

19th March 2026

To: All Secondary Schools, Parents & Carers

Ref: Arbor Pay, top-up reminders

Dear All,

We are very pleased to welcome all our students and their families onto our new Management Information System, Arbor. Arbor is now implemented across all our secondary schools and replaces old systems such as Parentmail, Parent Pay, SIMS and School Comms.

The Arbor parent app brings a wealth of benefits and information about your child, and with all schools now using Arbor we can utilise some of the added value services. One of these services is the ability to send email reminders to parents reminding them to make top-up payments to allow their child to purchase food from our school caterers when credit is low or in a deficit.

As you will know from my previous letters, historically we have allowed an element of discretion for food payment, which has meant students have been able to spend more money than they have available, creating a deficit. Whilst this discretion was made with the good intention of ensuring no student goes without a meal at school, it created a significant deficit that we are contractually bound to settle.

To avoid this, we now discourage the build-up of deficits and students will be refused food if there are insufficient funds. You will receive a phone call requesting an immediate top-up payment or to provide food for your child. However, we recognise this approach is not always convenient.

Using Arbor data, we will send fortnightly emails to you if your account balance reaches £3 or less reminding you to make a top-up payment or provide a packed lunch. This will avoid any child going hungry and helps busy parents. Where accounts continue to remain in arrears, you will continue to receive phone calls from your school, your child will not be able to buy food without sufficient funds and you will be asked to provide a packed lunch.

For those who are eligible for Free School Meals, our till systems automatically populate your child's details to allow your child to buy food up to the value of £3 per day. You also have the option to top-up via Arbor if you choose to do so.

I hope this service will help parents manage their top-up payments or provide food in advance of reaching a deficit position. Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely



Jemma Arnold-Gunning
COO Insignis Academy Trust