

BIOMETRIC (FINGER/THUMB PRINTS) SCHOOL MEALS SERVICE

Dear Year 6 Parent/Guardian

We have been operating a cashless school meals system in school with our catering company Chartwells since November 2020. We have recently implemented a biometric system which allows students to access their school breaktime/lunch account using a biometric fingerprint image.

Our selected partner for this project are Sharp Electronics one of the world's largest electronic companies. The biometric system uses the latest biometric technology allowing the system to scan a thumb/finger at the till and debit the relevant account.

Please be reassured that all 'touch points' used by students will be wiped down after each use with the recommended antiseptic wipes thereby ensuring a safe biometrics process.

Under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) biometrics are classed as 'special category data' and requires an 'opt in' or 'consent' arrangement. Therefore, if you wish for your child/children to be registered, please complete the consent form that is within your online Enrolment Form. Please complete the consent form even if your child never/or occasionally uses the catering facility

If you choose not to have your child/children registered on the biometric system, then your child will be issued with a key fob that accesses their break/lunch account and can be used at the same payment points. The first key fob is issued free of charge, if a replacement fob is required, these can be purchased for £1 from the school canteen or Main Reception.

Students without fobs have to give their names to the catering staff in order to purchase food items which causes both delays and possible security issues (mis-identification) so we are keen for as many of our students as possible to be included in the biometric system.

Please regularly top-up your child/children's school lunch accounts via the School Gateway.

Some FAQ's are detailed below, please get in touch if you have any further questions.

Thank you.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do you store fingerprint images?

A. No, fingerprint images are not stored on the system, specific points of the scanned finger image are converted to a unique numeric algorithm and then stored in the pupils account record. Data is also only stored on the school premises and not on a cloud server. Pupils, parents and staff can therefore be assured that images cannot be used by any other source for identification purposes.

Q. Can anyone see a fingerprint image?

A. Finger images are not stored on the system and from the unique number it is impossible to reverse engineer to an image

Q. What happens when a pupil leaves the school?

A. All data will be deleted.

Q. What alternative is there if we do not consent to “opt in” to the biometric system?

A. Pupils will be issued with a fob to access their account.

Q. What happens if I hurt my finger?

A. The account details can be retrieved by searching on pupil’s forename or surname, a photo image will be displayed as confirmation that the correct account has been accessed.

Q. How do we purchase goods?

A. Simply place your finger on the scanner, your biometric pattern is scanned and then converted to your unique account number, which is then debited.

Q. How do we know the correct account number is being debited?

A. The name and/or photo of the student appears on the terminal screen confirming the identity to the operator. The account numbers are unique.

Q. How can I check my account balance?

A. The balance available is displayed on a customer screen at each transaction. Account balances are also available on the School Gateway

Q. What if I am entitled to Free School Meals?

A. There is no discrimination as the works system works exactly the same for all students whether they pay or have a free school meal entitlement. The set allowance will be electronically placed onto the pupil's account each day (The allowance is not rolled over so must be used in full each day) additional cash can also be added to enable a greater daily spend this is retained in a separate electronic purse and is only used when free meal entitlement has been used in full.

Q. Is there a limit to how much can be spent in one day?

A. Yes there is a school global maximum spend per day of £6.00. However, parents can also request individual daily spend limits via the form.