SIMS Agora for Parents

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01 | **Getting Started with SIMS Agora**

Welcome to SIMS Agora

SIMS Agora is an online marketplace, which enables schools to sell and collect payment for items such as school uniform, school meals, trips, events, clubs and other school activities, in a safe and secure way.

The benefits of using SIMS Agora include:

- the ability to make safe and secure online payments at any time of the day.
- the ability to make payments via debit or credit card.
- the ability to make payments in person via PayPoint and Post Office counters.
- the ability to pre-pay for school meals.
- the ability to identify when payments are due and whether sufficient funds are available.
- the ability to receive email notifications when a balance falls below a set amount.
- the ability to pay for expensive items (e.g. school trips) in instalments, at the discretion of the school.
- the ability for parent/guardians with more than one child to maintain a single SIMS Agora account that serves all of their children, even if they attend different schools (this is available only if all the schools use SIMS Agora).
- the ability to view current balances and a payment history.

Registering for an Account

> **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *To register a SIMS Agora account, the account holder must have a Microsoft® Account. It is possible to use an existing account or you can create a new one (https://signup.live.com/signup.aspx?lic=1).*

Your child's school will send to you a registration letter that contains a unique child reference. A child reference will be issued for each child attending the school and will be addressed to the parent/guardian who is linked to the child. This reference will be required when registering for a SIMS Agora account. The date of birth of the child referred to in the letter will also be required.

> **WARNING:** *If another parent/guardian of the child wishes to register an account, either instead of, or as well as the person to whom the letter was addressed, please contact the school to request a separate child reference. Using a child reference intended for another person may cause problems in the future.*

> **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *If you already have a SIMS Agora account for a child (please see* Adding Children to My Account *on page* 14*), new children should be added to this, rather than creating a separate account.*

1. In a web browser, navigate to the SIMS Agora website (https://www.simsagora.co.uk).

2. Click the **Sign in with your Microsoft Account** button to display the **Sign In** page.

3. Enter your Microsoft Account login details (**Email or phone** and **Password**).
4. Click the **Sign in** button to display the **Welcome to SIMS Agora** page.

NOTE: This page is displayed only when you sign in to your SIMS Agora account for the first time.
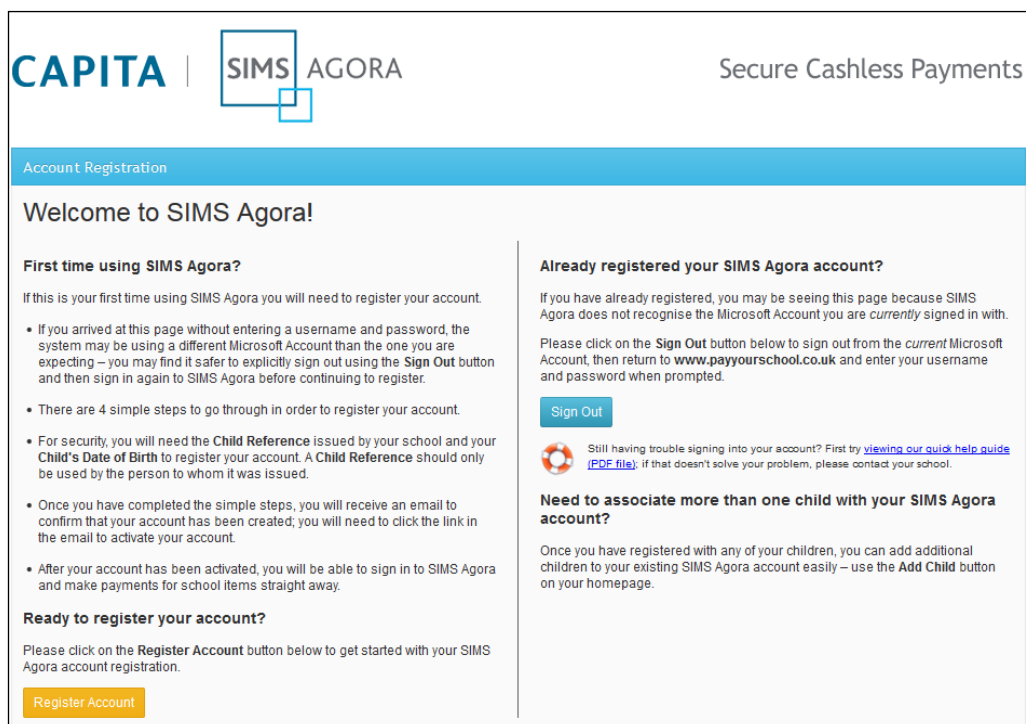
5. To register an account, click the yellow **Register Account** button at the bottom of the page.

The registration process consists of four steps.

Step 1

a. Enter the **Child Reference** contained in the letter received from the school and the **Child's Date of Birth** for the child referred to in the letter.

b. Click the **Continue** button.

Step 2

a. Check the details recorded for your child and enter their **Preferred Name**.

> NOTE: If these details are not correct, contact your School Administrator.

b. Click the **Continue** button.

Step 3

WARNING: *These details are for the parent/guardian to whom the registration letter from the school is addressed. If another parent/guardian of the child wishes to register an account, either instead of, or as well as the person to whom the letter was addressed, please contact the school to request a separate registration reference. Using a registration reference intended for another person may cause problems in the future.*

a.   Confirm your details, record an **Email** address and repeat this in the **Confirm Email** field.

b.   Deselect the **Enable automatic email notifications from SIMS Agora** check box if you do <u>not</u> wish to receive emails regarding your account. This can be changed at any time (please see *Checking My Details* on page *10*).

c.   Cardholder information is pre-populated with the details of the primary contact. If these are incorrect, enter the **Cardholder Name** and **Billing Address** (including **Town** and **Postcode**) for the card holder who will be making payments.

> *TIP: Cardholder details will be used during the checkout process to save time. If you would prefer to enter these details at the checkout each time you pay for an item, these details can be left blank.*
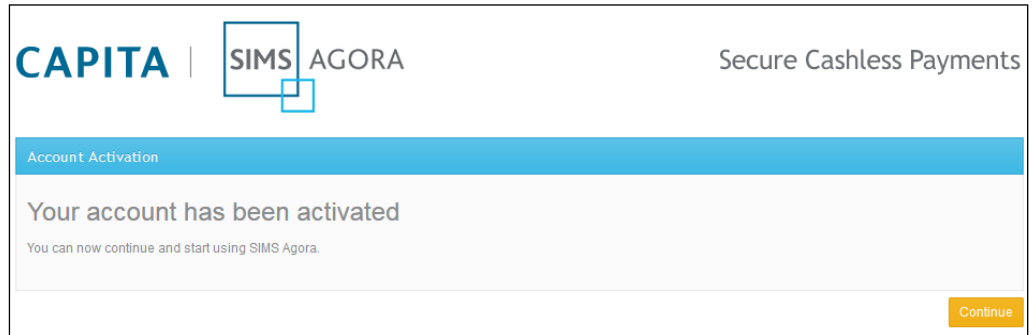
d.   Click the **Continue** button.

Step 4
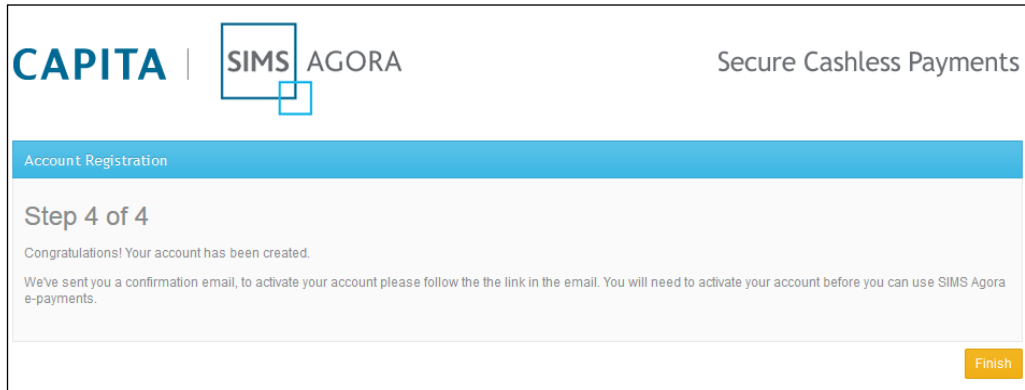
a. Click the **Finish** button. This prompts SIMS Agora to send you a confirmation email to the email account recorded in Step 3.

> *TIP: If the email has not arrived in your inbox, check the junk and SPAM folders.*

b. Follow the instructions in the email and click the link to display the **Your account has been activated** dialog box.

c. Click the yellow **Continue** button to return to the **Sign In** page. You can now use SIMS Agora.

02 | Using SIMS Agora

Signing In

The Microsoft Account that you used or created when registering a SIMS Agora account is required to be able to sign into SIMS Agora (please see *Registering for an Account* on page *1*).

1. In a web browser, navigate to the SIMS Agora website
(https://www.simsagora.co.uk).

2. Click the **Sign in with your Microsoft Account** button to display the **Sign In**
page.

3. Enter your Microsoft Account sign in details (**Email or phone** and **Password**).

4. Click the **Sign in** button to display the SIMS Agora home page (**My Homepage**).

> *TIP: For problems with logging in, please review the Troubleshooting section of this handbook.*

Managing My Account

Once an account has been set up, its details can be managed via the **My Account** page.

My Homepage is displayed when you sign in. It is also available by selecting the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).

The **My Account** page is available from **My Homepage** by selecting the **My Account** tab on the top right-hand of the screen.

Checking My Details

> *TIP:* **My Homepage** *is displayed when you sign in. It is also available on the* **My Homepage** *tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, select the **My Account** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen to display the **My Details** page.

> **WARNING:** *These details are for the parent/guardian to whom the registration letter from the school is addressed. If another parent/guardian of the child wishes to register an account, either instead of, or as well as the person to whom the letter was addressed, please contact the school to request a separate child reference. Using a child reference intended for another person may cause problems in the future.*

2. Ensure that these details are correct.

    If any of these details change, update SIMS Agora and contact the School Administrator.

3. The **Enable automatic email notifications from SIMS Agora** check box should be selected if you wish to receive email notifications from SIMS Agora. This can be changed at any time by deselecting or reselecting the check box.

*TIP: Cardholder details recorded here are for the purpose of auto-completing fields during the checkout process. Cardholder details do not have to be recorded in the **My Details** screen but if they are <u>not</u> recorded, they will need to be entered manually during the checkout process for every transaction.*

Managing My Children

*TIP: **My Homepage** is displayed when you sign in. It is also available on the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, select **My Account** on the top right-hand side of the screen to display the **My Details** page.
2. Select **My Children** from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen.
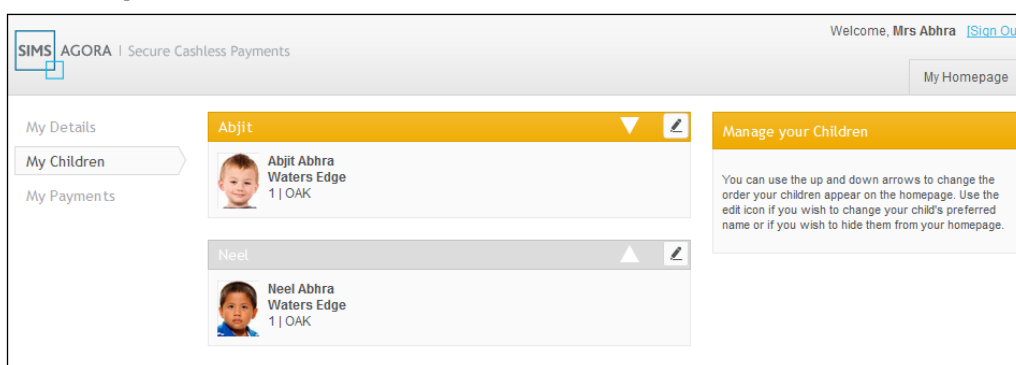
Changing the Display Order of Multiple Children

The display order of the children can be changed by clicking the **Up** and **Down** arrows in the header of each child.

Using a Preferred Name

A preferred name can be added to any child in your account. This may be due to personal preference or for identification purposes, e.g. if there is a duplicate record for a child because the child has moved school (please see *Moving Schools* on page *16*).

1. Click the edit icon in the heading of a child to display the **Manage Child** dialog.

Edit icon

2. Enter the **Preferred Name** that you would like to be displayed in SIMS Agora for this child.

> *TIP: A **Preferred Name** may include other information, e.g.* `Neel-Bedford School` *if, for example, a child has moved school (please see* Moving Schools *on page* 16*). This helps to identify the correct child's account when making payments.*

3. Click the **Save** button to return to the **My Children** page.

Hiding a Child from the Home Page

You may wish to hide a child from **My Homepage** if, for example, a child has moved schools (please see *Moving Schools* on page *16*). Hiding a child stops all notifications for that child until the child is re-instated (please see *Re-instating a Previously Hidden Child* on page *13*).

1. Click the edit icon in the heading of a child to display the **Manage Child** dialog.

   Edit icon

2. Click the **Hide** button.

Hidden children will still be visible on the **My Children** page but they will be displayed with a grey heading.

Re-instating a Previously Hidden Child

Re-instating a child to **My Homepage** also restarts notifications for that child. Email notifications can be enabled or disabled at any time (please see *Checking My Details* on page *10*).

1. Click the edit icon in the heading of a child to display the **Manage Child** dialog.

Edit icon

2. Click the **Show** button.

Children who are not hidden will appear on the **My Children** page with a yellow heading.

Viewing My Payments

Viewing payments from the **My Account** tab will show all payments made via your account. It will not show payments made by other account holders for this child. To view all payments made by all account holders for this child, see the School Meal Statements or Transaction Statements (please see *Viewing Transaction Statements* on page *25*) area of the home page.

> *TIP:* **My Homepage** *is displayed when you sign in. It is also available on the* **My Homepage** *tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, select **My Account** from the top right-hand side of the screen to display the **My Details** page.
2. Select **My Payments** from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen.

- **Payments in Progress** are shown at the top of the screen.
- **Payment History** is shown below for the period being displayed. The default period is **Last week**. It is possible to change the period by selecting from the drop-down list and clicking the **Show** button.

Each transaction is listed. Double-click any transaction to view the payment receipt.
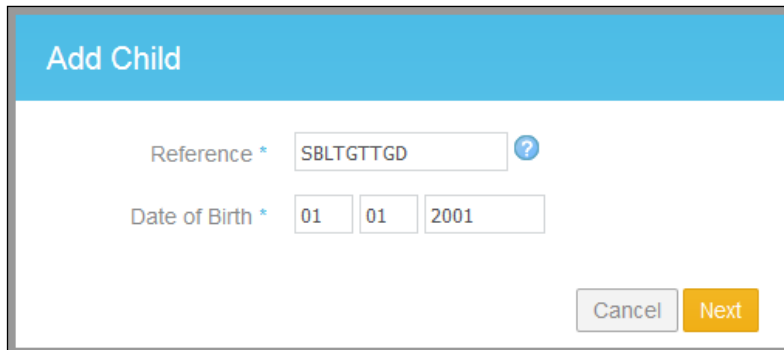
Adding Children to My Account

SIMS Agora enables parents to add multiple children to a single account, providing that all of the schools involved use SIMS Agora.
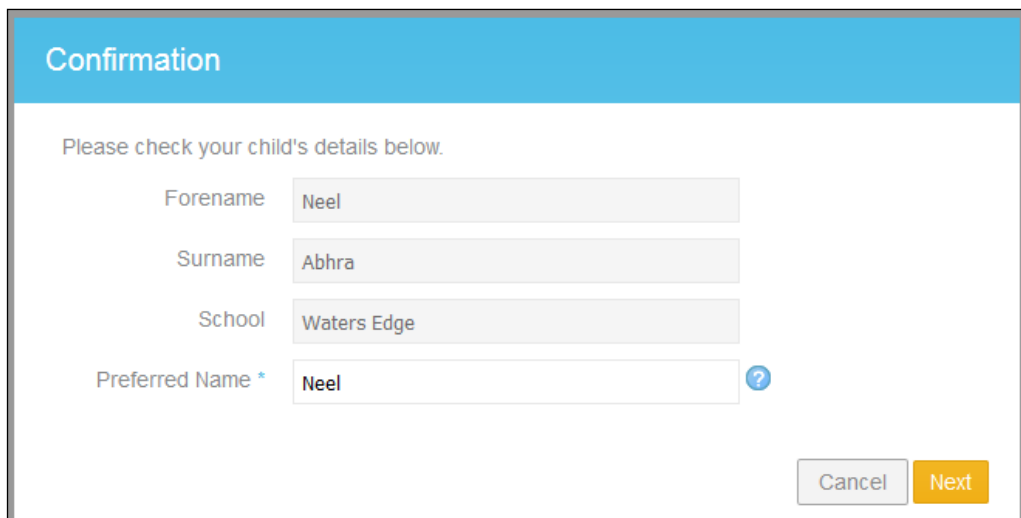
Each child will require a child reference from their own school to enable them to be added.

> *TIP: **My Homepage** is displayed when you sign in. It is also available on the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*
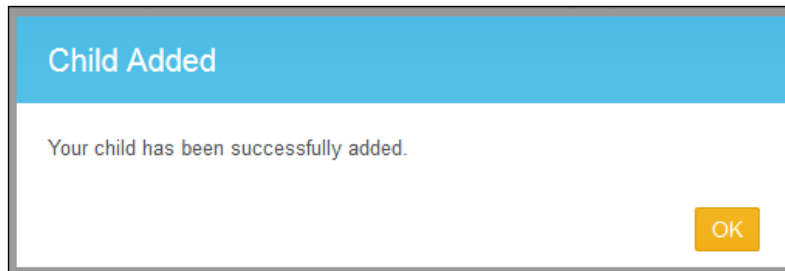
1. From **My Homepage**, click the **Add Child** button on the left-hand side of the page to display the **Add Child** dialog.

2. Enter the child **Reference** for this child (provided in the letter that you received from the child's school) and their **Date of Birth**.

3. Click the **Next** button to display a confirmation message.

4. Enter a **Preferred Name** and check your child's details (please see *Using a Preferred Name* on page *11*).

5. Click the **Next** button to display the **Child Added** dialog.

6. Click the **OK** button to complete the process and return to **My Homepage**.

7. The added child is displayed below any existing children on the left-hand side of **My Homepage**.

Combining Multiple Accounts

You may want to combine multiple accounts if separate accounts have been created in error, or family circumstances mean that you now wish to add a child to your account who was part of another person's account.

If you wish to combine multiple accounts:

1. Contact your child's school. They will unlink the child from the account you will no longer be actively using.

2. The school will provide another child reference for the unlinked child.

3. Sign in to the account that will remain active.

4. Add the unlinked child using the new reference number (please see *Adding Children to My Account* on page *14*).

> *NOTE: Accounts <u>cannot</u> be deleted. The transactions that were made with the previous account must be available to the account holder but it will not be possible to view children or carry out any transactions via an unlinked account.*

Moving Schools

When a child moves from one SIMS Agora school to another, any payment history must be kept separate. For this reason, when a child joins a new school, they will be issued with a new child reference (by the new school) and the parent can add the record to their existing account (please see *Adding Children to My Account* on page *14*).

To distinguish between the two records, it is recommended that the preferred name for the child in both records is edited to include the name of the relevant school (please see *Using a Preferred Name* on page *11*). It is also recommended to hide the 'old' record from the home page (please see *Hiding a Child from the Home Page* on page *12*). This will stop any notifications from being issued for that record.

Increasing a School Meal Balance

SIMS Agora enables parent/guardians to manage payments for School Meals by maintaining a balance in SIMS Agora that the school can use to pay the school meal provider. This gives parents the option to 'top up' their balance less frequently in SIMS Agora than they would be required to pay for school meals directly. Funds can be added at any time for any amount between £5.00 and £100.00. The school will use these funds to pay for School Meals until the balance in SIMS Agora is reduced to £0.00. If you have email notifications enabled, a message will be sent to you when your balance reaches a pre-determined threshold, to give you a chance to 'top up' before the balance runs out. If a payment is made without sufficient funds, the balance will show what is owed.

> *TIP: **My Homepage** is displayed when you log in. It is also available on the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

From **My Homepage**, click a child's name or their picture (if there is one) on the left-hand side of the page to display the selected child at the top of the group.


The **School Meal Balance** for the selected child is displayed in the centre of the screen. It is also displayed under the child's name and (if it is available) picture.

*NOTE: If a **School Meal Balance** falls below the threshold set by the school and you have enabled email notifications, you will receive an email notification from the school. The negative **School Meal Balance** in SIMS Agora will be displayed with a red heading until funds are added and the balance becomes positive. Funds can be added at any time.*

1. To **Add funds** enter the amount you wish to pay in the **Enter Amount** field.
2. Click the **Add to Basket** button to send this item to the **My Basket** page and display this item on the **My Basket** tab.

An item that costs £10.00 will show on the **My Basket** tab as **£10.00 (1)**. The **(1)** indicates the number of items in the basket.
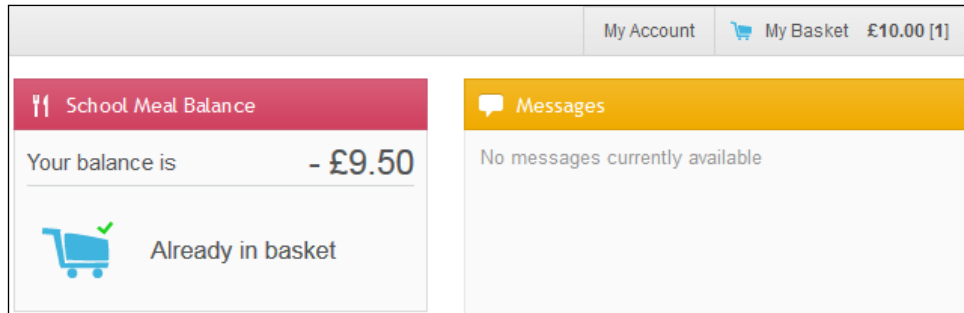

Purchasing Products and Services

Your school will decide what products and services are available for you to purchase through SIMS Agora based on your child's class/year and activities.

*TIP: **My Homepage** is displayed when you log in. It is also available on the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, click a child's name or their picture (if there is one) on the left-hand side of the page to display the selected child at the top of the group.
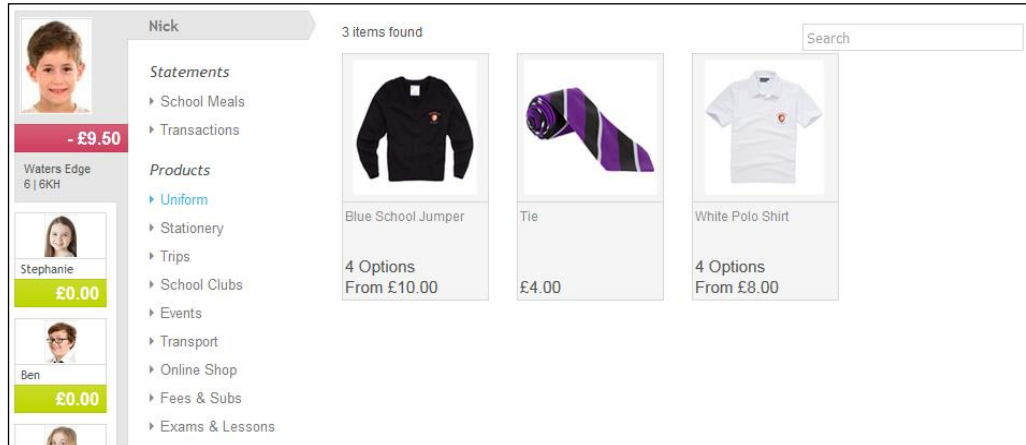
2. From the **Products** menu (displayed below the child's name), select a product or service to view the associated items.

3. Click an item to view more information.
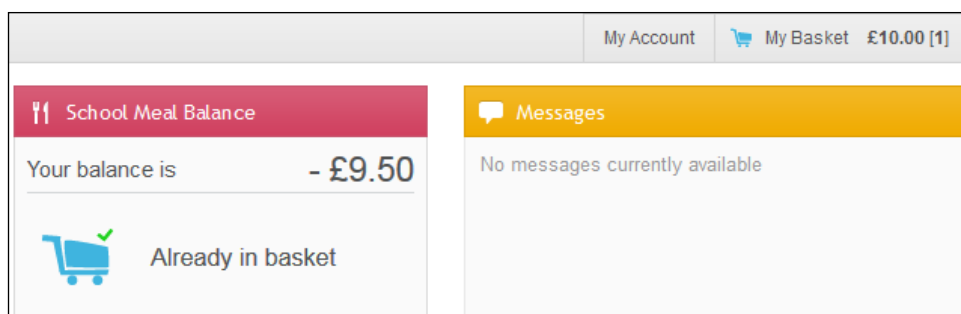
Blue School Jumper
£10.00
In stock

| Option | 5 - 6 ▼ |

Unisex blue school jumper

| Quantity | 1 |

Add to Basket
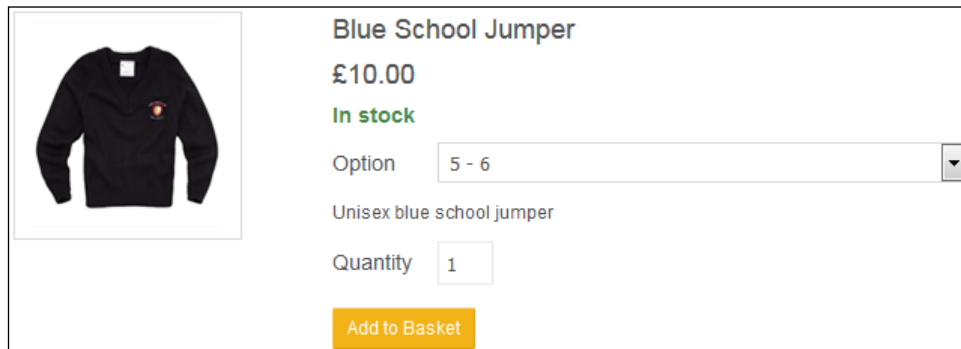
4. Select an **Option** from the drop-down list.

> *IMPORTANT NOTE: The nature of the **Option** you select will vary according to the selected product type. For example, a jumper that forms part of the school uniform might offer size options, colour options, etc.*

5. Enter a **Quantity** and click the **Add to Basket** button to send this item to the **My Basket** page and display this item on the **My Basket** tab.

> *NOTE: The school may place restrictions on the quantity that can be purchased.*

An item that costs £10.00 will show on the **My Basket** tab as **£10.00 (1)**. The **(1)** indicates the number of items in the basket.

| | My Account | 🛒 My Basket £10.00 [1] |

🍴 School Meal Balance	💬 Messages
Your balance is - £9.50	No messages currently available
🛒✓ Already in basket	

My Basket

The **My Basket** page shows all the items that are pending payment. Items can still be added to and deleted from the basket at this stage.

1. Select the **My Basket** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen to display the **My Basket** page.

Carl at Blue			
Product	Quantity	Price	Cost
School Jumper (Large) — NO IMAGE AVAILABLE — Remove from basket	1 [Update]	£10.00	£10.00
School Meals — Remove from basket	1 — 10.00 [Update]		£10.00
School Polo Shirt (Medium) — NO IMAGE AVAILABLE — Remove from basket	2 [Update]	£5.50	£11.00
Tina at Blue			
Product	Quantity	Price	Cost
School Meals — Remove from basket	1 — 6.00 [Update]		£6.00
Steve at Green			
Product	Quantity	Price	Cost
School Meals — Remove from basket	1 — 9.00 [Update]		£9.00
		Total Cost for 6 items	£46.00
			[Checkout]

Items are listed by child and product.

2. To change the amount you want to pay, enter a different value in the **Price** field and click the **Update** button. This applies to variable priced items only. It is not possible to change the amount payable for fixed price items.

   ▪ To cancel the purchase, click the **Remove from basket** link (this is located below the **Product** name).

   ▪ Additional items can be added to your basket. Select the **My Homepage** tab and navigate to the required product or service (please see *Purchasing Products and Services* on page *18*).

3. Click the **Checkout** button to proceed to the checkout (please see *Checking Out* on page *21*).

Checking Out

The checkout process requires the input of your personal and card details to complete the purchase of any items added to your basket.

1. From **My Basket**, click the **Checkout** button to be display the **SIMS Agora Secure Cashless Payments** screen.

2. Enter the required details.

3. Click the **Continue** button to display the **Additional Information** screen.

> NOTE: If you have recorded cardholder details on the **My Details** page, they will be displayed automatically. If cardholder details are not recorded, you must enter this information each time you carry out this process.

4. Complete the required details and click the **Continue** button to display the **Payment Confirmation** page.

5. Click the **Make Payment** button to confirm the transaction and to display the **Confirmation** page.

6. A summary of your payment is displayed.

Paying with PayPoint or at the Post Office

If a person with parental responsibility does not wish or cannot use SIMS Agora to pay online for school items, it is possible to pay for items using PayPoint or at the Post Office.

1. Contact your child's school to request barcodes for the items you wish to purchase.

2. Your child's school will provide a printed barcode for each item requested (each item has a unique barcode).

3. Take the barcodes to your PayPoint or Post Office counter.

   Inform the cashier if you wish to purchase more than one of any item, as these will be scanned separately.

4. The cashier will scan the barcodes and take payment for the items.
   - Some items will be fixed price, e.g. uniform.
   - Some items, e.g. school meals will require you to notify the cashier of how much you intend to pay.

5. If the payment is for school meals, it will show in the **Statements** section of your account immediately (please see *Viewing Transaction Statements* on page *25*).

> **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Payments made by barcode cannot be assigned to an account holder and will therefore only be displayed in the **School Meal Statement** or **Transaction Statement** screens. The **Payer** will be displayed as **Other**.*

Viewing School Meal Statements

Payments shown on this page are for all account holders. Payments made by the person logged in are shown in the **Payer** column as **self** and payments made by anyone else are shown in the **Payer** column as **other.**

> *TIP:* **My Homepage** *is displayed when you log in. It is also available on the* **My Homepage** *tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, click a child's name or their picture (if there is one) on the left-hand side of the page to display the selected child at the top of the group.

2. Select **School Meals** from the **Statements** menu under the child's name.
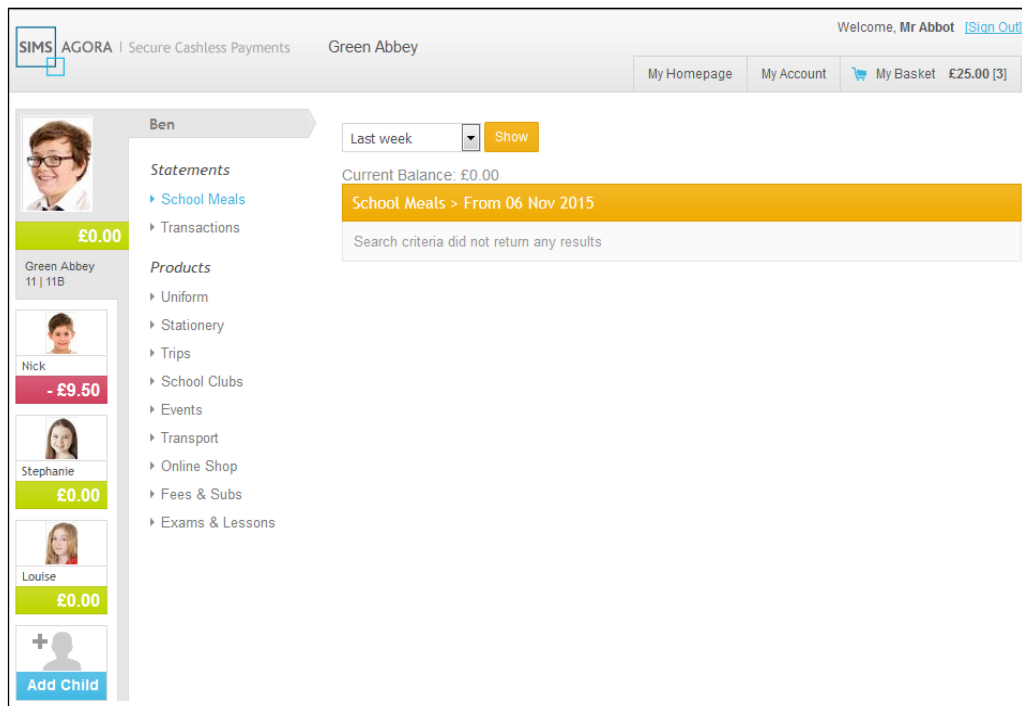
The **Current Balance** and any payments made during the period will be displayed. The default period is **Last week**. It is possible to change the period by selecting from the drop-down list and clicking the **Show** button.

Viewing Transaction Statements

Payments shown on this page are for all account holders. Payments made by the person logged in, are displayed in the **Payer** column as **self** and payments made by anyone else, are displayed in the **Payer** column as **other**.

> *TIP: **My Homepage** is displayed when you log in. It is also available on the **My Homepage** tab on the top right-hand side of the screen (unless you are already on the home page).*

1. From **My Homepage**, click a child's name or their picture (if there is one) on the left-hand side of the page to display the selected child at the top of the group.

2. Select **Transactions** from the **Statements** menu under the child's name.

The **Transactions** made during the period will be displayed. The default period is **Last week**. It is possible to change the period by selecting from the drop-down list and clicking the **Show** button.

03| Additional Information

SIMS Agora Security

SIMS Agora operates inside of secure parameters to protect both financial information and personal/child information.

- SIMS Agora can be accessed only after the successful completion of various security steps.
- No card details are stored in SIMS Agora.
- No card details are ever disclosed to the school.
- SIMS Agora is PCI DSS Level 1 certified and uses the highest levels of card payment security and 3D fraud protection measures.
- You will receive an email receipt for all payments.
- Payment history is available at any time via your account.
- SIMS Agora is synchronised with the main SIMS system to ensure that all account holders have up-to-date Parental Responsibility permissions.
- SIMS Agora flags account holders whose parental responsibility information has been removed from the school's main SIMS system. This also applies to parent/guardians who have a current court order recorded against them in SIMS. Account holders who are not flagged as having parental responsibility for a child (and therefore do not qualify for a new SIMS Agora account) can still sign into SIMS Agora but cannot view any child details, or purchase products or services.

Cookie Policy

A small number of cookies are used to provide the features in the web site and to help us to improve its performance.

We operate an 'implied consent' policy, which means that we assume that you are happy with this usage. If you are not happy with this, then you should not use this site, you should delete the cookies after you have visited the site, or you should browse the site using your browser's anonymous usage setting. The name of this setting varies, depending on the web browser:

- Incognito (Google Chrome)
- InPrivate (Internet Explorer)
- Private Browsing (Firefox and Safari).

For more information on cookies, you are advised to visit the About Cookies website (http://www.aboutcookies.org).

The following table describes the cookies we use on this site.

Cookie Name	Purpose
_ga	Google analytics tracking
_gat	Google analytics throttling
ASP.NET_SessionsId	Used to identify a user's session
FedAuth	Used to track the current signed in Microsoft Account
_RequestVerificationToken_Lw_	Cross-site request forgery prevention
capitaSimsAgoraLoginRedirection	Identifies a new administrator being registered
cookies-consented	Used to confirm that the user has consented to cookies

Technical Requirements

To use SIMS Agora, your system must meet the following minimum specifications:

Internet Connection

A minimum network connection speed of 512Kbps is required to operate SIMS Agora.

NOTE: Bandwidth tests performed on a 'client PC' should return results of at least 0.5Mbps or 512Kbps.

Supported Browsers

PC users:

- Internet Explorer® version 10 or later with the latest service packs
- Firefox® - latest version
- Chrome® - latest version.

MAC users:

- Firefox - latest version
- Safari® - latest version.

FAQ

Child Reference Has Expired

You have 28 days to activate your account once your reference has been generated by the school. If the reference you have received from your School Administrator does not work, please contact your school.

Forgotten Your Microsoft Login?

1. From https://www.simsagora.co.uk, click the **Sign in with your Microsoft Account** button.
2. At the bottom of the Sign in page, click the **Can't access your account?** link to display the **Why can't you sign in?** page.
3. Select the relevant radio button and follow the on-screen instructions.
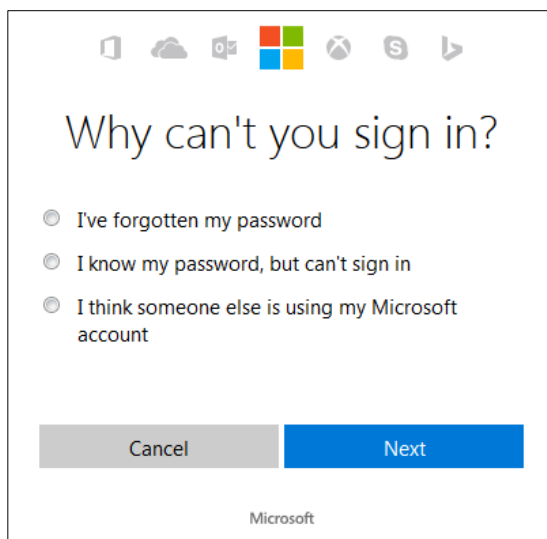
Can't Access SIMS Agora?

If you have already set up your account and are encountering problems when attempting to access SIMS Agora, check that you are signed into the correct Microsoft Account. This is particularly important where a computer has multiple users.

Navigate to the Microsoft website (https://account.live.com), sign out of your account and then sign in again with your Microsoft credentials.

If you continue to experience problems when attempting to sign into your SIMS Agora account, please contact your School Administrator.