

‘Achieving Excellence through Leadership’

GILES JUNIOR SCHOOL

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"Excellence in Leadership"

Headteacher: Miss. L. Whitby

Friday, 27 June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: School Payments & Communications System – Parent Feedback

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent questionnaire about the use of Arbor for school payments and communication.

We greatly value your feedback, which has helped us identify what is working well and where improvements are needed. Below is a summary of the key findings:

- **General Ease of Use:** Responses were mixed. While some families found Arbor straightforward, others described it as difficult to navigate, particularly for making payments.
- **Payments:** A majority of parents **miss the ability to save card details** for quicker payments. A large proportion would prefer to return to **School Gateway** for handling payments.
- **Clubs:** Many parents expressed difficulty in viewing or amending **Breakfast Club and After School Club** bookings, especially where multiple session times are involved.
- **Communication:** Although most parents find Arbor acceptable for receiving messages, some would prefer a return to Gateway for communication as well.
- **Forms and Permissions:** This function was generally well received, with many parents finding it useful to complete forms and consents online.
- **Contact Updates:** Most parents also appreciated the ability to update their child's contact details directly through Arbor.

We will be sharing these findings with Arbor directly and requesting urgent improvements to areas such as:

- The ability for parents to view and modify club bookings;
- Restoring features like saving card details;
- Streamlining message review and visibility.

Next Steps: Payments & Communication Systems

Thank you once again for your helpful feedback regarding Arbor and its use for school payments and communication. We are now at a decision point and want to keep you informed about the possible next steps.

Following your comments and further investigation, we have discovered some limitations and options we want to share:



- **Arbor does not integrate fully with School Gateway/SchoolComms**, particularly for the dinner money element, which means information will not sync both ways.
- Arbor does offer an additional paid feature called the **Arbor Shop**, which we currently do not have. This would allow us to:
 - Create separate categories (instead of placing all items under ‘Trips’).
 - Enable parents to **save card details** for quicker checkout.

As a result, we are now considering **two final options** moving forward. Our goal is to choose a system that meets the needs of both the school and families, and we would welcome your input:

◆ Option 1 – Continue with Arbor

We would:

- Add the **Arbor Shop** feature to improve usability.
- Keep all payments and communications in one system.
- Enable the saving of card details and better organise purchases.

◆ Option 2 – Use a Hybrid System

We would:

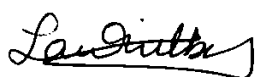
- Keep **Arbor** for pupil data and **dinner money only**.
- Reintroduce **School Gateway** for:
 - School communications
 - Clubs
 - Trips and wraparound care

We are keen to make a decision quickly so we can ensure a smooth start for all families in September. Please let us know your preference using the short form below:

[\[SURVEY LINK\]](#)

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind Regards,



Miss Louise Whitby
Headteacher