

The Academy for Character and Excellence

Parent Pay Account Management Policy

Reference: TP/SW.LB.RR/Finance

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Reviewed and Updated		
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MAT Schools	Redhills Primary Shaldon Primary Collaton St Mary Galmpton Primary	Totnes St John's Brixham Primary

Who should use this policy?

This policy will apply to all parents/carers of children attending any school within the Academy for Character and Excellence in relation to managing their Parent Pay account and any associated debt.

This policy will be reviewed every four years unless significant legislative changes occur before the review date or the Trust deem it necessary.

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John 10:10

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Our school’s approach to this policy follows that of the Church of England Education Office in that it seeks to be faith-sensitive and inclusive. It is underpinned by Our Vision of *‘Life in all its fullness’* and ensures that all of school life incorporates the values of the Christian Faith. These values are central to all that we do and determine how we will implement all policies and procedures. We want to ensure that through our gateways of citizenship, leadership, expression, exploration and flourishing, all pupils and adults are shown how to be compassionate, passionate, honest, inspiring and responsible individuals. By starting with our vision, we aim to ensure that all members of our school community understand our expectations, our practise and the ways in which we will implement this Policy.

Introduction and Aims

The Academy for Character and Excellence is a values led Trust. We will collaborate with families to ensure effective management of the Parent Pay accounts within each school.

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity, equity and consistency in managing Parent Pay and also help parents and carers clearly understand what is expected of them when they make a financial commitment.

The policy ensures an improved collaborative partnership and mutual support with families in managing debt. This in turn will help reduce the administrative burden and ensure that the school budget is used to provide educational services for all our pupils.

Account Management

1. Parent Pay

In order for families to manage their financial accounts the Trust uses Parent Pay as a system which enables all financial transactions to take place. All families will be issued with a log in to activate their account upon a child starting school. Should anyone require support in using this system please discuss this with your school admin team.

2. Methods of Payment

As we are a cashless Trust, there are various ways to easily pay on-line such as through your bank account, credit card and pay point card. Any of these options can be discussed with your school administrator.

3. School Meals

Within the Trust all school meals must be booked and paid for in advance via Parent Pay. You can select from as many days for a term when ordering a child's school meal, you log into your Parent Pay account. You go to the menu and select the options required advance. Once the meal(s) have been selected no charge will be deducted from your Parent Pay account until your child has taken their meal.

If a child forgets their lunch the school admin team will contact the parent and discuss the best option to ensure the child has a meal that day. This can be either through arranging a meal through Parent Pay, or by bringing in a packed lunch.

4. Free School Meals

All meals must be booked in advance on line via Parent Pay. This includes all children in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 at state schools in England that automatically get universal infant school meal allocation(UIFSM) and for families that are in receipt of free school meals (FSM).

Parents who are in receipt of certain benefits should refer to the school website, or discuss with school admin teams, regarding applying for free school meals.

5. School Trips

All non-funded school trips are entered onto the Parent Pay system, and parents are required to pay either by instalments or in full. Should parents need to discuss payment methods, or are having difficulty in paying for school trips, this should be raised with the school admin team at the earliest convenience.

6. Wrap around Care

Breakfast club and after school clubs

Payment for school breakfast and after school clubs is made via Parent Pay unless you are in receipt of any other payment method i.e. childcare vouchers. Failure to book in advance and make necessary payments could result in your child losing their place for wrap around care. Further information on booking can be obtained from the school admin team.

7. After School activities

After school activities or external wrap around care, are normally paid by the parent direct to the organisation or individual involved. You will need to follow their payment guidelines as appropriate.

Key Responsibilities

Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure that timely payments are met in accordance with school processes and requests.• To raise any financial issues or concerns with the school as soon as possible.• In the unlikely event that a debt occurs, to agree and settle an agreed payment plan.
School Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure all parents are aware of the school's Parent Pay account management system.• To promote and encourage school meal take up.• Communicate the financial support available for free school meals and school trips.• Initial point of contact with parents regarding account management issues and concerns.• Maintain records and report concerns to the senior leadership team, catering lead and the finance team.• Issue debt management letters where required.
Catering Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To promote and encourage school meal take up.• Ensure that the level of outstanding debt is regularly monitored.• Discuss outstanding debt with the Headteacher and finance team.
Headteacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitor Parent Pay debt.• Discuss concerns with admin team and parents/carers.• Seek and agree solutions with parents/carers to manage their account• Involve Deputy Safeguarding Lead where appropriate• Review level of outstanding debt at the end of each term and discuss with the finance team.
Finance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discuss and review Parent Pay debt each term with the head teacher.• Ensure all procedures have been followed.• Agree next course of action.• Work within the EFSA guidelines in relation to debt recovery.
Finance and Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work within the ESFA guidelines, academies financial handbook, funding agreement, and scheme of delegation.• Decision on legal action to recover the debt.• Decision on approval to write-off of the debt.• All decisions to be referred to in the minutes and records retained for 7 years.

Debt Management

The Trust takes every reasonable measure to ensure debt does not occur as part of its management of public funds. Should debt occur the following procedure is in place:

Flowchart of debt management processes

Level 1 Indicator: A child's account goes into debt

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 does this parent normally pay on time, is this just a one off?

Action 1: Admin team to discuss the outstanding payment with the parent/carer and request the debt to be paid on line.

Level 2 Indicator: The debt continues to not be paid.

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Action 2: send a 'Gentle debt reminder' - Parents will be issued with this letter regarding outstanding payment.

Level 3 Indicator: The debt continues following the receipt of the debt reminder letter

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent/carer made contact?

Check 4 is the family deemed vulnerable? Have welfare checks been done? Have these been reported on CPOMS.

Action 3: Parent/Carer invited in for a Parent Pay debt management consultation with the Headteacher and Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Level 4 Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with an agreed payment plan.

Check 1 is this a FSM child, are dates correct?

Check 2 is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Check 3 has this parent made contact?

Check 4 is the family deemed vulnerable? Have welfare checks been done? Have these been reported on CPOMS.

Action 4 send strong debt letter - The headteacher will send a final letter to the parent/carer.

Level 5 Indicator: The parent consistently does not comply with an agreed payment plan and has not taken any action to pay the outstanding debt

Action 5: Referral to Trust Finance Team

School to notify the Trust Finance Team who will initiate further action

- Step 1 The Finance Team will take all necessary steps to reclaim any debt occurred and will assess each individual situation with the Headteacher and Deputy Safeguarding Lead
- Step 2 Discuss proposed actions with Trust Finance Committee
- Step 3 Refer to Trust legal team
- Step 4 Where appropriate commence formal processes through debt reclamation procedures.