

ESSEX SCHOOL TAKES CASH HASSLE OUT OF THE EQUATION

WHY GO CASHLESS?

Phillip James, Finance Manager at The Sweyne Park School in Essex, has put into words that which many schools know to be true: "Children and cash equals hassle".

It was therefore imperative that The Sweyne Park School reduced the amount of cash; so they looked for a solution that integrated with their catering system and that facilitated going entirely cashless.

Cash based payers would need to pay through PayPoint and being able to share data with the cashless catering system would also be a key requirement

Now that ParentPay is live across the school, Phillip has seen the benefits: "Both parents and staff can pay online and more securely as they can see exactly how much they've paid, where the funds have been allocated and how much was spent.

Parents can also see what their child has purchased at lunch and pay for trips at their own pace through instalments. There is far less cash brought into school."

FAVOURITE FEATURES

ParentPay has many features that have been designed to make going cashless even easier for schools. When we asked Phillip what his favourite ParentPay features were, he listed the following:

- Being able to see which parents have outstanding payments against certain trips
- Being able to easily debit accounts for school meals and allow parents to see what their child has bought
- Being able to quickly set-up staff user accounts

OBJECTIVE

To reduce the amount of cash coming into school. To make lunch times more efficient

SOLUTION

A payments system that is trusted by over 9,000 schools nationwide. A system that integrates with the school's cashless caterer.

OUTCOMES

93% parent uptake, increasing every year. £636,456 has been put through the system in the last 12 months



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The Sweyne Park School

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PARENT REACTION

93% of The Sweyne Park School's parents are actively using ParentPay.

When asked how they encouraged parents to pay online, Phillip said: "We state on all letters regarding a payment that ParentPay is our preferred method of payment."

Encouraging parents to pay online doesn't have to be a battle as many choose the flexibility and convenience of paying online over the frustration of trying to find the right amount of change to send their children into school with.

Phillip also commented that: "As a senior school the number of digital payments has gone up year-on-year over the last 5 years.

I think that as more parents at our feeder schools get used to paying online this habit continues when their children come to The Sweyne Park School."

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 and our Parent Pack is filled with resources to help you better communicate with your parents. Aside from using your website, you could also use letters and emails as well as parents' evenings and events.

4. **SPARK ACTION**

Consider a promotion to encourage parents to pay online or through PayPoint e.g 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 28,000 PayPoint outlets in 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.