

The Billericay School  
Cashless Catering  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q What is a Cashless System?**

A A Cashless Catering System is a software solution, which is designed to meet the demands of the catering operation in schools and other educational establishments. The Trust-e Cashless Solution provided by Nationwide Systems allows schools to provide students with a faster, more efficient meal service by facilitating pre-payment of meals and recording transactions. Cashless systems are in place and work successfully in many thousands of schools.

**Q What is Biometric?**

A Biometric is simply a method of identifying an individual person. It uses an algorithm-based scan, which reads between 50 & 130 points on the finger/thumb. **It is not captured or stored as a fingerprint**, nor can it be interpreted back into a usable fingerprint image. The technology provided meets with BECTA guidelines and the encrypted data held is of use only in the cashless system. When a student leaves and is removed from the school database, the information held on the cashless system is automatically purged.

**Q How does a Biometric System work?**

A The information relating to a student or staff member, once they have been biometrically registered, is stored on a secure biometric controller within the school, which only our provider, Nationwide Systems, can access. The student or staff member places his/her thumb on the EPOS terminal, which identifies them, looks up the account details and allows them to purchase items which are then charged to that account.

**Q How does my child register on the Biometric System?**

A Registration will take place on Student Induction Day (or in the case of a Mid Year Transfer, on the first day of admission). Your child will be asked to place their thumb on a biometric sensor twice, to obtain a matching template. This takes only a few seconds. (Note: consent from a parent must have been provided to the school prior to registration)

**Q Can I opt out if I do not want my child to provide biometric data?**

A In accordance with current legislation we will be operating an 'opt In' policy and will be asking parents to complete a consent form before their child is registered. No child will be registered without the consent of a parent. 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 as biometric as they may be forgotten or seen by others; if you choose this option it will be your child's responsibility to remember the code and keep it secure at all times.

**Q How will I pay for my child's meals?**

A Any amount (minimum of £10.00) can be credited to your child via your ParentPay. Please ensure you top up your child's account prior to need as during peak activity times transactions may not appear on accounts instantly. All parents will be allocated a ParentPay ID and password and many of our parents already use this method to pay for school trips, etc.

**Q Can I pay for my child's meals via any other method?**

A If you are unable to access ParentPay for some reason you may send or bring a cheque /cash to the school office and office staff will credit your child's account for you. It is emphasised, however, that this method is administratively time consuming and may cause delays and some inconvenience for your child. We therefore urge all parents to use the ParentPay system. Please note that students will not be able to pay by cash at any till point

**Q How can I check the amount of money my child has spent/has left?**

A This can be checked via your ParentPay account. ParentPay will send text or email alerts when balances reach a pre-set balance, this can be activated within the child's ParentPay account under 'Profile, Alert Setting'. The school has a balance checking terminal in C block. Once registered, a student may access their own balance by presenting their thumb (or using the pin number) and the current available balance will be displayed.

**Q Can I control what my child spends?**

A Yes. The daily 'Spend Limit' has a default of £6.00, but this may be changed by request to the school office.

**Q What happens if my child's account is not in credit?**

A If a Parent has forgotten to credit their child's account, the student may go to the main school office where they will be given the option of a ham, cheese or plain roll together with fruit. The cost will be charged to the pupil's account and the parent contacted to request that the account be bought back into credit.

**Q How do 'free meal' entitlements work?**

A All free meal entitlements will be recorded on to the system prior to the 'Live' day. The cashless system will, on a daily basis, automatically allocate £3.00 credit for every child entitled to free school meals. Pupils with FSM entitlement remain anonymous as all accounts are accessed in the exact same manner, regardless as to whether or not the meals are paid for. Please note that any monies not spent from the daily free meal allocation will not be carried over to the next day.

**Q Can my child use the free school meal allowance at any till point?**

A Yes. The advantage of the cashless system for free school meal children is that they will have the flexibility to spend their £3.00 allowance at breakfast, break or lunch at any serving point. (The main hall, A block quad, the B block "demunchable" and the 6th form servery will all be linked to the cashless system). We recommend FSM students take advantage of the "meal deal" which gives them a nutritionally balanced lunch, dessert and drink (£2.90) but they may order a packed lunch or use the allowance to supplement any food brought from home with snacks and drinks, if they prefer.

**Q Can anyone else use my child's account?**

A No. Due to the extensive security on biometric templates no-one else will be able to access your child's account. As a secondary precaution a photo image is held for each student, which can be seen by the operator at the till point. If a pin number is used, care must be taken to ensure it remains known only to the user.

**Q Can I monitor what my child is buying and eating?**

A Yes. By logging into ParentPay you will be able to access this information