

THE NEW SCHOOL TRUSTEE CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK 2022

WELCOME FROM OUR FOUNDER

Hello and welcome to The New School,

Thank you for considering the role of Finance Lead.

The New School is a pioneering educational innovator seeking to transform the system to better serve children and young people – particularly those who are most disadvantaged. Our independent school currently serves 72 young people from our local community in South East London. We do not charge fees, because education needs to be available to all. Our ethos and principles put the young person at the heart of the design, decisions and delivery of their schooling – ensuring we best look after their whole development and wellbeing.

This is a pivotal point in time for education in the UK, and we hope that you will be inspired to be a part of our journey in changing the UK education system for the better. I created The New School because I believe we can do things differently. I have seen the problems of our profession from the inside - teaching to the test, the youth mental health crisis, teacher burn-out, the damaging and unnecessary exclusion of young people from the system. But it does not have to be this way.

At The New School, we believe that not only are these problems avoidable, but that education can provide answers to even bigger social problems. And for us, a more equitable society starts in school, with every young person having a voice and a choice in their education. We want every child to know they have the power to make decisions about their own life because if we feel out of control, we cannot also feel safe and have personal agency. We encourage young people to express themselves and to know that their opinions and thoughts matter. This creates many positive benefits – improved self-esteem, mental health and confidence, which in turn improves engagement in learning.

We want this not just for our own students, but for all young people in the UK. Which is why The New School is not 'just' a school, but a charity with a much bigger aim. It is our mission to unleash innovation within the education sector by (a) establishing a new blended public-private funding model for our own school and (b) changing mindsets, practice and outcomes in the state education system.

Our blended funding model will have three elements:

- We will bring on board local government partners (and outcomes contracts) across the four main boroughs that we serve. This will take time, but we are already in advanced discussions with three of them.
- We will diversify our philanthropic funding to a range of individuals, trusts, foundations and family offices.
- We will engage the private sector through investment, in kind contributions and sponsorship.

We want to prove to the government and educators through rigorous evidence that relationship-focused education works for every young person, and that it is worth investing in, i.e. better value for money.

Our work to date has been funded by a corporate foundation interested in seeding systemic innovations (e.g. the adoption of social prescribing). This £2m funding will last until August 2022 and in the Appendix, I have attached an overview of our growth plan to show how we plan to establish the school, prove the concept and unite public and private investment to showcase an alternative financially sustainable model for education.

In October we were thrilled to welcome our new Chair, Mark Norbury, CEO of UnLtd. Mark and I are now keen to further diversify and strengthen our board, including finding the right Finance Lead to work closely with us to deliver on our growth plan, ensure agile, inclusive and rigorous governance as well as overseeing excellent financial and risk management.

If you are excited by our journey and share our drive to positively challenge the educational status quo by putting young people's voice and wellbeing at the heart of education, then we would love to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Lucy Stephens

Lucy Stephens,
Founder and Director, The New School



ABOUT US

Our approach is driven by giving every student a powerful sense of agency - the will and the ability to positively influence their own lives and the world around them.

Education at the moment is too focused on passing tests and a narrow curriculum that doesn't acknowledge the broader interests of children or a richer concept of human creativity. Importantly it also doesn't help children develop the skills they need for mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.

By creating an educational space that allows young people to be recognised and to participate in decision-making structures as equals, we believe every young person can fulfil their potential and go on to lead happy lives. Ultimately if we change the way we educate our children, we can change the world.

Last, but not least, we are non-fee paying – we don't believe income should be a barrier to a better education.



**WE'RE A NEW TYPE OF
SCHOOL ON A MISSION TO
POSITIVELY CHANGE THE
WAY WE EDUCATE OUR
CHILDREN IN THE UK**

HOW WE WORK

The New School is guided by its commitment to its principles. It also operates its meetings using sociocratic methods, which means that all voices are heard and treated with respect, and decisions are taken through a consent-based approach. Work is organized via 'circles' - groups of staff and volunteers with delegated authority for leading on operational topics.

This unique approach to school leadership and management ensures that all ideas and views are considered, that staff have agency over aspects of the school operations, and that decisions are improved through constructive debate.

Young people and staff (other than the Director) do not take part in Board meetings, unless by request from the Board. However, the sociocratic structure ensures that all voices are heard within the operational running of the school and this feeds into the Board.

The school opened in September 2020 and gained charitable status soon afterwards. Whilst the Chair and Board are responsible for the legal duties of running the school, we have a highly capable team of staff, led by the two Co-Headteachers, that ensure young people receive the best possible educational experience, and all relevant Ofsted requirements are met. The board oversees all such legal duties, but we expect the greater focus to be on establishing the overall commercial, financial and strategic aspects of the charity as a whole, in particular diversifying income streams to ensure a long-term financially sustainable future beyond September 2022 when the initial corporate donation start-up funding will begin to phase out.



WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED TO DATE

The New School opened in September 2020, despite the best efforts of Covid. We passed our Ofsted inspection with great feedback and we are hugely oversubscribed.

Young people come from a variety of backgrounds, including 75% previously home schooled. All scored in the lowest 2% regarding feelings about school at the beginning of the year; relatively low levels of preparedness for learning (all in lowest 25% and sadly, also for learner self-worth).

Despite this the school has seen:

- Good progress in learning despite a disrupted year due to COVID, including 90% progression in phonics and reading.
- 78% of behavioural incidents were in the lowest level of harm. Our distinctive approach uses restorative justice, enabling young people to de-escalate incidents of behaviour and work through conflict collaboratively. This approach has been revolutionary for some families.
- 65% of young people have met one or more personal goals, using our My Learning Plan process designed to support young people to set and work towards their own social and emotional learning goals.
- 82% have made positive progress on the Boxall profile scales that describe the extent to which a child is emotionally secure, makes constructive, adaptive relationships, is able to co-operate with others, and has internalised the controls necessary for social functioning.
- Overwhelmingly positive feedback from young people and parents as evidenced through our evaluation with the University of Nottingham.



WHAT MAKES US DIFFERENT

We are a research-informed, democratic school – we include young people in making decisions about their education and in how the school itself operates.

- We focus on relational practice – trusting, healthy relationships are at the heart of our work– young people trust us and each other.
- We use restorative justice – a radically different approach to dealing with behavioural challenges; it is about empathy and taking responsibility, over punishment.
- We measure what matters – we have developed a comprehensive alternative outcomes framework that goes much further than mainstream academic performance measures.
- We hold ourselves accountable - we are measuring the impact of what we do with an independent evaluation by the University of Nottingham due out soon.





COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The New School is an equal opportunities employer, committed to equal opportunities policies. We welcome applications from all backgrounds so that our board mirrors the community we serve. We welcome applications from anyone regardless of disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion, socio-economic background and other differences.

The New School is deeply committed to inclusive working practices, so during the application process we commit to:

- Paying for care and childcare whilst you are at interviews where these take place in person.
- Paying for your travel costs to the office and back for interviews held in person.
- Making any reasonable adjustments – for example ensuring we have a sign language interpreter organised in advance if you'd like them.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.
- Offering a guaranteed first stage interview for disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the role.

If there is anything else you are concerned about or think we could provide, please let us know.

ABOUT THE BOARD

The initial board who supported the start up of the organisation was rich in knowledge about pedagogy, democratic education and the process of setting up new schools. Led by our newly appointed Chair, Mark Norbury, we are now looking to expand our board to provide more expertise in financial management, social investment, business development and governance. The new Finance Lead will be our next appointment and after this, we will identify at least two more general Trustees. More details of our board [here](#).

Laura Dempsey – Founder and Director of Volunteers for Future, a conservation and climate education social enterprise, working with schools. As a consultant, Laura was closely involved in supporting Lucy to launch The New School.

Debbie McKenzie-Arday – a senior experienced teacher in South London, and emotionally intelligent coach.

Mark Norbury (Chair) – Current CEO of Unltd, an experienced civil society CEO and Chair with a strong 25-year track record in building inclusive, high performing organisations and teams to deliver significant growth in impact and income. Previously the co-chair of HM Government’s Inclusive Economy Partnership and Global Social Entrepreneurship Network, and on the Impact Investing Institute’s Advisory Council.

James Searjeant -an experienced Headteacher of a large primary and nursery school in South East London.

Lucy Stephens - Director of The New School. With a background in teaching, programme management at The Prince’s Trust, and research, as well as degrees in social psychology, nutritional therapy and evolutionary biology, Lucy is passionate about system change and has a clear vision to enable the team to deliver a significant challenge to the current education narrative. Lucy believes that creating a fairer world starts with changing education.



ABOUT THE ROLE

The Finance Lead is responsible for chairing the Finance and Risk committee of the Board and representing this group at Board meetings. This group ensures that the financial and risk management of the school and charity are aligned to organisational values, the law and the expectations of Ofsted and the Charity Commission. As Chair, the Finance Lead will have the opportunity to shape the workings of this committee. Current members of this group include: the Director; the Finance Consultant; the Strategy Consultant; The Chair of Trustees; and Laura Dempsey, a Trustee, who is the acting subcommittee Chair. This group has an interdependency with the Strategy and Development committee, which is responsible for income generation.

Specific tasks include:

- Work with the Chair, Director and Financial Consultant to ensure robust financial controls and risk management systems and reporting are in place to support us to achieve our aims.
- Offer support and regular challenge by being available for, and proactive in, finance briefings and discussions, constructively questioning and providing support and guidance as appropriate.
- Chairing Finance and Risk committee meetings efficiently and in an inclusive way such that everyone's voice and experience is heard and valued.
- Support the Chair to ensure the charity's overall financial model and strategy is clear, that costs and risk are well managed, and that Board, staff and consultants are aligned and focused in the efforts to achieve financial sustainability beyond the initial seed funding period.
- Along with fellow Trustees, champion the work of The New School (e.g. in the media, at events, in meetings) and be willing to make strategic introductions and connections, especially where possible, with potential funders, social impact experts, or influencers to government.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The role of Finance Lead presents a fantastic opportunity to collaborate with some inspiring people in a start-up culture. The Finance Lead will not only contribute to proper financial management, but will also help to shape a unique financial model that could open up innovation within the UK education system. All whilst making a positive difference to the lives of the young people we support in our school today.

Essential:

- A demonstrable interest in The New School's progressive mission to challenge the educational status quo, and a commitment to its principles.
- A qualified accountant and / or in-depth experience of financial management at Director or Board level.
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, alongside recognition of their importance to good governance.
- A commercial mindset, with experience of business model development and planning.
- Knowledge of at least one of the following: outcome contracting; public sector commissioning; or fundraising.
- Ability to chair meetings in an effective and collaborative manner.

Desirable:

- Experience working within or establishing new (social) enterprises.
- Experience as a School Governor or similar educational systems / knowledge
- Well-networked with an understanding of how to operate strategically to influence policy and maximise impact.

Qualities:

- Entrepreneurial spirit with well-balanced approach to risk management.
- An astute commercial thinker that enjoys organisational strategy, as well as finance.
- Personable character, enthusiastic about our inclusive sociocratic culture (no prior experience necessary).



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

TIME COMMITMENT

Pre-reading and attendance at Trustee meetings (c. 2 hours held on weekday evenings every 3 months). Chairing Finance and Risk meetings (frequency in response to need but typically every 6 weeks). Ad hoc engagement with the Chair, Director and Finance Consultant as required.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All candidates will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and these will be discussed with the candidate to establish whether and what action is needed to avoid a conflict or the perception of a conflict.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

An offer of appointment will be made once all candidates have been interviewed, and will be subject to satisfactory completion of eligibility checks, including reference checks. If you are offered an appointment you will receive a detailed summary of your main terms and conditions. Terms of appointment are usually 4 years, renewable once.

LOCATION

Home based; Trustee meetings for the foreseeable future are held virtually on Zoom, but from time to time may be face-to-face at the school site in Upper Norwood, South London. Remote dial-in is an option for those that cannot attend in person.

REMUNERATION

The role of Trustee is unremunerated, although expenses for travel and other pre-agreed items may be claimed.

SAFEGUARDING

The Trustee is subject to the provision of all child protection legislation, and all policies governing staff that work with children and vulnerable adults.

HOW TO APPLY

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Inclusive Boards on behalf of The New School. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following by 23.59 06/02/2022

- A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum two sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application and will be assessed as part of your full application.
- Please provide details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you.
- Referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- Diversity monitoring form - your data will be stored separately from your application and will at no time be connected to you or your application.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call to discuss the role please email TNS@inclusiveboards.co.uk or call 07738 725350.

Please send your CV and cover letter to TNS@inclusiveboards.co.uk or visit www.inclusiveboards.co.uk/opportunities to apply online.