

Cashless Catering at Northampton School for Boys

The school has been operating a cashless system for paying for food in the school canteen for some years in partnership with Cunninghams, an electronic point of sale provider, who specialise in these systems and have many years of experience in school environments.

The principle of the system is to try to remove the amount of cash from the school environment and to increase the speed of service in our dining facilities at mealtimes. Each student is set up with a user account which can be credited with money, which can then be spent in the school catering outlets or school shop.

The main benefits of this system are that queuing times in the school canteen are significantly reduced and that the pressure on students, from their friends, to part with left over change is also reduced. We also hope it will improve the way students manage their own finances.

How do students load money into their accounts?

Students can bring cash in on a daily or weekly basis and credit their accounts at one of two revaluation machines in the canteen area. These revaluation machines can also be used to check balances. However, our preferred option would be to use our online facility, ParentPay, to load money to your son's account at a time that suits you best. This removes cash completely from the school environment and also prevents students from spending money on the way to school. In the current pandemic, it also reduces the need for students to touch a finger scanner to load money onto their account.

How do students spend money?

The system we use is based on biometric fingerprint recognition rather than a card system. We feel that there is a greater chance of students losing cards or forgetting to bring them in. This system does not take or keep a student's fingerprint. It works on the basis of identifying a number of points on a student's finger and turning these into a unique code. As each student's fingerprint is different, each student will receive a unique code. When a student wishes to purchase food from the canteen, they simply place their finger on a reader which will then automatically deduct the cost of the meal from their account. In the current pandemic, these finger readers will be cleaned with a sanitising wipe between each use, or students will be able to provide their name for identification purposes.

Biometric Scanning

We intend to scan students' fingers when they return to school, as part of their induction process, ensuring that readers are cleaned with a sanitising wipe between each use. If you do have any questions or concerns about this then please contact me via the main site number (01604)

230240. If you wish to object to your son's fingerprint being taken you must object in writing before 7th July to Mrs H Sharp at the school. Please note if you said No to the Biometric Data Consent on our Data Collection Sheet then your son's fingerprint will not be scanned. He will be provided with a card to operate the catering system. Also please note: cards do not encompass the same level of security as the biometric system and it will be your son's responsibility to keep it secure.

Credit Limits

The system also allows us to limit the amount of money spent on school meals. It is a student's responsibility to manage their account sensibly, however, parents can also check their son's balance using the online ParentPay facility.

Other advantages

The system allows us to record and monitor what students have been purchasing from the catering outlets and this is shared with parents online. You are able to see that dinner money is being spent in school rather than on the way to school! It does have the capability of allowing us to analyse which meals are most popular so that we can then look to improve our service to students. Finally, if your son has an allergy the cashier is alerted and can crosscheck this with the ingredients of the meal they are trying to purchase and alert the cashier.

ParentPay

As mentioned above, this system allows parents to pay for items such as school meals, school trips or school uniform on line by credit or debit card via a secure website. The main benefits are ease and convenience for parents, so you don't have to keep remembering to give your child their dinner money, but again it is to try and remove the need for students to carry any cash or cheques to and from school. There is a permanent link between the cashless catering system and ParentPay and updates are made every 30 minutes, so if a student did forget their dinner money one day, it could be credited by that lunchtime.

Further details about ParentPay, including login and password details will be issued in due course. More information about ParentPay can be obtained from <https://www.parentpay.com>