Cashless Catering System - Frequently Asked Questions - Helpful Information from Nationwide Retail Systems Limited

Q   Why has the Academy moved to a biometric cashless payments system?
A   The Student Council have, for many years, asked that action be taken to reduce the queues at break and lunch times. Biometrically authorised transactions are the quickest means of paying for food and drink, helping students spend much less time queuing and more time eating, socialising or attending homework and other lunchtime clubs. Additionally, students on free school meals will now undertake the same transactions as all other students. Furthermore, parents and carers will be empowered by the ability to analyse their child's food and drink purchases.

Q   What is a cashless catering system?
A   The Trust-e cashless solution provided by Nationwide Retail Systems is a purpose-designed system that removes cash at the point of sale to provide students with a faster, more efficient and more appealing school meal service.

Q   What is biometric?
A   Biometric is simply a method of identifying an individual person from their unique, natural features.

Q   How does a biometric system work?
A   An algorithm is generated from the image created by a finger or thumb scan, selecting between 50 and 130 points to form a unique pattern for that person. The system does not use fingerprints and therefore does not store any fingerprints. The pattern it creates is of use only in our cashless system.

Q   How is biometric data stored and used?
A   The information of a person who has been biometrically registered is stored on a secure Biometric Controller within the Academy, which only our provider, Nationwide Retail Systems Ltd, can access. Once an account is credited the person places their finger/thumb on the payment terminal scanner, which looks up their account details and allows them to purchase items using this unique method of identification.

Q   How does my child register on the biometric system?
A   Registration will take place at the Academy, either before or on the day of joining. Your child will attend a registration terminal where they will be required to place their finger/thumb on a biometric sensor twice to obtain a matching template, which only takes a few seconds.

Q   What if I do not opt in to the biometric system?
A   If you have chosen to not opt in to biometric, your child will still be registered for cashless payments, but will be presented with a 4 digit PIN code instead of using finger image recognition. This takes a bit longer for each transaction and the PIN must be kept secure by your child.

Q   What methods of payment can be used to credit a cashless account?
A   Any amount can be credited to an account as frequently as you wish by way of any of the following methods. Once an account has been credited the monies cannot be withdrawn and must be spent on the school meal services:

    a.   On-line payments
    We have introduced on-line payments via ParentPay, the industry leader. A temporary user name and password will be issued. You can pay 24/7 by debit or credit card, with no transaction fees.

    b.   PayPoint
    You will be issued with a PayPoint card, which can be used to top up your child's account at your local PayPoint stores (there are 3 in Looe and 2 in Pelynt). Payments via PayPoint will take up to 48 hours to be credited. You can find your local stores at http://www.paypoint.co.uk

c.   Cheques

All cheques must be made payable to Chartwells and be received by the Canteen Manager by 9.00 am prior to that day's commencement of service and have written on the back of the cheque the student's name and Tutor Group. Cheques received after this time will not be credited until the following day.

d.   Cash

A dedicated paying-in machine is sited in the Canteen to top up a student's account using the finger/thumb sensor or by entering the 4 digit PIN code. The following tender is accepted:

      Notes -£20, £10, £5

      Coins - £2, £1, 50p, 20p, 10p, 5p (please note – copper coins are not accepted)

Q   How can I check the credit on an account?

A   Students - This can be done at the paying-in machine by the account holder placing their finger/thumb on the sensor or by entering their 4-digit PIN Code. The current balance will then be displayed.

Parents/Carers - This can be accessed online via a ParentPay account. You can have a ParentPay account to view purchases and balances, even if you do not wish to make online payments.

Q   Can I change the daily spend limit?

A   Yes. The daily spend limit has a default of £3.50, but this may be changed by written or telephone request to the Academy by parents/carers; we do not adjust the limit at the request of students.

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

A   A 'lend' can be processed at the payment terminal, which will then allow a meal to be taken. An automatic overdraft of £3.00 will be set up to allow the student to go into debit while funds are sorted. Where funding is not resolved, letters will be sent to remind overdue account holders.

Q   How do free school meal entitlements work?

A   All free school meal entitlements will be entered on to the system following confirmation of entitlement. The system will, on a daily basis, automatically allocate the appropriate accounts with the free school meal allowance of £2.30. Entitled students remain anonymous at all times as all student transactions are processed in the exact same manner at the tills. Any monies not spent from the daily free school 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 nobody 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 4-digit PIN code, which someone obtains and attempts to use, the photograph shown on the payment terminal will not match and should alert the operator to a suspected fraudulent sale taking place.

Q   My child has an allergy, how will this be monitored?

A   All allergy records registered with the Academy will be automatically entered on to the cashless database. When students attempt to purchase an item that has ingredients that they are allergic to, the system will alert the operator and prevent them from selling the chosen item. Please make sure the Academy is kept up to date on allergy and other conditions.

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

A   Yes. In addition to looking online via ParentPay, the cashless catering system provides for advanced reporting facilities, which includes dietary habits. These may be requested by contacting the Academy in writing.

Q   What are the technical specifications of the biometric information?
A   The individual templates are encrypted using a 256 bit AES key that is built into the scanner's hardware. Also the persisted file is encrypted using a different 256 bit AES key built into the matching algorithm supplied by Secugen and generated by a unique license purchased for each site. This is more secure than the ANSII and ISO standards that government departments use as the Secugen Template is encrypted and the ANSII and ISO standards are not.

Outside of the cashless system the template data is useless and cannot be interpreted back into a usable fingerprint image. If this was not the case then there would be no world standards and performance measures for such technologies. The data is stored in an array in the RAM of the Biometric Controller and is also permanently stored on the hard drive of the Biometric Controller to be restored in the event of a reboot. Below is an example of a template code for an individual finger.

0X41774141414251414141444541514141415141534141414D415A41414141414141474774541414C71477734
6C5869656D6C574945494A764A6B42466D6837616C4E764D704F517874517A706A4A395A31784935686C
4177395366726E777645576357386C4573314B426F4744316669941706755597704C763168423642682A7043

The solution is secure because the matching can only be done by the individual's consent as the finger has to be presented to the device for matching. We do not hold images of fingerprints in our system. The technology provided for this method of identification meets with BECTA guidelines and also allows students the option to opt out of the scheme and use a PIN number instead.

Also under the Data Protection Act the school or caterer (the originator of the data) cannot allow access to this data by anyone for any other means than for the purpose the data was collected and that is to identify an individual within the solution we supply. Any biometric data that belongs to an individual that leaves the Academy is purged, which also is in line with the BECTA guidelines.

Q   Can we have information on data protection from Nationwide Retail Systems Limited?
A   NRS is accredited with ISO 27001 - Information Security Management System - and is committed to ensuring that privacy is protected. Should we ask you to provide certain information by which you can be identified, you can be assured that it will only be used in accordance with this privacy statement.

NRS is registered as a data processor under the Data Protection Act (DPA) and operate at all times under the DPA Guidelines.

The Academy's data will remain their responsibility and they remain fully in control of accessing, managing and updating all student data within the system. The Academy is operating as Data Controller under the DPA. All NRS Staff that may have administrator access to Academy data for support purposes are Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checked.

Information collected to implement a cashless catering system is outlined below:

Essential information collected		Optional information that may be requested
Admissions Number	Gender	Unique Pupil Number
Surname	Date of Birth	Ethnicity
Forename	Year	
Tutor Group	FSM Allowance	
Current photograph		

Nationwide Retail Systems Limited does not sell, distribute or lease your personal information to third parties.

NRS removes all data from servers one week after the cashless system has gone live within the Academy.

Under the DPA you may request details on personal information that we hold about you. If you believe that any information we are holding about you is incorrect or incomplete, please write to or email us as soon as possible, at the address below.

Nationwide Retail Systems Limited
Whaley Road
Barugh Green
Barnsley
S75 1HT
01226 732 200
support@nrsltd.com