

Service Definition

ParentPay



Introduction to ParentPay

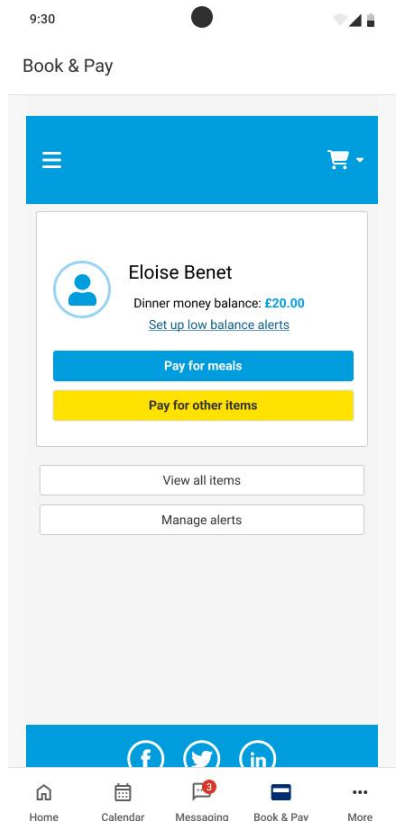
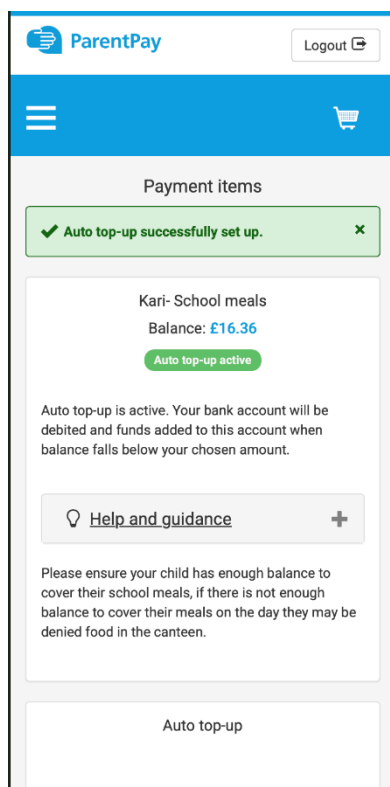
One solution for every school payment

Pay (ParentPay) is a secure, cloud-based payments platform designed specifically for education. Used in over 11,000 schools and developed over more than 20 years, it enables schools, MATs, local authorities and caterers to collect, reconcile and manage income efficiently — while removing the need for cash in schools.

From meals and trips to clubs, uniform and donations, Pay brings all school payments together in one trusted platform, supporting accurate reconciliation, clear financial visibility and improved experiences for families.

One app for parents. One seamless payment experience.

Parents and carers use a single online account for all their children, even when they attend different schools. Through one app, families can view payment items, select services and complete a single basket checkout — making one payment across multiple children, schools and payment types.



Payment items include clear descriptions and, where required, schools can securely collect additional information such as consent, emergency contacts or medical details as part of the payment journey. This ensures schools receive the information they need while reducing paper-based administration.

The Parent Account is available in both English and Welsh, supporting compliance with Welsh Government language requirements.

Flexible, inclusive payments that remove cash from schools

Pay supports a wide range of payment methods to ensure inclusivity for all families, including debit and credit cards, Direct Debit (with no minimum payment amount), auto top-up and PayPoint cash payments at local stores. This completely removes the need for schools to handle cash, while still ensuring accessibility for every household.

Where required, schools can also record cash and cheque payments manually, with full audit trails and banking reports to support reconciliation and oversight.

Accurate, real-time financial visibility and reconciliation

Pay provides schools with clear, up-to-date visibility of what has been paid and what is outstanding. Income is settled weekly to the correct bank account, with support for multiple school, caterer and local authority bank accounts and no limit on settlement destinations.

The platform links directly with SIMS, ensuring pupil data, balances and attendance information update instantly — reducing errors, strengthening safeguarding and saving staff time.

Industry-leading compliance, security and risk reduction

As Merchant of Record, ParentPay assumes responsibility for financial processing, PCI compliance and fraud risk — meaning schools do not carry this risk themselves. Payments are protected by 24/7 monitoring and industry-leading certifications, including ISO 27001, ISO 9001, PCI-DSS Level 1 and Cyber Essentials Plus.

All transactions and communications are securely stored and auditable, supporting compliance, transparency and accountability.

Centralised management for MATs, local authorities and caterers

For local authorities and caterers, Pay provides centralised income collection and administration through the Group Manager application. This enables authorised users to manage multiple sites from a single login, support schools with debt management, create centrally administered income streams and access bespoke reporting with consistent cost centre coding.

Access controls ensure GDPR compliance, with schools retaining full control over permissions.

Fully integrated with the wider ParentPay Group ecosystem

Pay integrates seamlessly with SIMS Engage, SIMS FMS and cashless catering solutions including Cypad and BlueRunner, delivering a joined-up experience across communication, payments, catering and finance.

This integrated ecosystem reduces duplication, improves data accuracy and provides schools with a single, connected solution that no other education payments provider can offer.

A proven, scalable payments platform for education

Together, these capabilities deliver a dependable, future-ready payments solution that saves time, reduces risk and improves financial control — while making life easier for families and school staff alike.

“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”.

Annette House, Edinburgh Primary School

Service description

Our platform is used in over 11,000 schools and has been developed over 20 years to meet the needs of removing cash from schools. We provide users a secure and reliable solution for collecting and reconciling payments and managing school income. Payments can be collected for school meals, trips, school activities and for generating additional income for your school.

ParentPay can be linked to the local authority and/or caterer's central bank accounts for the collection of dinner money, and also to the school's own bank account(s), so that income for each payment item is settled on a weekly basis to the correct account. ParentPay can be used for recording meal numbers by class/registration group. There is no limit to the number of bank accounts for settlements with ParentPay.

Payments can be made using debit or credit card, by Direct Debit (with no minimum payment amount), or with over-the-counter cash payments in any local store using PayPoint, completely removing the need for cash. Schools can also opt in to enable our auto-top up service, which enables parents to top up their balance for lunch time meal payments without the need to log in.

If a school still wishes to accept cash and cheque payments, they still can as our solution offers the facility for these payments to be recorded manually with associated banking reports available to support the reconciliation. Cash and cheque payments can also be audited as received and recorded against pupils in the parent's accounts.

Parents/Carers have a single online account for all their children, even if they attend different schools, with one username and password. Payers can view and select the services/payments items available for each child, and add these to their shopping basket, before completing the payment as a single transaction, even if payments are settled to different schools/bank accounts. Each service/payment item includes a detailed description, so that the payer knows which items they are selecting. Schools can also capture additional information from the parent/carers, where required, such as emergency contact details, medical information, passport details or collection arrangements which are relevant to a school trip. When schools have requested these details, the payer must complete the requested fields before they can add the item to their basket - the information provided by the parent/carers is reported to the school.

The Parent Account is available in either English or Welsh, to ensure compliance with Welsh Government regulation requirements.

ParentPay offers an integrated messaging function, either by printed letter, email or text messaging. Parents can set their own messaging preferences from within their Parent Account, which is then picked up when the school produces a communication. Printed letters and emails are free to send, if a parent has requested a text, they will purchase bundles of texts directly from ParentPay Group, from within their account. If a school chooses to send communications via text, they will buy text bundles directly from ParentPay Group. All communications are stored for future reference within the school's site and in the Parent Account.

The ParentPay Trips module is included in the core payments solution, offering schools additional, enhanced functionality to manage both chargeable and free trips and visits. This has been developed to eliminate the need of any paper-based administration, so includes all feature schools would need including customisable parental consent, standard information requests (e.g., emergency contact details, passport information, dietary/medical information).

ParentPay also provides additional modules including Clubs (providing a one stop solution for facilitating and taking payment for extra-curricular activity and wrap-around care), Shops which enables the collection of payments for uniform, stationary and more. Donation Pages which allow you to raise funds for your school including gift aid; from your entire community with a seamless guest checkout. We also offer a simple payments page which can be used to collect monies from school fetes and hire of your facilities enabling an easy way for to generate additional income for your school. These modules are integrated with your MIS data and our payments platform, offering you a one stop shop that no other ed-tech payments provider can offer.

ParentPay offers caterers and/or local authorities the use of our Group Manager Application (free of charge), which enables central administration of all their sites, from one login. To adhere to GDPR protocol, schools have the ability to grant or deny this access. This feature enables single central administrators to manage centrally collected income, assist schools with managing school meal debt, send communications and create centrally administered income streams, e.g. music tuition.

ParentPay offers local authorities and caterers robust centralised income collection, with additional, bespoke reporting and hard-coded cost centre coding, for streamlined reconciliation.

ParentPay integrates seamlessly with Cypad and BlueRunner, providing an all-in-one cashless catering solution for schools, caterers and local authorities.

ParentPay Group IT operations

- ParentPay Group operations and infrastructure is fully resilient and prepared to handle a comprehensive set of serious failures. These are exercised regularly through various mechanisms
- All critical systems are replicated between data centres and backups are encrypted and replicated to cloud storage in our UK Data Centres
- Our RTO for all unscheduled service outages is 4 hours and RPO is near real-time
- Office locations have redundant internet connectivity to ensure continued service for telephony and SaaS systems used for the delivery of the service
- Telephony and Support systems are cloud based and are resilient to failure, with Disaster Recovery capability
- ParentPay Group operates a secondary datacentre for use in a disaster scenario
- All staff within ParentPay Group are able to work from any location, with all systems enabled for remote access. This ensures that all functions of the company can operate without the risk of a physical location being lost

Onboarding support

- We have 15 years of experience, rolling out multi-site projects across the UK
- Our Project team work to Prince2 methodologies
- Schools are supported by our Onboarding team, who will manage their site configuration and training programme
- We offer training for the MAT/caterer/local authority, to ensure they understand how to support their schools and use the central administration tools and processes

Offboarding support

Schools wishing to end their ParentPay Group contract should contact our Support Desk. We will then agree a suitable end date for the school. Our support team will then guide the school through the close down process.

Service constraints

ParentPay (or Schoolcomms) will be required for Cypad Meal Selection, which integrates seamlessly with ParentPay Parent Accounts, enabling parents to use the meal booking feature from within their ParentPay account.

ParentPay seamlessly integrates with all leading MIS providers to import student and staff data. Alternatively, schools can upload via excel/csv files in exceptional circumstances (e.g., nurseries without a MIS).

Customisation

- Schools can upload their school logos to their ParentPay site, to personalise it and add extra reassurance for parents to identify their child's school when in their Parent Account.
- Schools, local authorities or caterers can Save standardised communication templates to school sites for schools to use, offering consistency
- Schools can add/edit/archive their own payment items, including descriptions, URL, photos and documents
- Minimum and maximum payments can be assigned to payment items (there is no minimum payment for using Direct Debit)
- Schools can edit payment amounts at individual pupil level, to accommodate exceptional circumstances
- Flexibility of payment options (configured by the school), allowing users to pay in instalments, once, repeatable etc
- Multiple payer accounts can be linked to a pupil, giving additional family members the opportunity to financially support the pupil
- Multiple bank accounts can be assigned to each school's site
- Hard coding is available for centrally collected income, for ease of reconciliation at caterer/local authority level
- Free text boxes available in all banking screens, for additional coding, audit notes and additional notes for administrators

Service availability

Service availability target is 99.5% for all applications and services. Service availability is provided as per service levels defined in the Customer Service Agreement. This is 24/7/365, with documented maintenance windows agreed with the customer. These maintenance windows take place outside of normal school hours.

System availability is monitored and reported on a monthly basis and can be reported to the customer as required.

Support

School and Parent Support: We provide omnichannel support for queries via our robust knowledge base of help articles. Any queries that can't be answered can be raised easily via email, telephone, online forms. Operational support hours are available Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4:30pm, however email and online forms are available to be submitted 24/7/365 days a year.

We aim to resolve all standard priority requests within 6 hours, although in reality most telephone/chat enquiries are resolved during the initial contact.

Target response timetable:

Priority		Contact method	SLA Response time (business hours)	Resolution time (business hours)	
1	Critical - Entire system failure impacting all users	Phone	30 seconds	75% within 60 minutes	90% within 120 minutes
		Portal/Email	Immediate escalation and Analyst response within 20 minutes		
2	High - Key system failure with no workaround, impacting some users or one part of the system	Phone	30 seconds	75% within 120 minutes	90% within 6 Hours
		Portal/Email	Analyst response - 20 minutes		
3	Medium - An issue causing impact, but a workaround is available or only some users/records affected	Phone	30 seconds	50% within 2 hours	90% within 8 hours
		Portal/Email	Analyst response within 2 hours		
4	Low - System usage assistance/guidance is required	Phone	30 seconds	50% within 6 hours	90% within 8 hours
		Portal/Email	Analyst response within 6 hours		

After sales support

- All users will have access to our online knowledge base. This includes technical details of our systems, FAQs, details of version updates and a portal to submit and manage ticket requests
- We provide ongoing Account Managers for the MAT/caterer/local authority. Our Account Managers manage the process of regular business review meetings, supported by a Strategic Business Plan. They will also collaborate with cross brand subject matter experts to cover the technical and commercial aspects of the products and services whilst taking proactive and tactical measures to ensure the successful delivery of the contracted services and ensuring customers maximise their return on investment

Technical requirements

Schools will need to use the most up-to-date versions of internet browsers to access the site, ensuring maximum security. ParentPay can be accessed via all standard internet browsers.

Maintenance management

ParentPay Group communicates any downtime due to planned system maintenance with all users, well in advance of the maintenance window. These are scheduled to take place late at night, to avoid disruption to users. Any software releases are carried outside of school opening hours and again, are communicated in advance to appropriate users.

System monitoring

Systems are monitored 24/7/365, dependant on the severity of an incident and user type, customers are informed via email or in app notification.

Hosting locations

Our platforms are hosted solely within the UK. A number of sub-processors process data from within the EEA. All such transfers are fully safeguarded as required by the EU GDPR and UK Data Protection Law.

All data centre locations are managed by dedicated specialist third party data centre operators. All data centre locations are certified by specialist third parties, independent to the datacentre provider. All locations are subject to PCI-DSS and ISO 27001 Standards.

Access to data (upon exit)

Our Support team will advise schools on how and when to access and download relevant data, as part of the closedown process. Data can be exported in Excel or .csv format.

Security

- ParentPay Group has a dedicated team of qualified security experts
- ParentPay Group is fully ISO27001 Certified
- ParentPay Group is PCI-DSS Level 1 Certified (the highest level of compliance available), we were the first UK school payments provider to achieve this level of certification
- ParentPay Group is also Cyber Essentials Plus certified, at time of writing, we are one of just a few (if not the only) CE+ certified supplier across UK EdTech
- ParentPay Group undertakes a comprehensive suite of penetration tests (approx. 80 tests per year); each product is tested at least once per year
- We operate industry leading network and host-based intrusion detection systems and best in class endpoint security technologies – including 24x7x365 Managed Detection and Response (MDR) with unlimited incident response support from highly regarded global cyber security specialists