

Dear Parent / Carer

I am pleased to inform you that the Local Education Authority has launched a cashless catering system at Elfed High School. The system provides the opportunity to purchase meals using a biometric cashless catering system. Cash is not accepted to purchase food or drinks in the dining room.

What is a cashless catering system?

With a cashless catering system you pay in advance for your child's school lunches, crediting his/her account with the amount paid in. Your child uses this credit to pay for food and drink at lunchtime and during morning break. Individual students are identified at the till by an automated mechanism, with the cost of their lunch being deducted from their credit.

Why introduce a cashless catering system?

There are several advantages to a cashless system:

- Students do not need to bring anything with them to the dining room
- The risk of losing money is reduced because money only needs to be brought to school when the amount in credit needs topping up rather than every day.
- Balance statements and description of food purchased are available on request.
- Any special dietary needs can be noted into your child's account details.

What happens to students who have free school meals?

Students who have free meals have an automatic credit on their account every day. Other students cannot tell who has a free meal. Parents or carers sometimes choose to add extra credit to their child's account to top up their free meal allowance. An application form and information on how to claim free school meals is attached for information.

How does the biometric / PIN system work?

The cashless system uses biometric technology and avoids the need to use cash to purchase school meals. The biometric system is based on fingerprint recognition technology. A numerical value is derived from the fingerprint. It is this numerical value that is stored, not the actual image of the fingerprint. **It is not possible to recreate a student's fingerprint, or even the image of a fingerprint, from what is, in effect, just a string of numbers.** The number derived from your child's fingerprint will be used only for the cashless catering system. It will not be passed to anyone within, or outside of, the school and will be destroyed when your child leaves the school.

We understand that some people have concerns over use of the fingerprint recognition system. Your child may choose to use a PIN number (Personal Identification Number) instead of fingerprint recognition. In this case it is essential that he/she is careful not to give the PIN number to anyone as it could be used by another person.

Additional security is provided by including photograph identification at the till. The photograph is taken with parents' and students' permission and is not used for any purpose other than the cashless system.

How to keep the account in credit

- Your child can make a cash payment by inserting cash into either of the two revaluation units at the school. These units take 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2 coins. £10 and £5 notes are also accepted.
- The balance left after each purchase is displayed on the machine. Students can check their credit balance on the revaluation units at any time during the school day.
- Cheque payments can be made but will not be processed until the next day. Please write your bank card number, school name, student's full name and form group on the reverse of the cheque. Cheques must be made payable to "Flintshire County Council" and placed into the cheque box situated next to the revaluation unit.

What happens next?

1. Please complete and return the enclosed form so we can set up an account for your child on the system and, where necessary, provide your child with a unique pin number for personal use. Even if your child plans to bring packed lunches to school it is recommended that they enrol on the system as from time to time students do forget to bring their packed lunch and the school can therefore arrange for your child to have a lunch from the canteen.
2. Please provide your child with cash or a cheque to ensure that your child's account in credit or return the information required for a free school meal.

If you have any questions about enquiries about account balances or requests for information about food purchased please contact Mrs L Webb, the Catering Site Supervisor, on 01244 550217.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rosemary A Jones
Headteacher