



Willingdon

COMMUNITY SCHOOL

May 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Information on the Cashless Catering System at Willingdon Community School

We are pleased to inform you that we have a cashless biometric system for the catering service at Willingdon Community School which has been in operation here at Willingdon for a number of years, and has proved very successful and popular with both students and our parents/carers. We are sure you will appreciate the advantages the system offers the parents/carers and students of the school by enabling the delivery of a more efficient, faster service which allows our catering contractor Chartwells to provide wholesome, healthy, and enjoyable meals at the lowest cost.

All of our new students will be informed of, and given training on how to use the cashless system, as no cash can be accepted at the actual food counter 'Till Point'.

In readiness for your child starting, for your convenience and to assist us in our administration of the service, a method of payment "on line" is also available. As well as providing your child with dinner money to bring in, we are also able to offer our parents/carers the option of "ParentPay", an on line, secure facility for the direct payment of school meals and other school items such as uniforms, trips etc. More information on how this works is available on the school website.

With regard to the school meals cashless system that is in operation in the Dining Hall, any amount of money can be paid into your account held within the system; money spent on food will be deducted from the account and students can check by using the "revaluation" terminals to see how much money is left. The Canteen Manager is also able to provide parents/carers with a report detailing each item of food served, each credit made to the system, for any time period and show a current balance. There is a daily 'spend limit' programmed into the system of £6.00. However, this can be decreased for an individual student by parents/carers making a written request to the Canteen Manager.

Should you wish your child to continue to be responsible for bringing their own 'dinner money' to school, the facility for accepting cash payments for the day or a number of days will of course, always be available. However, all cash will have to be entered into the system by using the automatic cash "revaluation" terminals, located in the dining hall or near to the staffroom, and cannot be used to buy food directly at the dinner counters.

The revaluation units are programmed to accept **£20-£10-£5 notes** as well as **£2-£1-50p-20p-10p coins**. The units are not programmed to accept coins of less than 10p and the school and kitchen staff do not have the means to change these small amounts so please be mindful of this if you choose to give your child their dinner money in cash. Nor will staff be able to change large notes into smaller denominations if your child doesn't want to put all the money into the revaluation terminal.

Whilst a summary of the objectives of the Cashless Catering System are highlighted in this correspondence, further information on the system can also be accessed via the school website at www.willingdonschool.org.uk.

The School has adopted the "biometric" method of providing cashless catering, and additional information on this facility is accessible via the school website. To summarise the benefits of the biometric system, it is faster without the need for handing over cash or school meal cards, so there will be less queuing, and also because some students do have a tendency to forget or lose their school meals card, or forget their

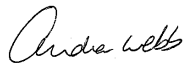
pin code number (which are the alternative methods used in cashless catering systems). The Biometric system works by the student swiping their finger past a reader at the till. However, the School and Cashless catering provider will not retain any students' fingerprints or biometrics on any computers or any other records. Each student's fingerprint image is taken and used to create a mathematical algorithm, but the image is then destroyed and the only information stored is the student's name and their code number. The numbers cannot be reinterpreted back to a fingerprint image. This technology is widely used in primary and secondary schools, meets GDPR (Data Protection) regulations, and the data is only used for the specific purpose of cashless catering, using encrypted data and deleted when students leave the school at the end of year 11. We have been pleased how popular and effective the system has been since being installed six years ago, with over 99% of students at Willingdon Community School, using the full capabilities of the cashless biometric system.

Due to data protection legislation, requiring your consent in writing (or by way of response via an email account clearly stating your name and that of your child) we require our parents/carers to sign and date the reply slip below where indicated. Alternatively you can email consent to biometric@willingdonschool.org.uk

If, however, you wish to opt out of the biometric scanning system, please can you notify the school via the reply slip (or via the biometric email address above) as soon as possible that you would like a school meal PIN number to be issued to your child, which would then need to be recalled by them, and used at the till point, on a daily basis.

I am confident that our new students, parents and carers will continue to embrace the benefits from our cashless biometric catering service, which will enable your child to access a healthy, balanced school meal.

Yours sincerely



Andy Webb
Business Manager
Willingdon Community School (working in conjunction with Chartwells, our school meals provider)

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Cashless Biometric Catering – for the attention of Reception (PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY)

We/I have been informed that Willingdon Community School is offering biometric finger scan technology for the purchase of catering **and I am willing to have my child/children participate in the process.**

OR

We/I have been informed that Willingdon Community School is offering biometric finger scan technology for the purchase of catering **and I do not wish my child/children to participate in the process.**

Please print name of Student

Year/Tutor Group (if known)

Please print name of Parent/Carer

Signature of Parent/Carer

Date