

## **Financial Support Policy 23/24**

### **Purpose**

To use funds allocated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and The College Group to remove barriers to learning, to support students to achieve, participate and succeed through targeted financial support.

### **Funds Overview**

Using the evidence provided on an application form, applications will be assessed to ensure that support for students are maximised within all available funds. All thresholds are subject to fund eligibility and may be adjusted in year to ensure support is maximised for all students. Some funds are subject to availability.

The support funds available to the College are:

#### **16-18 Discretionary Bursary**

An ESFA funded means assessed scheme for students aged 16 to 18 years old at the start of their study programme. The fund is used to support students' travel and compulsory course costs.

#### **Bursary Plus**

An ESFA funded non-means assessed scheme for students in Government defined vulnerable groups. Students must be aged 16 to 18 years old or aged 19-25 (19+continuers or those aged 19-25 with an EHCP) at the start of their study programme.

These students will need to evidence eligibility. This fund is predominantly to support young people either currently or recently in the local care scheme and young people living independently.

#### **19+ Discretionary Bursary**

An ESFA funded means-assessed scheme for students aged 19+ on a funded Level 1 or Level 2 course, and those aged 19-23 years old undertaking their first funded Level 3 course. Students who meet the eligibility for this fund could receive help with travel, essential materials, fee reductions and childcare.

#### **Advanced Student Bursary**

Students with an approved Advanced Student Loan can apply to this fund. Students who meet eligibility could receive support with travel, essential materials and childcare.

#### **Free College Meals**

Students who meet predetermined eligibility criteria will receive up to £3.50 per day to use in the College canteens.

### **Making an Application for Financial Support**

During busy periods, such as the first half term, applications can take up to four weeks to process. It is important that applications include full details and evidence in order to ensure that payment approvals are not delayed.

To apply for support, a financial support application form must be completed digitally using the online application portal with the requested evidence as stated in the financial support application form.

Applications should be made via our online portal which can be accessed at <https://windsor-forest.paymystudent.com/portal/>. The portal has a translation feature to support non English speakers. In exceptional circumstances, students can request a paper application form which can be collected from Financial Support.

All stated thresholds and information about awards calculation is based on funding availability. The College may adjust thresholds in year for later applicants if it is the interest of maximising support for the highest number of students.

### **Calculating Household income**

Many students may require help from parents / carers and partners to complete the form due to the request for household income information. We will require income information for anyone in the house who the student is financially dependent upon. This includes all parents / carers, spouses and partners of parents / carers.

The Financial Support Team will calculate all income including all wages and benefits. Income that will be assessed and we will require evidence for:

- Income earned from any form of employment
- Pension or pension credits
- Housing benefit
- Child tax credit
- Working tax credit
- Employment Support Allowance
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Income Support
- Universal Credit
- Carers Allowance

An income of over £5,000 per annum must be met in order to assess a household income. If household income is under this threshold, the student or appropriate adult must be able to demonstrate a justifiable reason for this.

### **Asylum Seekers / Refugees**

Asylum seekers (those seeking refugee status) with a pending application for asylum, will be required to provide evidence of their asylum status. This evidence of this would be one of the following:

- ARC card
- Local authority / home office letter confirming asylum application

Settled asylum seekers (refugees) who have a granted application for asylum, who are in receipt of benefits and / or earning will be assessed for household income as per the criteria above.

### **Providing Evidence**

The evidence section on the financial support application form will outline the evidence that will need to be submitted with the form.

We encourage all applicants to complete a digital application and submit electronic evidence. If you are unable to do so, please speak to the Financial Support Team for details of alternative application methods.

Evidence must be submitted in a timely manner so that students Are not delayed in receiving funding that enables them to engage with their studies.

Where documents are required as evidence, these must be provided in full. Partial documents will be rejected which may result in a delay in applications being approved.

### **Age**

Students are categorised by their age on 31 August of the year starting that academic year. For example, if a student is 18 years old on 31 August of the current year of study and turns 19 years old during that academic year, that student will be regarded as 18 years old for the duration of that academic year.

### **Payment of Awards**

The Financial Support Team aims to make all payments to students via BACs transfer directly to a bank account in the student's name.

Course costs will be reimbursed to the student via BACs transfer. The student is expected to follow their curriculum area's process for ordering essential course costs. Once this is completed the student should email a copy of their receipt to the financial support mailbox, including their ID number in the subject line. Scanners are available on student photocopiers should it be required.

The College provides a cashless payment shop for course related items and wherever possible, these items will be made available on this platform. Where applicable, the Financial Support team will link funds to shop items to allow for bursary discounts to apply.

For students without bank accounts, the College will offer a single month's discretionary cash payment. This will allow sufficient time for students to open a bank account in their own name.

Cash payments for all students should be collected on or after the designated payment date as indicated on the award letter.

In exceptional circumstances materials may be purchased on the student's behalf or provided in kind. This is usually when The Financial Support Team has a direct relationship with an external company to provide these materials.

Financial Support will backdate all payments to the start of the term in which the student submitted a completed application. A completed application includes answering all required questions on the application, providing bank details and a complete set of evidence.

The Financial Support Team will aim to avoid cash payments to a student except in exceptional circumstances.

The Financial Support Team will pay awards directly to a student's bank account, unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced.

In the unlikely event of an over payment, a student would be expected to pay back any money incorrectly sent.

Students submitting receipts for bursary related expenses should do so in a timely way and on a regular basis. As a general rule, the college will not backdate more than a half terms worth of expenditure.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

In line with the stated purposes of financial support, The Financial Support Team is committed to basing payments based on student's attendance to college. The Colleges Group recognises the fact that good attendance is closely linked with success and achievement.

Attendance will be checked for the preceding fortnight (excluding holiday periods) and travel payments will be subject to acceptable attendance levels as detailed below.

The Financial Support Team will pay calculated travel payments at the following rates:

- 90%+ attendance for the previous fortnight = 100% payment

- 75% - 89% attendance for the previous fortnight = 75% payment
- 50%-74% attendance for the previous fortnight = 50% payment
- 0% - 49% attendance for the previous fortnight = No payment

The Financial Support Team can alter these thresholds at their discretion within the academic year. Any revision of payment brackets will apply to all students.

Childcare payments will be made if the student registers attendance in the previous month, however low attendance will be subject to the student being contacted directly to justify their attendance record. Future payments may be withdrawn if attendance does not improve for subsequent months.

The Financial Support Team can alter and release any previously unauthorised payments providing sufficient evidence is provided and demonstrates that withholding payment or failing to make reasonable adjustment, will have a detrimental impact on the student's achievement. In exceptional circumstances probationary payments will be made to allow a student to improve overall attendance in a short period of time.

## **Communication**

All awards and decisions relating to an individual's bursary will be communicated via email directly to the student's College email address.

Financial support awards are confidential to the student, except where named parents / carers are on the student's ILP. Where the College requires additional information from parents / carers, it may be appropriate to communicate directly with these named contact(s).

All information is held confidentially under the terms of the privacy agreement on the main College Group application form and in line with GDPR requirements.

## **Laptop Loans**

Loans will be allocated on a need basis, prioritising those from the most vulnerable groups, with exceptional hardship or those completing IT based courses.

Where a loan device is not available and within funding rules, the college will use available Financial Support Funds to purchase a device for a student.

Laptop loans must be returned in good condition at the end of the academic year or the student's course, whichever comes first. Unreported or intentional damage may result in students being liable for repair or replacement charges.

Full terms and details can be found in the College's Device Loan Statement.

## **16-19 Discretionary Bursary**

The 16 to 18 discretionary bursary has two main elements of financial support; travel and essential course costs.

Each student who is eligible for the fund will have a targeted financial assessment to provide the best level of support for the student.

### **Travel payments Information for 16-19 Discretionary Bursary**

- We will calculate the student's travel costs based on location, number of days in college, weeks on the course and travel routes.
- Travel includes travel to College and to College organised Work / Industry Placements.
- Mileage will be paid in exceptional circumstances at a rate of 25p per mile.
- Travel costs will only be awarded if the student lives more than 2 miles from their place of study, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Travel awards are capped – please see the table below.
- Students may be awarded a reduced fare travel pass or purchased a season ticket, where appropriate and available, as part of their award in order to offer the most economical travel options. These are paid in addition to travel caps. Students must follow the terms and conditions of any third party arrangements.
- Travel payments are calculated based on the most cost effective journey to college. For students attending 4+ days this is typically a weekly ticket. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they use their funding appropriately.
- If at any point in the academic year, students travel costs increase or decrease significantly, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Support Team and request a reassessment. Travel costs are intended to be a contribution towards the overall likely cost of travel.
- Students submitting receipts should do so in a timely way and on a regular basis. As a general rule, the college will not backdate more than a half terms worth of expenditure.

### **How public transport awards are calculated for 16-19 Discretionary Bursary**

- Travel costs will be assessed and awarded based on the most economical travel option, with consideration of the duration of travel for students.
- Awards can be made for up to 90% contribution based on student's individual circumstances.
- Awards will be made from either the point of application, or the point that complete evidence is submitted (whichever is later), until the end of the academic year. The total award is then divided into evenly split payments.

### **What will I receive towards travel costs?**

What will I receive?	Criteria
90% funding contribution	Those who qualify for Free College Meals (see below).
75% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) under £26,000 net (take home pay).
50% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) under £30,000 net (take home pay).

### **Travel costs for students 16 – 19 students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

- Students with Special Education Needs and Disabilities and who meet the criteria below can receive up to 100% contribution towards the cost of travel by coaches that service the Colleges or other public transport.
- Students may be awarded a reduced fare travel pass or season ticket, where appropriate and available, as part of their award in order to offer the most economical travel options. These are paid in addition to travel caps. Students must follow the terms and conditions of any third party arrangements.
- Students must be able to access public transport independently in order to receive support. If students are not able to access public transport independently, they should contact the Local Authority for support with alternative arrangements.
- In order to evidence a SEND need, students will need to present one of the following to qualify:
  - Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
  - Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments in the student's name
  - A letter confirming the student has a Learning Difficulty Assessment
  - Official doctor's letter

### **What will I receive for 16 – 19 SEND Travel?**

What will I receive?	Criteria
100% funding	Students who have an evidence SEND need (see above) and qualify for Free College Meals (see below)

90% funding contribution	Students who have an evidence SEND and have a household income (including benefits) under £26,000 net (take home pay).
75% funding contribution	Students who have an evidence SEND and have a household income (including benefits) under £30,000 net (take home pay).

### **Compulsory Course Costs for 16 - 19 Discretionary Bursary**

How are compulsory course costs for 16 - 19 calculated?

- Compulsory course costs include trips, visits, books, materials and mandatory resit exams.
- Curriculum areas provide lists of essential course items and recommended costs - these are used as a basis for funding awards.
- Compulsory course costs are capped to a study programme – please see the table below.
- Where relevant, receipts need to be submitted electronically to the relevant contact email address (see appendix) within the term of purchase for reimbursement. Clear photos of receipts or invoices will be accepted.

### **What will I receive for compulsory course costs under 16 – 19 Bursary?**

<b>What will I receive?</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
90% funding contribution	Those who qualify for Free College Meals (see below).
75% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) under £26,000 net (take home pay).
50% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) under £30,000 net (take home pay).

### **16 – 19 Asylum Seekers**



### Accompanied Asylum Seeker

- Accompanied asylum seeking children (those under 18 with an adult relative or partner) and those aged 18 and above are entitled to education but not to public funds.
- For asylum seekers who have not had their application for asylum refused, institutions can provide in-kind student support such as books, equipment or a travel pass.
- 16-19 asylum seekers are not automatically entitled to Free College Meals but may be considered on an individual basis where there is a defined need.
- 16-19 asylum seekers will receive an award as per the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary eligibility for books, equipment, materials and trips which will be provided by internal transfer to college departments.
- Students are not permitted to receive cash payments of any kind.

### Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are the responsibility of the local authority.
- They are treated as Children Looked After and are eligible for a bursary for vulnerable groups. Please see eligibility under this category within the '16-19 Bursary Plus' section.

### Funding Caps 16-19 Discretionary Bursary

Cap Area	Maximum award total
Travel (including work / industry placements)	£1,500
Travel for SEND (including work / industry placements)	£3,000
Compulsory course costs per course	£400
College Organised Work / Industry Placement Uniform	£30

### 16-19 Bursary Plus

This fund is predominantly to support young people either currently or recently in the local care scheme and young people living independently.

The ESFA defined vulnerable groups include those who:

- **Are in care or a care leaver** - written confirmation of their current or previous looked-after status from the relevant local authority - this is the local authority that looks after them or provides their leaving care services. The evidence could be a letter or an email but must be clearly from the local authority.
- **Are in receipt of Income Support** - A copy of their Income Support Award notice. They must be entitled to the benefit in their own right and the evidence must confirm that the young person can be in further education or training. If it is not clearly stated on the award letter, then a letter from a benefits officer or key worker is required.
- **Universal Credit (UC)** - A copy of the Universal Credit Award notice. Students must be entitled to the benefit in their own right and the evidence must confirm that the young person can be in further education or training. If the evidence does not clearly state this, then a letter from a benefits officer or key worker is required. Students must also provide additional documentation to confirm their independent status, for example a tenancy agreement in the student's name, a child benefit receipt, children's birth certificates, utility bills etc.
- **Are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their own right, AS WELL AS Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit (UC) in their own right** - A copy of the student's Universal Credit or ESA award from DWP (UC claimants will be able to print off details of their award from their journal). Evidence of receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment, must also be provided.

The 16 to 19 Government guidelines defines 'in care' as:

- Children looked after by a local authority on a voluntary basis (section 20 of the Children Act 1989) or under a care order (section 31 of the Children Act 1989) - Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 defines the term 'looked after child'
- An individual placed in foster care by the local authority, including independent fostering agencies.

A 'care leaver' is defined as:

- A young person aged 16 and 17 who was previously looked after for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods amounting to 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16; or
- A young person aged 18 or above who was looked after prior to becoming 18 for a period of 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16

This bursary has two main elements of financial support; travel and essential course costs.

Each student who is eligible for the fund will have a targeted financial assessment to provide the best level of support for the student.

### **Travel payment Information for Bursary Plus**

- We will calculate the student's travel costs based on location, number of days in college, weeks on the course and travel routes.
- Travel includes travel to College and to College organised Work / Industry Placements.
- Mileage will be paid in exceptional circumstances at a rate of 25p per mile.
- Travel costs will only be awarded if the student lives more than 2 miles from their place of study, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Travel awards are capped – please see the table below.
- Students may be awarded a reduced fare travel pass or season ticket, where appropriate and available, as part of their award in order to offer the most economical travel options. These are paid in addition to travel caps. Students must follow the terms and conditions of any third party arrangements.
- If at any point in the academic year, students travel costs increase or decrease significantly, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Support Team and request a reassessment.
- Students submitting receipts should do so in a timely way and on a regular basis. As a general rule, the college will not backdate more than a half term's worth of expenditure.

### **How public transport awards are calculated for Bursary Plus**

- Travel costs will be assessed and awarded based on the most economical travel option, with consideration of the duration of travel for students.
- Awards can be made for up to 100% contribution based on student's individual circumstances.
- Awards will be made from either the point of application, or the point that complete evidence is submitted (whichever is later), until the end of the academic year. The total award is then divided into evenly split payments.

### **What will I receive for Travel under Bursary Plus?**

100% contribution towards your cost of travel.

### **Compulsory Course Costs for Bursary Plus?**

#### **How are compulsory course costs calculated?**

- Compulsory course costs include trips, visits, books, materials and mandatory resit exams.
- Curriculum areas provide lists of essential course items and recommended costs - these are used as a basis for funding awards.

- Compulsory course costs are capped to a study programme – please see the table below.
- In exceptional circumstances, payments will be made in advance for compulsory costs. Students will be expected to provide evidence of a purchase as per below.
- Receipts need to be submitted electronically to the relevant contact email address (see appendix) within the term of purchase for reimbursement. Clear photos of receipts or invoices will be accepted.

### **What will I receive for compulsory course costs under Bursary Plus?**

100% contribution towards the cost of compulsory trips, visits, books, materials and mandatory resit exams.

### **Caps for Bursary Plus**

Bursary plus funding is capped at £1,200 an academic year. Students can receive additional funds based on need, from the 16-19 Discretionary Bursary, subject to the caps detailed below.

<b>Cap Area</b>	<b>Maximum award total</b>
Travel (including work / industry placements)	£1,500
Travel for SEND (including work / industry placements)	£3,000
Compulsory course costs per course	£400
College Organised Work / Industry Placement Uniform	£30

### **Free College Breakfast and Lunch**

The College Group has a cashless payment system for Free College Meals which can be used in the College canteens.

Learners meeting the below criteria will have the relevant amount automatically uploaded to their College ID badges.

Should the learner not have their ID badge present they must come to Student Services to obtain a meal voucher.

The Financial Support Team will work with the Canteen Staff and managers to ensure that dietary requirements are met.

Any learner with specific dietary requirements must inform the Canteen by 10.00am on the morning (for Free College Lunches) or the day before (for Free College Breakfasts) to ensure that adequate notice is given for the meal to be prepared.

The Financial Support Team has an obligation to promote healthy eating and will work with Catering Staff to monitor and promote healthy choices.

### **Free College Meals**

- Students meeting the criteria below will have £3.50 per day automatically uploaded to their College ID badge.
- Free College Meals are provided for lunch time and can be available on student's ID badges between 11.00am and 2.30pm.
- Any unused balances will be deducted daily.
- Students are not permitted to use their allowance to buy snacks or soft drinks alone.

To be eligible to receive a Free College Meal, students must be:

- A student must be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August in their current year of study to be eligible to receive a free meal. Students aged 19 or over are only eligible to receive a free meal if they are continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers) or have an EHCP.
- These 2 groups of aged 19 plus students can receive a free meal while they continue to attend education (in the case of a 19+ continuer, this must be the same programme they started before they turned 19), as long as they also continue to meet the benefits criteria detailed below.

Students must also be able to evidence that they meet one of the targeted disadvantage groups. Free meals in Further Education 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 Her 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 pa (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

### **Assessment for Free College Meals Using Universal Credits**

In order to assess eligibility the College will verify the eligibility of students, or their parents, who are in receipt of UC, by asking for a copy of their UC award notice that includes their monthly earnings. Institutions will need to assess the information given to obtain an accurate proxy of the individual's current earned annual income. Monthly earnings are after tax and do not include any benefits the individual receives. There is a three stage assessment process required by the ESFA, details of which can be found [here](#).

### **Discretionary Free College Breakfast**

- Where a free breakfast offer is made available, this will typically not be before the first half term.
- The offer of a free breakfast is not guaranteed and is wholly at the discretion of the College Group.
- Where approved, learners will receive £2.00 per day automatically uploaded onto their College ID badge.
- This £2.00 can only be used to purchase Breakfast Meal Deals stipulated by the Canteen.
- Students must use their allocation between 7.00am and 9:30am each day.
- Café opening times may vary by site.
- Where there are issues with the allocation of funds to an ID badge, students can obtain a meal voucher from Student Services.

### **19+ Discretionary Bursary**

Students on ESFA funded adult courses can apply for help with travel, compulsory materials, childcare and fee reductions, if applicable.

Students aged over 19 years old and on an ESFA full or co (partly) funded course are entitled to receive support from the 19+ Discretionary Student Bursary.

Students on this fund can apply for help with travel, compulsory materials, and childcare and fee reductions if applicable.

### **Travel and compulsory course costs for 19+ Discretionary Bursary**

- We will calculate the student's travel costs based on location, number of days in college, weeks on the course and travel routes.
- Travel includes travel to College and to College organised Work / Industry Placements.
- Mileage will be paid in exceptional circumstances at a rate of 25p per mile.

- Travel costs will only be awarded if the student lives more than 2 miles from their place of study, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Travel awards are capped – please see the table below.
- If at any point in the academic year, students travel costs increase or decrease significantly, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Support Team and request a reassessment.
- Students submitting receipts should do so in a timely way and on a regular basis. As a general rule, the college will not backdate more than a half terms worth of expenditure.

### What will I receive for 19+ Discretionary Travel and Compulsory Course Costs

What will I receive?	Criteria
100% funding contribution	<p>For students who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have a household income (including benefits) of under £26,000 net (take home pay).</li> </ul> <p><b>And</b> are in receipt of one or more of the benefits below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Income-based Jobseekers Allowance</li> <li>• Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)</li> <li>• Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</li> <li>• The guarantee element of State Pension Credit</li> <li>• 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 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)</li> <li>• Working Tax Credit run-on – paid for 4 weeks after someone stops qualifying for Working Tax Credit during the initial roll out of the benefit Universal Credit</li> <li>• Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2019 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)</li> </ul> <p><b>Or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those aged 19-23 who are a care leaver</li> </ul>

75% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) under £30,000 net (take home pay).
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### 19+ Discretionary Bursary Fee Reductions

Fee reductions are awarded based on a tiered points system. Please see table below:

Household income threshold (take home pay, including benefits)	Points
£5,000 - £16,190	3
£16,191 - £21,000	2
£21,001 - £26,000	1
In receipt of DLA, PIP or disability benefit in student's name	1
In receipt of carers allowance	1
Single parent as stated on a recently dated child tax credit letter	1

Using this information, the following fee reductions will be applied to the cost of the student's course:

- 1 Point = Up to 25% fee reduction
- 2 Points= Up to 50% fee reduction
- 3 Points= Up to 75% fee reduction
- 4+ Points= Up to 90% fee reduction

### 19+ Asylum Seekers

If an asylum seeker is eligible for course funding they can receive support in the form of course-related books, equipment, cash payments or a travel pass as above.

### Caps for 19+ Discretionary bursary



<b>Cap Area</b>	<b>Maximum award total per academic year</b>
Travel (including work placements)	£1,500
Travel for SEND (including work placements)	£3,000
Essential course costs per course	£400
Childcare	£6,000*
Course Fees Per Year	£2,000
College Organised Work / Industry Placement Uniform	£30

\* subject to available funding, individual child, hourly rate and weekly caps. Please see the 'Childcare' section of this document for more information.

### **Advanced Learner Loan Bursary**

Students receiving funding for a course via an Advanced Learner Loan can apply for support via the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary scheme.

Students who have an active and approved Advanced Student Loan and whose household income is below £26,000 per year net (take home pay / after tax), can apply for support with travel, compulsory course costs and childcare through the Advanced Learner Bursary.

### **Travel and compulsory course costs for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary**

- We will calculate the student's travel costs based on location, number of days in college, weeks on the course and travel routes.
- Mileage will be paid in exceptional circumstances at a rate of 25p per mile.
- Travel costs will only be awarded if the student lives more than 2 miles from their place of study, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Travel awards are capped – please see the table below.
- If at any point in the academic year, students travel costs increase or decrease significantly, it is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Support Team and request a reassessment.

## What will I receive for Advanced Learner Loan Bursary Travel and compulsory course costs?

What will I receive?	Criteria
100% funding	For students who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• have a household income (including benefits) of under £16,190 to £21,000 net (take home pay).</li></ul>
75% funding contribution	For students who have a household income (including benefits) of between £21,001 and £26,000 net (take home pay).

## Childcare

Childcare support is split into two categories:

- The Government funded 'Care to Learn' programme for those learners aged 16-19 years old. For more information, please go to <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/overview>
- The College's Childcare Bursary for learners aged 20+ years old which is available out of the 19+ Discretionary Bursary.

## Care to Learn

Learners aged 16-19 years old at the start of their study programme who have children can apply to the Care to Learn programme for support with their childcare costs during college hours.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- A childcare taster session for up to 5 days
- Childcare place over the summer holidays
- Taking a child to their childcare provider

NOTE:

- Childcare payments go directly to the childcare provider and not to the learner.
- The College will verify required evidence on behalf of Care to Learn and provide attendance monitoring information which may affect payments made to the childcare provider

## Childcare Support via the 19+ Discretionary Bursary

Students on ESFA funded adult courses can apply for help with the costs of childcare under the 19+ Discretionary Bursary.

As additional information is required to provide support with childcare, a separate childcare application form must be completed for each child and submitted in addition to your Financial Support Application.

Bursary funds can only be used to cover the learner's contact hours whilst in College in addition to a 30-minute window either side to allow for travel.

The College recognises that childcare providers have varying time allocations therefore subject to the existing caps, managers responsible for reviewing appeals for each campus will apply logical discretion to requests wherever possible.

The Financial Support Team will financially support a maximum of £8 per hour per child or to a maximum of £130 per week per child, whichever is highest. Any amount over this would be expected to be covered by the learner

The Financial Support Team will only support learners using OFSTED registered childminders and providers.

The learner is responsible for sourcing an appropriate childcare provider. The College cannot make childcare recommendations

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Childcare funding is subject to attendance monitoring criteria and funding will be withdrawn as a result of continued poor attendance by the learner.

### **Payments**

Childcare payments will be made directly to the childcare provider.

### **Withdrawal**

If a learner withdraws from the course, it is their responsibility to inform The Financial Support Team immediately, otherwise the learner is liable for any childcare costs incurred after the withdrawal date.

Both the childcare provider and College can give each other 1-month notice to terminate a childcare contract

The Financial Support Team can withdraw childcare funding should there be sufficient evidence that the provider poses a risk to the safety of the learner / learner's child or integrity and reputation of the College.

## **Funding Mitigation**

The College has a responsibility to ensure that funds are effectively used to support as many students as possible and support engagement with courses.

Childcare support is often a significant financial contribution, therefore students are expected to ensure that before applying for support via the college that they have taken advantage of existing Government schemes including, tax free childcare allowance, 15 free childcare hours and 30 free childcare hours in order to reduce financial need.

Information about 15 free hours can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Information about 30 free hours can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/30-hours-free-childcare>

## **Childcare Caps**

Childcare awards are capped at £6,000 per household.

## **Appeals**

The Financial Support Team recognises that student achievement can be affected by unforeseen and unexpected circumstances. Support requirements can be very specific and therefore these requirements may fall outside of the usual support provided under the funds. Additionally sometimes circumstances change which may result in an increased or decreased support need.

For this reason, students who disagree with or who do not believe that an award meets their needs have the right to appeal that decision.

An appeal must be submitted in writing and will be considered by one of the following senior staff members:

- Funding and Student Engagement Manager - Langley Campus and BCA campuses
- Assistant Principal, Student Services (Sixth Form) for the Strode's and Windsor College campuses

Should an appeal be unsuccessful, the student can re-appeal if there is additional information or evidence to support the appeal. This will be considered by the opposing senior staff member listed above.

Please contact the Financial Support Team with details of how to make an appeal and the information that will be required, including the additional funding requested, the grounds on which the appeal is made and any additional evidence that should be considered.

Appeal outcomes will be communicated to students in writing within 10 working days.

Students have a further 10 working days in which to raise a second appeal. Secondary appeal decisions will be final.

### Third Party Agreements

The College works with third party companies to provide tailored support to its students. The Financial Support Team recognises that services which can have a positive impact on the achievement of students are sometimes best provided by external providers.

Examples of third party providers the College Group work with include:

- OFSTED registered childcare providers
- Local taxi companies which provide non-public transport costs to SEND students
- Transport for London's Oyster scheme

When a third party is used, it may be subject to its own terms and conditions. The Financial Support Team will work closely with a third party to ensure the student's best interests are always considered.

### Alternative sources of funding

Where students are found to be ineligible for support via the funds outlined in this document, the Financial Support Team will endeavour to signpost individuals to alternative sources of funding that they may like to consider.

There are a number of organisations operating that can provide additional or alternative support for students while they study. We recommend using the grant search option from Turn2Us online at [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk). The 'Grant Search' tool allows students to search locally and nationally for charities and providers who may be able to help.

Other local charities:

The Egham Education Trust - For students living in Egham. Visit [www.eghamunitedcharity.org](http://www.eghamunitedcharity.org)

Richmond Parish Lands Charity - For students living in postcodes TW9, TW10, SW13 or SW14. Visit <http://www.rplc.org.uk/> or call 0208 948 5701

The Barnes Fund - <https://thebarnesfund.org.uk>

### Monitoring and reporting

The College Group operates a rigorous monitoring process that ensures consistency of application assessment and procedure across its three sites. This includes:

- Internal auditing
- External auditing by independent advisors
- Cross-college staff training and development activities

- Annual review and feedback from students who have accessed the service which informs self-assessment and development activities
- Use of forums and training events to inform best practice

In addition, allocations of funding are monitored regularly to through termly and annual reports, to review, assess and improve uptake of services with consideration of gender, disability, ethnicity, age and other key demographic information. This information is subsequently used to ensure that the College Group is effectively targeting those students who are likely to have significant barriers to learning and achievement.

### Campus Contact Information

Campus	Call	Email	Address
<b>Strode's College</b>	01753 793368	Financialsupport.sixthform@windsor-forest.ac.uk	Student Services Strode's College High Street Egham Surrey TW20 9DR
<b>Windsor College</b>			Student Services Windsor College St Leonards Road Windsor Berkshire SL4 3AZ
<b>Langley College</b>		Financialsupport.langley@windsor-forest.ac.uk	Student Services Langley College Station Road Langley Berkshire SL3 8BY

<b>BCA Campus</b>	01628 827597	Bursary_team@bca.ac.uk	BCA Hall Place Burchetts Green Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 6QR
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**Related Policies**

Policies can be requested from Student Services.

- Device Loan Statement
- Student Management Procedures