

LANCASHIRE SCHOOL GOES FULLY CASHLESS WITH ONLINE PAYMENTS

ST LAWRENCE SHARE THEIR CASHLESS EXPERIENCE

St Lawrence CE Primary school is one of thousands of schools across the country that has changed the way they collect payments from parents. They're using ParentPay in partnership with BT Lancashire Services to streamline income collection as well as saving valuable time and resource.

Maria Smith, School Bursar explains: "Since introducing ParentPay, we have achieved 100% activation rate amongst parents which is great. We're really pleased to have reached the stage where all our parents are paying online."

Maria says: "We have not done anything differently to other schools wanting to make a success of going cashless.

The key is communicating with parents. We sent out school newsletters prior to the move outlining what we were planning and how this would benefit the school and parents going forward.

From here, everything went online, we send newsletters, updates, trip letters and notifications via ParentPay. Parents know that if they don't activate their accounts they won't be able to pay for what they need to, and they're happy with this as they don't want their child missing out."

HOW THEY DID IT

"We had a strategy in place, and we stuck to it.", Maria explains: "The first thing we give to our new intake pupils is an activation letter for their ParentPay account, outlining that all payments are collected online and communications to parents are sent via ParentPay too.

This sets the precedent for parents and works really well, it ensures they activate their accounts early and get used to the process straight away."

REALISING THE BENEFITS

Using ParentPay has resulted in numerous changes the school has benefitted from. Maria says: "All of our school meals are booked in advance, some as far as a half or full term in advance. This has been great for our finance and catering teams, as it's all online and the reporting available within the system allows for easy reconciliation and automated meal registers.

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OBJECTIVE

Remove cash from school. Improve efficiencies and processes. Save time

SOLUTION

Introduce online payment system that includes school - parent communication

OUTCOMES

No more handling/ processing cash in school. No more trips to the bank. Meals booked and paid for in advance. Easier for staff and parents.



Reporting available allows for easy reconciliation and automated meal registers

Maria Smith
St Lawrence CE Primary school

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In terms of banking, this has been one of our biggest changes, as I no longer need to! ParentPay has helped massively, as there is no need to spend hours on finance and admin tasks associated with collecting and reconciling cash and cheque payments. Using ParentPay saves us about 2 days a month, which is great as it means we can put this to better use elsewhere.

Personally, a big benefit for me is that the end of term is no longer a stressful time, it's so much easier to keep on top of payments. I can log in and view the small list of accounts in debt, then send reminders via the system to those parents within minutes. It's been great!"

ADVICE TO OTHER SCHOOLS

Maria reiterates the importance of communicating the change to parents: "It's important parents know what they can expect and what it means if they don't activate their accounts. They need to book their child's meals and pay for trips so they don't miss out.

If you have or work with a pre-school or nursery attached to the school, get them paying online too. This may only be for milk or meals initially, but by the time they join the school, parents will already be familiar with the system and how it works.

There have been parents that have not found it as easy as others, but we tackled this head on and invited them into the office to take them through the process. This takes a bit of time, but is worth it in the long run, as they become more confident paying this way, and now we're 100% cashless."

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 through 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.

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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