

IMPROVED SECURITY AND EFFICIENCY ACROSS MAT

HUGH SEXEY C OF E SCHOOL ON GOING CASHLESS

Jenny Farrell, School Business Manager from Hugh Sexey Church of England Middle School MAT in Somerset, outlines the reasons why they decided to go cashless: "With 590 pupils on roll, our aim was to reduce the amount of cash received in school, along with the time spent on associated tasks and processes such as counting cash, issuing receipts and reconciling."

Jenny continues: "I had used ParentPay at my previous school, so knew how effective it was at improving processes including security."

SELECTING AN ONLINE PAYMENT SYSTEM

"We needed a system that offered parents an option to pay online as well as cash, and ParentPay offers PayPoint. PayPoint still allows parents to pay cash, but rather than bring this into school, they can pay by going into one of their local PayPoint shops. This has proved essential as some parents still want to pay with cash, but the school doesn't have to spend time collecting, counting and banking it like we used to."

Jenny also thought about how they would want to utilise the system they chose in the future: "Not only did we want to collect payments online for our trips and activities, but we planned to go cashless in the canteen, so the system needed to be flexible enough to be utilised for school dinner payments when we were ready."

KEY BENEFITS YOU GAINED

Hugh Sexey CofE Middle School wanted to introduce an online payment system to predominantly increase efficiencies, and they did just that.

Jenny explains: "The benefits of introducing online payments include the amount of time saved, that would have otherwise been spent on issuing receipts, and processing small payments. We've also found less time is spent banking, and because of the online audit trail, we have a more comprehensive record of payments received."

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OBJECTIVE

Reduce the amount of cash received in school, along with the time spent on associated tasks and processes such as counting, reconciling and banking

SOLUTION

Collect payments online for trips, and eventually for meals too.

OUTCOMES

Saved time on issuing receipts/ counting/ reconciling. Less time is spent banking. We have a comprehensive record of payments received.



Take up is around 97%, so the cash volume has dropped significantly for us.

Jenny Farrell

Hugh Sexey CofE Middle School

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GETTING PARENTS ENGAGED

There are different approaches you can take when it comes to getting parents on board; "We took a supportive approach with parents, and have always offered to talk them through the sign-up process, or invited them into school to do so", Jenny says.

In my experience, I believe it is more beneficial to inform parents that no cash payments will be taken from a specified date. We had a growing demand from parents for the option to help reduce the risk of pupils losing money; our take up is around 97% so the cash volume has dropped significantly for us."

LESSONS TO SHARE

Depending on your school's objectives, there are different approaches to take when it comes to going cashless.

Jenny offers her advice: "If you are able to take a firm stance and say no cash payments in school from a specific date, I would recommend this. We do make allowances when circumstances dictate."

Jenny also outlines her vision for the future: "Our longterm goal is that all three tier schools in our MAT will use ParentPay, meaning parents will only have to activate one account."

IF YOUR SCHOOL IS CONSIDERING GOING CASHLESS

Jenny summarises, based on her experience with ParentPay:

"ParentPay is quick and easy to use for parents and school, setting up an account takes a couple of minutes. The ParentPay communication centre is also useful; you can send emails to all pupils or an individual group. A message can be tailored specifically for the parents of those assigned to a particular trip. It's also possible to add cash payments to ParentPay if required, which keeps the control and records up to date."

USEFUL TIPS

1. **AGREE A CASHLESS STRATEGY WITH SLT AND COMMUNICATE THIS TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS**

Your strategy could be something as simple as: From next term we'll be offering and encouraging parents to pay for items online, helping us reduce cash in school. Our aim is to be totally cashless in 5 years. Or your strategy could be more aggressive: All parents must pay online or though PayPoint from next term.

2. **HAVE A PLAN THAT CAN DELIVER YOUR STRATEGY**

Plan key timescales including an onsite system demonstration, getting sign-off by SLT/Governors, staff training and roll-out. ParentPay advisors can help you with this.

3. **RAISE AWARENESS AND INTEREST**

Central to your plan should be communication with parents and staff. Keep communication simple and positive. Our advisors can work with you to plan communications to suit your school. Aside from using your website, you could also use letters and emails as well as parent's evenings and events.

4. **SPARK ACTION**

Consider a promotion to encourage parents to pay online or through PayPoint. Eg: for a specific event or school trip.

5. **BE INCLUSIVE AND PROVIDE FOR CASH BASED PAYERS**

94% of parents prefer to pay online, but for those who don't or can't, sign-post them to PayPoint. There are over 33,000 local shops offering PayPoint across the UK.

6. **REMEMBER ALERTS AND REMINDERS**

Provide balance or new payment notifications via ParentPay's email and text system to increase early payments and drive uptake

GET STARTED, IT'S SIMPLE

Our experienced advisors are ready to help, they can answer any questions you may have; provide a quote for your school; or give a demonstration of our system. You can even arrange to see us in person; we'll visit your school and show you and your staff how it all works.

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