-event basis, or a termly basis in the case of subs. The parents, guardians or carers must reapply each term for continuing support with subs.

Total Funding Available

The total amount available for the Hardship Fund in a given financial year will be set out in the Group's Reserves Policy which is reviewed on an annual basis.

In any given financial year, the Treasurer cannot grant hardship support in excess of the amount set aside in the Reserves Policy without first obtaining approval from Trustee Team.

Grants in excess of the amount set aside in the Reserve Policy will only be approved in exceptional circumstances.

The funding is made up of grants and donations from individuals and organisations who want to support Scouting in Wintringham, as well as the Group's own reserves.. We will publish details of those who have donated to the scheme if they are happy for us to do so. We do not share information about who has received funding from the scheme with these donors, but we will let them know how many people have benefitted, and what kind of things the funding was spent on.

Considerations

The primary consideration must always be the young person: if they have shown a regular commitment to Scouting, are keen and active members, then we should be doing everything we can to enable them to participate.

Payment options

Where funding is granted for subs or activities, events or camps then the parent/carer will be asked to pay the reduced amount to the Group rather than the full amount. In the case of activities, events or camps, the Group will then pay the full amount to the provider of the activity.

Where funding is requested for uniform then the Group will assist with the provision of uniform, firstly through the acquisition of second-hand uniform, or through the provision of vouchers for the Scout shop where no second-hand uniform is available.

Confidentiality

Information relating to individual hardship cases is often highly personal and will therefore be treated as strictly confidential. Any record of discussion of a hardship case at Trustee Team meeting will be on an anonymous basis. Only the Treasurer, Chair, Lead Volunteer and Section Team Leader will be aware of the identity of the applicant

Approved by the Trustee Team: 11/04/2026

To be reviewed: Every three years, or sooner if required.