



## **Cashless Catering at John Mason School – your questions answered**

### **What is a Cashless system?**

At the heart of the cashless system is a computer controlled by I.M.P.A.C.T. – Software. This allows the system to recognise each individual student, hold individual cash balances, record cash spent and cash received, record where money is spent, on what food, on any specific date and time of day.

### **How are students recognised by the system?**

The system uses the same biometric technology as we are already using in the library, so students are already familiar with it. All a student has to do is place their finger on a scanner.

### **How is this then used to obtain a school meal?**

The student simply places their finger on a scanner at the point of sale; a display will show the server the student's name, tutor group and current cash balance held within the system. The selected food items will be entered into the system from an itemised keyboard while the amount spent and the new cash balance will show on the display.

How is money entered into the system?

- By using the Top Up machine situated in the school.
- Online via debit or credit card, details on how to do this will be released shortly. This option gives parents complete control over any money students spend at school.
- By sending cash or a cheque to the school.

### **How will a student top up their account?**

The student places their finger on the scanner mounted on the Top Up machine to enter the I.M.P.A.C.T system, which will display the student's name and current cash balance held within the system.

The student then inserts coins into the slot. Each incremental cash balance will show on the display. The student presses the red button to tell the system when the transaction is completed.

### **How will a student check their current cash balance?**

By using the Top Up machine. They place their finger on the scanner and the current cash balance is displayed. There is no need to deposit any money, just press the red button to finish.

A student will also see a display of their new cash balance after they make a purchase at the Diner.

### **What if the student does not hold a sufficient cash balance one day to pay for a school dinner?**

No student will be refused food if they are out of credit. The system will allow the student a small overspend for one day. However, the student would be expected to bring some money with them the next day to repay the loan and top up their account. If this system is not respected and repayments are not made, the arrangement may be withdrawn.

**If we pay for a set number of school meals, can it be spent in one day?**

No, a daily spend limit of £4.50 will be set for all students and no food above that limit can be bought. On request, an individual student limit of your choice can be set, to include break time snacks and lunchtime.

**What about students entitled to a 'free school meal'?**

The system works exactly the same for all students whether they pay or have a free school meal. The amount allocated for the free school meal will be entered automatically into the system each day and available to the student for a dinner at lunchtime.

Any under spend or missed dinner will be identified by the system and will not be added to the next day's balance.

The student can also add extra cash on to their balance in the system by using the Top Up machine, to enable a greater daily spend than allocated by their free meal allowance. As the allowance can only be spent on a school dinner, extra cash added into the system can also be used for break time snacks.

This system will eliminate the need for 'free meal' tickets and no student will be identified in the Diner as being on the 'free meal' register.

**Will students have problems in using this system?**

Some students may find it difficult to control their accounts for the first couple of weeks but, because of a daily spend limit, most learn this important life skill very quickly and will enjoy being in control of their account.

**Will parents have access to any information on how the system is being used?**

Reports can be obtained from the system giving comprehensive information on all aspects of use for each individual student as well as each day's service. These reports can be for a specific day or between any dates you wish, they will be dated and timed to the minute, and can be obtained directly from the school website.

You will be able to see:

- A list of every item of food served and the total cost of each serving.
- When payments were made online or entered by the school (following deposits of cash or cheque).
- When your child used the Top Up machine, and even the number of individual coins and the denomination.
- A total overview showing the date, time, location and cost of each purchase, value of each top up payment and the current cash balance.

**Data Handling**

**Certain data will be held on the system to enable accurate operation. This will include your child's name, tutor group, photo, account balance and meal entitlement. This data will be handled under the guidelines of the Data Protection Act and used only by parties directly involved with the implementation of the system. If you have any concerns please contact Mrs Wiltshire, Business Manager, at John Mason School.**