



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 Department of Education (DfE). 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 College related costs such as travel, meals at college if eligible, equipment, essential 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 and meeting the eligibility criteria does not guarantee full financial support.
- 1.5 At Chichester College Group, the bursary award is known as the Learning Support Grant.
- 1.6 This policy applies to
 - 16-19 Discretionary Bursary fund
 - Adult Skills Fund Learner support
 - Advanced learner loan bursary
 - Free college meals

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 DfE guidance (for example 16-19 Bursary Guidance, Adult Skills Fund guidance for 19 plus students, Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Guidance for 19 plus students).

3. Principles

CCG will administer bursary funding in accordance with the following principles

- 3.1 Individual need
 - All awards are based on assessed actual need
 - Awards reflect real, evidenced based Participation costs



- 3.2 No standardised awards
 - No flat rate, blanket or automatic payments will be made
 - Income thresholds are used as guidance only, not as determinant of the award amount.
- 3.3 Discretionary and Prioritisation
 - Funding is limited and will be prioritised to learners with the greatest financial barriers
 - Not all eligible students will receive support
- 3.4 Participation focused
 - Funding is only provided for essential costs required to participate in learning.
- 3.5 Transparency and Fairness
 - The process will be accessible, consistent and clearly communicated
- 3.6 Evidence based decision making
 - All awards must be supported by evidence of financial need and evidence of actual costs.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 For travel payments to be made through the academic year, eligible students are expected to have a minimum of 90% attendance, Exceptional or Extenuating circumstances affecting attendance will be taken into account.

4. General Eligibility

- 4.1 To be eligible to apply for the Learning Support Grant students must be:
 - Enrolled on an eligible funded course within the College Group for the academic year your applying in.
 - Their place on the course must be funded by the Department of Education (DfE) (16-19 or ASF (19 plus) or Tailored Learning or ALL.
 - 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 2026.
 - 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, The College Group 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 £30,000 per annum, are in one of the categories listed in the Vulnerable Bursary section or have extenuating circumstances that creates a financial barrier to engaging in the education programme
- Maintaining satisfactory attendance and progress in the professional judgement of the teaching and support staff working with them.

4.2 Household income is considered when assessing financial need, as a guide, we will consider household incomes of £30K per annum as a priority group for financial support however all applications will be assessed on individual need basis

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 individual 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 based on individual needs assessment

5.2.1 Can be awarded to any student aged 16 to 18 (at the start of the academic year) or 19-24 with an EHCP 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 £30,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances. All applications will be assessed on an individual needs basis, prioritising those most in need
- 5.3 19+ Discretionary Bursaries - Awarded based on individual needs assessment
 - 5.3.1 Provides support for students aged 19 and over at the start of the academic year where the student is funded for 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 £30,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances. All applications will be assessed of an individual needs basis, prioritising those most in need.
 - 5.3.4 This fund can also be used to support childcare costs if an Ofsted registered provider is used. Childcare support will be assessed on a needs basis and may be contribution to costs of childcare rather than covering the full costs based on available funding.
- 5.4 Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Funds awarded based on individual needs assessment
 - 5.4.1 Advanced Learner Loans Bursary will 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 £30,000 can still apply for hardship support however will need to demonstrate that they require financial support due to exceptional circumstances. All applications will be assessed on an individual needs basis, prioritising those most in need.
 - 5.4.4 This fund can also be used to support childcare costs if an Ofsted registered provider is used.



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 direct to the childcare provider as appropriate. Reimbursing of any daily fees paid in advance whilst an application is being assessed following the award of childcare support being issued will be paid once proof of payment has been received.

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 DfE will receive a daily meal allowance of £4.50 for each day that they attend college. Eligibility for free college meals will be assessed each academic year.

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:

- Student in receipt or having parents in receipt of universal credit
- Support under part VI of the immigration and asylum act 1999



6.2 Uniform, Kit, Equipment and Books

6.2.1 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. As with any bursary award this may not cover the full cost of kit or equipment and could be contribution based.

6.2.2 Awards for equipment and books will be made for equipment and books that are essential for a programme of study. Once award has been agreed with student finance, reimbursement of costs will be made once receipts have been provided.

6.2.3 The maximum contribution to course kit (as stated as an essential requirement for the course) is £500. Additional costs will be considered in exceptional circumstances via appeal.

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 85% 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 . Weekly payments to support students to Reengage in college programmes can be applied

6.3.5 Travel awards will be made on the following basis

- Public transport awards will be based on best price available with student discounts or weekly tickets and students are expected to purchase the best ticket price available.
- Fuel awards will be based on 25P and mileage between the student home address and the place of study
- The maximum annual award for travel is £900. Exceptional circumstances for additional travel awards will be considered via the appeal process.

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. No financial support awards will be provided for overseas trips or educational trips that are not essential to the programme of study

6.5 Course Fees and Exam costs

6.5.1 For students aged 19 or older that are on an DFE 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

Bursary awards cannot support the purchase of any electronic devices

6.8 Progression support

In some circumstances, we can support costs associated with progressing to university such as university visits or interviews. This maybe a contribution to costs and we cannot guarantee covering all costs.

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 or supporting evidence 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, including award details and payment information regarding bursary will be made via the email address provided at application.
- 7.6 Additional information relating to income and expenditure may be requested to assess any students individual needs, all information must be provided as requested for applications to be assessed.
- 7.7 Applications received after the October half term will be assessed in the same way as all applications but awards will only be made from the date of application and back payments of travel awards will not be made unless there are exceptional circumstances.

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.

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