



Dear Parent/Carer

### Cashless Catering System

At John Colet School we use a cashless catering system which incorporates the latest biometric technology.

The benefits of a cashless catering system are:

- Increased speed of service reducing queuing times.
- Anonymity on Free School Meals.
- Facility to pay online through Parentmail.
- No need for students to carry cash preventing loss/theft.
- Automatic alerts to stop pupils purchasing allergy trigger items.
- Students learn about important lifestyle control by monitoring their own accounts.
- Reporting facilities help the Catering Manager decrease wastage and improve the overall efficiency of the meal service.

Money can be paid into your child's account through Parentmail. Any amount of money may be added to your child's account and the daily maximum 'spend limit' will be set at £6 which can be increased or decreased upon written request. All students entitled to Free School Meals will also use this system with a daily maximum 'spend limit' of £2.62. An 'FAQ' sheet is attached which provides additional information.

To enable your child to use this system we require your authorisation, however, if you choose not to have your child registered on the Biometric System, a 4 digit PIN code can be allocated and/or your Child's access controlled via manual entry by the Catering Team . Please note PIN codes do not have the same level of security as the Biometric System and it will be your child's responsibility to remember the code and keep it secure at all times so that nobody else can use it. Please complete your preference on the electronic admission form. You can change your preference at any time by emailing [office@johncolet.co.uk](mailto:office@johncolet.co.uk)

Kind regards

Mr J Jennings  
Head of Finance and Business



## **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 during the first week of term. Your child's whole form will be asked to attend the canteen and will be required to place their finger/thumb on the Biometric Reader twice to obtain a matching template. This whole process only takes a few seconds, after which your child will be asked to return to class. If you have chosen to opt-out of this procedure, your child will be given a 4 digit PIN code to use instead.

### **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 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 £2.62 for Free School Meal students and £6 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 onto 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/carer and addressed to the Student Welfare Officer.

**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.

