



Hall Green School An Academy

20 October 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Canteen Cashless System – Till upgrade

As you will be aware, at Hall Green Secondary School we run a cashless catering system. The system allows us to provide a more efficient, faster and ultimately better quality of service. I am pleased to inform you the upgrade to our till system has now been completed, enabling us to serve pupils quicker.

All pupils with biometric consent have now had their thumbprint taken for our new system. The attached information sheet outlines how this information is used. Whilst all pupils have been issued with a card, only those without biometric permission need to bring them into school. I recommend those with consent keep their card at home, or alternatively, return it to the finance office for safe keeping. When pupils use their thumb print or the card, their photo and name comes up in order for their identity to be checked at the till. Canteen staff will not serve pupils if the photo does not match the person. If pupils are aware they have mislaid/lost their card, they should inform canteen staff.

A daily 'spend limit' of £4.50 is programmed into the system. This can be increased or decreased for an individual pupil by making a written request to the canteen.

Pupils entitled to free school meals will have the daily credit (currently £2.20) available to purchase food and drink. It is important they do not overspend this amount unless they are adding money in to their account. Please be aware that we will always ensure pupils do not go without a basic sandwich meal, but that accounts will not be allowed to go overdrawn. If there are individual circumstances affecting the ability to ensure your child has enough on their account, please contact the school office as a matter of urgency.

Please do note that pupils are able to access free drinking water from the canteen.

The attached information should answer any questions you may have but if this is not the case then please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Miss K Slater
Headteacher

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q What is a Cashless System?

A A cashless catering system means that cash payments will not be accepted in the canteen or kiosk.

Q What is Biometric?

A Biometric is simply a method of identifying an individual person. We will be using 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.

Q How does a Biometric System work?

A The information of a pupil or staff member, who has been biometrically registered, is stored on a secure Biometric Controller within the school, which only our provider, Sharp, can access. Once an account is credited the pupil or staff member places their finger/thumb on the Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) Terminal, which looks up their account details and allows them to purchase items only using this method of identification.

Q How does my child register on the Biometric System?

A Your child will place their thumb on a Biometric sensor four times 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 card.

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

A Any amount can be credited to an account in two ways. Once an account has been credited the monies cannot be withdrawn and must be spent on the school meals.

On-Line Payments

We have already introduced on-line payments in partnership with ParentPay. Simply log in as usual to credit the account. In exceptional circumstances, i.e. if you do not have access to the internet, you can request a barcode from the school, which can be used to top up your child's account at your local PayPoint stores. Payments via PayPoint will take up to 48 hours to be credited to the appropriate account. You can find your local stores by visiting <http://www.paypoint.co.uk/locator.aspx>

Q How can I check the credit on an account?

A This can be done by the account holder placing their thumb on to the EPOS terminal in the canteen or by swiping their card. The current balance will then be displayed. Alternatively, this can be accessed via ParentPay. Please ensure your child's account is in credit.

Q Can I change the daily 'Spend Limit'?

A Yes – the daily 'Spend Limit' has a default of £4.50 but this may be changed by written request to the School Office.

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

A Unfortunately your child will not be able to purchase a meal from the canteen. In exceptional circumstances, your child will be issued with a sandwich and drink to ensure they do not go without a meal.

Q How do ‘free meal’ entitlements work?

A All free meal entitlements will be entered on to the system. The cashless catering system will, on a daily basis, automatically allocate the appropriate accounts with the free meal amounts. **Pupils with Free Meal Entitlements now remain anonymous at all times as all accounts are accessed in the exact same manner regardless as to whether paid for or not.** (Evidence of benefit is still required)
NB. Any monies not spent from the daily free meal allocation will not be carried over to the next day.

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 allocated to each pupil. If your child is using a card, which someone obtains and attempts to use, the photograph shown on the EPOS Terminal will alert the operator and prevent a fraudulent sale taking place.

Q Can I dictate my child’s dietary requirements?

A The system will allow you to register any items that your child is not allowed due to dietary needs or religious beliefs. Any changes must be confirmed in writing by the parent/carer to the school nurse. It is the child’s responsibility to check the ingredients of what they eat. Advice and guidance can be sought by speaking to a member of the catering team.

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

A Yes, the cashless catering system allows numerous reporting facilities, which includes dietary habits. These may be requested by contacting the school canteen.