

20+ CHILDCARE BURSARY GUIDANCE NOTES FOR STUDENTS 2026/27

Please read these notes carefully, by applying for Childcare Bursary funding, you are confirming that you have read these guidance notes and agree to the terms and conditions of them.

Please refer to the 'Help with Childcare Costs' leaflet for information on the maximum contribution to your Childcare costs. Please note that Childcare Bursary amounts shown on the 'Help with Childcare Costs leaflet' are **maximum for the whole academic year**, amounts will be pro rata for applications received part way through the year.

Your application will be rejected if total fees exceed the maximum amount that you are eligible for.

Funds cannot be transferred from under 4yr olds to over 4yr olds or the other way round.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for Childcare Bursary funding you must:

- Be aged 20 or over on the first day of your course.
- Be fully enrolled with South Thames College Group on an eligible Government funded Further Education course (full or part time).
- Be the parent or main carer of the children that you are applying for.
- Be a UK National or have Leave to Remain with the right to live & work in the UK or be in receipt of NASS financial support.
- Be receiving, or be supported by someone receiving Universal Credits, or other qualifying means tested benefits or have an earned household income before tax and deductions, that does not exceed £32,000 per year.
- Be in receipt of an Advanced Learning loan if one is required to pay your course fees.
- Maintain at least 85% attendance per half term.

The Childcare bursary can only be used for the time you spend in timetabled lessons or on work placement compulsory for your course of study (with reasonable travel time allowance from college/placement to childcare provision).



South Thames Colleges Group

EVIDENCE

As well as evidence required for the general Learner Support Bursary, we require the following documents to be uploaded for Childcare Bursary:

- Document showing proof of the link between yourself and the child(ren) i.e., **Full Birth Certificate (not short version) or Child Benefit Confirmation letter.**
- **Your provider's Public Liability Insurance Certificate** – which must show valid date.
- **Childcare Bursary Fees Form** fully completed and signed by the Childcare Provider.

Please ensure that you advise the college of your correct email address, as all correspondence regarding the Childcare Bursary will be sent via email.

CHILDCARE PROVISION AND PAYMENT

- If you are eligible for 15/30 hours Government Free Childcare, then you must utilise this before the Childcare Bursary – your Childcare Provider will be required to sign a declaration that this is the case. The Childcare Bursary funding must not be used to supplement additional costs incurred by the childcare provider on consumables, meals etc. for days that are not covered by the bursary.
- Your chosen Childcare provider **must be Ofsted registered and have valid Public Liability Insurance.**
- They must complete and sign the Childcare Bursary Fees form for you to up-load to your application; your application will not be processed if they have not done so.
- You are responsible for your decisions when choosing childcare arrangements.
- Childcare bursary can fund Ofsted registered nursery, pre-school, after school care, wraparound care, breakfast club, childminder.
- Childcare bursary CANNOT pay refundable deposits/fees.
- Payment of childcare fees will be made **directly to the Childcare provider** at the beginning of each half term, subject to your satisfactory attendance at college and confirmation from the Childcare provider that your child is attending their setting.
- **You are required to achieve 85% attendance;** this will be based on your register attendance from the previous half term.
- **If your attendance regularly falls below 85% then Childcare Bursary funding will be withdrawn, and you will be liable to cover your own childcare costs.**
- The Childcare Bursary may pay a retainer fee over the Christmas, Easter and half term breaks subject to available funds. **It cannot pay a retainer for the Summer break.**
- The Childcare Bursary cannot be used to pay for any other days/sessions without prior agreement – requests for additional funding should be emailed to childcare@stcg.ac.uk for consideration.
- Your Childcare provider is required to provide email confirmation that your child is attending their setting each half term.
- If you withdraw from your course, or complete early then you will no longer be eligible for Childcare Bursary so you must advise us immediately by email to childcare@stcg.ac.uk and give notice to your Childcare Provider, failure to do so will mean that you are liable for notice fees with the provider.

- If you change course or study days, then you must advise us immediately by email to childcare@stcg.ac.uk as this may affect your Childcare Bursary eligibility and we will need to review your application and the amount of financial support we offer.
- If necessary, you may change childcare provider during the year.

If you change childcare provider after your Childcare Bursary has already been approved:

- You must advise us immediately by email to childcare@stcg.ac.uk and give notice to the childcare provider, failure to do so will mean that you will be liable for notice fees incurred with the provider. We will advise you of the Childcare Bursary funding amount still available to you for the changed provider and send you with a new Childcare Bursary Fees Form which should be completed by the new provider and uploaded to your application a.s.a.p.
- If you no longer require Childcare Bursary funding then you must notify us immediately by email to childcare@stcg.ac.uk and give notice to the provider, failure to do so will mean that you are liable for notice fees with the provider.

The Childcare Bursary may pay a childcare provider maximum 4 weeks' notice period payment if funds permit. If you do not advise the Student Payments Team by email to childcare@stcg.ac.uk at the time that notice is given to a provider, then you will be liable for the notice fee.

The Childcare Bursary is only valid for academic year 2026/27 (7th Sept 2026 – 2nd Jul 2027) – if you require Childcare Bursary in the future, you must apply again.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Childcare Bursaries are assessed during term time, in order of the date that they are received; after assessment, if successful, the bursary will be confirmed by email as soon as possible after application has been made – at busy times this can take up to 10 working days.

If you choose to use the Childcare provision before your bursary has been assessed and confirmed, then you will be liable for fees incurred if you are not eligible for Childcare Bursary funding.

Funds for Childcare Bursaries are limited and will be assessed in date order of application received.

The college is unable to guarantee funding for Childcare Bursaries.

If you are in receipt of any state benefits it is your responsibility to inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about any Learner Support Bursary and Childcare Bursary that you receive from the college, as Bursary payments may impact those benefits.

Childcare Bursary funding is provided by the government and as such is strictly audited. If discovered that misleading or fraudulent information has been knowingly submitted by you, resulting in Childcare Bursary payments being made inappropriately, we will be required to recover any overpayment, and the matter may be referred to the police authority. This in turn could result in criminal prosecution.

Correspondence regarding Childcare Bursaries should be emailed to: childcare@stcg.ac.uk