

Temporary changes to refund process in ParentPay Update to schools 26.06.2020 (amended 03.07.2020)

Following our previous updates regarding the changes to the ParentPay refund processes, we now need to repeat the process we followed in April and June (as the funds available in the GCC ParentPay account have reduced significantly).

What do you need to do next?

CENTRAL SCHOOLS (centrally banked) – only for Payment Items linked to GCC central bank account

1. Review what refunds you need to make.

Whilst we do not want to create unnecessary hardship, we would ask each school to review where a refund is absolutely necessary and consider alternative options. For example encouraging parents to:

- Transfer payments for cancelled trips/activities to other payment items on accounts.
- Retain payments for cancelled trips/activities to cover costs of replacement trips/activities

2. Tell us the value of the refunds you need to make on ParentPay – by Tuesday 7th July (3.00pm).

Once you have identified the amount, please copy and paste the below table into an email and send it to building.helpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

You will need to include any refunds you have processed “manually” that should have been processed on ParentPay.

(Here is a link to where schools can find the payment id number:

https://www.parentpay.com/refund-advice-form/#ank_itemid)

School Name	DfE number	Payment ID	School Cost Centre	Amount of Refunds to process on ParentPay	Description of Refunds
			107		

This information is required, to ensure that we have adequate funds available before refunds are processed. As the funds available have now significantly reduced, AMPS (Asset Management and Property Services) are going to “fund” the ParentPay GCC central schools account to enable you to process refunds. This prevents you from having to process individual payments to ParentPay for refunds linked to the GCC settlement account.

We will collate the responses and process a payment to ParentPay to cover the value of all refunds requested. This can take up to 5 working days. We will then contact all schools who respond, no later than Wednesday 15th July, to confirm that refunds can be processed.

Once you receive the confirmation, you will be able to process refunds to Pupil accounts using ParentPay. The refunds must be processed as promptly as possible. ParentPay will refund the accounts accordingly.

Please note, your school cost centre will be debited to the value of the refunds processed, when the corresponding settlement statement (showing the refunds) is received from ParentPay, to return the value of the funds to AMPS.

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IF YOU DO NOT RESPOND TO THIS COMMUNICATION IN THE TIMESCALES REQUESTED, YOU MUST NOT PROCESS REFUNDS FOR ITEMS LINKED TO THE GCC ACCOUNT.

YOU WILL NEED TO CONTACT AMPS SEPARATELY TO REVIEW HOW AND WHEN THE NEXT BATCH OF REFUNDS WILL BE MADE.

What do you need to do next?

**CHEQUE BOOK SCHOOLS and
CENTRAL SCHOOL REFUNDS for Payment Items linked to school fund accounts**

Whilst there are unsettled funds available in your ParentPay account, refunds can be processed as usual.

When unsettled funds have been depleted, funds will need to be added to the ParentPay account, in order to continue to process refunds.

You will need to fund the ParentPay account from your own school funds, as you will have separate bank accounts to the one used by centrally banked schools.

There is guidance on the ParentPay website advising how to do this:

<https://www.parentpay.com/refunding-parents-new-process/>

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In case you have not received any of the previous communications, here is a summary of the:

- **Standard processes for payments and refunds for credit and debit cards;**
- **temporary changes made to the refund process, due to reduced payments being made;**
- **steps you need to take, should you have any further refunds to make.**

Standard PAYMENT process (credit/debit cards)

- Parent/guardian pays money to ParentPay online or via PayPoint using credit/debit card
- Money is transferred on a weekly basis to GCC (AMPS team) via the settlement statement
- AMPS team process the weekly settlement statement, retaining any entries coded to 103183 (school meals) and journaling all other entries to school cost centres For example, payments relating to: trips/swimming lessons/music lessons)

Standard REFUND process (credit/debit cards)

- School completes a refund request on ParentPay
- Money is refunded to the Parent account (Parents/guardians can then allocate the funds to other items or “withdraw” to their own bank account)
- ParentPay is not able to process any refunds for payments paid via PayPoint.
- GCC is debited (via the next weekly settlement statement). The debit is taken against the payments made to GCC via the settlement statement
- AMPS process the weekly settlement statement, retaining any entries coded to 103183 (school meals) and journaling all other entries to school cost centres (trips/swimming lessons/music lessons etc)

Important note: There is a time limit on refunds made from the ParentPay platform. Refunds can only be made to the Parent account, within 18 months from the original transaction date.

In usual circumstances, the value of “payments” received each week exceeds the value of “refunds”.

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***** CHANGE TO REFUND PROCESS *****

When schools closed/partially closed and activities were being cancelled, “payments” were longer being made to ParentPay. This means that no payments are being made to GCC via the weekly ParentPay settlement statements.

ParentPay are therefore not able to make any refunds to Parent accounts, as they have no funds (payments) to offset refund requests against.

CENTRAL SCHOOLS (centrally banked) Payment Items linked to GCC central bank account

Following an urgent review of their processes to accommodate this change, ParentPay decided on the following course of action:

- Withhold payment of the latest settlement statements (as from week commencing 11th March 2020).
- Use the funds that are withheld to process refund requests received by centrally banked schools.
- Provide a settlement statement to Gloucestershire County Council, detailing the refunds, so that the relevant school accounts can be debited / accounts reconciled as appropriate.

GCC is working with ParentPay, to take a coordinated approach to the refund process, so that individual central schools do not need to make ParentPay Client Account Adjustments.

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CHEQUE BOOK SCHOOLS and CENTRAL SCHOOL REFUNDS for Payment Items linked to school fund accounts

Whilst there are unsettled funds available in your ParentPay account, refunds can be processed as usual.

When unsettled funds have been depleted, funds will need to be added to the ParentPay account, in order to continue to process refunds.

Cheque book schools (and central schools where refunds are for Payment Items linked to School Fund Accounts) will need to fund the ParentPay account from their own school funds, as the Payment Items in ParentPay are linked to separate bank accounts.

There is guidance on the ParentPay website advising how to do this:

<https://www.parentpay.com/refunding-parents-new-process/>

For schools that do not have access to make a BACS payment, ParentPay will accept cheque or credit/debit card payments.

Whether you choose to pay by cheque/credit or debit card, you must also complete the attached refund advice form and state how payment has been made (This ensures that ParentPay can reconcile the payments they receive):

<https://www.parentpay.com/refund-advice-form/>

Online payments can be made using your school bank credit or debit card.

(When completing the online payment form, please change the VAT rate to 0.00):

<https://www.parentpayshop.co.uk/schools/ParentPay/>

FURTHER SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE:

Should you have any queries regarding how to process the refunds, please contact ParentPay support@parentpay.com

Should you have any other queries, please email AMPS Building Helpdesk:
building.helpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk