



Harrow Way Community School

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Headteacher: Mr C Currie

16th May 2011

Dear Parent,

I am writing to inform you of some changes we are making to the way we run the dining arrangements at Harrow Way. In partnership with our catering provider, HC3S, we are planning to introduce a cashless system, with no money required at the point of sale.

Students or their parents will be able to top-up a pre-paid account using coin and note loaders in school with as much or as little money as they wish, with online top-ups as an option to be introduced in the medium term. Students will then be able to pay for food from the dining hall using this account, identifying themselves using their unique fingerprints.

The benefits of the cashless system will include:

Speed of service The catering staff will no longer have to deal with cash. Evidence from other schools, including the other Andover secondaries where similar systems are already in use, shows that the lunch queue can be processed much faster this way, with shorter queue times for students, meaning more eating and break time.

Spending limits Parents will have the option, if they choose to make use of it, to set a daily spending limit on food. This can ensure that a week's worth of school meal money is not spent in a single day!

Eliminates cash Lunch money can be loaded onto students' accounts at any time and in any amount. Students will not need to be responsible for looking after cash, which removes many of the problems surrounding this (e.g. money becoming mislaid etc) and also ensures that the money is being spent on school meals as intended and not in local shops. Whilst not available from launch day (various back-end systems need to be put in place to support this feature) we also plan to offer the facility to top up accounts online. The fingerprint system means that cash cannot be lost or stolen and that no payment cards can be lost or taken, so students and their parents can be reassured that only their children can spend their own lunch money.

Provides reports on spending The system will provide reports on exactly what products lunch money has been spent on. These reports could be used by parents to confirm whether their children are eating a healthy lunch and will also provide useful data to the School to tailor menus and plan appropriate food requirements.

Anonymity for students entitled to free school meals There will no longer be any separate queue lines for free school meals. The system will automatically allocate the daily entitlement and not even the catering staff will see who is and is not receiving free school meals. All students will of course be able to top-up their accounts for any additional spending if they wish.



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How does the system work?

Harrow Way has chosen a supplier called VeriCool to provide the technology for the new system. Once enrolled onto the system, as each student enters the dining hall, they will place their 'enrolled' finger on a fingertip scanner to make a payment for their food - no cash will be required at the till. During the enrolment process the VeriCool software captures a digital signature of your child's middle fingertip, which is then broken down into data points (similar to reference points on a map). The VeriCool software then converts these into an alphanumeric string which is then stored on a server on our own school network. Nobody has access to this information and the stored data points can only be viewed as a meaningless string of numbers and letters, stored in a secure proprietary format. Furthermore, all enrolment data will be deleted from the system when students leave school. We would like to assure parents that this software provides a very high level of security. It is not possible to recreate a fingerprint from the information held in the system.

Launch Information

We intend to launch this exciting new system during the week commencing 20th June 2011. To help us get started and to avoid large queues for the coin loaders while every member of the school population tops up their brand new account, we would ask that if possible parents could send in to school a cheque or cash amount sufficient to cover a typical weekly lunch spend, by 10th June 2011. The school will then ensure that your child's account is credited with this amount ready for 'go-live' day. There is no need to send in money at this point in respect of students who do not regularly make use of the school catering service.

Finally, whether your child is a frequent or infrequent user of our dining room, we ask all parents to return the attached slip to the school as soon as possible and by 10th June latest to confirm both receipt of this letter and to indicate that you give the consent we are required to obtain under Data Protection regulations to enrol your children into the new system. If any parents or students have any questions, concerns or comments regarding this new system, please do not hesitate to contact Mr T Parsons (Assistant Headteacher) at school during the day, or by e-mail at tony.parsons@harrowwway.hants.sch.uk, who will be able to address any concerns or refer them on to our suppliers.

Yours sincerely



C E CURRIE
Headteacher

CASHLESS CATERING REPLY SLIP

Please return to Mrs D Burton (Finance Office) before the 10th of June 2011

Student's name _____ Tutor Group _____

I have received and understood the letter explaining the fingertip cashless catering system which is to be installed at Harrow Way Community School and I give consent for my child to be enrolled into the VeriCool system.

My child is a regular user of the school catering service, therefore I also enclose a cheque/cash (*please delete as appropriate*) amount in the sum of £ _____ to provide an initial balance for my child's account.

Name of Parent (Please print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Office Use Only:

Received by Finance Office: _____ (Inits) Date: _____

Uploaded to Student Account : _____ (Inits) Date: _____