

Cashless is coming..... 9th of December 2010

Launching on Thursday the 9th of December 2010, St. Martin's School are delighted to announce that we will be moving to our biometric cashless catering system.

We as a forward thinking school, always like to provide our students and parents with services that will bring huge benefits to them, which is why we have selected a state of the art cashless system that uses biometric finger recognition in the canteen.

Like other schools in the area who have already gone cashless, we have some key issues that the cashless system will address and it was important that the system we have chose met out aims:

- Stop the need for students to carry cash, the result, no lost money, no spending of dinner money on the way to school, no security issue, deterrent to bullies
- De-stigmatise free school meals by providing anonymity for students
- Enable a spend limit for each student (generic and individually specified by parents)
- Reduce the queuing time for students at the tills
- Provide an opportunity for healthy eating award points to promote a healthy diet
- Enable parents to access a convenient and secure online payment system for the school meals and give them more control over their child's spending habits for the purchase of food
- Provide information about students' consumption for parents/health issues
- Enable further development of online payment facilities for parents to pay for school services such as trips, text books, revision guides

How does the cashless system work?

Each student and all our staff will be enrolled into the biometric finger recognition system. This takes less than a minute per person and allows the St. Martin's system to identify an individual by the unique reference points on their finger. These reference points might be where the unique groves on our fingers start, stop, join or split. The cashless catering system converts the reference points to a binary number which only it can understand and decipher.

When in the canteen students and staff need only present their finger and the system will know who they are by matching up the unique pattern of their fingertip. The money credited to their account then reduces based on what they purchase.

Parents credit their child's account in one of three ways:

1. via ParentPay®, a convenient online method using a credit or debit card
2. by cheque (made payable to Chartwells), or
3. by one of the wall mounted cash loaders at St. Martin's School.

What about students who are entitled to free school meals?

The daily free meal allowance will automatically be added to the student's account. Parents are able to top this up. Any unused free meal allowance is removed daily and does not accumulate.

How do parents use ParentPay?

All parents are issued with a unique username and password to log into the ParentPay website – www.parentpay.com. ParentPay accepts MasterCard and Visa credit cards and Maestro, Switch, Delta, Electron, Solo and Visa debit cards. Parents can view online the balance of their child's catering account and a record of the payments made. Parents have the flexibility to make payments online as regularly and as often as they wish. Parents may find it convenient to top up their child's account monthly or weekly. The minimum top-up is £10.

Is it safe to make payments on the internet?

Yes. In fact, it's as safe to pay online with ParentPay as it is to use your credit card in a shop or over the phone. ParentPay uses leading technology to process your credit/debit card transactions securely. All communication with the bank is encrypted (jumbled so no one else can read it). No credit/debit card details are stored in any part of the system.

What about our personal information?

ParentPay uses a very limited amount of information about you and your child solely for the purpose of administering your account; information is not shared or given to any other organisations. ParentPay and the school operate under strict guidelines set out by the Data Protection Act 1998, which ensure the protection and care of personal information.

What do I do if I am unable to log onto ParentPay?

The ParentPay internet service should be reliable and available at any time... However, if parents experience any problems they should contact the school for advice.

What do I do if I forget my ParentPay password?

The ParentPay website has a password reset facility:

https://www.parentpay.com/PR1/Info/PP_ForgotPassword.aspx

Do credits to my child's account expire?

No, all payments will remain on the account until debited for purchases made.

Will there be a daily spend limit for students?

The school will set a spend limit for all students of £4. Parents can choose to set their own limit by informing the school of the amount they require.

What if parents do not have internet access at home?

Parents may use a computer facility which will be available in the main school foyer. Parents may also wish to visit their local library, internet café or use a computer at their work, if this is permissible.

Once I have topped up, how quick will my child's account be credited?

With ParentPay (online) and PayPoint (local convenience store) methods of payment if the top ups are carried out by 9.30am the student's account will be credited in time for break and if top ups are carried out by 11.00am the students' accounts will be credited in time for the lunchtime session. Cash loads via the wall terminal will be instantly available for spend. With the cheque method of payment the student's account will be credited ready for the following day.

Can parents top up their child's account by cheque?

There will be a facility for parents to bring cheques into the school to credit their child's account. This method of payment will not credit an account immediately but cheques will be credited to the account ready for the following day.

My child brings sandwiches to school, can my child purchase food on the odd occasion?

All staff and students will have a limited dataset based on their fingertip recorded on the system. All parents will be issued with usernames and passwords and will be able to access ParentPay at any time or any other method of payment mentioned above in order to credit their child's account. Therefore, students who bring sandwiches to school will also be able to make purchases. It is advisable that, even if a student brings sandwiches, there is a small amount on their account.

St. Martin's will be issuing more information over the coming weeks via the website, ParentCall, posters around the school etc.

Most schools in the area already have a cashless catering system, their students and parents are already reaping the rewards, which is why we are extremely excited about the new system and what it brings to students and parents of St. Martin's School.

In the future we will be expanding the ability of online payments to include schools trips, music lessons and much more.

It is important to stress that we will not store your child's fingerprint, simply a unique number which is made from a small number of points taken from the fingerprint. We will not keep a copy of the biometric data of any child who has left the school and we will not pass the biometric data to any other organisation.

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Yours faithfully

Mr J R Tree
HEAD OF SCHOOL (BRUNEL)

Mr M A Faulconbridge
HEAD OF SCHOOL (NEWTON)