

AN INSIGHT TO THE NEW CASHLESS SCHOOL MEALS SYSTEM FOR PARENTS, STAFF AND STUDENTS



THE WINSTON CHURCHILL SCHOOL (a specialist Sports College)

May 2009

Dear Parent,

We are pleased to announce that we are installing a new cashless system for the catering service at The Winston Churchill School in **June 2009**. Our desire is to continue to provide and improve on the quality of the school meal service at our school.

We are sure you will appreciate the advantages the new system will now offer the parents and students of the school. Also the system will enable us to deliver a more efficient, faster service and to continue to provide wholesome, healthy, and enjoyable meals at the lowest cost.

We will start operating the system on **Thursday 4th June**. All students and staff will be informed of and given training on how to use the system.

From this day no cash can be accepted at the food counter 'Till Point'.

For your convenience and to assist us in our administration of the service payments can be made online via ParentPay (details and password provided with this letter), by cheque made payable to '**The Winston Churchill School**', and placed into the Post Box provided in the School Reception (**Please write the full Name of Student and Tutor Group on the back of the cheque and place in an envelope, marked 'School Meals'**), or by inserting cash into one of the two machines located in the RE corridor and at the bottom of the Science block.

Any amount of money can be paid into your account held within the system, with money spent on food and drink deducted. You can always check either machine to see what funds you have left. It is also intended to provide online access to the system, and details of this will be provided on our website in due course.

There will be a daily 'spend limit' programmed into the system of **£ 4.00**, this can be increased or decreased for an individual student by making a written request to the School Finance office.

The machines are programmed to accept **Notes, £2 - £1 - 50p - 20p - 10p coins**.

The new arrangements mean an automatic opt-in to the biometric system. However, if you wish to opt out your child from the biometric registration you need to return the opt out form on the attached paperwork. Should this be the case your child will be issued with a credit card (replacements will be charged).

Hopefully all your questions will be answered by the attached information, but should this not be the case a parents' information evening is planned to introduce the system and take your questions from 7pm at the School (main hall) on Thursday 14th May 2009.

Yours sincerely

Mr D Smith
Headteacher

What is a Cashless System?

At the heart of the cashless system there is a computer controlled by specific software. This allows the system to recognise each individual student, hold individual cash balances, record cash spent and cash received, record where money is spent, on what food, on any specific date and time of day.

How are students recognised by the system?

Each student will have their fingerprint registered which will then be translated to an Alpha Numeric number, the image is then discarded, when used this will then enter them into the system program and identify them by a number.

How is this then used to obtain a school meal?

The Student simply places their finger on a scanner at the point of sale; 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 from an itemised keyboard while the amount spent and the new cash balance will show on the display.

How is money entered into the system?

- (a) By use of the online ParentPay system (please see website for full details, or www.Parentpay.com) a login and password are provided in the attached letter. This will allow you to make electronic payments into your child's account. Please note ParentPay can also be used to pay for school trips.
- (b) By 'Cheque' (subject to a minimum payment of £ 15) made payable to '**The Winston Churchill School**' via the Finance Office to cover any period. i.e. Term - 1/2 Term - Month or Week - Or a fixed monetary amount of your own choice (subject to the above). - A Post Box to receive your cheques is located in the school reception.

Please note:

To enable the Finance office to identify the student account in which to place any payment by 'Cheque' write the Full Name and Tutor Group of the student on the back of the cheque and place in an envelope marked 'School Meals'.

If the payment is to be shared between two students, identify both with full name and tutor group.

- (c) By 'Cash Coin and Note' into an automatic cash revaluation terminal located in the school which is set to accept Notes, £2 - £1 - 50p - 20p - 10p coins. **(1p – 2p – 5p coins, cannot be used)**

How does the revaluation station work?

Firstly the student places their finger on the scanner mounted on the Revaluation Station to enter the system which will then display the students name and current cash balance held within the system.

The second stage, coins are inserted into the slot. Each incremental cash balance will show on the display.

How will the student be able to check what the current cash balance is held in the system at any one time?

- (a) By using the revaluation station. Placing their finger on the scanner to display the current cash balance. There is no need to deposit any money, just press the red button to finish.
- (b) Also a Remote Display at the point of sale will show the new cash balance when the food service is finished.

Where else can the money input into the system be used?

As well as using the funds input into the system for school meals, we also intend to allow the same biometric system to be used with the drinks vending machine. In the future the same system may be used for other supplies and services.

If we pay for a set number of school meals, can it be spent in one day?

No, a daily spend limit of (£ 4.00) (or a selected amount) will be set for all students and no food above that limit can be bought. On request, an individual student limit of your choice could also be set.

What if the student does not hold a sufficient cash balance one day to pay for a school dinner?

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 revaluation station or by cheque payment to 'The Winston Churchill School' via the Finance office.

What about students entitled to a 'free school meal'?

The system works exactly the same for all students whether they pay or have a free school meal. All students have their own account to use in exactly the same way.

The amount allocated for the free school meal will be entered into the system by the software daily and will only be accessible at dinner break.

The system will then allow on a daily basis the required cash amount for each individual student to be allotted to their current cash balance. 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 student can also add extra cash on to his or her balance in the system by using the revaluation station, to enable a greater daily spend on the school dinner than allocated by their free meal allowance. This allowance can only be spent on a school dinner.

The students will no longer be identified by having separate free lunch tickets.

How will 'healthy eating' be encouraged?

After the new system has been operating for a while, we hope to enhance the school's 'healthy eating policy'. When the food is selected on the canteen server's keypad, it will also register points for a balanced, healthy and nutritious school dinner. There will be some recognition for the highest scoring students.

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.

Will students have problems in using this system?

Some students may find it difficult to control their accounts for the first couple of weeks, but because of a daily spend limit, most learn this important life skill very quickly and will enjoy being in control of their account.

Will we be able to have any information on how the system is being used?

Reports can be obtained from the system giving comprehensive information on all aspects of use for each individual student as well as each day's service. These reports can be for a specific day or between any dates you wish, they will be dated and timed to the minute, and can be obtained from the Catering Department.

- (a) To show every item of food served and the total cost of each serving.
- (b) Individual payments made direct to the school by cheque or cash and manually entered into the system.
- (c) Each payment made by cash at the revaluation station by the student and if required, even the number of individual coins and the denomination.
- (d) A total overview to show the date, time and location with cost of each purchase value of all manual cheque or cash payments, value of all cash deposited in the revaluation station and current cash balance

FURTHER DETAILS ON WHEN AND HOW THESE WILL BE PROVIDED WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE IN DUE COURSE.

Data Handling

Certain data will be held on the system to enable accurate operation. This will include your child's name, tutor group, photo, account balance and meal entitlement. This data will be handled under the guidelines of the data protection act and only used by parties directly involved with the implementation of the system. If you have any concerns please contact the School Business Manager.

Main Benefits

- * Convenient way of paying for school meals. No more looking for change every morning.
- * Discourages the misuse of school dinner money through spending in shops outside of the school grounds.
- * Alleviates many of the associated problems with the use of cash in schools. i.e.: Loss, theft and bullying.
- * Specific food allergy ingredients can be barred automatically.
- * Healthy eating is encouraged.
- * Queuing times are reduced through increased speed of service.
- * Automatic free meal allocation with the student remaining anonymous.
- * Detailed reports to analyse all aspects of the use of the system.
- * Having control of student accounts by students teaching them important life skills.
- * A more efficient delivery of service helps the canteen to provide wholesome, healthy and enjoyable school meals at a lower cost.

The system goes live on the

Thursday 4th June