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Cashless Catering

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will cashless catering work?

Each student will be issued with their own personal 'swipe' card

The card is handed to the catering staff at the till point who swipes the card through a card reader and gives it back to the student. A display will show the server the student's name, class and current cash balance held within the system. The selected food items will be entered into the system while the amount spent and the new cash balance will show on the display.

How much money should I put on the card?

Ideally it should be enough for half a term. To decide how much to pay, work out how much your child is likely to need each day to cover breakfast, break time and lunch. The meal of the day is £1.40. Add to that an amount for breakfast (if required) and for break time. For example, if you allow your child to spend £2.50 per day this would be £12.50 per week or approximately £100 for a half term. If your child receives a free meal you need only pay for any additional spend. The card can be topped up at any time using the cash machines.

How will I pay for school meals?

(a) By Cheque - payment made to 'Sodexo Education Services Ltd' via the Catering Office to cover any period. ie. Term - 1/2 Term - Month or Week - Or a fixed monetary amount of your own choice. We cannot accept cheques for less than £30.

Please put your child's name and tutor group on the back of the cheque. If the payment is for more than one child please put the names, tutor group and amount for each child on the back of the cheque. If you are paying by cash please provide the same information and place in the envelope.

To ensure that payments are recorded on the system before break, cash and cheques must be handed into the school office before registration.

(b) By Cash (notes only) via the School Office, placed in an envelope and posted in the Post Box as for cheque payments.

(c) By Cash - Putting coins into an automatic cash machine located in the school dining halls which is set to accept £2 - £1 - 50p - 20p - 10p coins only.

How does the cash machine work?

The student swipes the card through the card reader mounted which will then display the student's name and current cash balance. Coins are then inserted. The balance will be displayed on the screen. Pressing the red button will tell the system you have finished topping up the card.

Can I restrict the daily spend?

Yes. We will ask you to specify a limit for your child's combined spend at breakfast, break and lunch.

What if my child does not hold a sufficient cash balance one day to pay for a school meal ?

As before, no student is refused a school dinner because they have not brought their dinner money to school with them. The school will allow for the student to loan money for one day. However, just as before, the student would be expected to bring some money with them the next day to repay the loan and re-credit the system by using the cash machine (see above).

How does the system deal with free school meals?

The system works exactly the same for all students whether they pay or have a free school meal. The amount allocated for the free school meal (£1.40) will be entered into the system by the software daily and will only be accessible at lunch time.

However, any under spend or missed dinner will be identified by the system and will not be added to the next day's balance.

The card can still be topped up for purchases at breakfast, break or lunch by using the cash machines or by a cash or cheque via the School Office.

What happens if the card is lost?

When a card is reported to be lost, a new card with a new number is allocated and the old card is immediately deleted from the system. Information about cash balances are held on the computer and not the card so no 'cash' is lost if the card itself is lost.

The first card will be issued free of charge. There is a charge of £5 for replacement cards.

What happens if my child forgets their card?

When a student forgets to bring the card to school on a particular day the Catering Office can issue a child with their card number. The till operator will have the facility to enter a card number into the system manually.

What is meant by 'dietary control'?

Should the student have a specific food allergy, or be a diagnosed diabetic, this medical information can be coded into the system, preventing foods with allergy ingredients from being served to a particular student, by automatically locking out relevant buttons on the keyboard.

Can I have information about what my child has been eating?

Reports can be obtained from the system giving comprehensive information on all aspects of use for each individual student. These reports can be for a specific day or between any dates you wish and can be obtained from the Catering Department.

What do I do if I have any further questions?

If you are uncertain about any aspects of how the cashless catering system will work please contact Micon Metcalfe, The Director of Administration and Business on 020 8677 2431.