

# Care to Learn Policy

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**Impact Assessment Status:** In preparing the Policy, any potential disproportionate impact it might have upon individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, have been carefully considered. It is the conclusion of the College Group that the Policy does not adversely impact on individuals with any of the protected characteristics.

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## Aim

Care to Learn (C2L) provides funding for childcare to help young parents under the age of 20 continue in education after the birth of a child. The C2L scheme provides funding for childcare costs whilst the young parent is enrolled on a study programme at Chesterfield College, including help with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to and from the childcare provider's setting. The scheme also supports any childcare costs whilst the young parent is on work experience or an industry placement. The maximum amount of funding available is £180 per child, per week.

## Scope

This policy and associated operating procedures apply to Chesterfield College, which includes our subsidiary companies: Training Services 2000 Ltd, Learning Unlimited ATA Ltd, Recruit Unlimited Ltd and Chesterfield College Enterprises Ltd.

## Policy Statements

To ensure finance is not a barrier to recruitment, retention, and success, Chesterfield College will promote Care to Learn (C2L) and other sources of financial assistance from the Department for Education. This policy states how the funds are allocated and prioritised.

Students who apply for C2L will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their financial need. Please note that C2L awards only cover one academic year and students must re-apply for support on an annual basis.

## Implementation

To receive Care to Learn (C2L), the student and childcare provider must meet the eligibility criteria.

### Age

The young parent must be under the age of 20 on the date they start their study programme. Young parents who turn 20 during their study programme will continue to receive C2L funding to the end of the programme detailed in their learning agreement.

### Main Carer for the Child

The young parent must be the main carer and in receipt of Child Benefit for the child for whom they are claiming C2L. A copy of the Child Benefit letter must be provided to the college in support of the application, which will be retained for audit purposes. If the young parent loses custody of their child, even temporarily, they must notify the college immediately. The mother or father of the child can claim C2L as long as:

- The other parent is unable to provide childcare, for example because they are also in education or are absent.
- The other parent is not claiming childcare paid through any other source, for example government-funded early years places or Child Tax Credits.

## Residency

To be eligible for C2L, the young parent must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their study programme.

If the young parent indicates that they are not a British or Irish citizen, they will only be eligible for C2L if one of the following immigration conditions applies:

- They are an asylum seeker under the age of 18.
- They are an asylum seeker and a care leaver aged 18 or 19 (an original copy of a letter from the resident Local Authority that shows their address and confirms that they are a care leaver must be included with the application).
- They have refugee status.
- They have humanitarian protection.
- They have discretionary leave to remain.
- They have indefinite leave to remain.
- They have indefinite leave to enter.
- They have limited leave to remain.
- They have limited leave to enter.
- They have leave outside the rules.

## Study Programme

Only students enrolled on a study programme are eligible for C2L funding. The following programmes and qualifications are not eligible for C2L:

- Privately funded programmes where students are required to pay tuition fees.
- Voluntary work that is not a required part of the agreed study programme.
- Apprenticeships.
- Higher Education courses, including courses leading to a bachelor's degree, Higher National Diploma (HND), Higher National Certificate (HNC), Diploma in HE, foundation degree, or initial teacher training.
- Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), except for a very small number of young parents aged 19 doing a HTQ funded by an Advanced Learner Loan.
- Social activities or groups that are not a required part of the agreed study programme.

## Childcare Provision

C2L funds childcare with a childcare provider registered with Ofsted. The childcare provider must be registered in one of the following ways:

- They are on the early years register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency.
- They are on the compulsory and/or voluntary part of the general childcare register with either Ofsted or a childminder agency.
- They are offered by schools (who are exempt from Ofsted registration for children aged 2+), such as a school-run breakfast club, after-school club, or holiday club.

The childcare provider must provide the college with evidence of registration with Ofsted, including that they are on the correct register for the age of the children they care for.

In the case of childcare provided by a school, the school must provide their unique reference number (URN) to the college.

Childminder agencies who register with Ofsted on behalf of the childminders they represent must also provide the college with evidence of their Ofsted registration.

### **Childcare Payments**

C2L will pay towards the cost of childcare up to a maximum of £180 per child per week.

C2L will support childcare hours in reasonable excess of the study programme hours to allow time for the student's travel between the college and the childcare provider, and time for any independent study undertaken, within the maximum weekly amount.

Childcare payments will be made directly to the childcare provider by bank transfer each month. Under no circumstances will the college make cash payments for childcare directly to the student or their family.

Payments will only be made if the student is attending their study programme. Examples of absences which may be authorised for continued payment are as follows:

- Student sickness. This should be reported via the absence hotline. The number of sickness absences will be closely monitored and, if considered excessive, payments may be withheld.
- Medical appointments. Evidence of appointments must be provided in the form of a letter or appointment card. Failure to provide this could result in payments being withheld.
- Interviews, for example for a job or university. Evidence of interviews must be provided in the form of a letter or email confirmation. Failure to provide this could result in payments being withheld.
- Bereavement or funeral.
- Religious holidays.

Where a student has been absent for a period of four consecutive weeks or more, excluding college holiday periods, or where a student has made the decision to withdraw from their programme of study, all C2L payments will be stopped. Payments will restart when attendance restarts and meets the agreed minimum standards.

### **Travel Payments**

C2L will pay for travel costs, where appropriate, if these are necessary for the student to take their child between home and the childcare provider. Travel costs will only be paid if they are in addition to the student's normal travel costs from home to the college.

Travel payments will be made by the cheapest means of transport available, which is normally by public transport. If the cheapest means of transport is by car, the amount paid will be at a rate of 25p per mile.

The total of the childcare costs and travel costs provided by C2L will not exceed the maximum amount of £180 per child per week.

## Deposits and Registration Fees

C2L can pay deposits of up to a maximum of £250 per child if the childcare provider requires this.

C2L will also pay any registration fees that are charged by the childcare provider, up to a maximum of £80 per child. This is a one-off payment that does not form part of the weekly maximum rate and will not be paid for subsequent academic years if the student continues to use the same childcare provider.

## Summer Retainers

C2L can pay summer retainers to childcare providers, if required, to hold a childcare place over the summer holiday period. This only applies if the student is continuing their study with Chesterfield College into the next academic year. The student and their study programme must continue to meet the eligibility criteria for a summer retainer to be payable.

To be eligible for a summer retainer for summer 2026, the student must:

- Have received C2L funding in academic year 2025/26 and be intending to return to a study programme in academic year 2026/27.
- Have been on a study programme that lasted for 6 weeks or more in the academic year 2025/26.
- Have been on a study programme that finishes no earlier than 26 May 2026.
- Be intending to use the same childcare provider that was used in the academic year 2025/26.
- Have been using the childcare provider for a minimum of 6 weeks.

Summer retainers can be paid for a maximum of 8 weeks, with the amount per week not exceeding the C2L weekly maximum rates.

## Application

Applications for C2L must be made in person by completing a paper-based application form for each child for whom support is required. Applications will only be processed from students enrolled on a study programme at Chesterfield College.

All students must submit their application as soon as possible after the application window opens.

## Communication Flow

The Care to Learn Policy is available for staff and students to view on the college website. All staff with responsibility for processing application forms and payments within the Student and Apprentice Services and Finance departments are familiar with and work to the policy and procedures outlined within this document.

Regular meetings take place between Student and Apprentice Services and Finance to monitor processing of applications and payments.

The Student and Apprentice Services Team have developed an introduction to the service that provides information and guidance around C2L, which is delivered to cross-college staff and students as part of the induction process.

## Monitoring

College staff involved in the administration of the C2L scheme will comply with college policy on the storage and transfer of information supplied in the course of application and payment.

The annual return to the Department for Education will be completed by the due deadline.

This policy and accompanying procedures will be reviewed by Student and Apprentice Services and Finance on an annual basis and submitted to the Finance and Corporate Services Committee for approval.

Complaints concerning failure to comply with this policy or published procedures should be made in accordance with the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures (CSE06).

## Associated Information and Guidance

- Department for Education guidelines on Care to Learn:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-to-learn-guidance/care-to-learn-academic-year-2025-to-2026-conditions-of-grant-funding>

## Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- Complaints and Compliments Policy (CSE06)
- Bursary Policy (FIN07)