

December 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

We wrote to you a few weeks ago and advised of our move to use Arbor Pay in school from Monday 5 January 2026. Arbor Pay will replace ParentPay and will be the new platform through which you will pay for your child's school meals and also for events such as trips and visits.

As I outlined in my previous letter, we have been working on the setting up of Arbor Pay in school and the majority of this work is now complete. Parents and carers will now be able to see an option to pay for school meals, and manage your child's account, when you log into Arbor using the app or browser. There is one final part of the process to complete in school, which will be undertaken by the company who manage the systems that allow us to take payment for meals in our dining hall. This is due to be completed on Friday 19 December 2025.

As we look ahead to finalising the move to Arbor Pay and the end of the use of ParentPay, there are several pieces of essential information to share with parents and carers. Please read the following carefully and ensure that you have taken the action required of you by the dates outlined.

- Parents must clear all balances on ParentPay by the end of the day on **Tuesday 23 December 2025**. If your child's account is in debt, you must pay this off by the deadline provided or they will not be able to access Arbor Pay to pay for meals. In these cases, you will need to provide your child with a packed lunch until the debt is cleared. If your child's ParentPay account is in credit, we ask you to withdraw this when school finishes for the Christmas break to avoid any monies temporarily being lost while the transfer between systems takes place (this is a small risk that Arbor have warned us of and we would like to remove from the process).
- However, parents and carers should avoid making any transactions, on either ParentPay or Arbor Pay, on **Friday 19 December 2025**. On this date, the IT migration to ensure Arbor Pay is set up will take place in school and any parent or carer transactions made on Arbor or ParentPay during the work on these systems may not register or go through.
- Before your child returns to school on **Monday 5 January 2026**, please top up their Arbor Pay account in the same way as you would have done with ParentPay. Our school meal and food options will remain the same at this time, so what your child can eat and the cost of this will not change immediately. If your child receives universal free school meals or free school meals, these allowances and the systems for processing these transactions on Arbor will not differ from ParentPay. Account top ups by parents and carers for children who pay for school food and meals would be best undertaken during week commencing **Monday 29 December 2025**. This will ensure that the balance is visible to you on Arbor well before your child comes back after Christmas and you then know they have money available to purchase food at break and lunchtime when they return to school. You then manage your account each week in the same way as you do now.

The school has put plans in place with our catering provider, Aspens, which mean that if there is some unforeseen issue with our move to Arbor Pay, or our systems do not work as we expect them to when we return to school because of these changes, all children will be able to access school food and meals until this is resolved. We do not expect this to be a problem, but we want to provide that reassurance due to this move taking place while school is closed to students.

Another important piece of information for parents and carers is that Arbor Pay do not offer a method to allow you to top up student accounts using barcodes, pay points in shops or supermarkets, or cash. Appleton Academy is also a cashless school and has been for several years. Therefore, you must ensure that you sign up to and begin using the Arbor app or portal during the Christmas break if your child accesses school food and meals. 95% of our parents and carers have already signed up to Arbor. Help and useful information about how to do this (if you haven't already) can be found on our website: <https://appletonacademy.co.uk/arbor-parent-app/>.

We hope that the information provided in this letter is clear and will help you to manage the transition from using ParentPay to Arbor Pay. However, if you do have any questions or concerns, please email these to info@appletonacademy.co.uk in the first instance and a member of staff will get back to you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully

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

Ms H Jones
Executive Headteacher