Biometric Cashless Catering System

The Royal Harbour Academy

Our school operates a biometric 'cashless' catering system. The new system will allow you to better track what your child purchases and also enables us to continue with the development of the school meal service, which will provide a more efficient, faster and ultimately better quality service.

How does the cashless system work?

When a student wishes to purchase items from the canteen or sandwich bar, they collect it in the usual way and then proceed to a till. At this point, rather than paying with cash or coins, they will simply place their finger on the reader. The software will recognise the student and automatically deduct the value of the items from their account.

Accounts are topped up using what is called 'revaluation' machines. These are located in the dining area on both sites, and allow students to top-up their accounts using coins or notes, (accepted tender is £20, £10, £5 notes or £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p or 5p coins; please note that copper coins are not accepted). You may also pay by bank transfer, directly to the school bank account; please contact the school office for more details.

Spend limits

To ensure students cannot spend all of the money in their account on a single day, there is a spend limit of £5.00 per day. This can be increased or decreased on request by contacting the school.

What if a student does not hold sufficient balance to pay for a school dinner?

There is no overdraft facility on the system so students must have sufficient money on their account to be able to pay for their school dinner. If a student finds themselves without sufficient funds, they should go to their Head of Year or Pupil Support Officer and explain the situation.

Students entitled to free school meals

All students entitled to free school meals have their accounts automatically credited each day with the free school meal allowance. Pupils 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. However, any under-spend or missed dinner will be identified by the system and will not be added to the next day's balance.

Students who have free school meals can also opt to add additional funds to their account using the revaluation units, which allow them to purchase additional snacks before school, at break time or during lunch.

Opting out

As per current legislation we will be operating an 'Opt In' policy and therefore require you to do so when completing your child's admission form. We only require permission from one parent, however by law we have to contact both parents. If you choose not to have your child registered on the Biometric System, a 4 digit PIN code will be allocated. Please note that PIN codes do not have the same level of security and it will be your child's responsibility to remember the code and keep it secure at all times.

Frequently asked questions concerning fingerprint recognition

Trust-e (by Civica) is the software used to record and recognise student fingerprints. This FAQ addresses some common questions and concerns related to fingerprint recognition technology.

What is Trust-e – how does it work?

Trust-e is a central database which stores the information which identifies pupils uniquely to each of the applications used within the school. It is simply a method of identifying an individual person

Why use Trust-e's biometric system instead of other existing identification methods?

- Increased speed of service reducing queuing times
- Increased uptake on Free School Meals
- Anonymity on Free School Meals
- Facility for parents or a carers to pay online
- Students need not carry cards, remember PIN numbers to buy a meal.
- No need to carry cash preventing loss/theft, students cannot borrow or steal credentials from each other, reducing the opportunities for bullying.
- Automatic alerts to stop pupils purchasing allergy trigger items
- Students learn about important lifestyle control by monitoring their own accounts
- Reporting facilities help decrease wastage and improve the overall efficiency of the meal service

Does Trust-e record images of individual fingerprints?

Trust-e never stores images of fingerprints on its system and will never do so. It is an algorithm based scan, which reads between 50 and 130 points on the finger/thumb. The mathematical information is encrypted and is called a template. This data is extremely secure in its encrypted form, but even if it were not encrypted it would be impossible to recreate the original fingerprint image from the stored data.

It is not a fingerprint in any way, shape or form and is of use only in the Cashless System.

Is it possible to recreate a fingerprint from the data stored by Trust-e?

No. The Trust-e system only stores a short string of encrypted numbers – too few numbers to provide enough detail for the original print to be reconstructed.

How secure is the stored data? What would happen if somebody stole the data in some form?

The database is protected by a licence key, which means that the database and any backup of its contents can only be accessed on licensed hardware. The licensed hardware is stored in the school's own secure facility, so that the encrypted data is only available to the registered licensee. Even if a school's security were to be compromised and a backup of the database stolen, the encrypted data would still be unreadable, even by another school.

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

Yes – all allergy records registered with the school will be entered into the Cashless System. When pupils 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 or carer, and addressed to the school office or emailed to office@rha.kent.sch.uk

Can I request a printed report of my child's meal intake?

Yes – the Cashless Catering Solution allows numerous reporting facilities, including dietary habits. These may be requested by contacting the school office or emailing office@rha.kent.sch.uk

Please refer to our Protection of Biometric Information Policy (available on our website) for further details on how we process personal information and your rights.