



John Colet School

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Biometric Cashless Catering System

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a cashless catering system?

A cashless catering system is a solution which is designed to meet the ever evolving needs and demands of the catering provision required by today's schools and academies. The cashless solution allows schools to be better able to provide their students with a faster, more efficient and more appealing meal service.

What is 'biometric'?

Biometric is a method of identifying an individual person. The cashless catering system uses an algorithm based scan which reads between 50 and 130 points on the finger/thumb. It is not a fingerprint in any way, shape or form and is of use only in the cashless system.

How does a biometric system work?

The information of a student who has been biometrically registered, is stored on a secure biometric controller within the school, which only the system provider, Nationwide Retail Systems, can access with permission from the school. Once an account is credited, the student or staff member places their finger/thumb on the EPOS Terminal Biometric Reader which looks up their account and allows them to purchase items using only this method of identification.

How does my child register on the biometric system?

Registration days will take place before the end of the Summer Term. During these days, registration terminals will be placed in the school. Your child will attend at a requested time and will be required to place their finger/thumb on the Biometric Reader twice to obtain a matching template which only takes a few seconds. If you have chosen to opt-out of this procedure, your child will be presented with a 4 digit PIN code.

What methods of payment can be used to credit an account?

Any amount can be credited to an account by way of any of the following 3 methods:

1. Cash at the Revaluation Units

A revaluation unit will be situated outside the Medical Room. This can be used to top up accounts by the students placing their registered finger or thumb on the Biometric Reader or by entering their 4 digit PIN Code followed by inserting the accepted tender: £20, £10, £5 notes or £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p or 5p coins. Please note that copper coins are not accepted.

2. Cheques

Cheque payments can be accepted via the cashless catering system. Cheques should be made payable to 'Chartwells', have the student name and form written on the back and be handed to Matron. The Catering Manager will add the funds to the student's account.

3. Online Payments

We have introduced online payments in partnership with Parentmail which can be accessed through your Parentmail account.

Once an account has been credited, the monies cannot be withdrawn and must be spent on the school meal/break services.

How can I check the credit on an account?

This can be done by the student either placing their finger/thumb on the Revaluation Machine scanner or entering a 4 digit PIN code, or via your Parentmail account.

Can I change my child's 'daily spend limit'?

Yes – the amount your child can spend throughout one day can be changed by written request to Head of Finance and Business. The current 'daily spend limit' is £2.50 for Free School Meal students and £5 for other students.

How do 'free school meal' entitlements work?

All free school meal entitlements will be entered on to the system prior to the 'live' day. The cashless catering system will, on a daily basis, automatically allocate the appropriate accounts with the free school meal amount. Students with FSM entitlement remain anonymous at all times as all account types are accessed in the exact same manner, regardless of whether paid for or not. Any monies not spent from the daily free meal allocation will not be carried over to the next day.

Can anyone else use my child's account?

No – due to the extensive security on biometric templates, no-one will be able to access your child's account. As a secondary precaution, a photo image is allocated to each student. If your child is using a 4 digit PIN code which someone obtains and attempts to use, the photograph shown at the EPOS Terminal will alert the operator of a fraudulent sale.

My child has an allergy. Will this be monitored through the Cashless System?

Yes – all allergy records registered with the school will be entered on to the cashless system. When students attempt to purchase an item, which contains ingredients that they are allergic to, the system will alert the operator and prevent them from selling the chosen item.

Can I dictate my child's dietary requirements?

The system will allow you to register any items that your child cannot consume due to dietary needs or religious reasons. Any such items must be confirmed in writing by the parent/guardian and addressed to Matron.

Can I check what items my child is purchasing?

Yes – you will be able to see itemised purchases your child has made through your Parentmail account.