

# **CASHLESS CATERING EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW**

## **WHAT IS CASHLESS CATERING?**

Cashless catering means that all students will pay for their food by charging the cost to their own personal account (just like a bank account) instead of handing over cash. Students will go to a payment till and will identify themselves using biometric technology, to ensure that the cost is charged to the correct account.

## **WHY DID WE INTRODUCE CASHLESS CATERING?**

Cashless catering has many benefits. Firstly, the payment process is much quicker, which reduces queues and allows students more time to eat their food, take part in lunchtime clubs, or just relax. Secondly, by reducing the amount of money that students need to carry around, we can reduce the risk of loss. Thirdly, by giving the students the responsibility for managing a money account, we can ensure that they can learn important personal finance skills.

## **HOW DO PERSONAL ACCOUNTS WORK?**

We will set up a personal account for each student. Money can be added to the account in a two ways: (i) Coins and notes can be inserted into a “revaluation machine”, which will automatically credit the personal account with the amount deposited; and (ii) parents can credit the accounts by handing over cash or cheques to staff. Where a student is entitled to Free School Meals, the school will automatically credit the account with a daily allowance. (Note: if you believe that your child is entitled to Free School Meals and you have not yet registered, please contact the school office).

Students can check the balance on their account at any time by using the enquiry facility on the revaluation machine.

## **WHAT IS BIOMETRIC TECHNOLOGY?**

Biometric technology uses unique physical characteristics to identify individuals. In our case, we will be using fingertip technology. We scan certain parts of the tip of the middle finger and a computer program converts this information into a unique code, which is then stored as part of the personal account information. The same process is used when students wish to purchase food and make balance enquiries; the code derived from the fingertip is compared with the codes already stored, to ensure that the account holder is correctly identified. When purchasing food, a picture of the student is displayed so that the till operator can double-check the student’s identity.

It must be made clear that this is not the same as fingerprinting, as it is not technically possible to re-create a fingertip “picture” from the code. However, in recognition of parents’

concerns, legislation taking effect from September 2013 requires schools to confirm (or reconfirm) parental agreement for the use of this technology.

### **ARE THERE ANY OTHER BENEFITS?**

In order to ensure that students are charged the correct amount of money, the system must hold details of every single menu item. The system then keeps a record of every transaction, which means that we can let you have, on request, a report of what food your child has purchased (complete with nutritional analysis) and how much money has been spent, over a given period.