

"Excellence in Leadership"

Headteacher: Miss. L. Whitby

Thursday, 05 June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Subject: Parent Consultation – School Payment & Communication Systems

Since March, we have been using **Arbor** to manage school payments, including trips, dinner money, clubs (such as Breakfast and After School Club), as well as permissions and certain communications.

As with any new system, it has taken time for both staff and parents to understand how Arbor works and how it differs from our previous system, **School Gateway**. We are now at a point where, following several months of use, we want to carefully evaluate whether Arbor remains the most effective option, or whether a return to School Gateway for payments and communications may better serve both the school and our families.

We wanted to share with you an honest summary of our experience so far, to help inform a decision that balances both school operations and parent convenience.

What has worked well with Arbor:

- Parents can easily view their child's attendance.
- Permissions and consent forms can be completed electronically.
- Contact details can be updated by parents, subject to office approval.
- Staff have found Arbor more efficient when accessing attendance and pupil information.
- Teachers are able to locate and view key pupil information more quickly.

However, we have identified a number of limitations in Arbor, which have presented challenges:

- Higher costs to the school for sending text messages, as Arbor includes a fixed signature that takes up additional characters.
- Arbor charges the school a percentage of payments processed.
- Limited flexibility for creating one-off or ad hoc payments (e.g. discos, fundraising events, uniform sales).
- Financial reporting is more complex and harder to preview.
- Communications are more complicated to set up and require additional administrative time.
- Parents are unable to save card details for future payments, which many found convenient in School Gateway.
- Parents booking After School Club or Breakfast Club sessions are unable to view which specific sessions have been booked or cancel these if they need to.

Why we are reviewing the system now:

When we adopted Arbor, it was with the hope of simplifying multiple systems into one single platform. However, we have since found that some of the key functionalities we require as a school either involve significant additional costs or are not available within Arbor's current structure.

We are therefore considering returning to **School Gateway** for payments and communications, while retaining Arbor for attendance, reporting and pupil information management.

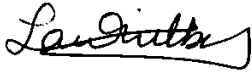
Your feedback is important:

Before making any final decision, we would welcome your views and experiences of using Arbor for payments and communication. Your feedback will help us ensure that any change we make supports both the efficient running of the school and offers a system that works well for families.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) as would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to share your thoughts.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Kind regards,



Miss Louise Whitby
Headteacher