Chesterfield College Group

Ofsted Good Provider

Bursary Policy 2026/27

Policy Family:	Finance and Corporate Services
Reference Code:	FIN07
Issue Number:	2
Originator:	Chief Finance OfficerChief Finance Officer
Responsible Manager:	Chief Finance OfficerChief Finance Officer
Committee for Approval:	Finance and Corporate Services
Approval Date:	June 2026
Issue Date:	June 2026
June	June 2027

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.

Contents

Aim

The Bursary Policy aims to ensure that:

- Students facing financial hardship can access the appropriate financial support during their time at college to maximise participation and increase retention and achievement.
- The college fulfils its responsibility to ensure that bursaries are awarded appropriately in accordance with funding guidance and the aims of the scheme.

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

Chesterfield College receives an allocation of funds from the Department For Education (DFE) to support eligible students studying further education courses funded by the DFE with the costs of participating in education and training post 16.

To ensure finance is not a barrier to recruitment, retention, and success, the college will promote DFE funds and other sources of financial assistance. This policy states how the funds are allocated and prioritised.

There can be no virement between the 16-19 Bursary, 19+ Bursary, Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, and Free Meals Bursary funds.

Students who apply for any of the funds available will be assessed individually and awarded support based on their financial need. Please note:

- Bursaries are subject to available funds and eligibility does not guarantee entitlement to funds.
- Funds will be allocated to students who meet the eligibility criteria on a ‘first come first served' basis, with any funds that become available being reallocated to those on the waiting list.
- Bursary payments are subject to students maintaining satisfactory levels of attendance and behaving in line with college policies and procedures.
- Bursary awards only cover one academic year, and students must re-apply for support on an annual basis.

Bursary support provided through Chesterfield College will take the form of the provision of services or equipment that will enable students to overcome some of the barriers to participation which they may face. Cash payments may also be deemed appropriate in a minority of situations.

The college is committed to doing everything it can to support its students, however bursary funding is limited and cannot be guaranteed. The bursary fund is not intended to support extra-curricular activities, costs not related to education, or to provide learning support and other services that the college might provide to students, for example counselling, mentoring, or extra tutoring.

Application

Applications for financial support must be made in person by completing a paper-based form or via the online application portal which can be accessed from the student's Prospect Learner Hub account. Applications will only be processed from students with a conditional offer to study and/or enrolled students as defined by the college. Awards will only be issued and delivered to students once they are fully enrolled.

All students must submit their application as soon as possible as funds are limited and are awarded on a 'first come first served' basis. The only exception to this is students applying for the 16-19 Vulnerable Young Person Bursary, which is guaranteed for all eligible students.

The following income and benefit types) are considered when calculating total household income.

- Universal Credit (UC) (the take-home pay figure in addition to the amount of UC awarded each month highlighted in the blue box of the UC statement)
- Tax Credits
- Income Support
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Guarantee element of State Pension Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Employment
- Self-Employment
- Pension

Assessment of Income

The assessment of income for all groups of students and, where applicable, the parents of students, will be made using clear and consistent criteria which takes into consideration the payments and payments in kind received from employment, benefits, and other sources, and will be clearly outlined in the application process. Applicants and, where applicable, their parents, will be responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the information used to assess eligibility.

For the 16-19 bursary, we will consider the income of all parents/guardians who live in the household.

For the 19+ bursary, where a student is financially dependent on parent(s)/guardians, we will only consider the students own income (if any). If the student lives with a partner, we will consider both the student's own income and their partner's income.

Withdrawal and Clawback of Payment

Students are expected to meet minimum standards of attendance and participation throughout their programme. Failure to do so may result in the withdrawal or clawback of bursary payments.

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

Wherever possible, support will be provided to students in the form of travel passes, equipment, access to trips, or vouchers for meals. Where Chesterfield College Group believes a cash payment has been made in error or obtained by a student or their household by fraudulent methods, it will seek to claim back this payment by all methods up to and including the employment of external debt management agencies in order that this money can be employed in the support of other students.

Provision of Bank Details

Where a cash payment is to be made to a student, this will usually be via BACS to the bank account of the student. The bank details provided by the student must be provided on the application. Students who do not have a basic bank account should be encouraged to open one as part of the application process.

Students under 18 who do not hold a bank account may request for funds to be paid into an alternative account. This must be the account of a parent or guardian and notified upon completion of the College Bursary Application Form.

It is expected that students aged 18 and over have their own bank account. Exceptional circumstances outside of this will be considered by the Bursary Team.

Protection of the Bursary System from Abuse

Where a student in receipt of bursary is withdrawn from the college and later reinstated, the student will not automatically continue to receive bursary funds.

16-19 Bursary

To be considered eligible for the 16-19 Bursary in 2026/27 the student must be:

- Resident in the UK for 3 years or more.
- Enrolled on a 16-19 study programme funded by the Department for Education

- Aged 16, 17, or 18 on 31st August 2026.
- Aged 19 and over and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuer).
- Aged 19 to 24 on 31st August 2026 and have an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Have a household income of £38,000 or below.

Students aged under 19 enrolled on higher education qualifications are not eligible for support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund has two student priority groups:

Priority Group 1 – Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary

For students participating on a study programme that lasts for 30 weeks or more, priority for a guaranteed bursary to a maximum value of £1,200 will be given to young people identified as a Vulnerable Young Person through the following criteria:

- In care.
- Care leaver.
- Receiving Income Support or Universal Credit **in their own name** 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 Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) **as well as** Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit **in their own name**.

Students must be in receipt of DLA or PIP and ESA or UC to be eligible – receipt of DLA or PIP alone does not meet the criteria.

Young people in Priority Group 1 may receive a combination of cash payments and support with direct course-related costs, meals, and transport up to a total award value of £1,200. Students will be awarded the amount of support they need to participate based on assessment of the types of costs they have and will not be automatically awarded £1,200. Should the student require additional financial support over and above the standard meals, transport, and course-related costs, an exceptional circumstances form must be completed before determining if any additional support can be provided to the student.

The Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary will not pay the costs of purchasing electronic equipment or devices such as laptops or tablets. Where applicable, students should seek advice from their social worker or speak to the Library and Learning Resource Centre to enquire about the loaning of a college laptop.

For students on a study programme lasting less than 30 weeks, all support will be awarded on a pro-rata basis.

VYP bursary students who do not qualify for Free Meals bursary, may receive free meals support for the 16-19 discretionary bursary, however, this is subject to review and approval by the Bursary Team.

Evidence of eligibility for the Vulnerable Young Persons Bursary must be provided and retained to support an application. For students in care and care leavers, this must be a signed letter or email confirmation from a Local Authority appointed representative.

Priority Group 2 – 16-18 Discretionary Bursary (awarded to students with a household income of £38,000 or less)

A discretionary bursary may be given to young people aged 16-18 (at the start of the academic year) who face genuine barriers to staying in education and training and who have a household income of £38,000 or less. The college will make discretionary awards based upon a proven hardship need, which must be substantiated by evidence and will be retained in accordance with audit requirements. Eligibility for the Free Meals Bursary is determined by guidance provided by the DFE.

Allocation of discretionary 16-19 funds will be prioritised as follows:

1. Costs directly attributed to a study programme, e.g., materials, uniforms, equipment to allow practical skills to be practiced and developed outside of college.
2. Support for Free Meals where the student is eligible for the Free Meals Bursary.
3. Support with the cost of meals in extenuating circumstances if the student is not entitled to Free Meals.
4. Subsidising public transport costs for college attendance (if the student lives more than 1.5 from the college).

Successful course-related cost awards will, where possible, be paid directly to the student's curriculum area. However, where a student has purchased an item and can evidence this, payment will be made directly to the student .All Priority Group 2 awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Free Meals Bursary

Chesterfield College Group will administer funds provided by the DFE for the provision of Free Meals as per guidance provided by the DFE. These awards will comply with the eligibility criteria detailed below:

Age

Students must be aged between 16 and 18 on 31st August 2026 to be eligible for free meals. Students who turn 19 during the 2026/27 academic year will remain eligible for free meals until the end of the academic year or to the end of their study programme, whichever is sooner.

Students aged 19 to 24 on 31st August 2026 who are subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are also entitled to free meals while attending their provision if they meet the eligibility criteria.

The following groups of students are **not** eligible for free meals in further education support:

- Students aged 19 and over on 31st August 2026, unless they have an EHCP.
- Apprentices, including those with an EHCP.

Eligible Benefits

Free meals are targeted at disadvantaged students. For the purposes of eligibility for free meals, disadvantage is defined as the student being in receipt of, or having parents who are in receipt of, one of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Guarantee element of Pension Credit

A student is only eligible to receive free meals once they, or a parent/guardian on their behalf, have made a successful application to the college.

Working Tax Credit is not a qualifying benefit for free meals, and a parent or student who is in receipt of Working Tax Credit only is not entitled to free meals. However, if a parent or student is in receipt of one of the other qualifying benefits (with the exception of Child Tax Credit) as well as Working Tax Credit then they are eligible for free meals (i.e., the other qualifying benefit takes precedence over Working Tax Credit).

Payment

The standard rate for Free Meals allowance is £2.61 per day for eligible students. However, Chesterfield College Group boost this allowance to £4.00 per day. For students studying at the Infirmary Road campus, this allowance is transferred internally from bursary funds to the college refectory where students sign for a meal each day that they attend college. Students studying at other locations with no catering facilities will be paid via their bank account in three instalments at the beginning of each term.

Students will be supported in an appropriate way for days they attend work placement.

19+ Bursary

To be considered eligible for the 19+ Bursary in 2026/27 the student must be:

- Aged 19 or over on 31st August 2026 (20 or over for childcare support).
- Eligible for Adult Skills Fund funding for their course.
- Enrolled on a programme of learning funded by the Department for Education Students on courses funded via an Advanced Learner Loan should see the section for Advanced Learner Loans Bursary below.
- In receipt of an individual (if living alone, with parents, or with friends/flatmates/other relatives) or household (if living with a spouse/partner) income of £38,000or less.

Eligibility is assessed at the point of enrolment. The college is unable to support students aged 19 and over who live in a devolved Local Authority, other than East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).

Students remain responsible for all correspondence with the Department for Work and Pensions and must inform them of any support funds received as this may affect eligibility for some benefits.

The 19+ Bursary provides support to students aged 19+ who are experiencing financial hardship. The fund can be used to help students with the costs associated with further education that are directly attributed to a learning programme, such as materials, uniforms, childcare costs, and transport costs. The college may also be able to offer help with unexpected hardship.

For students who are not eligible for full fee remission for their tuition fees under the criteria set by the DFE, a contribution of up to 75% of the tuition fee and exam/registration fee set by the college will be made through the 19+ Bursary where the student meets the eligibility criteria for the fund. The remaining balance will need to be paid as per the terms for payment of course fees laid out in the college's Fees and Refunds Policy (FIN09).

More details regarding eligibility can be found in the DFE Funding Rules. Bursaries cannot be paid to students on commercial or higher education courses, waged apprentices, or people released on temporary licence from custody.

Where a student is drawing down an Advanced Learner Loan but is also enrolled to an DFE-funded course, the college will use its discretion as to which bursary fund to allocate.

Students aged 19 or over on 31st August 2026 may be eligible to apply for continual support from the Free Meals Bursary fund if:

- They are continuing a programme of study they began when they were aged 16 to 18.
- They have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

Childcare Funding (20+)

Students claiming discretionary support with childcare costs can only do so if they are aged 20 or over on the start date of their course. Students aged 19 or under can claim childcare support through the Government's Care to Learn scheme. A student can claim support with childcare costs up to a maximum of £2,500 per academic year, per child over the duration of a 35-week study programme. Where students reach the maximum £2,500 award cap before the end of their programme, subject to necessary funds being available, further financial support may be provided to cover childcare costs.

If a student's childcare costs exceed their allocation through the 19+ Bursary, the student is liable for any additional fees incurred. Funds will only be used to pay for childcare that is approved and registered with Ofsted; informal childcare arrangements (e.g., with family members) cannot be funded. The responsibility/contract for childcare costs is between the student and the childcare provider. Chesterfield College will not take responsibility for any disputes between the student and childcare provider. All payments for childcare will be made directly to the agreed provider on submission of their invoice. Should a student withdraw from the college at any point during the academic year, financial support for childcare will end on the last date of recorded attendance and the student will be liable for all outstanding fees. Payments will reflect the student's attendance and will be paid to the childcare provider in arrears.

The amount of funding available for childcare is limited and there is no guaranteed entitlement to the funds. In exceptional circumstances and where funds allow, the maximum award may be increased. The college reserves the right to withhold payments if the student's attendance falls below the minimum standards for attendance, targets, and progress.

Childcare Funding (19 or under)

Please refer to the College's Care to Learn Policy (FIN07A) for full details and eligibility.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum Seekers are eligible for support via the 19+ bursary. This support, however, cannot take the form of any cash payment. Asylum Seekers can only be supported by 'in kind' awards (subject to availability and assessed need):

- Subsidised college bus pass.
- Course-related costs.

Once an Asylum Seeker achieves Refugee status all normal 19+ bursary rules apply, and cash payments can be made where applicable.

Advanced Learner Loan Bursary

To be considered eligible for support from the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary, students should be:

- Enrolled and funding their learning through an approved Advanced Learner Loan via the Student Loans Company.
- In receipt of an individual (if living alone, with parents, or with friends/flatmates/other relatives) or household (if living with a spouse/partner) income of £38,000 or less.

This bursary forms the DFE's commitment to additional student support requirements and allocation of this fund to the college is based on a percentage of actual Advanced Learner Loans applied for by students. This subsidiary bursary for financial aid can be used for the following purposes:

- To finance Learning Support provided in addition to the course. This will be assessed as part of the recruitment process in consultation with the relevant curriculum area.
- Costs directly attributed to a learning programme, such as materials, uniforms and kits, childcare costs, and transport costs.
- Unexpected hardship (at the discretion of the college).

Students will only be supported by the Advanced Learner Loan Bursary if they have an Advanced Learner Loan approved by the Student Loans Company. Evidence of this must be submitted alongside the bursary application form.

Apprenticeship Bursary for Care Leavers

Students on apprenticeship programmes are employed rather than in full-time education. They are therefore not eligible for Bursary Funds. The only exception to this is apprentices eligible for the Care Leavers Bursary.

Apprentices are eligible to receive a £3,000 bursary if they have been in the care of a UK Local Authority. This is defined as:

- A young person aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after by a UK Local Authority or health and social care trust for a period of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still looked after.
- A young person aged 16 or 17 who has left care within the UK after their 16th birthday and before leaving care had been looked after by a UK Local Authority or health and social care trust for a period of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.
- A young person who is under the age of 25 who, before turning 18, had been looked after by a UK Local Authority or health and social care trust for a period of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14.

Evidence of the above must be provided and retained to support an application. This must be a signed letter or email confirmation from a Local Authority appointed representative.

The care leavers bursary payment will be paid as follows:

- The first instalment of £1,000 will be paid 60 days after the apprentice's learning start date if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.
- The second instalment of £1,000 will be paid 120 days after the apprentice's learning start date if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.
- The third and final instalment of £1,000 will be paid 300 days after the apprentice's learning start date if the apprentice is still undertaking their apprenticeship.

The care leavers bursary is a one-off claim, and an eligible apprentice must only receive the bursary once. Where an apprentice leaves their apprenticeship before receiving the full bursary, they will still be entitled to further payments on a new apprenticeship until they have received £3,000 in total.

If the apprentice is found to have accepted the payment when they are ineligible, the government will require it to be repaid.

Implementation – Types of Support

Course-Related Costs – Uniform, Kit, Equipment and Books

Awards for kit, materials, books, and uniform are available up to the amount identified by the curriculum area and described as **essential** for the course that the student is enrolled to. In some cases, students will already have some or all of the kit/equipment required and will not be granted funds to duplicate or replace such equipment. If students are required to purchase these items themselves, they will be able to submit a receipt for reimbursement providing there are enough funds available. The college may not be able to reimburse 100% of these costs.

Travel to College or Work Placement

Only travel by public transport will be considered, and the cheapest option will be awarded.

The 16-19 Bursary, 19+ Bursary, and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary may support the travel costs of coming to college for students who are travelling 1.5 miles or more to their place of study.

Students who travel to College 3 or more days per week using a Stagecoach bus route will be awarded a termly travel pass. For students who attend on a part time basis (less than 3 days per week) we will pay up to £6.00 per day by half termly BACS payments. The college may ask for proof of actual cost each term, to ensure over payments are not being made to students.

Where a student travels to College by train or an alternative bus provider that is not Stagecoach or train, subject to the availability of funds, the College will pay up to £6.00 per day by half termly BACS payments. The college may ask for proof of actual cost each term to ensure over payments are not being made to students.

For students travelling using multiple public transport modes and travel providers (e.g. bus and train or two different bus providers) the College will pay up to £6.00 per day.

The College does not support costs associated with travel by car or taxi

For students who are expected to attend work experience or an industry placement as part of their programme of study, the college will assess their eligibility in line with this policy and ensure that travel support is provided. The Bursary Team will work alongside the Work Placement Team to identify which students may require this additional support.

Educational Trips and Visits

All trip support is subject to funds being available. Trips that are deemed as essential for the student to complete and pass their course are covered for those that are eligible. Trips to foreign countries will not be supported if the same experience and content can be found in England for a smaller cost.

Where a student is progressing to university, the college may contribute towards the costs of travel up to a maximum of £100. Evidence will be required, such as a personal interview letter or email from the university and valid travel documents or proof of purchase. The college can also support the cost of the UCAS registration fee for students who can evidence that they have applied and how much they have paid.

Emergency Payments

The college will retain 5% of the annual allocation of support funds for emergency and late payments. A separate procedure applies in exceptional circumstances for granting emergency support to the most vulnerable students, which is approved by the Assistant Principal Student Experience and Wellbeing and/or Chief Finance Officer, or an appropriate deputy.

Administration Charge

The college can claim up to 5% of the total 19+ Bursary and Advanced Learner Loan Bursary commitment made, to pay for the administration of the schemes, in line with DFE guidelines.

Communication Flow

The Bursary 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, and monthly reports are created by MIS to support this process.

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

Monitoring

College staff involved with administering the bursary 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 DFE 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 Procedure (CSE06).

Associated Information and Guidance

- ESFA guidelines on financial support for 16-19 students: [16 to 19 education: financial support for students - GOV.UK]

- Advanced Learner Loans Bursary guidance: https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan/bursary-fund

Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- Fees and Refunds Policy (FIN09)
- Higher Education Bursary Policy (FIN08)
- Complaints and Compliments Policy (CSE06)

Summary of Changes

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
7	March 25	T Kidsley	
8	June 26	T Kidsley	Policy updates & thresholds, guidance links