



December 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

The Academy will be moving from our current Management Information System (MIS), which is SIMS, to a new system called Arbor in the New Year. This change will take effect in school from Monday 6 January 2025.

The MIS system stores pupil information and data to be used in the delivery of their education at Appleton Academy. In anticipation of this move, we have been preparing for the transfer of data and training staff to use the new system for a number of weeks. We have also been working with third-party contractors who provide services in school that rely on access to the MIS system, to ensure they are also ready for the change.

In the course of this work, it has now been brought to our attention by one of these third-parties, ParentPay, that their system operates in such a way that they will need to make some specific changes that will not immediately take effect when we move to Arbor. These changes will, therefore, take a little longer to be implemented than in other cases. ParentPay inform us that this may affect some of the information that pupils and parents can see on ParentPay, including the updated balance of your child's account. This is likely to mean that the balance you see will not accurately reflect any money spent by students in school, for instance on school meals.

Unfortunately, this is outside of our control and is something that ParentPay need to work through and manage once the MIS system is changed in school. ParentPay advise us that this issue with pupil balances may be present for the first two weeks of the New Year.

We apologise for any inconvenience this problem with ParentPay may cause. We would politely ask that parents add credit to your child's ParentPay account in the same way as you normally would during that first two weeks of January, even if their balance appears to be telling you that they have not spent money or have credit on their account. This is likely to be an error and once ParentPay aligns correctly with the new MIS system, Arbor, any accounts that are in debt will still owe this money (although balances may not appear accurately in this period, ParentPay's systems will still be logging transactions in the background). Continuing to add money to your child's account, and doing this in the way you normally would, will mean it is unlikely your child's account will be in debit once ParentPay and Arbor are aligned.

We would like to reassure parents that children will not be affected by negative balances during that first two-week period, as long as you are continuing to top up their accounts as you normally would, either each day or each week, with sufficient funds to pay for the food and drinks they normally order. Our staff are aware of and prepared for this problem and children will receive school meals as normal. However, if you have any concerns about this matter, please email info@appletonacademy.co.uk in the first instance. We will update parents once ParentPay have confirmed that their system has successfully been updated and is operating correctly in conjunction with our new MIS system, Arbor.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Jones".

Ms H Jones
Executive Headteacher