

Student Funding Childcare Fund – Provider’s Handbook



Academic Session 2026-27

Welcome to the Forth Valley College’s Childcare Fund – Provider’s Handbook! As a childcare provider, this comprehensive guide will equip you with essential information to support students and their children. Whether you’re a seasoned provider or new to college funding, you’ll be able to get all the information you need right here.

If you need any additional information or extra help, you can contact us.

Contact Student Funding

Phone: 01324 403041

Email: funding@forthvalley.ac.uk

In-Person: Falkirk Campus Student Hub (Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm during Term-Time or by appointment)



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Purpose of the Childcare Fund

The purpose of the Childcare Fund is to contribute towards **eligible childcare costs** for students studying at college. These funds, which are discretionary and cash-limited, are intended to supplement existing resources used to directly support students' study-related childcare costs.

The funds are available to all eligible Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) students with childcare responsibilities. The funds provide assistance with the cost of **formal registered childcare expenses**.



What are eligible childcare costs?



As a childcare provider claiming from the college for eligible childcare costs, you should be aware of what the college defines as an eligible cost.

Eligible childcare costs are those expenses that are directly related to caring for a student's child during their college hours.

The student's college hours are when the student is attending **timetabled classes and mandatory work placements**. Additionally, the college considers travel time. It covers up to **one hour** of travel time before the student's first class and one hour after their final class.

However, there are certain **exclusions** to be aware of. For instance, if a student has a partner at home who is not working or in education during their timetabled classes, they are not eligible for childcare funding from the college.

Also, **additional costs** such as administration fees, deposits, snacks, and trips are not covered under childcare funding.

Why are there restrictions on what the college will pay towards?

It's important to understand why there are restrictions on what the college will pay towards childcare costs. The primary reason is that the funding allocated for childcare is classified as **public funds**. This means that it is money that comes from taxpayers and is therefore subject to certain rules and regulations to ensure it's used responsibly and effectively.

The **source of funding** for childcare costs comes from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland. They require regular reports from the college throughout the year detailing how we spend their public funds, and we are audited every year.

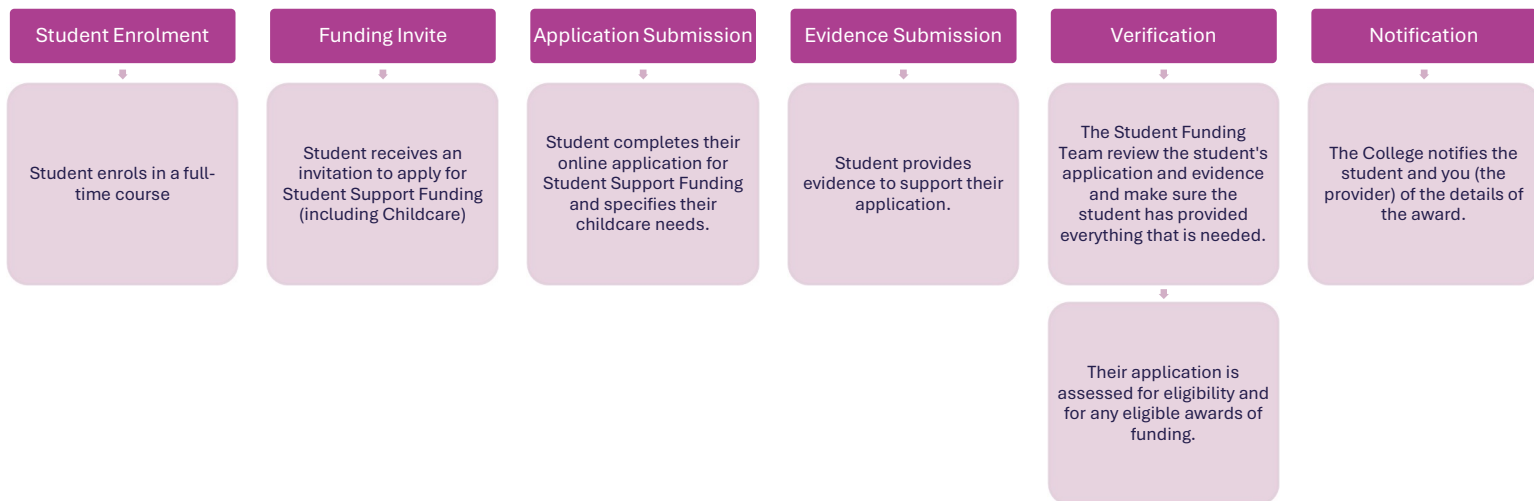
It's therefore essential to promptly inform the college about any **changes in childcare arrangements**. If these arrangements come to an end or vary, the college needs to be notified to avoid overpayment situations.

This is because the college is **obligated to recoup any overpaid government or public funds**. Therefore, keeping the college updated about any changes helps ensure the correct allocation of funds and avoids potential issues with overpayment.



How do I know if I can claim childcare funding?

Before you can claim childcare funding from the college, the student must first be assessed as eligible and awarded childcare funding. The College will not accept any claim forms until the student in question has been assessed and awarded childcare funding.



When the student is awarded Childcare Funding, and where you have been named as a Childcare Provider on the student's application form, **you will receive an email** from us detailing the student's individual Childcare Award and **a link to the Childcare Portal** so you can access the forms you'll need to make a claim.



The Childcare Award will show the student's name, the child's name, the award percentage, and the eligible period of the award. The eligible period will have a start and end date and is determined by when the student applies for funding. Students who make a successful application for funding within the first 6 weeks of their course will be eligible from the start date of their course. Students who miss this deadline will be awarded funding from the date their application is complete. No payments will be made for care provided outside of these dates.

How do I make a claim?

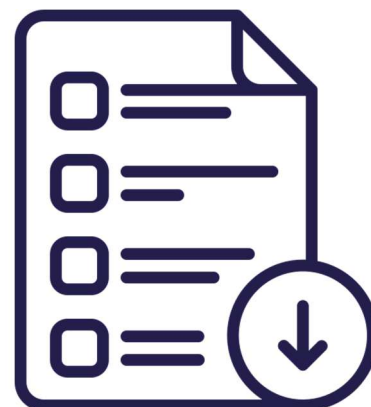
When you visit the Childcare Portal, you'll be able to access all the **forms** that you need to submit a claim to the college as well as other useful documents and information.

Agreement & Weekly Claim Form

The first form you'll need to complete is the **Agreement & Weekly Claim Form**. On the Agreement Form you'll need to provide essential information about both you, the student, and the child you'll be looking after. Including: names, addresses, Care Inspectorate CS number, and your bank details.

The Agreement Form also contains the **Terms and Conditions** of claiming from the Childcare Fund. A copy of these can be found at the back of this document.

The Weekly Claim Form is where you'll provide the specific days and times where you will be providing care for the child. You should make sure you get a copy of the student's timetable so you're aware of when they will be at college and therefore when the care will have an eligible cost.



If you need more detailed instructions on how to complete the forms you can check out the "Guide to Childcare Claim Forms" or contact Student Funding.

Submitting your Claim



Once you have completed the Agreement & Weekly Claim Form, this should be emailed to Student Funding (funding@forthvalley.ac.uk) alongside a link to, or copy of your fee structure.

Once we have received this a member of the Student Funding Team will acknowledge receipt, and your paperwork will be added to the queue to be **processed**.

Please Note: we are usually particularly busy at the start of terms, so please bear with us and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

The Student Funding Team will then process your Agreement & Weekly Claim Form. If there are any issues with your forms they will **contact you for clarification or correction**, which will delay the processing of any eligible payments. So if you need help to complete your forms, please contact us prior to submission.

Your Weekly Claim Form will be used to calculate a Weekly Award amount and you and the student will be issued with copies of an Award Letter showing the award amounts and the payment schedule. (Please Note: payments are subject to conditions.)

How are my payments calculated?

Once your paperwork reaches the top of the processing queue the first thing the Student Funding Team will do is verify your Care Inspectorate CS number. This is because we can only make payments for registered formal childcare.

Timetable Check

The Weekly Claim Form will be checked to see that the days and times being claimed for matches the student's timetabled classes and mandatory work placements (plus an hour's travel each way). If there are times claimed-for outside of this, there will be a pro rata deduction.



For Example:

The student is timetabled 9am-3pm and you have claimed care from 8am-5pm at a rate of £7 per hour for a total of £63. The college would be able to pay for care from 8am-4pm (1 hour before and after the timetable), at a rate of £7 per hour for a total of £56.

Free Hours Calculation



A check is done to see if the child would be eligible for 'Free Hours' via the **Funded Early Learning and Childcare programme**.

The Funded Early Learning and Childcare scheme is available for **children aged 3 to 5** years old. It provides up to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare per year (approximately 30 hours a week during term time). Additionally, some 2-year-olds may qualify depending on the parent's circumstances.

If the child is eligible, then these hours **must be used first** before claiming any funding from the college to avoid duplicating government funds.

If the parent **chooses not to use their full entitlement**, or chooses to use a provider who is not eligible to access the free hours; then the college will deduct 6 hours per day from any claim made. (6 hours per day, across 5 weekdays to make the 30 hours per week.)

If the parent is already using their full allowance from the free hours scheme and requires additional childcare to cover their time in college, then you can claim this additional time.

For Example,

The student is timetabled for, and you are claiming for, 8am-5pm at £7 per hour for a total of £63. However the child is eligible for free hours and they are not being used. We would then have to deduct 6 hours at a rate of £7 per hours, meaning the payable amount would be for 3 hours at £7 an hour for a total of £21.

Another student is using their free hours at a nursery for 9am-3pm each day. You are providing wrap around care from 8am-9am and 3pm-5pm at £7 per hour for a total of £28. As the student is already using their free hours, and the times you have the child are within the timetable – we would pay the full £28.

Multiple Provider Checks

Depending on the student's circumstances, they may use more than one childcare provider. Where this is the case, we need to ensure that the student is not receiving **overlapping funding**. The Student Funding Team will liaise with the student to get the required information from providers to confirm this. These claims will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Childcare Award Percentage Calculation



Students are **awarded a percentage** of their eligible childcare costs depending on their household income. The percentage rates are shown below. Once the claim has been calculated, this percentage will then be applied to generate the weekly award amount.

There is not a fee cap on the amount which can be awarded to a student

You will find the student's award percentage on the email notifying you of the award.

Based on Partner's income we can pay	
Lone Parent	100%
£0 - £29,999	100%
£30,000 - £34,999	75%
£35,000 - £44,999	50%
£45,000 +	25%

For Example:

The weekly claim has been assessed fully and totals £220 per week. The student has been awarded 75% Childcare Funding, meaning the weekly award would then be £165.

Childcare Award and Payment Schedule

Once your weekly award has been calculated, you will receive a copy of your **Award Letter** by email. The student will also receive a copy. It will detail what the weekly award is and show the payment schedule.

Throughout the year, changes may occur that result in multiple award letters being issued to you. Each additional award letter will reflect the additional costs associated with these changes, rather than providing a single, updated award letter.



- Adhocs will be shown on a separate award letter.

If there is an increase or decrease in costs:

- The original award letter will be updated to show an end date.
- A new award letter will be issued to reflect the new amount going forward.

Childcare Funding is only payable for weeks where the college is open, therefore payments will not be made for holiday weeks, i.e. February break, Easter, October break, and Christmas break. Conditions for payment can be found in the Terms & Conditions at the back of this guide.

How will I be paid?

Payments are made by **BACS** and according to the **payment schedule**. Most payment dates cover a two week period and are paid in arrears.

Payments are usually made on a Friday (unless there is a Bank Holiday) and you will receive an email with a remittance advice document attached. It will show the child's name and the amount being paid. If you ever have any queries about your payment, you should contact Student Funding.

What if I need to change my claim?



Sometimes the care you provide for the child will change days, times, or even stop all together.

If this happens, or is going to happen, then you must notify Student Funding in writing (by email). The conditions around changes in claims are detailed in the Provider Terms and Conditions at the back of this guide.

Claim Amendment Form - Continuous Changes

If the care you provide for the child is going to **change on an on-going basis**, then you will need to complete and email us a **Claim Amendment Form**.

You will also need to let us know when the change comes into effect. The Student Funding Team will then recalculate your claim and send you an **Amended Award Letter** showing the new award amount.

Ad Hoc Claim Form - One-off Additional Claims

If you have an occasion where you are providing **one-off additional care** for a child you can complete an **Ad Hoc Claim Form** and email it to Student Funding.

On this form you need to tell us why the additional care is needed. This is because we can only cover the cost if it is due to the student needing to attend college outside of their normal hours (i.e. block placement weeks, exams, etc.), or if it is due to a school closure, strike day, etc. Confirmation or additional **evidence may be required** to justify the claim depending on the reason. We will usually contact the student and ask them to provide this.

Ending a Claim

If you stop, or are going to stop, caring for a child, then you can email Student Funding to notify us. The email should include the student's name, the child's name, and the date the care is going to stop. The Student Funding Team will then verify this with the student and close the claim. The college will not pay for any termination fees. It's the student's responsibility to adhere to any cancellation or termination agreement they have with you.

Glossary of Terms

Ad Hoc Claim Form: A form that needs to be completed if one-off additional care is being provided for a child.

Agreement & Weekly Claim Form: A form that childcare providers need to complete to claim funding from the college.

Childcare Award: The amount of funding a student is eligible to receive towards childcare costs.

Childcare Award Percentages: The percentage of childcare costs that can be funded for students based on their household circumstances.

Childcare Fund: A fund that contributes towards eligible childcare costs for students studying at college.

Childcare Portal: An online platform where childcare providers can access all the forms needed to submit a claim to the college.

Childcare Provider: The individual or organisation providing childcare services.

Claim Amendment Form: A form that needs to be completed if the care provided for a child is going to change on an ongoing basis.

Eligible Childcare Costs: Expenses that are directly related to caring for a student's child during their college hours.

Funded Early Learning and Childcare Program: A government scheme available for children aged 3 to 5 years old that provides up to 1,140 hours of funded early learning and childcare per year.

Further Education (FE) Students: Students who are studying at SCQF level 6 or below.

Higher Education (HE) Students: Students who are studying at SCQF level 7 or higher.

Public Funds: Money that comes from the government and is subject to certain rules and regulations to ensure it's used responsibly and effectively.

Student Award Agency for Scotland: The organisation that provides and regulates the college's funding.

Student Funding Team: The team at the college that processes claims and payments for childcare funding.

Timetabled Classes: The times when a student is scheduled to attend classes at college or mandatory work placements.

Childcare Terms and Conditions

- 1. Agreement:** The agreement for the provision of childcare is between yourself (the childcare provider) and the student. No contract exists between yourself and Forth Valley College. The College's involvement within the arrangement is solely to provide assistance with the childcare costs on the student's behalf. We therefore will not accept invoices for childcare costs or demand notices.
- 2. Coverage:** The award only covers the days the student is timetabled to be in college. You should ensure that you receive a copy of the student's timetable from the student directly.
- 3. Travel Time:** If the student requires time to travel to/from college, the College will pay up to a maximum of one hour before their first class and one hour after their final class. Any additional time required by the student will be paid directly to yourself by the student, unless the College has reviewed the reasons for the student's additional request and agreed to make the payments.
- 4. Free Childcare Entitlement:** If you have a child in your care who is over three years of age, then the child is entitled to free childcare at a nursery. Some two-year-olds are also eligible for the free entitlement if their parent has certain circumstances. The student is required to make use of this entitlement before seeking further assistance from the College. If the student has selected not to use a nursery or use a provider that is not part of the free childcare scheme, we will deduct 6 hours per day (30 hours per week) and the student will be responsible for these costs with you. If you do not use an hourly rate, the session rate you have provided will be pro-rata'd to enable this deduction to be made. More information on free hours can be found here: [Funded early learning and childcare - mygov.scot](https://www.fvgov.scot.nhs.uk/learning-and-childcare-mygov.scot)
- 5. Additional Costs:** Any additional costs such as (but not limited to) deposits, snacks and trips will be met by the student and not Forth Valley College.
- 6. Student Requirements:** Should the student fail to satisfy the engagement, attendance, conduct, and progress requirements of their course, their payments may be at risk of being withheld. It will be the responsibility of the student, as the signatory of the childcare contract, to make these payments directly to yourself in these instances.
- 7. GDPR:** The College can enter into discussion regarding the student's attendance and engagement with yourself under the terms of GDPR. This is subject to the signed agreement being in place and only where relevant to payment queries. The student may also request copies of payments made to you on their behalf for either their own records or for any other legitimate reason.
- 8. Notification of Changes:** The College must be notified of any changes to claims as soon as is reasonably possible and within 6 weeks of the change. If the change involves an increase in costs or additional costs incurred, and we are notified beyond the 6-week period, we will not backdate this increase to the stipulated start date. Instead, the increase will be calculated from the date we were notified. If the change involves a decrease in costs, we will backdate the decrease regardless of when we are notified. The reduction will be deducted from future payments until the balance is repaid, or an invoice will be issued for the overpayment. In the event of significant changes to the childcare circumstances that are not communicated to us within a reasonable time frame, the childcare award may be subject to withdrawal in its entirety.
- 9. Claim Processing:** At the start of each term, there may be delays with processing your claim. Where there is a delay in assessing your claim, the College will make payment retrospectively on the first available payment date.
- 10. Funding:** Forth Valley College's childcare funds are granted on behalf of SAAS and as such, the College must follow their respective guidelines on how these funds are administered.
- 11. Ad-hoc Claims:** There may be times where you are asked to care for the child on a different day/time as a one-off (due to work placements, school closures, etc.). In this case, an Ad-hoc claim will be required. Please complete this noting the details for additional care in full and we will assess. Once approved we will include in the relevant payment run.
- 12. Timetable Changes:** During the year the student's timetable may change. If there is a change to the days or times you provide care for the child, please let us know immediately and we can review the weekly calculation that is currently in place. We may require a new weekly claim which will supersede the original/previous claim.
- 13. Payments:** All Student Funding payments are paid in arrears. A copy of our payment dates and the period for each payment can be found within the Childcare Provider Portal and on the award letter you are issued.
- 14. Overpayments:** If for any reason there has been an overpayment of Childcare funds, the College will request repayment and you, the childcare provider, will be obliged to repay the amount requested. Failure to do so will result in an invoice being issued, and where appropriate forwarded to a debt collection agency.
- 15. Childcare Provider Portal:** Our childcare provider portal will provide the necessary information to complete and submit your claim. The portal also provides details of payment dates for the academic year and also our maximum rates guide. Please ensure you read these fully prior to submitting your claim. You can access this here: [Childcare Info | Forth Valley College](#). Please also ensure you retain any copies of agreements and claims for your own records.