



20 + Childcare (full and part time students)

Fircroft College is committed to supporting students to access learning where hardship is a barrier to education. These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Student Funding Policy 2026-2027 alongside the WMCA Financial Support Procedure. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance on how eligible students can access support costs for Childcare whilst studying.

Please note for a student under 20 years of age on the first day of their full-time academic course they should apply to Care to Learn at www.gov.uk/care-to-learn

Applications can be submitted prior to enrolment to the course. Payments will be made once the application has been approved and enrolment is completed. Applications should be made in conjunction with Student Financial Support applications.



1. Eligibility

- 1.1.1 Must be aged 20 + on the first day of learning.
- 1.1.2 Be the primary carer or have parental responsibility for the child or children being claimed for.
- 1.1.3 Have a personal income below £36,126 pa.
- 1.1.4 Be a 'home' student see financial support guidance.
- 1.1.5 Be enrolled on a WMCA funded programme of study.

2. Evidence required

Students will be required to produce:

- 2.1.1 Evidence of the child/children's birth certificate/s.
- 2.1.2 Evidence of Tax Credit Award Notice. This information will be copied and retained with the application. The information provided in the Tax Credit Award should provide up to date evidence of personal circumstances; including income and details of child/children.
- 2.1.3 Where provisional Tax Credit documentation or a tax Credit review letter is submitted as evidence, students will be also expected to provide three most recent bank statements (to show ongoing tax Credit payments).
- 2.1.4 Evidence of state benefits.
- 2.1.5 Asylum seeker must provide supporting evidence such as Home Office letter and ARC (Application Registration Card) card.

Evidence may be submitted electronically, by post or in person. Copies of evidence will be retained with application form for audit purposes.

Evidence will be retained for 7 years in line with Fircroft College Data Archiving & Retention Policy.

3. Application process

- 3.1.1 Students must provide a completed 'Childcare Quote Form' from their childcare provider alongside the childcare application form. The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered.
- 3.1.2 The application form must be submitted with evidence of income or tax credits and child/children birth certificate(s).
- 3.1.3 A Childcare Support Application form must be completed and approved to meet the cost of childcare provision.
- 3.1.4 Child care support is not guaranteed and until approval of application, childcare payments are the responsibility of the parent or guardian. Students are advised to submit timely applications to ensure childcare payments can be made in line with provider contracts.
- 3.1.5 Copies of the contract should be submitted to ensure support payments can be made in line with terms and conditions.
- 3.1.6 Childcare contracts should be signed, dated alongside the Ofsted registration number of the provider before returning the form to Fircroft College. Applications will not be approved until contracts have been completed and verified.
- 3.1.7 Fircroft College will contact the childcare provider with College Childcare Agreement and full payment schedule.
- 3.1.8 The College has the right to cease payment to the provider should the provider lose registration, be deemed inadequate or requiring improvement. The College also has the right to request reimbursement of any payments that may have been made since the provider lost registration, was deemed inadequate or requiring improvement.

3.1.9 All applications and supporting evidence will be treated as confidential. However; it may be necessary for Student Services to contact other College staff and/or childcare providers for additional information to allow for an application to be processed.

3.1.10 If the childcare application is declined all associated childcare costs must be met by the student.

4. What the College will pay for.

4.1.1 Where students are eligible to receive Government 2/3 or 4 year Funded Childcare Hours, Free Early Years Entitlement must be used in the first instance (FEEE).

4.1.2 Students who receive the approved Childcare funding are expected to have a 100% attendance record on their course. Childcare may be suspended if attendance falls below 80%.

4.1.3 Assistance may be granted towards the cost of childcare for eligible students with dependent children up to 15 years of age (16 for children with a disability).

4.1.4 Childcare support is for timetabled sessions only plus one-hour travel to and from Fircroft College as appropriate.

4.1.5 All childcare payments will be paid directly to the childcare provider in line with the payment schedule.

4.1.6 The maximum childcare costs payable per student will be £50.00 per day per child. Where the childcare costs exceed the maximum amount awarded it will be the responsibility of the student to meet these additional costs which must be paid directly to the childcare provider.

4.1.7 College will fund payments to the childcare provider in cases of sickness of parent or child. Students must inform Fircroft College on the first day of sickness.

4.1.8 Absences will be reviewed after 1 week and a decision will be made by an Assistant Principal whether to continue childcare funding. Students who do not make the College aware of sickness absence (in line with the Attendance Policy) may be liable for childcare payments.

5. What the College will not pay for.

5.1.1 The contract for childcare is the full responsibility of the student and any outstanding costs relating to non-attendance, withdrawal from programme or extra hours will be met by the student.

5.1.2 Payments for childcare support provided by a family member or friend.

5.1.3 Childcare funds will not be available in between courses, where a student enrolls on a number of short courses.

5.1.4 Trips, extra meals, parties or other additional activities provided by the childcare setting.

5.1.5 Childcare support for private/home study.

5.1.6 Childcare fees where a student has missed College for a holiday or to visit family members.

6. Appeals and complaints.

6.1.1 Appeals and complaints will be processed in line with the Students Financial Support procedures.

If you require further information or support, please contact Student Services on: 0121 472 0116 or email Admissions@Fircroft.ac.uk