SIMS Agora online payments
Commonly asked questions from parents about Agora

About this Quick Guide

This quick guide provides supporting information for schools to help with commonly asked questions by parents about the SIMS Agora online payment system, including parent activation queries, combining multiple children into one account, payment queries plus automatic parent alert settings.

Helping with parent queries

When starting a new online service for parents such as SIMS Agora, it is expected that there will be queries, questions and feedback that the school will receive.
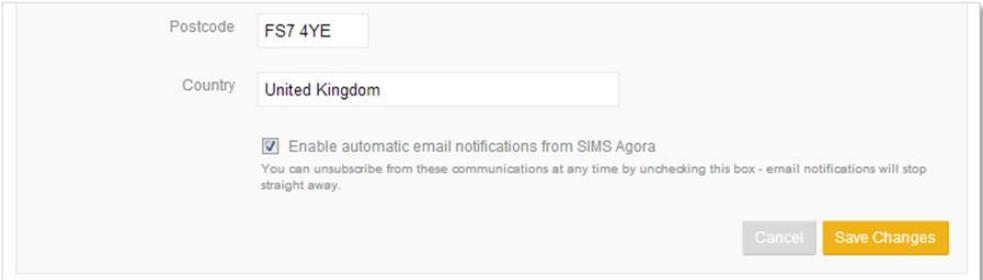
It is impossible to cover all of the types of questions and queries that may be asked; however, the following list provides a useful update on the most commonly asked questions schools may receive for their new online payment service:

Question/query	Suggested response
I have not received my activation email from SIMS Agora	NOTE: Once a parent has completed their account activation steps through SIMS Agora they will be sent an automatic email to complete the activation process. Occasionally the parent enters an incorrect email address or their email providers block unrecognised emails **ADVICE FOR PARENTS:** Some email providers incorrectly identify emails from SIMS Agora as SPAM and send the emails direct to the SPAM/JUNK folder. If you have completed your account activation and your activation email hasn't arrived, please check your SPAM/JUNK folder. If you still have not received the verification email please follow these instructions: 1.Login into SIMS Agora at www.payyourschool.co.uk 2.Please click the **'Resend activation email' button** 3. Check your emails, and click the link included in the verification email to activate your account. 4. If your email has still not arrived, please contact your child's school and confirm the email you entered into the activation screen.
The details I enter into the system for my account are not recognised **The parent may see the following error message:** **The combination of Reference and Date of Birth is not valid.**	A parent may receive this error due to one of several different reasons, including: ▪ The date of birth for the pupil may be incorrect in the school's SIMS system. ▪ The parent's activation reference has expired ▪ The parent has already activated their account, but not completed the final step with their activation confirmation email they will have received ▪ The parent has already activated their account, but is now logging in using a different Microsoft Account. --- **SUGGESTED THINGS FOR THE SCHOOL TO CHECK:** 1. Please check that the school has the correct date of birth in SIMS for the pupil – this is occasionally incorrect and will prevent a parent's access 2. Please check the parent is entering in the correct activation reference and date of birth – occasionally, parents mistype their activation reference 3. If the child details are OK and correct, it may be that the parent has already activated their account, but either:

Question/query	Suggested response
	(a) not completed the final step with the activation email they will have received *Please check with the parent to make sure they have completed their activation by clicking on the link in their confirmation email.* OR (b) they have done this and are trying to activate their account again but logged in under a different Microsoft Account. *Please check with the parent that they are accessing Agora with the Microsoft account they activated their account with.* **CHECKING THE PARENT'S ACTIVATION STATUS** Please check the child's Agora account within the school's Agora system: **Users > STUDENTS > select the pupil name – on the Student management screen**: 1. If the parent **has not activated their account**, the school admin will see the following – showing when the reference will expire: If the parent's activation reference has now **EXPIRED** and they still have the original activation reference, you can **extend their reference** for a further 28 days. If the parent no longer has the original activation reference, you can **extend the expiry** and **download a CSV** containing a new activation reference, which can be provided to the parent. 2. If the parent **has activated their account**, the school admin will see the following message, which means the parent has entered their activation reference already: **Association Status:** This user is currently linked to this student If the parent has already used their activation reference to register their account, but is now unable to access their account, you may need to re-set their account and provide a new activation reference – please see the following information on how to do this.

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	RE-SETTING A PARENT'S ACCOUNT

If the parent is still unable to access Agora after trying to activate their account, and SIMS Agora has their status as activated, the school administrator can use the '**Unlink User**' function on the student management screen to re-set the parent's account and create a new activation reference.

You will need to do this within the pupil/student's details in the school's Agora system:
Users > STUDENTS > select the pupil name – on the Student management screen:

Once a parent's account has been unlinked/re-set, a new activation reference can be created by clicking on the **Download CSV** button and the new activation reference provided to the parent. |
| **I've completed the activation process but can't access SIMS Agora – the screen is requesting my activation code**

Parent activation Quick Guide:
Download >> | If the parent has already activated their Agora account, they may see the registration page again because SIMS Agora does not recognise the Microsoft Account they are currently signed in with.

ADVICE FOR PARENTS:
- Please refer to the Agora parent activation quick guide http://www.capita-sims.co.uk/files/sims/attachments/sims_agora_parent-activation_quick-guide_1.pdf

   This quick guide provides supporting information for parents to help with activating their SIMS Agora account, including how to access SIMS Agora for the first time. |
| **What details do I need to log into SIMS Agora?** | To access SIMS Agora for your child's Account, you will need the following details:
- Activation letter - the school will send you an activation letter containing a unique reference for your child - you will need this reference to access your child's account
- Your child's date of birth
- A valid Microsoft Account - you can use an existing account if you already have one, or create a new one online - they are free, very easy to setup and you can use any email address and password
- Please login to SIMS Agora from the school website or go to: www.payyourschool.co.uk |
| **Why do I need a Microsoft Account?** | - Microsoft account is the combination of an email address and a password that you can use to sign in to services like Outlook.com, Windows Phone, Xbox Live and services like SIMS Agora.
- SIMS Agora uses the Microsoft account as many parents/guardians will already have one of these accounts, which means they don't have to remember different usernames and passwords – they are always in control of your own access details. |
| **How do I sign up for a Microsoft Account?** | You can use an email address you already have as your Microsoft Account or create a new Microsoft email address
To sign up for a Microsoft Account:
- Please go to the Microsoft account sign-up webpage |

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	- To use your own email address for your Microsoft account, please enter it in the field marked 'Microsoft account name' - Provide the rest of the information, and then please read the Microsoft service agreement and the privacy statement. If you agree to the terms, click 'I accept' - Once you have created a Microsoft Account you will be able to access SIMS Agora and complete the simple account activation steps - If you used an existing email address to sign up, you will need to verify it to prove that it's yours. You will receive a verification email from Microsoft to the email address you are using.
Can I use my existing email address for a Microsoft Account?	**Yes,** you can use any existing valid email address you have to create a Microsoft Account - you do not need to use a Microsoft specific email address.
How do I merge accounts if I have more than one child? **Parent activation Quick Guide:** **Download >>**	SIMS Agora allows parents to add multiple children to one single combined account, including children attending another school or more than one school, provided their school also uses SIMS Agora. This allows parents to use just one account, with one username and password to make payments for all their children's school items available through SIMS Agora. **ADVICE FOR PARENTS:** Please refer to the Agora parent activation quick guide for a step-by-step guide to combining more children into one Agora account: http://www.capita-sims.co.uk/files/sims/attachments/sims_agora_parent-activation_quick-guide_1.pdf The parent's SIMS Agora account allows you to view and pay online for any school-related activities or items for your child or for all of your children in a single place. You can easily get an overview of your child's or children's account balances and you can settle multiple accounts with a single payment. - Login to SIMS Agora at www.payyourschool.co.uk - If this is the first time accessing SIMS Agora you will need to register your account. - You will receive an email to confirm your account has been activated; once you have clicked the link in the email you will be able to make payments for school items straight away. - When you are in SIMS Agora, to add further children to your account go to the Account Details link at the top of the screen. - Select the Child Administration option from the left-side menu. - On the Child Administration page, please enter the new child reference and date of birth into the 'ADD CHILD' panel for the additional child you would like to add to your account. The relevant information for the child that has been added will appear automatically within SIMS Agora for your account. You can complete this step as many times as you need to for additional children - you just need a unique Agora reference from the child's school.
Which credit/debit cards can I use to pay through SIMS Agora?	Payments with any of these debit or credit cards (not Diners Card or American Express) Maestro VISA VISA DEBIT MasterCard VISA ELECTRON

Question/query	Suggested response
How can I find out if my payment was successful?	Parents will receive a payment receipt by email as soon as a payment is made, plus all purchases will be shown in the parent's **Payment History** within your SIMS Agora account. The payment will appear on the parent's credit or debit card statement as 'School Payment-Capita'. (Please note: payment card number or card details are not stored or accessed by the school)
How can I find out if my payment was unsuccessful?	If a payment was unable to be processed through SIMS Agora the parent will receive an email advising that the system has been unable to complete the transaction - the error may have occurred for a number of reasons: ▪ The system may not be able to obtain payment authorisation - it may be that the card issuer has declined payment ▪ The parent may have input incorrect payment details ▪ The website may be experiencing problems - you may want to try again at a later point
Can I receive alerts from the school about my child's school meal balance and/or new items to pay for?	By default, notifications will be enabled for parents who have already activated their SIMS Agora account. For new parents activating their SIMS agora account, they will have the option to enable automatic notifications, or opt out. Parents can choose to opt out/unsubscribe from receiving email alerts from SIMS Agora at any time, plus also opt back in whenever they wish to. **ADVICE FOR PARENTS:** Parents can opt to receive alerts from the school or stop these alerts at any time through their Agora account. To change the settings to receive or stop receiving automatic alerts from SIMS Agora, please log into your SIMS Agora account, then access **Account Details > Personal Details**. There is an option to enable or disable automatic email notifications, then press **'Save Changes'** – this will update your settings straight away. ![Postcode FS7 4YE, Country United Kingdom, checkbox Enable automatic email notifications from SIMS Agora, You can unsubscribe from these communications at any time by unchecking this box - email notifications will stop straight away. Cancel / Save Changes buttons]

More frequently asked questions for School administrators are available online at
www.capita-sims.co.uk/sims-agora-schools-help