

# Learner Bursary Fund Policy for 16-19 year olds

The information below is for students who are studying a further education course and aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2025, or aged 19 and on the second year of a 2 year course, or aged 19 or over with an Education Health and Care Plan. The bursary application is online at [www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support](http://www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support)

**Here is a summary of funds that may be available to you.**

**Funds are generally paid to a third party (suppliers) and not directly to learners.**

## Vulnerable Learner Bursary

This is a payment of up to £1,200 per academic year if you are:

- In care/a care leaver  
See pages 2 for more information.
- In receipt of Income Support or Universal Credits in the learner's name
- In receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) as well as Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in the student's name.

**See page 2 for more information. If you do not meet the criteria, bursary funding will be refused.**

## Discretionary Bursary

The **16-19 Discretionary Bursary Fund** will provide financial assistance for learners who are finding it most difficult to participate in learning through financial hardship. Assessment will be made based on a combined total household income including take home pay and other benefit payments. Total household income must be below £35,000 for maximum support. Applications from households with an income exceeding £35,000 are not normally considered.

## College Meals

If you qualified for Free (College) Meals at school and meet the eligibility criteria, you can receive a food allowance for your timetabled days which is automatically added to your college card once your application has been approved. **See page 3 for more information.**

## Travel Support Income below £16,190

Travel Assistance is available from those dependent on someone with a taxable income below £16,190. Eligible applicants are required to apply to Essex County Council Post 16 transport and where evidence is provided, a refund may be made for the subsidised contribution of £150 per term. Refund policy and dates apply. **See page 10.**

## Kit and Uniform

Some courses require an essential kit or a uniform. If you are studying a course with one of these costs and your household income is **less than £35,000 per year**, essential costs can be covered by the fund. **See page 4 for more information.**

## Essential Trips

Costs for essential trips related to your course will be covered. **See page 4 for more information.**

## Essential Costs

Some courses may require essential costs such as First Aid Course or DBS. These costs can be covered by the bursary fund.

## Essential Books

Essential books required to complete your course can be covered by the bursary fund.

## Care to Learn

If you are a young parent aged 19 or under when you start your course, Care to Learn may be able to help pay for your childcare costs. This is processed within your application.

## Important information

Bursary Funds are limited so we advise you to apply as early as possible. Whilst we aim to help all eligible learners, this may not always be possible. Please also be aware that any funding awarded by **the College may not cover 100% of your costs**. Being eligible to apply does not guarantee an award. Any funds awarded are generally paid to a third party and not directly to the learner.

The application form asks for personal and financial information, which you must then sign to confirm it is correct. If you are awarded funding based on false information, you may have your funding withdrawn and be asked to return any funds you have received.

## You will not receive an award from the college if:

You are planning to enrol on a course that does not receive government funding (you can check this with staff in the Admissions Department.)

- You are receiving funding for a Higher Education
- You are on an apprenticeship
- You are on leisure and hobby (Adult Community and Leisure) course.
- You are a young offender who
  - is serving a custodial sentence
  - has been released from a custodial sentence on temporary licence
  - has been remanded to a secure institution

## Absence

There may be occasions where absence becomes unavoidable; you need to let us know.

Visit [www.chelmsford.ac.uk](http://www.chelmsford.ac.uk) for more information on how to report any absences.

**We will not release funds if your attendance is not satisfactory.**

**Bursary payments are made based on good attendance and behaviour.**

If your attendance falls below 90% overall or your standard of behaviour is deemed unacceptable, your award may be refused and should there be no improvement, this may lead to the cancellation of your entire award.

# Vulnerable Learner Bursary

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For students aged 16-18 and in one of the following groups below with an assessed financial need, there is an award of up to £1,200 per year, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria, full attendance and engagement on your course.

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## **Students in care or care leavers**

You will need to provide the College with a letter from your Social/Support Worker, confirming your care status and meet the household income criteria.

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## **Students who are claiming Income Support or Universal Credits in their name**

You will need to provide the College with universal credit awards in your own name (dated within the last 3 months) **and** either a tenancy agreement or utility bills in your name.

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## **Students who receive Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payments AS WELL AS Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit in their own right.**

You will need to provide the College with your universal credit awards (within last three months) and evidence of receipt of DLA or PIP.

You **must** provide us with the evidence detailed above. Without the evidence, we cannot accept your bursary application.

In receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) as well as Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in the student's name.

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## **How are children/young people in care and care leavers defined?**

For the 16-18 Bursary Fund, the definitions are:

'Children in care' means children looked after by a local authority voluntarily (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'

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### **'Care Leavers' means:**

Young people aged 16 and 17 who were 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. In legal terms, these children are called relevant children or former relevant children.

A young person who is aged 18 or above who was looked after before becoming 18 for 13 weeks consecutively (or periods of 13 weeks), which began after the age of 14 and ended after the age of 16. In legal terms, these children are called relevant children or former relevant children.

## **Foster care, including privately arranged foster care**

A young person placed with a foster carer by the local authority, including where the foster carer is on the books of an independent fostering agency, is classed as looked after. They are therefore in a defined vulnerable group for the bursary.

A child who is privately fostered (the arrangement is made between the parent and the person who will care for the child) is not classed as a looked after child, as this is a private arrangement.

Local authorities should have published policies stating what support they will provide in these circumstances.

### **Please see 'care leavers' definition**

Where a student has been in the care of the local authority and that care is transferred to another party via a permanent form of fostering, e.g. a Special Guardianship Order, the student is deemed to have left care and is now a care leaver (please see Care Leavers definition ) and they may be eligible for a vulnerable student bursary as a former relevant child/ care leaver.

The amount you may get depends on the costs you have and what you need for your course. The fund may be available to cover help towards college meals, travel, essential books, equipment and uniform and in some cases a weekly payment of £20 during term time for use towards associated costs with essential college costs. Where costs have been agreed the payments may be deducted from the total award. The bursary may not be given where there is no financial need.

A weekly BACS payment of £20 to cover additional essential study costs (eg. stationery, UCAS, additional travel) associated with college may be available subject to financial need and attendance. An on-line BAC's form must be signed and completed and terms and conditions agreed. See page 7 for more information.

The BACS payment will be split into weekly amounts, paid in arrears subject to weekly attendance.

A financial assessment will be required and any reward will be subject to attendance at college.

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# College meals

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If you used to qualify for free school meals, you are most likely entitled to receive a **£2.61** contribution towards a meal at college. The college uplifts this to £5.00 per timetabled day at college. If eligible, the food allowance will be added to your college card to spend in any of the college food outlets once your bursary application has been approved.

College meals are available if you or your family receive any of the following benefits:

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Income Support

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Income-based Jobseekers Allowance

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Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

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Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999  
Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit

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Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)

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Universal Credit with net earnings not exceeding the equivalent of £7,400

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## Discretionary college meals are available if you are:

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In care

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Care leaver

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You will need to provide a letter from your support or social worker confirming you are in care/a care leaver

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Benefits letter showing an annual income of no more than £16,190.

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Accepted bursary applications approved by the college who do not qualify for free college meals as above will be offered a contribution towards college meals at £2.50 per timetabled day. Your food allowance will be added to your college card.

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Discretionary college meals may be removed if your attendance falls below 90% or discretionary funds exceed available funds.

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## Evidence required

You will need to provide a letter from the Department of Work and Pensions or Jobcentre Plus confirming you receive one of the above benefits. **See page 5 for full list of benefits.**

All letters provided as evidence must be dated within the last **three months**, or an older letter (no more than 12 months old) with a most recent bank statement to show that the benefit payment is going into you/your family's bank account.

**For Universal Credit the latest three months full award statements must be provided.**

# Travel support

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## Essex County Council (ECC)

Travel Assistance is available for those dependent on someone with a taxable income below £16,190. Eligible applicants are required to apply to Essex County Council Post 16 transport and where evidence is provided, a refund can be made for the subsidised contribution of £150 per term. Refund policy and dates apply.

Post 16 transport (reduced rate available where criteria for low income is met).

You can apply for Post 16 transport assistance from Essex County council. (criteria applies).

For full information on making an application go to:  
[www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)  
(I am looking for 'Post 16 transport')

You can apply online NOW  
Alternatively you can call 03456 032200

Qualifying applicants may be entitled to a full **termly** refund of upto 100% for the lower rate termly ticket of £150. Qualifying criteria applies.

Further travel discount information for students in education can be found on the college website.

**[www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support](http://www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support)** from the drop down menu choose 'travel schemes'. On this page you can download the 'college travel schemes' information.

### Please note:

We will not release funds if your attendance is not satisfactory. If your attendance falls below 90% or your standard of behaviour is deemed unacceptable, your award may be refused. Any award refused will be communicated to you via email.

If you have submitted your application prior to September, the first payment may not be until the end of September.

**If you are not eligible for support from either the local authority or the College, you still may be able to travel at a discounted student rate using the college travel scheme.**

Please see our website for further information:  
**[www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support/travel-schemes.asp](http://www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support/travel-schemes.asp)**

## Additional Travel Support

For household income upto £21,000 net once an application has been made to ECC and provided to bursary we may be able to cover upto 100% of cost (using the cheapest route and ticket available).

Household incomes between £21,000 and £35,000 may be eligible for a discount on the First Bus Routes using their Chelmsford or All Essex First 3 month ticket scheme of upto 50% where travel has been identified as a barrier to learning.

Future information on this scheme is available on request.

# Kit and uniform

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If you are studying a course, which requires you to buy a uniform and you are eligible for the bursary, you may qualify. If you are studying a course, which requires you to buy a uniform and kit costs, (upper limits apply).

**NB: The college bursary generally pay a third party and not the learner.**

Some uniform and kits costs can be expensive and the maximum contribution the bursary fund can make will be limited to 'essential costs only' this is listed as 'funded' on the uniform order form. (these can be discussed further with your course leader or the bursary dept).

The college (in most cases) use an online supplier where you will be authorised to submit your order for 'funded items' only (these are limited amounts). Once the bursary department has agreed your bursary application your essential uniform/kit will be authorised and payment made on your behalf. (subject to strict guidelines and costs).

\* We will only cover kit/equipment that has deemed essential by the department (this is stated on the order forms).

**We only cover essential course items (Not general stationery items). Please refer to the course kit lists on the website.**

### Please note:

If you are studying a hair, beauty or catering course, please contact the department for guidance regarding the purchase of your kit.

The Learner Financial Support Team will order your essential uniform and/or kit on your behalf. **Please do not purchase yourself.**

In cases where a refund is agreed under exceptional circumstances, this must be agreed by the bursary department within 30 days of your purchase receipt. Your receipt must be available for upload onto the bursary portal. Agreed payment will only be met to the cost of the college essential costs for the items.

**Please note that you must NOT purchase your kit first.**

# Essential trips

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If you are eligible for the vulnerable learner bursary or the discretionary bursary you may qualify for essential trip costs.

Trips which are deemed essential to completing your course can be paid from the bursary. Some trips may be requested at enrolment and will be agreed following a successful application.

Any trips throughout the academic year requiring payment will need to be requested through your bursary portal and you will be required to upload your college trip letter with the request for payment of the trip.

# Evidence to support your bursary application support

The College cannot accept an application for funding without the required evidence and all sections completed. See the table below for information on what you should submit with your application. Please see the table below for information on which sections you should complete.

Which funding are you applying for?	Evidence required	
I am applying for a bursary of up to £1,200 as a young person who is in care or has left care.	Letter from your Social or Support Worker confirming your care status and meet the household income criteria.  A financial needs assessment will need to be completed following your application.	Require travel as I live 2 miles walking distance or more from college and travel cannot be covered by the local authority (evidence will be required).  I require a college meal.  I require assistance with essential material costs.  <b>If you do not meet any of the criteria your bursary application will be refused.</b>
I am applying for the bursary up to £1,200 as a young person in receipt of Income Support/ universal credit in my own name.  OR  I am applying for the bursary up to £1,200 and in receipt of either universal credit, Employment Support Allowance <b>and</b> Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or/Personal Independence Payments (PIP)	Last three months full Universal Credit Award Statements in your name <b>and</b> proof of sole occupancy of independent living.  Letter (s) from the Department of Work and Pensions or Job Centre Plus confirming you receive the relevant benefit(s). The letter must be dated within the last three months and universal credit award (last three months).  Last three months full Universal Credit Award Statements.	Require travel as I live 2 miles walking distance or more from college and I have been declined travel from Essex County Council post 16 transport (evidence will be required).  I require a college meal  I require assistance with essential material costs  <b>If you do not meet any of the criteria your bursary applications will be refused.</b>
I am applying for free college meals and help with essential course costs.  OR  I am not eligible for free college meals, but I am applying for help with essential course costs.	Please provide evidence which confirms your household is in receipt of Means Tested Benefits but must not be entitled to Working Tax Credits and has an annual household income of under £16,190.  Last three months full Universal Credit Award Statements not exceeding the equivalent of £7400p.a./£616.67p.m.  Please provide evidence that confirms your household is in receipt of Means-Tested Benefits or has an annual household income of under £35,000.	See the table below.  I require a college meal  I require assistance with essential material costs  See table below  I require assistance with essential material costs
<b>TRAVEL</b>  I am applying for the £150 per term ECC refund  Applying for travel support as not eligible for ECC lower rate due to not closest establishment or not meeting distance criteria  Additional travel support	Proof of payment to be submitted  Payment request to be made termly on set dates laid out by Bursary (details on bursary portal at back of policy).  ECC letter confirming reason for non eligibility  ECC approval letter  Income over £21,000 net but request discount.	Must qualify for ECC low rate criteria (£150)  Household income below £16190. More than 2 miles from the college  Household income below £21,000 net.  Specific ticket only income upto £35,000.

# Evidence to support your bursary application - continued

**TABLE:**

List of accepted evidence for annual household income of below £35,000 where benefit is claimed:  
Uploads confirming that someone in the household receives one or more of the following benefits:

Income support

- Employment Support Allowance (WRAG)

- Job Seekers Allowance (Income Based)

- State Pension Credit (guaranteed element)

- Tax Credits award 25/26

(with an annual household income of below £35,000)

Universal Credit Award (with an annual household income of below £35,000). Last 3 months statements must be provided.

List of accepted evidence for annual household income of below £35,000 where benefit is claimed:

If your parent(s) or guardian(s) are working, and are not in receipt of a benefit, we need the following evidence:

- P60 from the year ending 5th April 2025 for all working occupants.  
All pages must be supplied.

All letters provided as evidence must be dated within the three months before handing in your application. If this letter is more than three months old (no more than 12 months), please also submit a recent bank statement showing the benefit payment going into your account. (this does not apply to universal credit).

**If you do not hold a British passport.**

Please check with our admissions department to see if you are eligible to enrol on the course.



# General Terms

## Policy Statement

The 16-19 Bursary Fund will provide financial assistance for learners who are finding it most difficult to participate in learning through financial hardship. The fund will be distributed in a consistent and equitable way and in accordance with guidance issued by the Education Funding Agency.

Chelmsford College has determined that funds will be allocated to cover the essential costs, it deems necessary, for learners to complete their Study Programme. Support is very limited and cannot cover all costs associated with all Study Programmes.

**Funds will generally be paid to a third party, not directly to the learner.**

Each application is individually assessed and **all assistance is subject to the availability of funds.** Learners who are eligible for support are not automatically entitled to it. If demand exceeds the available funds, reduced awards may be given and when the fund is fully committed, no further awards will be made.

All on-going bursary payments will be subject to meeting a minimum of 90% attendance and meeting college expectations of coursework and behaviour or payments may be withheld. Learners are responsible for monitoring their attendance and addressing any queries.

Means testing will be rigorous but not excessive and supporting evidence of personal circumstances and/or relevant benefit evidence will be required. Other sources of financial support will be taken into consideration when processing applications.

## Eligibility

To be eligible for support,, students must be classified as being:

- Enrolled on a funded Study Programme.
- Meet the residency criteria in ESFA funding regulations.
- Aged 16 or over but under 19 years of age on 31st August 2025.
- 19 years of age and started a two year programme before their 19th birthday.
- 19 years and over who have an EHCP.
- In care, a care leaver, receive or be dependent on someone who receives a relevant benefit.
- And/or can demonstrate a genuine financial hardship which is causing a barrier to learning.

## The following groups are not eligible for financial assistance

- Students on apprenticeships or waged training.
- Learners on Higher Education (HE) courses.
- Learners serving a custodial sentence or release on temporary license.

## Application Process

Applicants must complete the relevant application form from the fund they are applying to within the eligibility guidelines.

- Applicants must demonstrate their financial need by providing the income information and supporting evidence as detailed in the application forms.
- All applications are assessed on receipt of a correctly completed application form.
- As funds are limited, an early application is advisable.

A decision on your application will be made within 14 working days from the date received and funds will be allocated following your enrolment.

If all funds have been allocated, your details will be recorded on a waiting list.

Chelmsford College cannot take responsibility for any correspondence lost or mislaid paperwork. Bursary funds are not backdated. Funds can only be allocated once your application has been agreed by the Learner Financial Support Team.

## Appeals

If you don't agree with a decision and wish to appeal, please put it in writing to the Head of Learner Safeguarding and Wellbeing within 7 days of being informed of the assessment outcome. Appeals will be resolved within 21 working days.

## Additional Information

### Financial Award Conditions

In order to receive financial awards learners must achieve a satisfactory attendance of 90% and above and meet College expectations of coursework and behaviour. If attendance does not meet College requirements payments may be withheld, subject to a progress review with the learner's Head of Department. Personal circumstances will be taken into consideration when determining if payments are to be re-instated.

Awards for living costs are outside the scope of the fund and are not available from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

### Vulnerable Learner Bursary

Learners will be required to have their own bank account to receive weekly bursary payments.

Learners 19 years plus are not eligible for the Vulnerable Learner Bursary.

Where learners are studying on a part-time or short study programme, financial assistance will be pro-rated and adjusted accordingly.

### Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances discretionary payments can be considered for costs which have been identified as a barrier to participating in learning. Applications for discretionary payments to the Head of Learner Safeguarding and Wellbeing for assessment.

### Financial Hardship

Applications can be made where household income exceeds the guidelines and evidence of financial hardship can be demonstrated e.g. redundancy, bereavement, debt management. Supporting evidence will be necessary to fully assess your application and determine level of support available.

### Additional Study Hours or Industry Placement

Travel and food costs can be considered for additional costs required to complete your Study Programme.

### Travel

The responsibility for post 16 transport lies with our local authority, Essex County Council (ECC). Post 16 travel applications must be made to ECC prior to an assessment for additional support from the Bursary Fund.

Additional support is subject to funding and bursary guidelines set out by the bursary department.

Where you have been assessed for travel support only no further assistance will be offered.

### Free Meals

Where remote food vouchers are provided they will be sent to your College email address. It is your responsibility to access them and assign them within 4 weeks of the delivery date, **as after this they will expire and will not be re-issued.**

### **Childcare**

If you need help with your childcare costs whilst you study please contact the Learner Financial Support Team to discuss further.

### **Changes to Circumstances**

Learners will be required to disclose any change of circumstances during the year which may affect their eligibility. If a learner leaves the College before the completion of their Study Programme they may be asked to repay their award or return any equipment.

### **Reimbursements/Refunds (including ECC Travel)**

**The College Bursary Fund will only offer reimbursements for approved items purchased by you where authorised by the Learner Financial Support Lead..**

**Reimbursements require prior agreement and will only be offered for essential items with a valid receipt. They must be claimed within 30 days of purchase.**

### **Please Note:**

Applications for financial assistance are valid for one academic year only. Should you return to the College in September 2026 and still require financial support a new application form must be completed and up to date supporting evidence provided.

The information provided is correct at time of publication but may be subject to change in line with Government guidelines. This document can also be found on the Chelmsford College website: [www.chelmsford.ac.uk](http://www.chelmsford.ac.uk) and may be converted to other formats if appropriate (Braille, large print, other languages etc).

The guidance applies to the academic year 2025/2026 and is reviewed annually. **The closing date for applications is 24th October 2025.**

**If you have had a change in circumstance or your course begins after 31st October 2025 please email [bursary@chelmsford.ac.uk](mailto:bursary@chelmsford.ac.uk) for a link to apply for bursary.**

### **Laptops**

If you require a Lap-top for college studies this is made available through the college lap-top loan scheme. This will need to be arranged through your Academic Tutor or Head of Department.

**All correspondence relating to Bursary including confirmation of your award will be sent to the email account you use to make your application through the bursary portal.**



# Travel support

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## Local authority travel support

In most cases, you must be attending a full-time course at the nearest or most accessible school or college to your home. If an alternative suitable course is offered by a Further Education provider nearer to your home, the student will not be eligible for support.

### **Please contact the local authorities for more information:**

#### **Essex:**

[www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)  
(I'm looking for post 16 transport)

Telephone 03456 032200

### **For termly refunds on termly lower rate (£150) costs (ECC)**

The college look to refund upto 100% of this cost on a termly basis.

You will need to submit your request online via your bursary portal with the dates detailed below each term (3 terms per academic year) to claim your refund.

This will be paid directly into your nominated bank account (conditions apply).

#### **Autumn Term 1:**

Submit refund request between enrolment and 24th October 2025

#### **Spring Term 2:**

Submit refund request between 8th Dec 2025 and 15th Jan 2026

#### **Summer Term 3:**

Submit refund request between 23rd March and 24th April 2026

You can apply for Post 16 transport assistance from Essex County council. (criteria applies).

## **Further Travel Support**

See page 4 of this guidance.

# Other travel discounts

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For full information on making an application go to:  
[www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.essex.gov.uk/schooltransport)

## **Bus and Trains**

You can find further information on discounts for full time college students at:

<https://www.chelmsford.ac.uk/support/travel-schemes.asp>  
choose 'travel scheme'



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## Trains

