

14th March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Important update about our catering provision: Please note, ACTION REQUIRED.

I am pleased to confirm that we are close to beginning our partnership with our new catering provider, Mellors.

I write to inform you that Mellors will accept three payment methods -

- Method 1: Pre-payment account with ParentPay using an automated (i.e. electronically operated) facial recognition system for identification and payment.
- Method 2: Pre-payment account with ParentPay using a PIN code for identification and payment.
- Method 3: Card readers, which will be available at service points and can be used for bank card, smartphone/smartwatch payments.

Method 1 is new to the school therefore I am providing you with detailed information below about how this will be implemented. This will allow you to make an informed choice.

What is biometric Information?

Biometric information is information about a person that can be used to identify them, for example, information from their face or a fingerprint. It is similar to how a mobile phone unlocks when it detects the user's face.

This new system will use facial recognition to identify your child's account. In order to do this we require permission from you and your child.

How will the biometric information be used?

Just before ordering food, a camera will identify your child via their facial characteristics and match them to their catering account. The account will have funds placed on it by you via ParentPay. The money spent will then be taken from their account.

Why is this system preferred or used?

It provides a more effective way of protecting the student's account as it does not use a mechanism which can be easily shared or impersonated, or rely on the students having access to their phone or a payment card. It is also much more efficient for queue management, reported to improve queue times by up to 8 seconds per student, ensuring students spend less time queuing and more time eating and enjoying their break or lunch.

Will the biometric information be used for other purposes and is it secure?

Biometric information will only be shared with the payment provider CRB Cunninghams Ltd. The information will only be used for the purpose stated above. WBHS is responsible for ensuring that the information is stored securely.

What if we do not consent?

If you do not consent, we will not collect or use biometric information for inclusion on the automated recognition system. A separate PIN-based system will be used, but we are advised that this is not as efficient, effective or secure. For example, another student could observe or overhear a PIN being given and use it to purchase food and drink for themselves.

What if my child receives Free School Meals?

Students in receipt of a free school meal will need to register for either the automated facial recognition system or opt to use a PIN code in order to receive their meal.

What happens next and what do I need to do?

The written consent of at least one parent is required. However, consent given by one parent will be overridden if the other parent objects in writing to the use of their child's biometric information. Similarly, your child is required to consent. It is possible to withdraw consent at any time, in writing.

If you give consent to the processing of your child's biometric information, please complete the information on the form below at your earliest convenience. This is your written consent. Please note that when your child leaves the school, or if for some other reason they cease to use the biometric system, their biometric data will be securely deleted.

In order to give/not give consent for your child for the automated system, please complete the Microsoft form using the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/CqBJP1sZPG>

If you have any questions related to the above information then please contact our Data Protection Officer, Peter Lilley, via peter.lilley@whitleybayhighschool.org

The new catering system will be live from Monday 15th April, when students return after the Easter holidays. Initially, whilst the automated recognition system is being set up, students will access their accounts using a 4-digit pin code. Mellors are also intending to offer card payments from Monday 15th April, however they are waiting for confirmation that these units can be delivered by this date. We will notify you if this is not possible. PIN codes will be sent to parents before the Easter holidays. During w/c 15th April, students with parental consent for the automated recognition system will be invited to have their photograph taken during the school week. Consent will be taken from the student at the time of the photograph. Once a student's photograph has been taken and loaded onto the system, they will no longer need to use their PIN to purchase food.

We will be in touch with further information relating to the new catering arrangements in the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully



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Legal Information/References: Under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (sections 26 to 28), we are required to notify each parent of a child and obtain the written consent of at least one parent before being able to use a child's biometric information for an automated system. In addition, in line with UK GDPR, we will also seek consent from your child. For clarity, consent must be given by both a parent and child before biometric data can be collected.