



STUDENT BURSARY POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Chichester College Group recognises that Student Bursary has an important role to play in removing barriers for some students accessing and completing further education courses. It is the aim of the group to use funds to make the maximum impact on recruitment, attendance, retention, and achievement.
- 1.2 The fund will be distributed in a consistent and transparent way and in accordance with the guidance issued by the Education, Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The Bursary is intended to help with the financial hardship needs of individuals studying a programme at College.
- 1.3 Awards from the Bursary will be used towards essential course related costs such as travel, meals at college if eligible, equipment, trips and other costs associated with learning (see section 6, Types of Support).
- 1.4 Discretionary and Hardship awards will be subject to sufficient funds being available.
- 1.5 At Chichester College Group, the bursary award is known as the Learning Support Grant.

2. Scope and Purpose

- 2.1 The scope of this policy includes all bursary funds administered by the group.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure transparent and consistent administration of bursary funds to all eligible students in accordance with the related guidance (for example 16-19 Bursary Guidance issued by the ESFA)

3. Principles

- 3.1 The bursary payment is subject to attendance, punctuality and behaviour. Attendance should normally be at a minimum of 90%. Extenuating circumstances that are affecting attendance will, however, be taken into account.
- 3.2 The bursary should be applied fairly and consistently.
- 3.3 The process must be easily understood and accessible to young people. The Learning Support Grant shall be published through a variety of channels directly to students and promoted directly to a variety of staff, who can support students to access.
- 3.4 The process should identify eligible students in a timely fashion.



3.5 There is a commitment to ensuring bursary funds allocated to the College are fully distributed in order to support as many students as possible, however, budgets are provided by external agencies and therefore, the college can only make payment if there are sufficient funds.

4. General Eligibility

4.1 To be eligible to apply for the Learning Support Grant students must be:

- Enrolled on a course within the College Group.
- Their place on the course must be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Cost recovery courses are not eligible to apply.
- Students following an Apprenticeship, or any waged training are not eligible to apply.
- Students must be aged 16 years or over on 31st August 2025.
- They must be a “home” student, i.e. having been ‘ordinarily resident’ in the British Isles.
- Accompanied asylum-seeking children (under 18 with an adult relative or partner) - As long as an asylum seeker has not had their application for asylum refused, institutions can provide in kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children do not receive cash support from the Home Office and are the responsibility of the local authority. They are treated as looked after children and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups (‘in care’ group), where they have a financial need.
- Live in a household where the income is below £36,000 per annum or are in one of the categories listed in the Vulnerable Bursary section.
- Maintaining satisfactory attendance and progress in the professional judgement of the teaching and support staff working with them.

4.2 Household incomes between £26,000 and £36,000 Will receive 50% contribution to any type of support and household incomes below £26,000 will receive 100% contribution to eligible support as outlined in this document. This is subject to sufficient funds being available.

5. Learning Support Grant Elements

5.1 Vulnerable Bursary

5.1.1 Vulnerable Bursaries are available for up to £1200 a year for students aged 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year) who are:

- In care
- Care leavers
- Receiving Income Support, or Universal Credit because they are financially supporting themselves or financially supporting themselves and someone who is dependent on them and living with them such as a child or partner.



- Receiving Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in their own right as well as Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right
- 5.1.2 Vulnerable Bursaries are available for up to £1200 and are designed to help students overcome the individual financial barriers to participation that they face.
- 5.1.3 No student will automatically be awarded a set amount of funding without an assessment of the level of need they have and therefore applicants will need to provide evidence to support their claim for transport, meals, or equipment up to the value of £1200.
- 5.1.4 Vulnerable bursaries will not pay the costs of purchasing electronic devices such as laptops or tablets.
- 5.2 16 -18 Discretionary Bursaries (awarded to students with a household income of £36,000 or less)
- 5.2.1 Can be awarded to any student aged 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year) who face genuine financial barriers to staying on in education and training to help with costs such as transport, meals at College and other course related costs.
- 5.2.2 16-18 Discretionary Bursary awards will only be made subject to a fully completed application with supporting evidence and will only be made to support genuine financial barriers to continuing studies and will be subject to financial limits.
- 5.2.3 Students whose household income is in excess of £36,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances.
- 5.3 19+ Discretionary Bursaries (Awarded to students with a household income of £36,000 or less)
- 5.3.1 Provides support for students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year where the student is funded through the ESFA or Adult Education Budget (HE, Cost recovery, Apprenticeships are not eligible).
- 5.3.2 Awards will be made subject to a successful application and only to students who face genuine financial barriers to completing their course, and priority will be given to co-funded students who are unable to afford their tuition fees or examination fees.
- 5.3.3 Students whose household income is in excess of £36,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances.
- 5.3.4 This fund can also be used to support childcare costs if an Ofsted registered provider is used. Childcare support Available only to students with a household income of £36,000 or less who are aged 20+ who are funded from the Adult Education budget from the ESFA or from the Advanced Loan Bursary.



- 5.4 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Funds (Awarded to students with a household income of £36,000 or less who have successfully funded their course through an Advanced Learner Loan)
- 5.4.1 Advanced Learner Loans Bursary will be only be available to students who are funded by an Advanced Learning Loan for their course and confirmation of this funding will be required to allocate Advanced Learner Loans Bursary.
- 5.4.2 Applications can be made by students who face genuine financial barriers to completing their Advanced Loan funded course to assist with paying their examination fees or other course related costs but, as funds are limited, all awards will be made subject to financial limits.
- 5.4.3 Students whose household income is in excess of £36,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances.
- 5.4.4 This fund can also be used to support childcare costs if an Ofsted registered provider is used. Childcare support Available only to students with a household income of £36,000 or less who are aged 20+ who are funded from the Adult Education budget from the ESFA or from the Advanced Loan Bursary.
- 5.5 Childcare support
- 5.5.1 The Learning support grant will only reimburse the daily childcare fee (agreed with the student finance team in advance) for attendance to an Ofsted Approved childcare provider on the days the student attends the timetabled course. If entitled to use the Free Early Education & Childcare funding this must be used to fund the days students are required to attend College and therefore students must only claim for childcare fees in addition to the free placement.
- 5.5.2 Applications must have confirmation from the Ofsted Approved provider of the daily rate to be charged. The Learner Support Grant funds will only reimburse the agreed daily childcare rate - any other fees or charges made by the Ofsted approved childcare provider will not be covered by this fund.
- 5.5.3 We will not consider payments for childcare where the student fails to attend their course. The responsibility will be for the student to pay their childcare fees with the chosen provider up front - once the childcare bursary application has been approved receipted or invoices will need to be submitted to the Bursary team and these will be reconciled with your attendance and payment made via BACS to the student or direct to the childcare provider as appropriate.



6. Types of Support

6.1 Free College Meals

All 16-18 year olds and those aged 19-24 with an Education, Health and Care Plan who meet the eligibility criteria for free college meals as set out by the ESFA will receive a daily meal allowance of £4.50 for each day that they attend college. This

This meal allowance will be added to their student card which can be used at the designated outlets across the group.

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. Free meals in FE defines disadvantage as students being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one or more of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- the guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they are not entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190, as assessed by His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC))
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- UC with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400 for each year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)

6.2 Uniform, Kit, Equipment and Books

Students can apply for support with Uniform, Kit, Equipment and Books as part of their application. If this support is awarded this will be paid directly to the department (if being ordered from the curriculum area) or directly to the student once receipts are submitted to the Student Finance Team.

6.3 Travel to College or Work Placements

6.3.1 Travel support will be based on actual costs of travel and, wherever possible on the student discount schemes available through local transport providers.

6.3.2 Travel support will not be provided for any student living within a 2 mile radius of the college campuses they are studying at.

6.3.3 Travel payments will be made half termly and will be conditional on attendance at College. Students with below 87% attendance will not automatically receive their travel payment and will need to appeal for mitigating circumstances via their teaching or support teams, who can confirm their engagement in College.



6.3.4 In exceptional circumstances, where students face significant hardship and have attendance below 87%. Weekly payments to support students to improve attendance can be applied.

6.4 Educational Visits and Trips

Students can apply for additional financial support for trips and educational visits that are essential to their progression on the course. This will be assessed on a case by case basis and awards may cover the full cost of the trip or make a contribution to the cost.

6.5 Course Fees and Exam costs

6.5.1 For students aged 19 or older that are on an ESFA funded programme, in exceptional circumstances, we may be able to help with the cost of course fees or exam fees. Students will need to submit an appeal to the Student Finance Team detailing the exceptional circumstances they have, once they have been awarded the Learning Support Grant and eligibility for the fund has been confirmed.

6.5.2 All appeals for exceptional circumstances will be reviewed by the Director of Student Experience.

6.6 Hardship

6.6.1 If there are exceptional circumstances for additional hardship support, then an application can be made via the Student Finance Team, detailing their circumstances.

6.6.2 All appeals for exceptional circumstances will be reviewed by the Director of Student Experience.

6.7 Electronic Devices

If the College is required to revert to remote teaching and learning, then the College will also use bursary funds to purchase laptops for loaning to funded students to enable them to study remotely.

7. **Procedures**

7.1 Students should complete an application in full through the Learning Support Grant portal and provide all subsequent supporting evidence. All applications will require supporting evidence which is detailed in the application process. We will require 3 months of supporting financial information to confirm household income and assess eligibility for any bursary funds. Applications submitted where financial information is not provided will not be assessed.

7.2 Applications will be assessed by the Student Finance Team and each application is subject to a two stage process to confirm award eligibility.



- 7.3 Bank details must be provided as requested following all Learning Support Grant awards made as all payments will be paid by BACS.
- 7.4 Bank details must be for the student's own personal bank account. We cannot accept any responsibility for any incorrectly entered bank account information - where payments are made to incorrect accounts there will be no further payments made as we are unable to recover these funds.
- 7.5 All Communication regarding bursary will be made via the email address provided at application.

8. Appeals

- 8.1 A student can appeal a decision when the application for support was declined or to appeal the amount of the award A student can submit an appeal for their application to be reviewed in writing, via email, to the Director of Student Experience. The applicant will be asked to state the reasons for disagreeing with the decision and why it is unfair, and evidence must be submitted to support the claim and confirm that the bursary claim is for educational costs.
- 8.2 An appeal for additional funding should be made in writing, via email, to the Director of Student Experience detailing the reasons additional funding is required, how this will support the completion of the courses and any other mitigating circumstances.
- 8.3 Any appeal will be reviewed within 10 working days and the outcome shared with the student.
- 8.4 The decision made by the Director of Student experience, following an appeal, is final.

Policy review area	Students & Customers
Lead Manager/Owner	Director of Student Experience
Approval level	Group Leadership Team
Approval date	
Review cycle	Annually
Next review	