

Income collection challenges resolved by going cashless



ParentPay®

Why did Edinburgh Primary School want to go cashless?

Annette House, School Business Manager at Edinburgh Primary, East London, outlined why the school decided to go cashless by collecting online payments: "Within a short period of time we went from a small school to trebling in size. One person counting and reconciling dinner money was never going to be manageable. Management of parental debt was becoming a concern... we just did not have the time to chase up parents payments and we needed to tackle the issue quickly."

The school could not justify increasing staffing to resolve the issue, so Annette spoke to other schools with similar demographics and found that many had successfully resolved income collection issues by going cashless.

The Edinburgh SLT decided that removing cash from school by deploying an online payment and debt management system was the clear way forward.

How did the school make sure they got the right solution?

Keen to 'get it right first time' Edinburgh appointed a project manager to evaluate whether there was a valid business case to switch to a cashless solution. The figures stacked up - cementing the need to get a solution in place as soon as possible.

Annette worked with the project manager to capture school requirements, before requesting proposals from suitable potential providers. Annette also gained stakeholders buy-in by involving them from the initial requirements gathering stage, reviewing proposals through to attending supplier presentations.

Why was ParentPay selected?

It was important that a future cashless school did not disadvantage any child and should also add value to all stakeholders: whether they were staff or parents. Due to the schools social demographics, many parents did not always have access to the internet at home or in some cases, personal bank accounts. The solution needed to be socially inclusive and parent friendly whilst also making income collection more efficient for school staff.

ParentPay already had over 1 million users and was the only proven solution partner with PayPoint; meaning that even parents who still 'needed' to pay physical cash to school could still do this through one of over 25,000 PayPoint stores across the UK.

This proven solution ensured no parent needed to send cash to school again - helping Edinburgh fulfil a cashless vision. Annette commented: "I was convinced that offering parents the ability to pay online, see live balances and obtain alerts combined with offering cash payments via PayPoint - offered total peace of mind."

“The school was expanding all the time. One person counting dinner money was unmanageable.”

Annette House,
School Business Manager.
Edinburgh Primary



“ParentPay's track record removed the risk associated with less proven solutions.”

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How were parents encouraged to get on board?

It is important that parents are made aware the service exists, and how to use it, whilst also outlining the benefits the school, children and their parents gain by going cashless.

Annette outlined the steps they took at Edinburgh to get parents on board: "Before the launch we drip fed the parents with notices around the school highlighting the advantages of paying online or cash through PayPoint. We ran presentations to the parents from April right through to September - we didn't miss any opportunities to promote the use of ParentPay, we even had staff wearing T shirts with the ParentPay logo!"

Annette highlighted the importance of planning ahead: 'We had a computer in the front office to encourage parents to login and activate their ParentPay accounts which ensured those without internet access at home could use ParentPay. We also made sure that every single item that parents needed to purchase was available online. ParentPay has become the one stop shop we envisaged.'



What has been achieved?

Annette was clear that there have already been measurable benefits gained since the school went cashless: "We have easily gained the benefits we thought we could at the outset. We have saved countless hours of time by no longer dealing with cash. Parents can access balances 24/7 and get text and email alerts; helping ensure school debt has gone from thousands to less than a hundred pounds most weeks!"

Lessons to share with other schools

Getting 'it right first time' is crucial; avoiding mistakes that could cause both financial and reputational damage to schools: Edinburgh share some key words of advice to other schools wanting to go cashless:

1. Dedicate the time and resource to going cashless from the outset - its worth it!
2. Ensure you create a 'vision' which can be easily articulated and gain stakeholder buy-in
3. Follow procurement best practice when selecting a solution
4. Have a plan - we used the cashless plan prepared by ParentPay and we implemented a time scale that suited our school
5. Have a station with a PC in the school reception for parents to access accounts with support of staff
6. Keep regular communication with all stakeholders, ask parents for feedback via surveys etc: generate questions and answers, work with parents to help raise awareness and interest
7. Set up a dedicated area at parents evenings and signpost it clearly and use it to invite questions
8. Know the product - train all the staff in the office so they can easily advise parents
9. Ensure that you assign cost codes for all income so when money is received from ParentPay its easily allocated

Want to know more?



www.parentpay.com