

Dear Parent/Guardian

Cashless payment system for catering service

I am writing to advise you that the Academy operates a cashless payment system in the canteen to improve the quality of the school meal service it provides.

The basis of this system is such that pupils do not pay with cash in the canteen and will have an individual account set up into which cash or cheques can be paid. To avoid the possibility of cash being lost, we strongly recommend that payment is made by cheque.

These accounts will be controlled by a computer system which recognises each individual pupil, holds cash balances, records cash spent and where it has been spent, on what food on any specific date and time of day.

The computer system is based on fingerprint recognition technology, which works by the computer storing numerical values derived from the fingerprints and not actual images of the fingerprints themselves. The Academy has fully checked this system for security and parents can rest assured that the fingerprint images can not be used by any other source for identification purposes. Once the image of the fingerprint has been used to create a numeric value, the fingerprint itself is discarded by the system with only the numbers remaining. These numbers can not be reinterpreted back into a fingerprint image.

I have attached a sheet giving further information as it is difficult to explain the full workings of the system in a letter, together with an opt-out form for those who do not wish to avail themselves of this system. It should be noted however, that if pupils opt out of the system, they will be unable to utilise the canteen for food or drink as it is not equipped to take cash.

Yours sincerely

S Baragwanath  
Principal

## Cashless catering system

### Why we operate this system:

- To ensure all pupils are served healthy and enjoyable school meals at the lowest cost and within the stipulated time.
- To solve the administrative problems associated with 'Free School Meals' and ensure that those pupils entitled receive their meals without stigma.
- To alleviate many of the associated problems with the use of cash within the Academy through loss, theft or bullying.
- To help reduce queuing times through increased speed of service.
- To provide a convenient system for parents so that they can pay for meals on a daily, weekly or monthly basis without the need to find change everyday.
- To provide parents with a report which details what food their child has selected at any given time.
- To ensure that pupils who have particular food allergies are not sold food items that are unsuitable to them.
- To discourage the misuse of school dinner money through spending in shops outside of the school grounds.
- To allow the pupils to acquire important life skills by using an account system for which they are responsible.
- To provide pupils with the up-to-date technology which is becoming a part of everyday life as we move towards a cashless society. This type of system is set to replace credit cards and passports in the long term.

### How the system works:

- Once the fingerprint images have been taken and an account established, pupils can credit their account by paying in cash at one of the revaluation units situated in the new school corridor. Parents can also send in cheques to the Academy office and the administrative staff will then credit pupils' accounts direct.
- A pupil can check the balance of their account at any time by placing their finger on the reader on the revaluation unit. A remote display on the tills in the canteen will also display the remaining account balance after each transaction.
- A daily spend limit of £4.00 will be automatically set for all pupils to ensure that a whole week/month's allocation can not be spent in one transaction. This limit can be set either higher or lower at parents' discretion.

- For pupils who are entitled to 'Free School Meals' the amount allocated will be entered into the system by the computer on a daily basis and will only be accessible at dinner time. These pupils can also add extra cash to their account by using the revaluation system to enable a greater daily spend on their school dinner than allocated by their free meal allowance.
- Once an account has a credit balance, pupils may use the canteen as before, making their food selections and then presenting themselves to the till operator to make payment. The only difference here is that instead of paying by cash, pupils will be asked to place their finger in the till reader from where their account will be automatically debited with the amount of the food/drink they have selected.
- With the cashless system in operation, we hope to encourage children to purchase a balanced, healthy and nutritious school dinner by awarding them points for selecting items of this nature. At the end of each term the top scoring pupils will be identified and the winners will receive an award.
- Should pupils have a specific food allergy, or be diagnosed diabetic, this medical information can be coded into the system, preventing foods with allergy ingredients from being served to them.
- Reports can be obtained from the system by parental request giving comprehensive information on all aspects of use for each individual pupil. These reports can be for a specific day or between dates and will be dated and timed to the minute and provide details such as:
  1. Every item of food served and the total cost of each serving
  2. Individual payments made directly to the Academy by cheque or cash and manually entered into the system.
  3. Each payment made by cash at the revaluation stations by the pupil and, if required, even the number of individual coins and the denomination.
  4. Current cash balances.

**Cashless catering system opt-out form**

I do not wish my child to be included in the registration process for the cashless canteen system

Name of pupil .....

Year and Tutor Group .....

Name and signature of Parent/Guardian .....

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