

March 2026

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you of the payment systems that Mellors, our catering provider, accepts for payment of school meals. This is in anticipation of your child joining us in September.

- **Method 1:** Pre-payment account with ParentPay using an automated (i.e. electronically operated) facial recognition system for identification and payment. This is the preferred method as it ensures that only the correct child can spend on the account. It is also the quickest method at the till, thereby reducing queue times for all.
- **Method 2:** Card readers, which are available at service points.
- **Method 3:** Pre-payment account with ParentPay using a PIN code provided by the school for identification and payment.

As method 1 maybe new to you, 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 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 a payment card. It is also much more efficient for queue management, reducing queue times, 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 can 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.

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

Students with parental consent for the automated recognition system will be invited to have their photograph taken during their first day in school. 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 be able to use their account straight away.

A separate letter will be sent to you shortly regarding registering for a ParentPay account. Please ensure that funds are available on your child's ParentPay account should they wish to use either the biometric or PIN payment systems. For those students wishing to pay by bank card only, there is no requirement to register for a ParentPay account.

Yours faithfully



Steve Wilson
Headteacher