

Need a New Payments Solution?

Your checklist for everything you need to choose the perfect solution for your school.

Click to complete

Business case

Complete?

Do you need reasons or an argument to convince your School Leadership Team and/or School Governors to introduce a cashless online system?

Hint: You may want to do a simple time/effort, cost, and benefits analysis. Compare the time currently used to manage existing cash versus the possible time/cost saved if an online payments solution removed cash from school. Suppliers should be able to provide case studies/referrals that may support your arguments.

Consider online services

Complete?

Your business case will be stronger if you can maximise the types of services you collect income for online. Have you considered what services you could take payments online for?

- School Meals
- School Trips
- School Clubs
- School Uniforms
- Tickets for special school events
- Donations

Goals

Complete?

Have you set goals and targets in relation to becoming an online cashless school?

Are these realistic and achievable?
Have you got a strategy and plan to achieve this?

Costs

Complete?

Do you know what the annual license costs for the online payments solution are and what you will need to pay for any additional features?

Note: This could include school-to-home communications, facilities, additional modules, reports, etc.



Options

Complete?

Does the solution offer socially inclusive payment options?

Note: You may not want to disadvantage payers who do not have the ability to pay by debit/credit card online. Can your school collect and manage multiple payment types? For instance, debit/credit card, online/PayPoint (for non-debit or credit card holders), occasional cash, and auto-top up.

Automate

Complete?

Will the solution you are considering enable you to regularly update your pupil and staff data automatically from your school's MIS?

Hint: Being able to easily update your cashless solution from your MIS will save time and reduce possible errors. Check what is possible with potential suppliers and ask to see how it works.

Reporting

Complete?

Does the solution meet your existing requirements for income reconciliation reporting?

Hint: For example, provision of electronic payment receipts, audit trails, banking reports, and reconciliation features including full transparent breakdowns of transaction fees, etc.

Secure payments

Complete?

Do you want to take direct responsibility for the collection of debit/credit card payments or will you use a secure payment collection service provider?

Note: If your school is happy to take responsibility for the direct collection of payments (via your own merchant account), please also consider security compliance training for staff, as well as ongoing merchant account costs.

Hint: A Merchant Account and PCI compliance training is not required if your suppliers' online cashless solution has a payment collection service; you take no responsibility for the processing of card payments, as the liability is with the supplier and banking network.

Solution options

Complete?

Does the solution cater for the recording of, and provide, UIFSM, FSM, paid for meal bookings, reporting, and advanced meal bookings?

Note: If being used for school meals.

Value

Complete?

Will the solution add value to the existing services being provided to students and parents?

Note: Does the solution meet parents' payment needs and requests? For example, a way to manage food allergies and intolerances if the solution offers school meal management.



Communication Complete?

Will the solution need to enable you to communicate with parents and vice versa?

Note: Check if there are messaging facilities within the payment system.

Balance alerts Complete?

Will the solution need to deliver balance alerts to payers by email and/or SMS text messages?

Note: Providing balance alerts to parents can help reduce the need to chase parent debt.

If using a Payment Collection Service Complete?

Does your school have to pay transaction fees on every individual payment item or are you just paying one off payment fees?

If you are not using a Payment Collection Service Complete?

Have you factored in costs associated with setting up your own merchant account and any PCI compliance training required for staff involved in payment collections from parents?

Supplier costs Complete?

Are charges associated with support offered by the supplier?

Note: These could be premium rate telephone numbers for support calls.

Support resources Complete?

Are telephone and online support resources available?

Investment Complete?

Does the supplier regularly invest in improving their product and service based on customers' needs? Can they evidence this for you?

Note: Do they have a wishlist facility and carry out customer surveys?

Fees Complete?

Are there additional (hidden) fees after the first year of the contract? Does your annual license cost increase?

Note: Some suppliers offer the first year free or vastly reduced first year annual service license costs to encourage schools to sign-up to 3 year contracts. Please ensure that you have the total costs related to the length of the contract available to you.



Support plan

Complete?

Has the supplier you are considering got a dedicated team and supporting plan to help you implement your online cashless solution within the timescales required?

***Note:** To ensure a successful launch of your online cashless solution, it is important that the supplier can also give your school the appropriate resource and support.*

Track record

Complete?

Has the supplier got a strong track record helping schools increase uptake of school meals, trips, and other services?

***Note:** It is recommended that schools seek several references from local schools already using the supplier's solution to evidence this.*

Financially sound

Complete?

Is the supplier in 'good health' from a financial perspective?

***Note:** Schools should ensure that they are working with a supplier that is not at risk of being unable to support your school in future. Credit/financial histories of suppliers should be requested or checked up on.*

SLA

Complete?

Has the supplier got adequate support resources and do they have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) that they can prove they can meet?

***Note:** SLAs should include response times for support requests that they are contractually bound to provide you with. It should also include availability/uptime percentages for the system you use and any compensation details should this be broken.*

Training

Complete?

Are there training costs for your staff to learn how to use the proposed online cashless solution?

Existing suppliers

Complete?

Does your potential online cashless supplier have formal partnership agreements with any of your pre-existing suppliers?

***Note:** This could include your cashless catering system and MIS system.*

Data Protection

Complete?

Does the supplier and the product meet ISO 27001:2013, GDPR, and PCI Data Security standards?

