



CASHLESS CATERING

Why use cashless catering?

The main reasons are:

- It removes the stigma of Free School Meals. (FSM) The system treats FSM students and paying students in the same way therefore students receiving FSM are not identifiable as a result of using the catering facilities;
- It will speed up the meal service. This is important for St Laurence School due to the changes in the school day from September 2014 and because the number of students on roll has increased.
- Safety:
 - Students do not need to bring cash to school.
 - Parents can be confident the money is being used as intended.
 - It encourages students to stay on site.

Can students use cash to buy drinks and snacks?

Every student has a cashless meal account and all purchases should be paid for in advance using their accounts. Cash is not accepted at any of the till points. Students who bring cash for food will need to add it to their meal accounts using one of the cash loader machines.

How are students recognised by the system?

- a) **Biometrics.** Providing we receive parental consent, fingerprints are scanned; or
- b) **PIN number.** A unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) is allocated.

Do all students need consent to use biometric recognition?

No, only students under 18

How will the biometric image be collected?

Annually for the new Y7 intake and then as required for new students or those who choose to register.

Where do I send completed consent forms?

Consent forms may be handed-in at Reception or sent direct to the school St Laurence School, Ashley Road, Bradford-on-Avon, BA15 1DZ. Forms can be downloaded from the school website:

<https://st-laurence.com/cashless-payments>

How are accounts charged for school meals?

- a) **Biometrics.** At the checkout, the student places their finger on a scanner or
- b) **PIN.** At the checkout, the student enters their unique PIN using a numeric pad.

A screen will show the student's name, photograph, class and current cash balance. The food items will be entered into the system from an itemised touch screen and then the amount spent and the new cash balance will be displayed.

How is money paid into meal accounts?

Every student and member of staff will have a meal account and purchases should be paid for in advance.

- Parents may add funds to their child's account using their debit or credit cards in ParentPay, the School's on-line payment system. Please note funds added this way can take up to 2 hours to appear in meal accounts. If you would like information about using ParentPay, please contact the Finance Office on 01225 309500.
- Students may top-up their meal accounts using cash (coins and notes) at the cash loader machine located in the school. The cash loader will only accept: £20, £10 and £5 notes and £2, £1, 50p, 20p and 10p coins.

How will parents and students check balances?

- Parents can log onto their ParentPay account to view the balances on their children's meal accounts;
- By using the cash loading devices, students can see their balances. They are not required to deposit funds to view balances.



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Is there a limit on the amount students can spend each day?

The default daily limit is £5. Parents may instruct the school to set a higher or lower limit in one of the following ways:

- Call the Finance Office on 01225 309515
- Send a signed letter or note addressed to the "Finance Office".
- Leave a signed note or letter at Student Reception.

How much should I pay into meal accounts?

This is up to parents but you can pay as much as you feel comfortable with. You need to decide the right balance between convenience and tying-up household income; you could pay for a whole term or a year, even, if you so wished.

If you are giving your child cash then we recommend at least a week's dinner money. If you don't top up your child's account via ParentPay then he/she will need to use the cash loader machine before they can make purchases. He/she may find it annoying and a waste of their free time if they have to do this daily.

If you are paying in advance, then you may want to set a daily spend limit – see previous question. Please bear in mind that payments via ParentPay can take up to 30 minutes to reach meal accounts.

What if the student does not hold sufficient balance to cover their purchases?

The school retains the right to refuse a school meal if a student has insufficient credit or they forget to bring their lunch money to school. The school will not allow the student to overdraw their account. However, we will endeavour to make allowances for this on the understanding that parents will be expected to ensure the account is settled by the next day or contact the school if there is a delay. Please note it can take up to 30 minutes for funds added via ParentPay to appear on meal accounts.

Why does the school want parents to use ParentPay instead of cash?

- Paying on-line is more convenient for parents and students.
- Parents can pay in advance: by the week, month, term, whatever suits them best.
- Parents can see how much is left on meal accounts at any time either from home, work or smartphone – anywhere they have access to the internet.
- Students are less at risk and cannot lose or forget their dinner money.
- Students do not have to use their free time to queue at cash loader machines to top-up meal accounts.
- Funds can only be spent at the school catering outlets and parents can be confident that dinner money is not used for other purposes.
- If they wish, parents can see what their children are buying; parents without internet access can request a print-out at any time.

Why does the school prefer students to use biometric recognition?

- It is more convenient for students; they do not need to remember their PIN number.
- It is safer; their accounts cannot be used by anyone else. PINs are quite safe as the student's details appear on the operators' terminal but use of biometrics adds an extra level of security.
- It is quicker than typing in PIN numbers. On an individual basis this doesn't make much difference but it does reduce overall queuing time when you consider that many transactions are processed in a very short time.

What about students entitled to Free School Meals?

The amount allocated for the FSM will be credited automatically each day and may be used whenever the catering facilities are open; any under spend or missed dinner will not be accumulated.

Students may add extra cash to their meal accounts by using the cash loader devices; enabling a greater daily spend than allocated by their free meal allowance. Parents may also top up funds using ParentPay. The system will first deduct the free school meal allowance before deducting funds added by students and parents.

There is no difference in the way the system is used by FSM students and anyone else. They will be completely anonymous and catering staff and other students will not be able to identify FSM students who use the catering facilities.



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What about Data Protection?

Certain data will be held on the system to enable accurate operation. This will include your child's name, class, account balance and meal entitlement. This data will be managed in compliance with the Data Protection Act and Protection of Freedoms Act and will only be used in the operation of the cashless meal system. Fingerprints are not stored on the system and none of the information is made available to third parties.

Tell me more about Biometrics

Biometrics are widely used and accepted in thousands of schools in the UK.

Biometrics can be used by twins

New laws on the use of Biometrics in Schools were introduced in September 2012, under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The Biometric system at St Laurence School complies with the provisions and requirements of the new legislation.

Your child's fingerprint is scanned; the software selects several points of the fingerprint; like landmarks on a map. It then takes the co-ordinates of only these specific points and passes them through software which turns them into a code. The image of the fingerprint is never stored. It is impossible to recreate a fingerprint using the code and would be like trying to recreate a street map of London using only its famous landmarks. The codes are useless to third parties and only have any meaning in St Laurence School's cashless system.

The school must obtain the permission of parents and students to enable students to use the biometric recognition system. The school uses a secondary system (PIN numbers) for students who do not opt-in to the biometric system.

The data will not be transferred to any third party. It will be visible by the equipment suppliers in the normal course of supporting and maintaining the system.